

# **Unity in Diversity**

**Freedom Employability Academy**



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# Introduction

All of us wish to live in a prosperous and peaceful society. To build that kind of society, we first need to build unity in our homes and in our communities. Building unity is not easy, however. It is something we have to learn about. It requires constant effort and practice.

The lessons in this workbook will help you learn about how you can build greater unity in your family, community, and even society. You will study the lessons of the workbook with your classmates in different ways, sometimes in pairs and small groups, and sometimes all together. Your teacher will guide you and your classmates through the lessons.

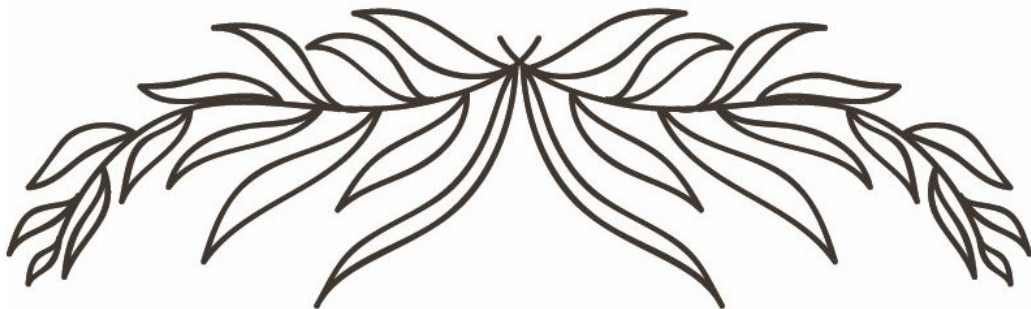
In the lessons, you will be asked to read, discuss, and experience new ideas together. You will often be asked to write down the answers to specific questions and exercises in a notebook. Sometimes you will have chances to use arts and perform skits that will deepen your understanding. And you will have chances to carry out acts of service outside of class and then reflect on your service with your classmates. In this way, you will learn in action together.

During this entire process, the hope is that you will humbly learn from and support each other. It is also hoped that you will experience great joy. After all, what greater joy can there be than to help bring unity and peace, happiness, and well-being to those around us?



## **Unit I**

### The Nature of a Human Being



## **Purpose**

1. To reflect on the nature of a human being.
2. To understand how we might best see and treat people according to their inward intellectual, moral, and spiritual characteristics rather than their outward physical and material characteristics.

## Lesson 1: What is a human being? Who am I?

Exercise #1: *Reflect on the following two questions.*

1. Do you think of yourself as a good person? Why? Please explain your answer.

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2. Do you think people in society are good or not? Please reflect on this question and discuss your answer with the class. Write some key ideas from your discussion in the space below.

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Exercise #2: *Read and discuss the following statement about human nature.*

**"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."<sup>[1]</sup>**

Exercise #3: *Now, please discuss the following questions with your class.*

1. What does the first sentence tell us about the nature of a human being?

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2. What are some of the gems you have within yourself?

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3. What does the second sentence tell us can help reveal the treasures in a person?

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*Please read the following story from Africa and reflect on the questions below.*<sup>[2]</sup>

There once was an eagle's nest on a mountain. The nest had three eagle eggs. An earthquake struck, and one of the eggs rolled out of the nest into a chicken farm in the valley below.



Chickens found the egg, took care of it, and kept it warm until it hatched. A beautiful eagle came out of the egg.



Raised among chickens, the eagle believed he was a chicken. He copied their behavior and never realized his true nature. One day, he looked up and saw great animals soaring in the sky. Curious, he asked a chicken about them. The chicken replied that those animals were eagles.

The eagle dreamed of soaring in the sky just like the great birds above. However, the chickens laughed at his dreams and told him that chickens could never fly so high. So, he returned to his chicken life, eating worms, and never understanding his full potential. As time passed, he forgot about his dreams. In the end, after a lifetime of thinking he was a chicken, he died without discovering the grand life he could have lived as an eagle.

1. How are you like the eagle in the story?

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2. Do we sometimes act like chickens and forget that we are eagles? Explain your answer.

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Exercise #2: Please draw your understanding of the statement below. Share your drawing with the class, and use it explain how we might understand the nature of a human being.

**"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."**<sup>[1]</sup>

### Keeping a "Gems" Journal

We want to develop the habit of identifying gems in each and every person we meet. We can develop this habit by regularly searching for gems in different people and reflecting on what we find.

To help us develop this habit, we will keep a "gems" journal. For each journal entry, you will want to meet someone and have a conversation with them. Before the conversation, you may wish to personally reflect on the statement:

***"Regard man as a mine rich in gems of inestimable value. Education can, alone, cause it to reveal its treasures, and enable mankind to benefit therefrom."***<sup>[1]</sup>

After the conversation is finished, you will want to write down four things in your entry: (1) the date you met the person; (2) the name of the person; (3) the gems you found in the person; (4) how finding the gems might make you see and act differently towards the person.

An example of what you can write is given below:

*Date: 06-10-2024*

*Name of the person: My neighbor Armaan.*

*Gems: While talking with Armaan, I saw gems of loyalty, dedication, hard work, and, enthusiasm.*

*How I now see and act towards them: I do not usually talk to Armaan because of our different backgrounds. However, after talking with him, I now see many more similarities than differences. I learned we both love to read. I hope to share books with him. I am eager to interact with him more.*

For your first journal entry, you may wish to have a conversation with someone you already know and are friendly with. For later journal entries, try and connect with people you do not know well or who may be quite different from you.

For the next several class sessions, your teacher will ask you and your classmates to share your journal entries. Sharing and reflecting on these entries as a class will help us learn more about how to identify gems in everyone we meet. As such, please write a new journal entry each day and be ready to share it with the class.



## Lesson 2: What is a human being? The view of biology

*Please read the following passage from the National Museum of Natural History at the world-famous Smithsonian Institution:<sup>[3]</sup>*

The billions of human beings living today all belong to one species: Homo sapiens.

As in all species, there are differences among individual human beings, from size and shape to skin tone and eye color. But we are much more alike than we are different. We are, in fact, remarkably similar. The DNA of all human beings living today is 99.9% alike.

We all have roots extending back 300,000 years to the emergence of the first modern humans in Africa, and back more than 6 million years to the evolution of the earliest human species in Africa. This amazing story of adaptation and survival is written in the language of our genes, in every cell of our bodies—as well as in fossil and behavioral evidence.

This ancient heritage is yours.

*Now, please watch the following short 4-minute video:*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHIBYTBe\\_hc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yHIBYTBe_hc)



Exercise: *Please answer the following questions.*

1. According to the video, how different are human beings from each other biologically?

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2. What are some of the many ways in which human beings are similar to one another?

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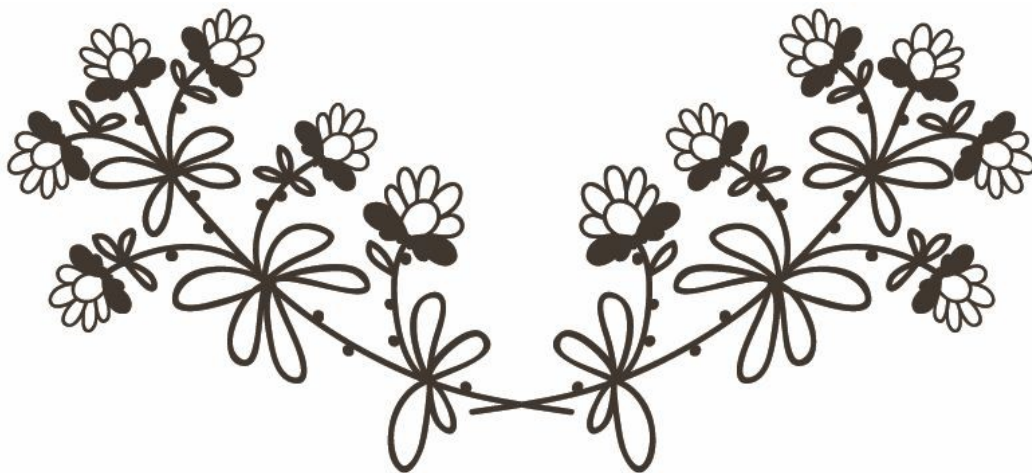
3. How might the awareness that we are all one human species affect our relationships with those around us?

