Reality is One, and Global Harmony is Inevitable:

Building a Culture of Oneness

~ A Baha’i Perspective on the Unifying Principles at the Mystic Heart of the World’s Sacred Traditions That are Guiding Humanity’s Conscious Evolution

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“Reality is one; and when found, it will unify all mankind...

Reality is the knowledge of God... reality underlies all the great religious systems of the world.”

~ Abdu’l-Baha, PUP, 372
Overview

~ The Nature of Reality

~ Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

~ Re-visioning Religion as a Sacred Tree

~ The Global Movement of Our Time

~ The Action Most Needed Now

~ A Meditation: Living in Oneness

~ Reflection & Dialogue
The Nature of Reality
Principle 5

Reality is one, and global harmony is inevitable

Reality is a changeless, grand organic whole; every thing in it is connected to – and part of – every other thing. Our conscious evolution has taken us through stages, from family to tribe to city-state to national unity; we are now on the verge of realizing world unity, as one human family.

With all the world’s spiritual and religious traditions looking forward to some form of “a new heaven and earth,” there has always been the hope and desire for “peace on earth.”
The Nature of Reality

The mystery of oneness is at the heart of creation; material and spiritual reality, counter-balancing parts of the same unified reality, are energized and held together by the same force that organizes and sustains the entire universe.

This connective, creative energy, known as Love, the divine Spirit, or Grace, is the underlying force expressed in every dimension of reality.
The Nature of Reality

Reality is the absolute unity of all existence, the whole within which the great diversity of all its parts find their place.

The existence of one reality has forever directed our collective evolution toward the realization of this oneness. Unity is the underlying principle defining reality ~ and its primary characteristic.
The Nature of Reality

How we see reality depends upon our perspective ~
Seeing through our own eyes, we tend to see distinctions, separations, and imperfections first.

But looking through the eyes of the Creator, we see the whole first, as it really is;
this spiritual reality ~ of holiness and oneness ~ is always right before our eyes, too.
“All things originate from one Essence, develop according to one law, and are destined to one aim.”

~ The Buddha

“One cannot help but be in awe when he contemplates the mysteries of eternity, of life, of the marvelous structure of reality.”

~ Albert Einstein
The Nature of Reality

Reality is the whole unified field comprising the entirety of creation; all of its parts fit together in a mysterious harmony, a hidden wholeness.

But we discover the reality of reality gradually. Though we come from oneness, are born into a realm of dualities, and strive to reclaim a consciousness of oneness, “awareness is all that changes in the journey from separation to one reality,” as Deepak Chopra says.
Reality as a Continuum

How we perceive reality is dependent upon where we are on our own consciousness continuum. Reality does not change, we do.

As we change, we see the same reality differently. At one point along the continuum, the sun rises and sets; at another point, we come to understand it is the earth turning in its journey around the sun.
Reality as a Continuum

An evolving consciousness fulfills the potential we are born with. Moving across the consciousness continuum from separation to unity allows us to see wholeness, to get the true picture of reality as it is. This also allows us to see Divine, or revealed, truth, as well as scientific, or discovered, truth as relative, progressive, and unfolding gradually but continuously across time.
Reality as a Continuum

How The Consciousness Continuum Can Lead to Opposite Outcomes

The Attitudes, Values, and Principles We Live By
Determine Whether We End Up With Either War or Peace

Start With: A Pragmatic-Centered Perspective (leads to) >> Generalizations >> Stereotypes >> Bias >> Prejudice >> Oppression >> Racism >> War
Start With: A Principle-Centered Perspective (leads to) >> Respect >> Appreciation >> Equality >> Cooperation >> Utility >> Peace

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End With:...non-existence
Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

All the world’s religious traditions have the goal of transcending duality and achieving oneness.

~ The Hindu practice of yoga...
~ The Buddhist notion of sadhana...
~ The Taoist notion of the way...
~ The Judeo-Christian notion of regaining paradise...
~ The Islamic concept of tawhid...
Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

In the mystic treatise, “The Seven Valleys,” Baha’u’llah traces the journey of the soul through the planes of limitation in the world of opposites in the first three valleys (Search, Love, & Knowledge).

But the next valley (Unity), is a bridge between the temporal and the eternal realm where “the veils of plurality” are pierced, “the heaven of singleness” is entered, and “the lights of oneness” are manifest.
The whole earth is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits... the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings.

