

Devotional and deepening on “True Unity”

Opening Music – Queen of Carmel - https://youtu.be/wgUhwR1_2Jo

Standing on a mountain
Looking across the bay
The Queen of Carmel reigns
She reigns majestically.

Chorus

Cry out O Zion
Cry out to your Lord
Cry out O Zion
Circle 'round in adoration
Circle 'round your Lord!

Unto God the Lord of Lords
Belong kingdoms of Earth and Heaven
Land and Sea Rejoiced this Day
The day of a Revelation

Chorus

Robed in white and crowned in gold
She stands for unity
God will sail His Ark on Thee
As mentioned in the Book of Names.

Chorus

Repeat Chorus

Repeat last 2 lines Chorus

Opening Prayer - UNITY

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord. (Bahá'u'lláh Compilations : Baha'i Prayers)

Readings

1. Insert Shaykh, O thou who hast surrendered thy will to God! By self-surrender and perpetual union with God is meant that men should merge their will wholly in the Will of God, and regard their desires as utter nothingness beside His Purpose. Whatsoever the Creator commandeth His creatures to observe, the same must they diligently, and with the utmost joy and eagerness, arise and fulfil. They should in no wise allow their fancy to obscure their judgment, neither should they regard their own imaginings as the voice of the Eternal. In the Prayer of Fasting We have revealed: "Should Thy Will decree that out of Thy mouth these words proceed and be addressed unto them, 'Observe, for My Beauty's sake, the fast, O people, and set no limit to its duration,' I swear by the majesty of Thy glory, that every one of them will faithfully observe it, will abstain from whatsoever will violate Thy law, and will continue to do so until they yield up their souls unto Thee." In this consisteth the complete surrender of one's will to the Will of God. Meditate on this, that thou mayest drink in the waters of everlasting life which flow through the words of the Lord of all mankind, and mayest testify that the one true God hath ever been immeasurably exalted above His

creatures. He, verily, is the Incomparable, the Ever-Abiding, the Omniscient, the All-Wise. The station of absolute self-surrender transcendeth, and will ever remain exalted above, every other station.

It behoveth thee to consecrate thyself to the Will of God. Whatsoever hath been revealed in His Tablets is but a reflection of His Will. So complete must be thy consecration, that every trace of worldly desire will be washed from thine heart. This is the meaning of true unity. (Baha'u'llah : Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah)

2. Say: O servants! Let not the means of order be made the cause of confusion and the instrument of union an occasion for discord. We fain would hope that the people of Baha may be guided by the blessed words: 'Say: all things are of God.' This exalted utterance is like unto water for quenching the fire of hate and enmity which smouldereth within the hearts and breasts of men. By this single utterance contending peoples and kindreds will attain the light of true unity. Verily He speaketh the truth and leadeth the way. He is the All-Powerful, the Exalted, the Gracious. (Baha'u'llah : Tablets of Baha'u'llah revealed after the Kitab-i-Aqdas).
3. We are told by Shoghi Effendi that two great processes are at work in the world: the great Plan of God, tumultuous in its progress, working through mankind as a whole, tearing down barriers to world unity and forging humankind into a unified body in the fires of suffering and experience. This process will produce, in God's due time, the Lesser Peace, the political unification of the world. Mankind at that time can be likened to a body that is unified but without life. The second process, the task of breathing life into this unified body of creating true unity and spirituality culminating in the Most Great Peace is that of the Baha'is, who are labouring consciously, with detailed instructions and continuing divine guidance, to erect the fabric of the Kingdom of God on earth, into which they call their fellow-men, thus conferring upon them eternal life, The working out of God's Major Plan proceeds mysteriously in ways directed by Him alone, but the Minor Plan that He has given us to execute, as our part in His grand design for the redemption of mankind, is clearly delineated. (8 December 1967, written by the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer) [10] Compilations : The Holocaust and the Greater Plan of God)