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### Lesson 3: What is a human being? The view of spirituality

*Please read and reflect upon the following passage.*

Many spiritual traditions say that human beings reflect intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities that come from a Divine Source. For example:

- In the Old Testament, we read: *“Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.”*<sup>141</sup>
- In the Gita, we read: *“Wherever you find strength, or beauty, or spiritual power, you may be sure that these have sprung from a spark of My essence.”*<sup>151</sup>
- In a Hadith, we read: *“Man is My mystery, and I am his mystery.”*<sup>161</sup>

The above quotations imply that the core identity of humans is not physical or material. Rather, the core identity of human beings is intellectual, moral, and spiritual.

In other words, human beings have the ability to show special qualities. These include intellectual qualities such as knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. These also include moral and spiritual qualities such as kindness, love, justice, and patience.

When we see ourselves as intellectual, moral, and spiritual beings first, we become more confident in our ability to transform ourselves and help others. When we see other people in the same way, we can see their true value as human beings.



Exercise #1: *Based on the passage above, circle the qualities you think reflect the true nature of a human being.*

kindness	thoughtfulness
generosity	jealousy
greed	thankfulness
helpfulness	outer beauty
extreme competitiveness	inner beauty
service to others	physical strength
anger	spiritual strength
justice	hate
unity	fear
patience	sadness
hopelessness	intelligence
caring	scientific thinking
envy	striving for excellence

Exercise #2: *Based on what we have read and discussed in the unit so far, how would you describe the true nature of a human being?*

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Exercise #3: “The Legend of the Two Wolves”

Up until now, we have discussed how we all have priceless gems hidden inside ourselves. Despite this, we all sometimes show negative qualities in our daily lives. Why?

To help us reflect on this question, please watch the video below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95\\_BTeanI8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x95_BTeanI8)

*After watching the story, please write down your responses to the following questions:*

1. Describe the two wolves in your own words. Which one of them represents the true or higher nature of a human being?

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2. What does the grandfather mean when he says the wolf you feed will win?

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## Lesson 4: What is dehumanization?

*Read the below paragraphs together as a class:*

We “*de-human-ize*” other people when we see and treat them according to their outward, physical and material characteristics. When we dehumanize other people, we do not treat them as real human beings.

Unfortunately, it is easy to dehumanize others. For example, we may give too much importance to a person’s good looks, material wealth, or job title. Rather than emphasizing a person’s outward characteristics, we can instead put greater emphasis on a person’s consciousness, reason, intellectual powers, moral and spiritual qualities.<sup>[7]</sup>

Exercise #1: *Please read and respond to the questions below.*

1. What does it mean to dehumanize someone?

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2. How do you feel when someone puts too much importance on your physical and material characteristics rather than your intellectual, moral, and spiritual characteristics?

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3. Give examples of dehumanization in human history or in society today.

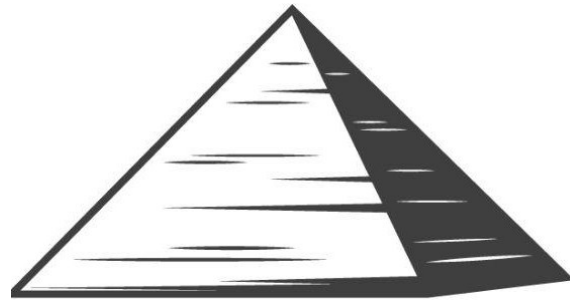
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## Lesson 5: A human being is more than a physical being—the story of the sphinx

The sphinx is an ancient symbol of Egyptian culture that can help us think about the true nature of a human being.<sup>181</sup> The sphinx has the body of an animal and the face of a human being. The human face means that the human being historically came out of nature. The human face also means that, compared to the rest of nature, a human being is characterized by consciousness, reason, and spirit. The most important aspects of a human being are **universal qualities** such as kindness, honesty, patience, caring, and friendship – all of which come from the mind and heart of a person. Unfortunately, we often dehumanize one another rather than treating each other as beings with this beautiful “human face.”



### Exercise #1:

1. Based on the passage above, how would you explain the body and face of the sphinx?

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2. The passage above states that kindness, honesty, patience, caring, and friendship are universal qualities possessed by human beings. Please list at least five more.

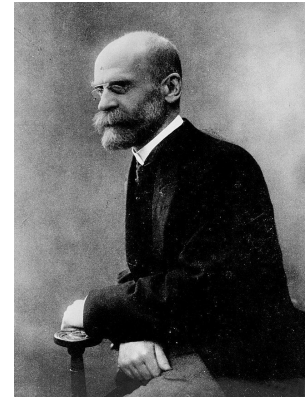
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## Lesson 6: Group identity affects how we treat others

A famous sociologist, Emile Durkheim, pointed out that human beings identify themselves by the group to which they belong.<sup>191</sup> They create a boundary around their own group and treat the people who are inside their group differently from the people who are outside their group. People outside their group become strangers, objects, and even enemies. People of one group may even believe that excluding, fighting, and dominating people in another group is a heroic thing to do.



Exercise: *Please answer the following questions.*

1. What problems might arise when we see people as being part of other groups? Can you give some examples?

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2. Do you think we should treat people from the same caste differently than we treat people from another caste? The same ethnicity? The same social class?

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3. Do you think it is possible to extend the boundaries we have created between groups to include others? If we limit our boundaries, what might that say about how we view others and ourselves?

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**Practice:** After class, have a conversation with someone who is of a different social class, caste, or religious group. The person could be from work, a fellow classmate, a neighbor, or someone else. After your conversation, write down what you spoke about and how you felt.

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## Lesson 7: Dehumanization, oppression, and prejudice

Human history is full of **dehumanization**, **oppression**, and **prejudice**, each of which occurs when we mainly think of human beings as physical, material, and **biological** objects.<sup>1101</sup> Unfortunately many types of dehumanization still exist today.

For example, the caste system reduces humans to the level of their natural and **biological** characteristics. A human being's rights, value, and opportunities are defined according to which family they were born into.

**Racism** is another form of **dehumanization**. **Racism** reduces the value, identity, and social rights of a human being to the color of that person's skin. **Racism** can occur when a human being is viewed only in terms of their **biological** and physical **characteristics**.

**Patriarchy**, a system in which men dominate women, is another form of **dehumanization**. In patriarchy, the value, worth, and the rights of human beings are determined by their gender.

An extreme form of **dehumanization** is **slavery**. **Slavery** is reducing a human being to the level of an object. The human being is treated as someone else's object without his or her agreement.

Exercise: Please fill out the following sentences based on the paragraphs above.

1. In the caste system, human rights, values, and opportunities are defined according to

\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Racism reduces the value, identity, and social rights of a human being to

\_\_\_\_\_.

3. In the culture of patriarchy, the value, worth, and rights of human beings are determined by

\_\_\_\_\_.

4. In slavery, a human being is treated as \_\_\_\_\_.

## Lesson 8: What dehumanization means for our lives

Let us summarize what we have read and discussed so far. We have read that history and society have had many instances of *dehumanization*. The reason for this is that we have identified ourselves and others by our outward characteristics and not by our inward characteristics. Based on outward characteristics such as caste, race, and gender, we have sometimes formed social groups that actively exclude others.