~ Baha’u’llah

The spiritual forces guiding us toward oneness are coming into sharper focus. With unconditional love as the foundation for a universal code of ethics, a Golden Age of humanity is being ushered in.
Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

Scientists and philosophers, too, are aligned with the world’s wisdom traditions in recognizing this interconnectedness, a central theme going back to indigenous beliefs.

The Perennial Philosophy, the Great Chain of Being, and scientific and spiritual ways of thinking, all describe Ultimate Reality, or the Creator, as “One,” a “unified field,” “holistic,” “progressive,” and with a “purpose,” toward which we are moving.
Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

A global transformation of consciousness is under way ~ the most formidable force of change now spreading throughout the world is global integration.

We are transitioning into our long awaited stage of maturity. It is now within the reach of every human being alive today to cultivate a global consciousness.
Spiritual Forces Guiding Us Toward Unity

Beyond political peace, world unity is the goal. Unity is the force most characteristic of the creative power of the Creator, the primary influence driving the progress of civilization.

“World unity is the hallmark of the stage which humanity is now approaching... Nation-building has come to an end... A world, growing to maturity, must recognize the oneness and wholeness of human relationships...”

~ Shoghi Effendi
The great world religions have been the primary agents of the spiritual development of humanity...

In our time, we have a new set of spiritual principles to put into action to achieve this destiny.

We are the midwives for this rebirth of the planet!

Peace is seen not only as a promise waiting to be fulfilled in the Baha’i writings, but also as inevitable, for many reasons.
The Sacred Tree of Religion

The organization of God is one; the evolution of existence is one; the divine system is one...

all are subject to one law and system.

~ Abdu’l-Baha

Principle 6

Revelation is continuous and progressive

There has never been a time when humanity has been without a connection to and guidance from the Creator...

The release of spiritual energies, essential in the past and future alike, is always needed to transform human hearts, shape new social institutions, and expand circles of unity.
The Sacred Tree of Religion

There are two ways we can view religion: as multiple, separate, and independent entities; or, as one evolving knowledge system with many branches.

If we can see reality as a whole, we also have to see Divine truth as relative, progressive, and unfolding gradually, all the while coming from the same Source.
The oneness of Divinity becomes more understandable as the process of ongoing Revelation is visualized as an unfolding, ever-growing tree of many branches, with the Indigenous traditions branches, the “Abrahamic” branches, and the “Dharmic” branches.
If we re-vision religion as built upon a dynamic, interconnected sequence of divine Messengers, the founders of world’s major religions... we can see that each represents a stage in the unfolding of a single reality...

“Religion is the outer expression of divine reality. Therefore, it must be living, vitalized, moving, and progressive.”

~ Abdu’l-Baha
Humanity’s Coming of Age

A spiritual springtime has come to the eternal, sacred tree of religion; a new chapter in humanity’s story has emerged from the decay of yesterday.

Though there are still signs of adolescent turmoil all around us, unseen but ever-present spiritual forces are being released in our time; a global ethic, with universal values, is emerging, and humanity’s coming of age is upon us.
Humanity’s Coming of Age

Leading thinkers today recognize the core principle of our time ~ the oneness of humanity ~ and what it entails.

Ervin Laszlo, who has said that mankind “needs a star to follow,” or “standards by which we can direct our steps,” adds that these will come from “the great ideals of the world’s religions.”
Laszlo goes on to say, “The essential goal of the Baha’i Faith is to achieve a vision that is world-embracing and could lead to the unity of mankind…”

He is relatively alone among his peers in recognizing the role of Baha’u’llah as a necessary link in the Great Chain of Being for proclaiming an emerging concept of historical progress that is both linear and cyclical at the same time. He explains...
A Hidden Wholeness Removes the Boundaries

The relationship between science and religion can be understood, simply, as complementary knowledge systems within the same whole, within the one Reality.

Both science and religion are progressive in nature, one advances through investigation and discovery, and the other through Divine revelation, and because everything is connected to everything else, the two together lead to a “grand synthesis” of the parts of the whole.
Welcoming the Interfaith, Interspiritual Age

This understanding of the hidden wholeness of the entire Creation is a big part of what has lead to the softening of the boundaries between religions, as well.