Music - Say God Sufficeth

<https://youtu.be/PEB0aNOi2PU>

4. THE SOURCE OF UNITY - What is real unity? When we observe the human world we find various collective expressions of unity therein. For instance, man is distinguished from the animal by his degree or kingdom. This comprehensive distinction includes all the posterity of Adam and constitutes one great household or human family which may be considered the fundamental or physical unity of mankind. Furthermore, a distinction exists between various groups of humankind according to lineage, each group forming a racial unity separate from the others. There is also the unity of tongue among those who use the same language as a means of communication; national unity where various peoples live under one form of government such as French, German, British, etc.; and political unity which conserves the civil rights of parties or factions of the same government. All these unities are imaginary and without real foundation, for no real result proceeds from them. The purpose of true unity is real and divine outcomes. From these limited unities mentioned only limited outcomes proceed whereas unlimited unity produces unlimited result. For instance, from the limited unity of race or nationality the results at most are limited. It is like a family living alone and solitary; there are no unlimited or universal outcomes from it. (Compilations : Baha'i World Faith Part 2)

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5. The unity which is productive of unlimited results is first a unity of mankind which recognizes that all are sheltered beneath the overshadowing glory of the All-Glorious; that all are servants of one God; for all breathe the same atmosphere, live upon the same earth, move beneath the same heavens, receive effulgence from the same sun and are under the protection of one God. This is the most great unity, and its results are lasting if humanity adheres to it; but mankind has hitherto violated it, adhering to sectarian or other limited unities such as racial, patriotic or unity of self-interests; therefore no great results have been forthcoming. Nevertheless it is certain that the radiance and favors of God are encompassing, minds have developed, perceptions have become acute, sciences and arts are widespread and capacity exists for the proclamation and promulgation of the real and ultimate unity of mankind which will bring forth marvelous results. It will reconcile all religions, make warring nations loving, cause hostile kings to become friendly and bring peace and happiness to the human world. It will Cement together the Orient and Occident, remove forever the foundations of war and upraise the ensign of the Most Great Peace. These limited unities are therefore signs of that great unity which will make all the human family one by being productive of the attractions of conscience in mankind. (Compilations : Baha'i World Faith Part 2)
6. The different religious communities have failed to unite in the past, because the adherents of each have regarded the Founder of their own community as the one supreme authority, and His law as the divine law. Any Prophet Who proclaimed a different message was, therefore, regarded as an enemy of the truth. The different sects of each community have separated for similar reasons. The adherents of each have accepted some subordinate authority and regarded some particular version or interpretation of the Founder's Message as the One True Faith, and all others as wrong. It is obvious that while this state of matters exists no true unity is possible. Bahá'u'lláh, on the other hand, teaches that all the Prophets were bearers of authentic messages from God; that each in His day gave the highest teachings of all are essentially in harmony, and are parts of a great plan for the education and the unification of humanity. He calls on the people of all denominations to show their reverence for their Prophets by devoting their lives to the accomplishment of that unity for which all the Prophets laboured and suffered. In His letter to Queen Victoria, He likens the world to a sick man whose malady is aggravated because he has fallen into the hands of unskilled physicians; and He tells how the remedy may be effected: --"That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error". – (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 255. Dr. J.E. Esslemont : Baha'u'llah and the New Era)

Music – STRIVE- Baha'i Music Video

https://youtu.be/4y2WGjl_9n4

Closing Prayer

Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same stock. Thou hast decreed that all shall belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are all Thy servants, and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle; all have gathered together at Thy Table of Bounty; all are illumined through the light of Thy Providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, dost shelter all, conferrest life upon all. Thou hast endowed each and all with talents and faculties, and all are submerged in the Ocean of Thy Mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! Unite all. Let the religions agree and make the nations one, so that they may see each other as one family and the whole earth as one home. May they all live together in perfect harmony.

O God! Raise aloft the banner of the oneness of mankind.

O God! Establish the Most Great Peace.

Cement Thou, O God, the hearts together.

O Thou kind Father, God! Gladden our hearts through the fragrance of Thy love. Brighten our eyes through the Light of Thy Guidance. Delight our ears with the melody of Thy Word, and shelter us all in the Stronghold of Thy Providence.

Thou art the Mighty and Powerful, Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlooketh the shortcomings of all mankind. **‘Abdu’l-Bahá’**