Exercise #1: *Please read and reflect on the following two questions.*

1. How might you limit yourself if you define yourself mainly by your outward traits such as beauty, weight, height, race, caste, social class, or job title?

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2. How might we limit our healthy relationships with others if we define them mainly by their outward characteristics?

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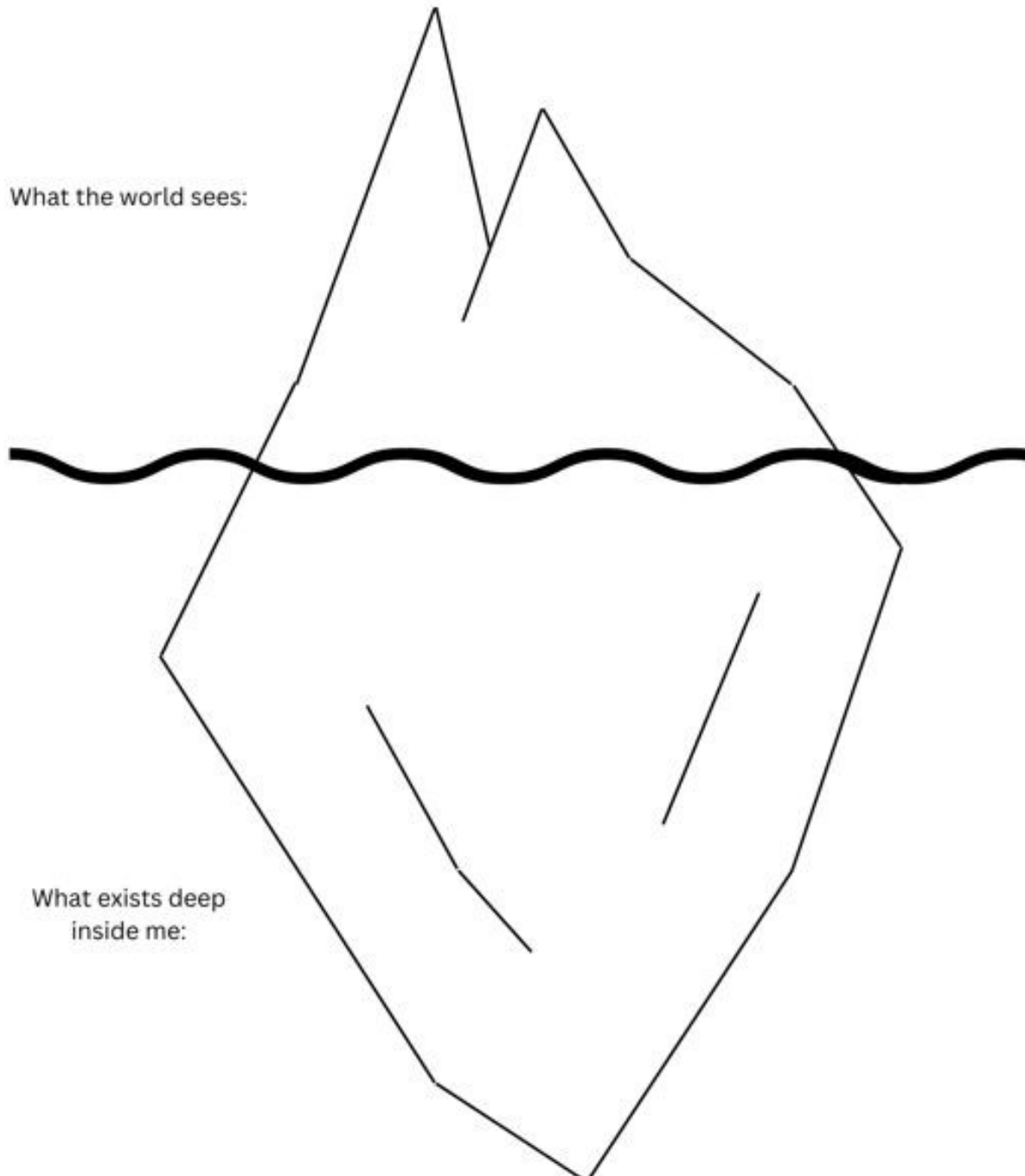
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Exercise #2: Please complete the following “Iceberg” activity.

Imagine you are an iceberg. Above the waterline is what the world sees. In that part, write what most of the world sees when they look at you (for example, your favorite food, your eye color, etc.). Below the waterline is what the world does not easily see. In that part, write the qualities and characteristics you see inside yourself.



Exercise #3: Please reflect and write about the following questions.

a) What is a healthy relationship you have had with a classmate or co-worker? What has made your relationship with that person healthy and why have you held that person close to you?

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b) Why do you think it is important to build relationships with people based on inward characteristics such as kindness, friendship, truthfulness, and patience?

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## Lesson 9: Unity and diversity

Consider the flowers of a garden. Though they are different in color, form and shape, they are refreshed by the same rain and receive power from the same sun. The diversity of the flowers increases their charm and adds to their beauty. It would be boring if all the flowers, plants, and trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Differences in color, form and shape beautify the garden and increase its attractive effect. In the same way, when different thoughts, personalities, and characters are brought together in unity, the beauty and glory of human perfection can show itself.<sup>[1]</sup>



Exercise #1: *Discuss the following three questions with the person next to you.*

1. Is unity the same thing as uniformity (where everything is the same)? Why or why not?

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2. How would you feel if everyone was exactly the same as you?

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3. Can you think of one or two other examples of unity in diversity in nature or society? How does unity depend on diversity? How does diversity depend on unity?

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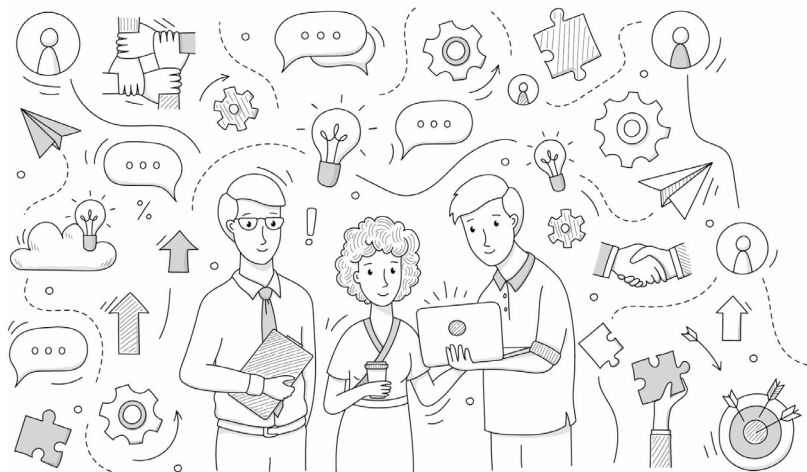
Exercise #2: Discuss your feelings about the following short passage with the class.

“Diversity makes India distinctive from other places in the world. A land without diversity would be like a house without people, boring and predictable.”<sup>[12]</sup>



Exercise #3: Read and discuss the meaning of the following statement with the class.

“To create an environment of unity, we need to learn how to bring together different talents, opinions, styles, and perspectives. Where there is disagreement, we must find complementarity. When there is opposition at one level, we must find cooperation at a higher level.”<sup>[13]</sup>



## Unit 1 Review: The Nature of a Human Being

### Goals for Unit 1

- a) To reflect on the nature of a human being.
- b) To understand how we might best see and treat people according to their inward intellectual, moral, and spiritual characteristics rather than their outward physical and material characteristics.

