

The Message of Bahá'u'lláh

On October 22, 2017, over 6 million Bahá'ís in some 100,000 localities worldwide which include over 2 million Indian Bahá'ís in over 10,000 localities, will celebrate the bicentennial of the birth of Bahá'u'lláh - the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. His vision of humanity as one people and of the earth as a common homeland, inspires a dual process of individual and collective transformation through selfless acts of service to society.

The conviction that we belong to one human family {*Vasudhaiva Kuttumbakam*} is at the heart of the Bahá'í Faith. The principle of the oneness of humankind is *"the pivot round which all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh revolve"*.

Bahá'ís believe religion is the driving force of the civilizing process and the primary agent of human development. It has the power both to nurture moral character and profoundly influence social relationships. Bahá'u'lláh says, *"the fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interest and promote the unity of the human race and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men."*

Some of the basic teachings of the Bahá'í Faith are:

- Oneness of Mankind, Religion and God
- Independent Investigation of Truth
- Equality of Men and Women
- Harmony of Science and Religion
- Elimination of Prejudice of all kinds
- Universal compulsory Education
- Abolition of the Extremes of Wealth and Poverty
- Establishment of a world commonwealth of nations

The Bahá'ís of India, like their counterparts in more than 185 countries and over 50 independent territories, are engaged with the government agencies and organizations of civil society in a series of social discourses on themes that include the equality of women and men, empowerment of youth, the role of religion in building an inclusive society and communal harmony. In collaboration with the like-minded organizations, the Bahá'ís are learning to address the grave challenges facing present day society such as the prevalence of caste and class prejudice, gender inequality, illiteracy, lack of education, violence against women and children, extremes of wealth and poverty, corruption and moral degradation.

The Bahá'ís of India are actively engaged in seeking the betterment of society through the processes of individual and social transformation. Along with men, women, children and youth from every walk of life, they are engaged in a collective learning enterprise. The guidance and resources for all these activities are channelled through Bahá'í governing councils at the local, regional and national levels. In the Bahá'í writings any work done in a spirit of service is also seen as an act of worship.

Bahá'ís carry out acts of collective worship in diverse settings, uniting with each other in prayer, awakening spiritual susceptibilities, and shaping a pattern of life distinguished for its inherent spiritual nature. The Bahá'í House of Worship - Lotus Temple, in New Delhi and its influence in its surrounding neighbourhoods is a living testimony. It stands as another testimony to the efforts of the Bahá'ís of India towards the promotion of unity in diversity.

Members of the Bahá'í Faith, along with an ever growing circle of friends, are learning how to effect a dual process of individual and societal transformation through acts of service and collective worship.

"So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth." - Bahá'u'lláh

"The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established." - Bahá'í Writings

"The Bahá'í Faith is a solace to humankind" - Mahatma Gandhi