The world has become smaller, the one Creator is seen as having one purpose, and spiritual forces are moving us toward a grand synthesis of our evolutionary process toward the realization of our oneness.
From the Interfaith Age to the Interspiritual Age

~ With so much that has happened since the mid-19th century – from the manifold increase in the speed of travel and communication, to the exponential explosion of knowledge, to all the human rights movements –

including the birth of the global interfaith movement with the first Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893, which inspired many other similar efforts around the world, we might wonder: is humanity’s current transformation of consciousness linked to the radical statement (especially for the mid-1800s), “The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens,” at the heart of the Baha’i revelation?
The Mystic Heart of the World’s Religions

~ In 1999, Brother Wayne Teasdale announced that we are at the dawn of the Interspiritual Age

This is a step beyond the Interfaith Age, because it acknowledges a spiritual interdependence among the world’s religions ~ he sees that “an actual impact of traditions on each other is clearly discernable in history...”
The Primary Spiritual Principle of the Interspiritual Age

The shifts in consciousness characterizing the Interspiritual Age ~ a recognition of the interdependence of all domains of life and reality, etc. ~ are reflected in the primary spiritual principle of the Baha’i teachings.

While most of the world’s religions are currently adopting a more holistic sense of shared values, the Baha’i Faith came into existence in 1844 with a fully developed understanding of the oneness of humanity.
A Global Movement is Emerging

The effects of the renewal of religion are being seen and felt everywhere.

~ A global interfaith, interspiritual, indigenous, and interdisciplinary effort is currently bringing people together from all directions, into the cause of oneness.

~ Massive and rapid change everywhere demands our participation – and action – on behalf of this unfolding process.
The Global Movement of Our Time: Building a Culture of Oneness ~

We live at the conjunction of transformation and integration, where world unity is a realizable goal as we build the foundation of a new civilization.

“God holds out an invitation to us — to wholeness that leads to flourishing for all of us...

Our planet will not survive if we cling to the verities of the past.

We must recognize that we are part of one family — the human family.” ~ Desmond Tutu
The Global Movement of Our Time

In the past century and three-quarters, we’ve seen the birth of the global interfaith movement, with the 1st Parliament of the World’s Religions in 1893, the inauguration of the Interspiritual Age in 1999, and now, a global effort to build a culture of oneness is coming into sharper focus.

A few of the main threads of this global bridge-building movement are efforts and organizations such as these...

The Global Movement of Our Time: Building a Culture of Oneness ~

To move from a consciousness of duality to a consciousness of oneness requires a deeper understanding of nonduality, a recognition of reality as one, and indivisible.

Adopting a consciousness of oneness is what will lead to a culture of oneness.
The Global Movement of Our Time: 

Building a Culture of Oneness ~

A culture of oneness means living in unity within our multiplicity, honoring our diversity, and safeguarding our differences.

This was seen in the recent Women’s March that took place simultaneously in nearly 40 countries on the same day. The voice of solidarity and oneness arose that day, as all the human rights causes converged into one cause, one movement.
The Global Movement of Our Time: Building a Culture of Oneness ~

Our greatest danger is remaining complacent in a duality-focused world...
Our challenge is to disregard the fleeting notions of the day, and tap into the spiritual forces of our time.

The action most needed now, the most important work today, is work across boundaries, across differences...
It is up to us to remove barriers that have been put up between us by others.
The Global Movement of Our Time:
Building a Culture of Oneness ~

Joining hands, in solidarity, love, and harmony, across differences is the sacred activism of our time.

As greater numbers embrace global citizenship, and as this is reflected in all social spheres, a consciousness of oneness will become as commonly accepted in the near future as nationalism was in the past.
A Meditation for Living in Oneness

Right mindfulness, part of the Eightfold Path, used as a regular practice, can be a way to change the mind’s habits, transform consciousness, re-pattern our thinking, and create new ways of seeing the world, speaking about it, and acting in it.

If we think, speak, and act with a consciousness oneness, and establish this as a habit, we will create a pattern that allows us to live in oneness.
A Meditation for Living in Oneness
THE STORY OF OUR TIME
FROM DUALITY TO INTERCONNECTEDNESS TO ONENESS
Robert Atkinson

“Good news! Human consciousness is unfolding toward its essential unity... This lucid book both celebrates that evolutionary trajectory and guides our full and empowered participation.”
- Mirabai Starr, author of Caravan of No Despair: A Memoir of Loss & Transformation

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