Questions: Please answer the questions below.

1. Fill in the blanks for the quote and answer the question below.

**"Regard man as a \_\_\_\_\_ rich in \_\_\_\_\_ of inestimable \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ can, alone, cause it to reveal its \_\_\_\_\_, and enable mankind to \_\_\_\_\_ therefrom."**

What is the meaning of the quote above? \_\_\_\_\_

2. What is a human being?

a) View of biology: \_\_\_\_\_

b) View of spirituality: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What are some of the positive, universal qualities that potentially exist in every human being?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is dehumanization? What are some examples of dehumanization?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How does the act of dehumanizing others hurt our lives? Why is it harmful for society?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why is unity necessary for diversity and why is diversity necessary for unity?

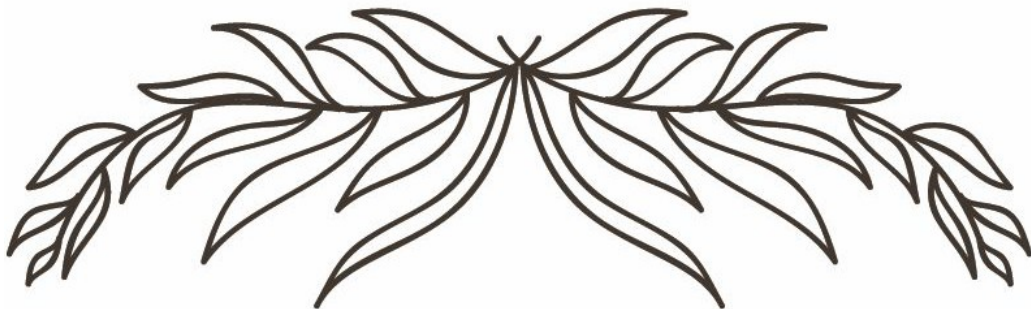
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## Unit 2

### Unity in Our Community





## **Purpose**

1. To explore which qualities, attitudes, behaviors, and skills help a community build unity.
2. To explore which qualities, attitudes, and behaviors prevent a community from building unity.
3. To continually develop the wide range of qualities, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as practice the skills, that contribute to unity in the community.

## Lesson 1: Unity of Purpose, Vision, and Action

*Your teacher will ask you to take turns reading the following text out loud in class. You will then be asked to discuss the questions as a group.*

We are fortunate to be part of several communities:

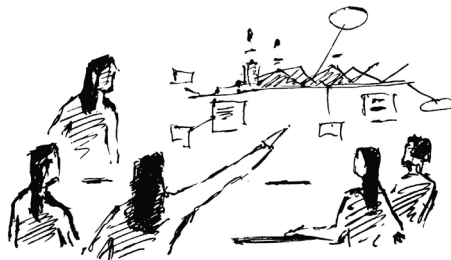
- At FEA, we have a diverse community of classmates and teachers.
- In our personal lives, we interact with friends, family and neighbors.
- At school or in our work, we collaborate with classmates, colleagues, and clients.

To build and maintain a thriving community, its members must become more and more united in their purpose, vision and action. Let's discuss these three aspects of unity:

- a. **Unity of purpose:** When the goals of individuals are in alignment with the goals of the whole community.



- b. **Unity of vision:** When the members of the community have a common idea of how to work for the betterment of the community.



- c. **Unity of action:** When individuals have both unity of purpose and unity of vision, and then work together for the betterment of the community.



We will explore the idea of unity in our community in much greater depth in the lessons below. Before we turn to those lessons, however, please discuss the following questions with your teacher. In discussing the questions, remember what we learned before: that unity does not mean uniformity but rather unity based on diversity.

1. What does **unity of purpose** look like for our FEA community? Can you give an example?

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2. What does **unity of vision** look like for our FEA community? Can you give an example?

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3. What does **unity of action** look like for our FEA community? Can you give an example?

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**Class Activity:** To live and work together with others effectively, we will need to create and harmonize unity of purpose, vision, and action. In this activity, we will look at two examples of members of a group trying to achieve unity.

**Example 1 (Work):** Coworkers in a company are trying to decide how to allocate time on a project together. Each coworker has different goals. Coworker #1 feels overworked and wants to work less hard; coworker #2 is energetic and excited about working on a new project; coworker #3 is new to the company and needs help; coworker #4 plans to go on maternity leave.

1) How might the different goals of each coworker conflict or disagree?

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2) How might the coworkers address the differences in their goals and achieve unity of purpose?

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**Example 2 (Family):** Imagine that the members of a family are trying to decide how to divide up household responsibilities.

1) Before they talk to each other, what are some different goals that each family member might have in this situation?

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2) How might the different goals of each family member conflict or disagree?

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3) How might the family members address the differences in their goals and achieve unity of purpose?

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## Lesson 2: Kindness, love, and respect

Ideally, we want to show kindness, love, respect to everyone in our community. This kindness, love, and respect should not be temporary and superficial. Instead, our kindness, love, and respect should be deep, sincere and lasting, extended to every human being without exception.

Let us explore kindness, love, and respect further below.

First, please read the following quotation about kindness and love:

**“Do not be content with showing friendship in words alone. Let your heart burn with loving kindness for all who may cross your path.”<sup>[14]</sup>**

Discuss: What does it mean to show friendship in words alone? What should we do instead?

Discuss: A candle shines light in all directions. A fire gives heat in all directions. With that in mind, what condition does our heart need to have to show love and kindness to every single person that we meet?

Next, read this passage about respect, adapted from the Native American Code of Ethics:<sup>[15]</sup>

- Respect means to feel or show honor for someone or something and to treat someone or something with courtesy.
- Treat every person from the tiniest child to the oldest elder with respect at all times.
- Touch nothing that belongs to someone else without permission.
- Listen with courtesy to what others say, even if you feel that what they are saying is worthless. Listen with your heart.
- No person should be made to feel “put down” by you; avoid hurting other hearts as you would avoid a deadly poison.
- Show deep respect for the beliefs and religion of others.
- Treat the earth as your mother. Show deep respect for the mineral world, the plant world, and the animal world. Do nothing to pollute our Mother, rise up with wisdom to defend her.
- Showing respect is a basic law of life.

**Discuss:** Is respect just about our words and gestures? What else is required to show real respect to each other?

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Now, please watch and reflect on the video called “Fresh Eyes” (the lyrics are below):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bgemCaaOkU>

<p>I got these fresh eyes, never seen you before like this My God, you're beautiful It's like the first time when we opened the door Before we got used to usual</p> <p>It might seem superficial Stereotypical, man You dress up just a little and I'm like, "Oh, damn"</p> <p>[Chorus]: So suddenly, I'm in love with a stranger I can't believe that she's mine Now all I see is you with fresh eyes, fresh eyes</p> <p>Appreciation, well, it comes and it goes But I, I'll ride that wave with you</p>	<p>It's human nature to miss what's under your nose 'Til you, 'til you remind a fool</p> <p>Maybe all of this is simple My heart's unconditional, yeah You dress up just a little and I'm like, "Oh, damn"</p> <p>[Repeat Chorus]</p> <p>If I could bottle this up, bottle, bottle this up, I would I would bottle this up, bottle, bottle this up, I would 'Cause you're gorgeous in this moment If I could bottle this up, I would</p> <p>[Repeat Chorus]</p>
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Exercise: What does the video have to do with love, kindness, and respect? Why is it inspirational? Write a few sentences to express your thoughts and share them with the group.

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Act of Service: We are learning that it is important to try and show kindness, love, and respect in all our interactions and with everyone. Knowing that these qualities are important is a first step. But we also need to practice kindness, love and respect so that more and more they become part of who we are and how we behave. To help each other practice kindness, love, and respect, let's engage in the following activity:

*Choose one act of service that you would like to practice before the next class. Some examples of acts of service include:*

- *Listening to and empathizing with someone who is experiencing challenges*
- *Helping a classmate or coworker finish a task*
- *Helping your family members with chores*
- *Sharing what you learned in today's lesson with a friend*

*When you practice the act of service, think about the spirit in which you would like to do it. For example, you may think about letting "your heart burn with loving-kindness."*

*Please share your experience with the class the next time. You can share what act of service you picked, the spirit with which you did it, and the effect it had on you and those around you.*





## Keeping an “Acts of Service” Journal

We can increase our ability to show kindness, love, and respect by regularly carrying out acts of service and reflecting on them.

To help each other develop this habit, please keep a journal. In the journal, write down the date, the act of service for the day, the spirit in which you carried out the act of service, the effect the act of service had on you, and the effect the act of service had on others.

An example of what you can write is given below:

*Date: 11-12-2023*

*Action: I helped my younger sister with her math homework.*

*Spirit: While helping her, I tried to practice patience and caring.*

*Effect on me: It gave me a lot of joy to help my sister with her homework. I can see she has a lot of capacity.*

*Effect on others: She learned more math today. Helping her is making us feel closer to each other.*

Each day, the teacher will ask some students to share their journal entries. Sharing and reflecting on these entries as a class, will help everyone learn more about how to better express kindness, love, and respect in our everyday lives. As such, please keep writing new journal entries and be ready to share each day.

### Lesson 3: Unity: Avoiding and Dealing with Conflict (Part 1)

*Your teacher will ask you to take turns reading the following text out loud in class. You will then be asked to discuss the questions as a group.*

- Conflict between community members leads to pain and separation.
- For communities to become truly united, we must try to avoid conflict.
- To do that, it is important to realize that conflict can take many forms. These include:
  - **Strife:** angrily disagreeing with others over fundamental issues
  - **Hostility:** being actively unfriendly towards or opposing others
  - **Estrangement:** no longer being friendly to others
  - **Apathy:** not caring about others

Avoiding conflict does not mean that we cannot have different ideas and opinions. We can have different ideas and opinions, learn from each other, and come to a greater understanding together. Avoiding conflict means avoiding personal conflict or *conflict between hearts*.



Please discuss the following two questions:

1. What happens to a community when two or more members have a personal conflict?

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2. Why are estrangement and apathy especially harmful?

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Now, please read the following two quotations:

**“Thoughts of war bring destruction to all harmony, well-being, restfulness, and content.”<sup>[16]</sup>**

**“Thoughts of love are constructive of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and happiness.”<sup>[17]</sup>**



3. What are some examples of “thoughts of war” from our own lives? What about “thoughts of love”?

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Small group activity (3-4 persons): Please take turns reading the following passage about a conflict between leaders and members of a community about where to build a new market.

In the city of Rajkot, two community leaders, Poorvi and Nikhil, are having a discussion with five volunteers about where to build a new healthy foods market. The current plan is to build the market near the southeastern part of Rajkot. The community leaders planned on this location because it was closer to the homes of the most regular and high paying customers. The increase in sales could provide many economic benefits to Rajkot.

During the discussion, the five volunteers express that this plan makes it very difficult for the majority of residents to access the market because it is very far away from where they live and there are no nearby bus stops. In the city, few people are able to regularly travel long distances for healthy food and many rely on public transportation like buses to go from place to place. The volunteers suggest that the new market instead be built near the middle of the city where it could be reached by walking or bus.

As the conversation continues, the community leaders and volunteers begin to get frustrated with one another and begin to look down on each others' suggestions. Tensions begin to rise and it is unclear whether they can come to an agreement about where to build the market. Hostility begins to overwhelm the conversation.



*How would you and your group answer the below questions?*

1. What is the main issue that the community members are discussing?

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2. Who are the people involved in the story?

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3. Where do the community leaders want to build the market and what is their reasoning?

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4. Where do the volunteers want to build the market and what is their reasoning?

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5. Can you give examples of how kindness, love, and respect might be brought into the conversation by one or more of the community leaders or volunteers? Could these qualities change the direction of the conversation?

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6. Now perform a role play with 3-4 classmates. In the role play, act out the discussion about where to build the market, but this time have one or two actors show positive qualities that might help the group come to a harmonious decision.

## Lesson 4: Unity: Avoiding and Dealing with Conflict (Part 2)

Please discuss this question with a partner: In your daily life, how do you typically deal with conflict? *(please think of some concrete actions and write them down)*

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In the previous lesson, we looked at some of the different types of conflict that we should try to avoid. The following three quotations will help us further reflect on the qualities, attitudes, and behaviors we need to practice to deal with conflict and build unity in our communities.

**“...concentrate all the thoughts of your heart on love and unity. When a thought of war comes, oppose it by a stronger thought of peace. A thought of hatred must be destroyed by a more powerful thought of love.”<sup>[18]</sup>**

**“If with a pure mind a person speaks or acts, happiness follows him like his never-departing shadow.”<sup>[19]</sup>**

**“Backbiting quench(es) the light of the heart and extinguish(es) the life of the soul.”<sup>[20]</sup>**

Discuss with the class: *How do the above three quotations help us to deal with conflict and build unity? Write insights from your discussion below.*

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3. Small group activity (3-4 persons): *The following conversation is about two individuals having a disagreement at work. Please take turns reading the conversation in a small group.*

Priti and Ahmed work at a local technology company in Bengaluru. Their supervisor asks them to create a presentation and share it in two weeks. Priti and Ahmed decide to meet and start working on the presentation.

In their first meeting, it quickly becomes clear that Priti and Ahmed have different approaches for creating presentations. Priti starts by saying: "I think it is very important for the presentation to provide detailed information. We should speak to the audience for at least 30 minutes." Ahmed responds to her idea somewhat abruptly, "That is a bad idea! We should only share a few major details and present many images instead. The presentation should only last 10 minutes. Otherwise the audience will quickly become bored, and we will hurt our reputations."

Neither Priti nor Ahmed are willing to change their opinions. After going back and forth for nearly one hour, they both leave the first meeting feeling frustrated. Later that day, Ahmed tells a close colleague how much he dislikes Priti's ideas and how he wishes his supervisor would let Ahmed do the presentation on his own. Priti also talks to a coworker, saying that Ahmed is being unreasonable.

Priti and Ahmed continue to meet several times during the week but are unable to overcome their disunity. They continue to complain about each other to their colleagues. The more they complain, the more they don't want to meet each other and the more the work on the presentation suffers. By the end of the week, Priti and Ahmed notice that some of their more friendly colleagues start avoiding them.



*Now discuss and answer the following four questions in your small group:*

1. Is either Priti or Ahmed necessarily right about how to create the presentation?

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2. How could Priti and Ahmed have acted differently in their first meeting? After the meeting?

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3. How could the coworkers have avoided engaging in backbiting about Priti and Ahmed?

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4. Priti and Ahmed still have one week to resolve their differences. What can they do to build unity and make sure they get their presentation done on time? What can they do to restore their coworkers' trust in them?

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## Lesson 5: Unity: Avoiding and Dealing with Conflict (Part 3)

Please reflect on the following quotations with your class:

**“Whenever you recognize the fault of another, think of yourself! What are my imperfections? -- and try to remove them...Thus you will grow, become more perfect.”<sup>[21]</sup>**

**“Easily seen is the fault of others, but one’s own fault is difficult to see.”<sup>[22]</sup>**

**“One must see in every human being only that which is worthy of praise. When this is done, one can be a friend to the whole human race.”<sup>[23]</sup>**

Please discuss the below questions with a partner. Then share your observations with the class.

1. The above quotations suggest that it is not helpful to focus on other people’s faults. What might we focus on instead if we want to build unity with others?

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2. What are some types of conflict that you face when you are interacting with family and friends? What might you be able to do to deal with these types of conflicts?

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3. What are some types of conflict that you may face in the workplace? What might you be able to do to deal with these conflicts?

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4. Matching Activity (do this with one other classmate): Conflict occurs in our daily lives. Please read the list of conflicts in the first column below. For each conflict, find an appropriate resolution in the second column.

Conflicts	Resolutions
<p>Your friends are arguing with one another and you are stuck in the middle hearing them backbite about one another.</p>	<p>Instead of staying upset with the family member, you approach them after dinner and tell them how the comment made you feel. You forgive them because you know their intention was not bad and because you value your family's unity.</p>
<p>Your boss has accidently made a mistake with your monthly paycheck. You get angry because you are not sure they will pay you what they owe you.</p>	<p>When you arrive at work, you decide to approach your colleague with kindness and ask if everything is alright. Then you ask if they would like to ride the bus together on another day.</p>
<p>Your brother agreed to wash the dishes after family dinner but after the meal walked away without helping. You become very unhappy with him.</p>	<p>You ask your friends to come together to have a discussion about what they are arguing about and discuss ways to forgive each other and heal.</p>
<p>At dinner one evening, your family is having a discussion and someone makes a comment that you find personally hurtful. You become very hurt and decide to ignore that person for the rest of the evening.</p>	<p>After dinner, as your brother is walking away, you kindly remind him that he promised he would do the dishes. Out of love, you offer a helping hand too.</p>
<p>You ask one of your co-workers if they want to ride the bus with you on the way to work tomorrow. The next morning, your co-worker does not show up. You ride the bus alone to work and become upset.</p>	<p>You meet with your boss to have a conversation about the error. With kindness and respect you ask about the mistake and how it could be fixed.</p>

## Lesson 6: The Relationship between Unity and Truth

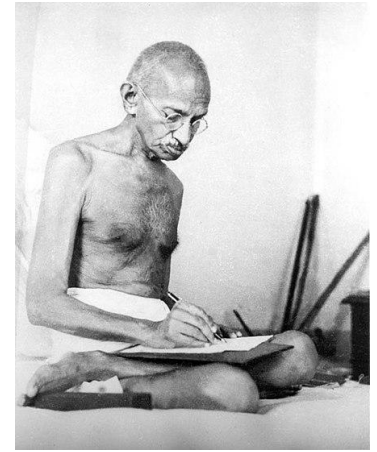
*Please read the following text out loud as a class and discuss the questions below.*

To achieve unity, we have to be full of truth. Truthfulness in our thoughts, words, actions, and relationships is essential for the unity of our communities.

To help us see why truthfulness is important, read the following words from Mahatma Gandhi:

**“...for me, truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also...”**

**...The seeker after truth should be humbler than the dust... the seeker after truth should so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of truth.”<sup>[24]</sup>**



Gandhi says that he is searching for the truth. Even after a great deal of effort, he only catches a glimpse of it. He also says that any person who is seeking the truth must be humbler than the dust.

### Exercises:

1. In everyday situations, do we ever completely know the truth? Why not?

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2. What kind of qualities should a seeker of truth possess?

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Now, please read the below passage about unity and truth from a book called *Arising to Serve*:

*We must be lovers of light no matter from what lamp it appears. We must be lovers of the rose no matter in what garden it blooms. We must be seekers of truth no matter from what source it comes. Attachment to one lamp can prevent us from appreciating the light when it shines in another... We must abandon prejudice and **outmoded** traditions if we are to succeed in finding the truth. There is a difference between **dogma**, **superstition**, and prejudice on the one hand and truth on the other.*

*In seeking the truth, we must free ourselves of all our opinions and **preconceived ideas**. We must give up our prejudices and **trivial notions**. An open **receptive** mind is needed. If our cup is full of self, there is no room in it for the water of life. The fact that we think we are right and everyone else wrong is the greatest **obstacle** in the path to unity. And unity is necessary if we are to reach the truth, for truth is one.<sup>[25]</sup>*



Exercises:

1. Can you describe the above image of the lamp and the light in your own words? What does the image have to do with seeking truth? What does the image of the lamp and the light have to do with prejudice and superstition?

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2. According to the above passage, what do we need to do when seeking the truth? Can you give some examples?

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3. What is the relationship between truth and unity? How does each lead to the other?

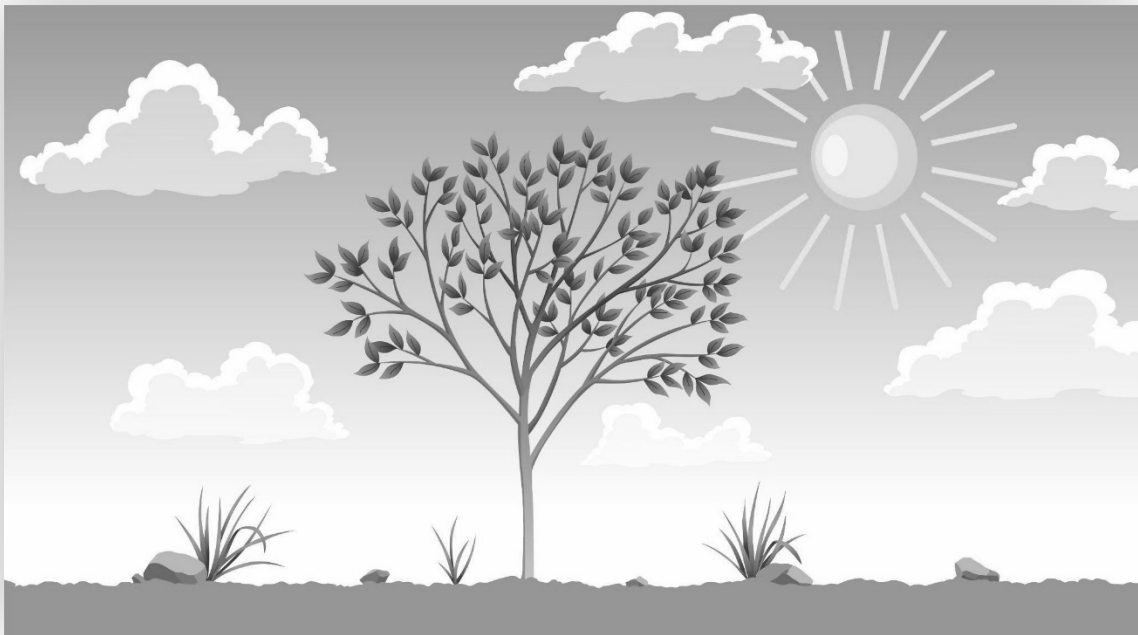
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## Lesson 7: Unity is a Cause of Strength

*Please read the following story from Aesop on your own.*<sup>[26]</sup>

A certain Father had a family of Sons, who were forever arguing among themselves. No words he could say did the least good, so he looked for an example that would make them see that conflict would lead them to misfortune.

One day when the arguing had been much more violent than usual, he asked one of them to bring him a bundle of sticks. Then handing the bundle to each of his Sons in turn he told them to try to break it. But although each one tried his best, none was able to do so.

The Father then separated the bundle and gave the sticks to his Sons to break one by one. This they did very easily.

“My Sons,” said the Father, “do you not see how certain it is that if you agree with each other and help each other, it will be impossible for your enemies to injure you? But if you are divided among yourselves, you will be no stronger than a single stick in that bundle.”

### **Exercises: Discuss the following three questions with a partner.**

1. What is the main lesson of the story?

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2. Please share an example of where unity led to greater strength in your family.

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3. What would society be like if it were united? How would it benefit the individual? Please explain your thoughts.

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The previous story and discussion can give us added confidence that individuals can achieve much more when they work shoulder to shoulder with others. To build better communities and societies then, it is clear that we need to learn to work together.

*Class Discussion: What would you say to someone that said the following statement: “Our community will never overcome its obstacles. There are too many problems. Unity is impossible.”*

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It is important to realize that we do not “achieve” unity once-and-for-all. Rather, we have to constantly work together to reach higher and higher levels of unity, especially as circumstances change.

*Class Discussion: What would you say to someone that said this: “If only we could get everyone to agree on the right way to do things once-and-for-all, we could make great progress.”*

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Now, read the following statement from Baha'u'llah about the purpose of a human being:

**“That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicate(s) himself to the service of the entire human race.”<sup>[27]</sup>**

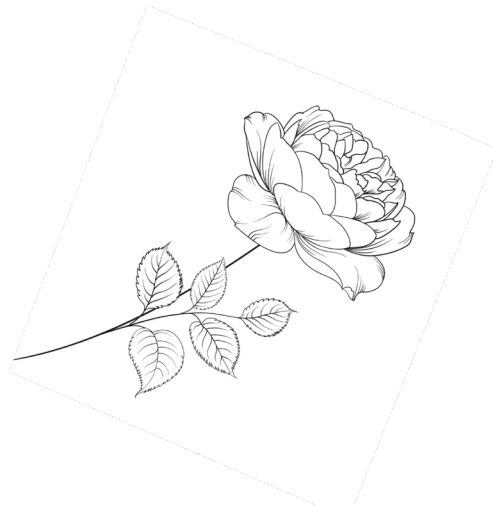
Please complete the exercises below with a partner and discuss your answers with the class.

Exercise #1: From each pair of descriptions of a person below, which one do you think best describes a true human being?

- Someone who focuses on their own needs before they are willing to help others \_\_\_\_\_
- Someone who thinks of others' needs before their own \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Someone who is kind and patient when other people act poorly \_\_\_\_\_
- Someone who waits for others to be kind before he will be kind to them \_\_\_\_\_
  
- Someone who does service occasionally when he or she has time \_\_\_\_\_
- Someone who integrates service for others into their daily life, study, and work \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise #2: Would you label the following statements **true or false**?

- A true human being wants to control others. \_\_\_\_\_
- Caring about everyone, no matter who they are, is what makes us human. \_\_\_\_\_
- Human society should be a place where striving for excellence in the service of others is more important than competition. \_\_\_\_\_





## Lesson 8: Consultation

*Read the below text together as a class. Then discuss the questions together.*

In order to build unity in our communities, we must learn the art of consultation. Consultation is an approach for group decision-making. Through consultation, a group not only makes collective decisions but also establishes a way forward for collective action.

If done well, consultation can lead to increased awareness and understanding. It helps the group move forward in unity. Consultation ultimately increases the well-being and welfare of the group.<sup>[28]</sup>

*Discussion questions:*

1. How does the above text describe “consultation”?

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2. According to the above text, what are some of the benefits of consultation?

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The above statements mention that the act of consultation can benefit a community and its members. But what does effective consultation look like? What are its main steps? When we consult, we can:

- turn our hearts towards the truth and search for it
- express our views with courtesy, dignity, care and moderation
- allow others to express their views, with freedom
- weigh all views and opinions with calm and composure
- carefully consider other people’s views before expressing our own
- accept another view if it is more worthy than our own
- vote if differences arise – and fully support the decision of the majority
- create an atmosphere of fellowship, unity, and love

*Discussion Questions:*

1. According to the above points, how might we express our views during consultation?

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2. According to the above points, how might we treat others' views during consultation?

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3. What can we do to help people who feel shy or anxious about expressing themselves in group consultation spaces?

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4. If a group consults harmoniously, will it always be necessary to vote on a decision?

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**For consultation to be effective, there are certain kinds of behaviors that should be avoided. We should avoid:**

- insisting on our own opinions
- belittling (“looking down on”) the ideas of others
- manipulating others
- dominating conversations
- feeling superior to others
- criticizing decisions that were made by the group, inside or outside of meetings

***Discussion Questions:***

1. Why do you think we sometimes insist on our own opinions?

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2. Why do you think we sometimes belittle (put down) the ideas of others?

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3. If we insist on our own opinions or belittle the ideas of others, how is consultation affected?

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4. Imagine that there is a group of five people who use consultation to make a decision together. If two of the people later start to complain about the group’s decision, why is that harmful?

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5. If everyone in the group supports the decision in unity, it will be easier to see if that decision is working well. If not, the group can consult again and make another decision. Discuss what the second consultation might look like if the group maintained its unity instead of getting upset by the first decision.

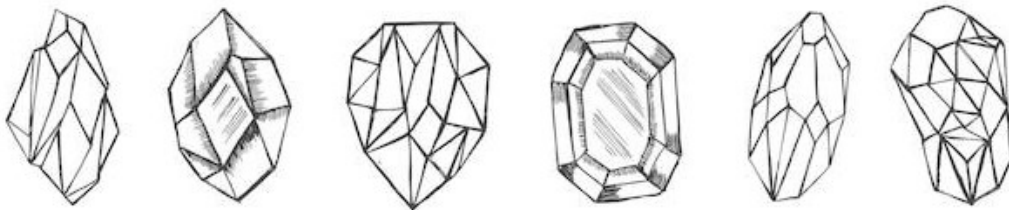
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Consultation is not just a set of rules and procedures. Rather, the kinds of qualities that we bring to a consultation are very important in determining whether the group is able to come to a decision in unity. Here is a list of important qualities that we should try to show during consultation:

- kindness, love, and respect
- a desire to promote unity
- pure intentions
- humility
- patience
- a mindset of service
- being open-minded
- having a sense of justice
- detachment (*avoiding being negatively affected by others' opinions or wanting a certain outcome too much*).



Exercise #1:

1. Based on the above passage, please fill in the sentences below about the kinds of qualities we need for effective consultation:

- A desire to promote unity is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Pure intentions are important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Humility is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Patience is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- A mindset of service is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Being open-minded is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Having a sense of justice is important because \_\_\_\_\_
- Detachment is important because \_\_\_\_\_

Exercise #2: Please read and discuss the main ideas of the following passage with your class.

It is important to remember that the authority to make decisions is not always equally shared in every situation. At work, for example, a supervisor has the authority to make decisions. Even so, it is very important to show the qualities of consultation in such situations. That is, it is important to listen to ideas respectfully, share our thoughts with courtesy, patience, and humility, and not expect or insist on a particular outcome.



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Exercise #3: Now, act out the following two skits in a small group (3-4 classmates):

**Skit A:** Make up a skit (role play) that shows what consultation would look like if each of you insisted that your view was the best one, did not listen to others, and openly criticized others.

**Skit B:** Make up a skit that shows what consultation would look like if you each had different opinions but were all also committed to maintaining friendship and building unity.

## Unit 2 Review: Unity in Our Community

### Goals for Unit 2

- a) To explore which qualities, attitudes, behaviors, and skills help a community build unity.
- b) To explore which qualities, attitudes, and behaviors prevent a community from building unity.
- c) To continually develop the wide range of qualities, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as practice the skills, that contribute to unity in the community.

*Please answer the questions below:*

1. What are “unity of purpose”, “unity of vision”, and “unity of action”? Why are they important?

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2. Fill in the blanks for the quotations and answer the question below.

a) **“Do not be \_\_\_\_\_ with showing friendship in \_\_ alone. Let your \_\_\_\_\_ burn with \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ who may cross your path.”**<sup>[14]</sup>

What is the meaning of the above quotation? \_\_\_\_\_

b) **Thoughts of \_\_\_\_\_ bring \_\_\_\_\_ to all harmony, well-being, restfulness, and content.”**<sup>[16]</sup> **“Thoughts of \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_ of brotherhood, peace, friendship, and happiness.”**<sup>[17]</sup>

3. What is the meaning of the above quotation? \_\_\_\_\_

c) **...The seeker after \_\_\_\_\_ should be \_\_\_\_\_ than the dust...the seeker after \_\_ should so humble himself that even the dust could \_ him. Only then, and not till then, will he have a glimpse of \_\_\_\_\_.”**<sup>[23]</sup>

4. What is the meaning of the above quotation? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the relationship between truth and unity? What kind of qualities should a seeker of truth possess?

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6. How does unity bring strength?

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7. What is consultation? What are its benefits? How does one engage in consultation?

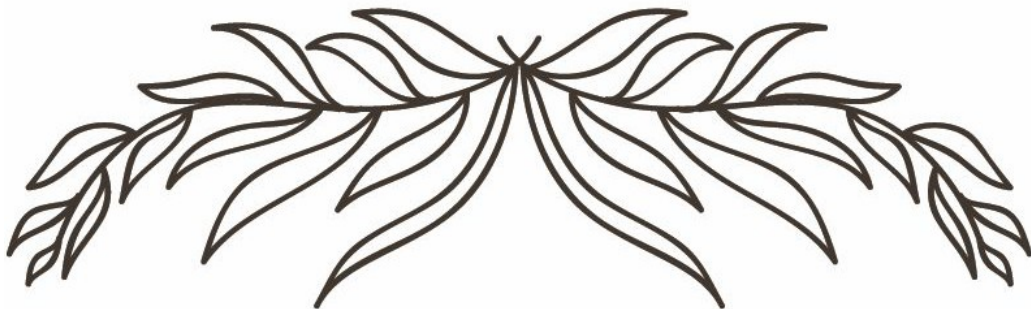
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## Unit 3

### Unity in Society





## **Purpose**

1. To recognize that individuals and communities are affected by society and, in turn, affect society.
2. To develop a vision of society in which unity and justice, and not competition and conflict, are our focus.
3. To reconsider the concept of power and understand how we might each have access to nearly limitless power.
4. To understand that there are both constructive and negative forces in society, and that we can be full of hope in aligning ourselves with the constructive ones.

## Lesson 1: The Individual, the Community, and Society

*Please read and reflect on the following two paragraphs with the help of your teacher:*

So far, we have learned about two major aspects of building unity. In the first unit, we learned that the true nature and value of a human being is the gems they have inside—their intellectual, moral, and spiritual qualities. In the second unit, we focused on developing the qualities, attitudes, behaviors, and skills that contribute to unity in our communities.

In this third and final unit, we turn our attention to the idea of **unity in society**. The idea of unity in society may seem far away from what is happening in our daily lives. However, it is not difficult to see that individuals and communities are affected everyday by what is happening in the larger society. At the same time, the choices and actions of individuals and communities can have a big impact on the society. The more we work for unity in our families, schools, workplaces, and communities, the more we can positively contribute to the transformation of society.

The quotation below will help us further reflect on the relationship between the individual and the society.

**“We cannot segregate the human heart from the environment outside us and say that once one of these is reformed everything will be improved. Man is organic with the world. His inner life moulds the environment and is itself also deeply affected by it. The one acts upon the other and every abiding change in the life of man is the result of these mutual reactions.”<sup>[29]</sup>**



*Now go deeper into the meaning of the quotation with the class. You and the class may wish to consider the following aspects of the quotation:*

*(a) the meaning of the phrase “man is organic with the world”*

*(b) why things do not improve if we just change the individual heart*

*(c) why things do not improve if we just change the social environment*

*Of course, feel free to share other meaningful insights you come up with as well.*

**Discuss:**

1. What happens to the mood of a happy person walking into a room of sad people? What happens to the mood of the sad people?

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2. What happens to the mood of a sad person walking into a room of happy people? What happens to the mood of the happy people?

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3. Would the problem of poverty be solved if rich people became more generous? What else might be needed?

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## **Exercise #1: You and Your Environment**

Please find a comfortable place to sit or stand outside the classroom. Close your eyes and take several deep breaths. Pay attention to what you feel, smell, and hear. Welcome any thoughts that arise, but do your best to remain present and alert. Take about 3 minutes for this exercise.

Now, with your eyes closed, think about the environment around you. For example, you might hear and think about the sound of birds or people walking nearby. Next, expand your thinking to include your family and community. What might your family be doing at this moment? What might the people in the community be doing? Take about 3 minutes for this exercise.

Finally, open your eyes and record what you were thinking about your environment, your family, and your community. In the space below, write down or draw any observations, emotions, and insights you may have had:

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## Lesson 2: A Vision for Society

*Please read and reflect on the following passage with the help of your teacher:*

Virtually every culture looks forward to a day in which humanity will have unity and peace. For example, more than two thousand years ago, philosophers in China predicted a “world of grand unity” (*Datong Shijie*). Great thinkers in India looked forward to the day in which we could realize “the world is one family” (*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*). And the great ones of Israel looked forward to a day in which “nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore (Isaiah 2:4).”

Even though all peoples hope for a world of peace, justice, and unity, what happens in society does not always line up with this hope. To take a few examples:

- We face too much competition in our educational and career paths
- We observe deep and persistent inequalities in wealth and economic opportunity
- We often see that women are not treated fairly compared to men
- We often see that the rich and beautiful are given special treatment in society

1. Can you list some other examples that you see in your daily life?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

In all of the above examples, conflict and competition are common, and society is like a jungle in which **survival of the fittest** is the mode of life. Yet this kind of conflict and competition does not seem to fit with the ideas of unity we hope for. This brings our attention to a **paralyzing contradiction** in human life. On the one hand, we all believe in unity and want to have peace with each other. On the other hand, we tend to **passively** accept conflict and competition as being natural and unavoidable aspects of life.



2. Before proceeding, let us reflect on the following questions together. Does society have to be organized around the idea of conflict and competition? Are conflict and competition necessary for people to survive and advance? Can society instead be organized around other ideas such as cooperation, mutual support, reciprocity and the pursuit of excellence?

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We naturally want to push back against the negative forces of conflict and competition whenever and wherever they occur. However, pushing back against various instances of conflict, one by one, can be exhausting. And rather than contributing to unity and peace, pushing back often creates further conflict. How then can we avoid pushing back against conflict and instead work towards unity?

A first helpful step towards a harmonious world is to find a more positive **vision** of society—a vision that we can all agree on and work towards together. Instead of seeing society as a jungle in which survival of the fittest determines who succeeds and who fails, we might instead think of society like a human body.

To help **envision** how we might think of society as a human body, read the below passage:

*Ideally, human society would be organized like the human body. As long as the different parts of the body—its cells, tissues, and organs—are coordinated and cooperating in harmony, it is healthy in the fullest degree. When the different parts of the body lack coordination and harmony, it experiences disease and death. Similarly, when the relationships among individuals, communities, and institutions in human society have coordination and harmony, society thrives. Lacking coordination and harmony, society starts to come apart and fail.*



3. Reflecting on the parallels between the human body and human society, please answer the questions below:

- a. Does each cell of the body have its own capabilities and powers? What about each individual in society?

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- b. When does a cell live and thrive the most – when it is part of the body or separate from it? Is the relationship similar for the individual and society? Why?

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- c. How can the uniqueness and diversity of individuals contribute to the well-being of society as a whole?

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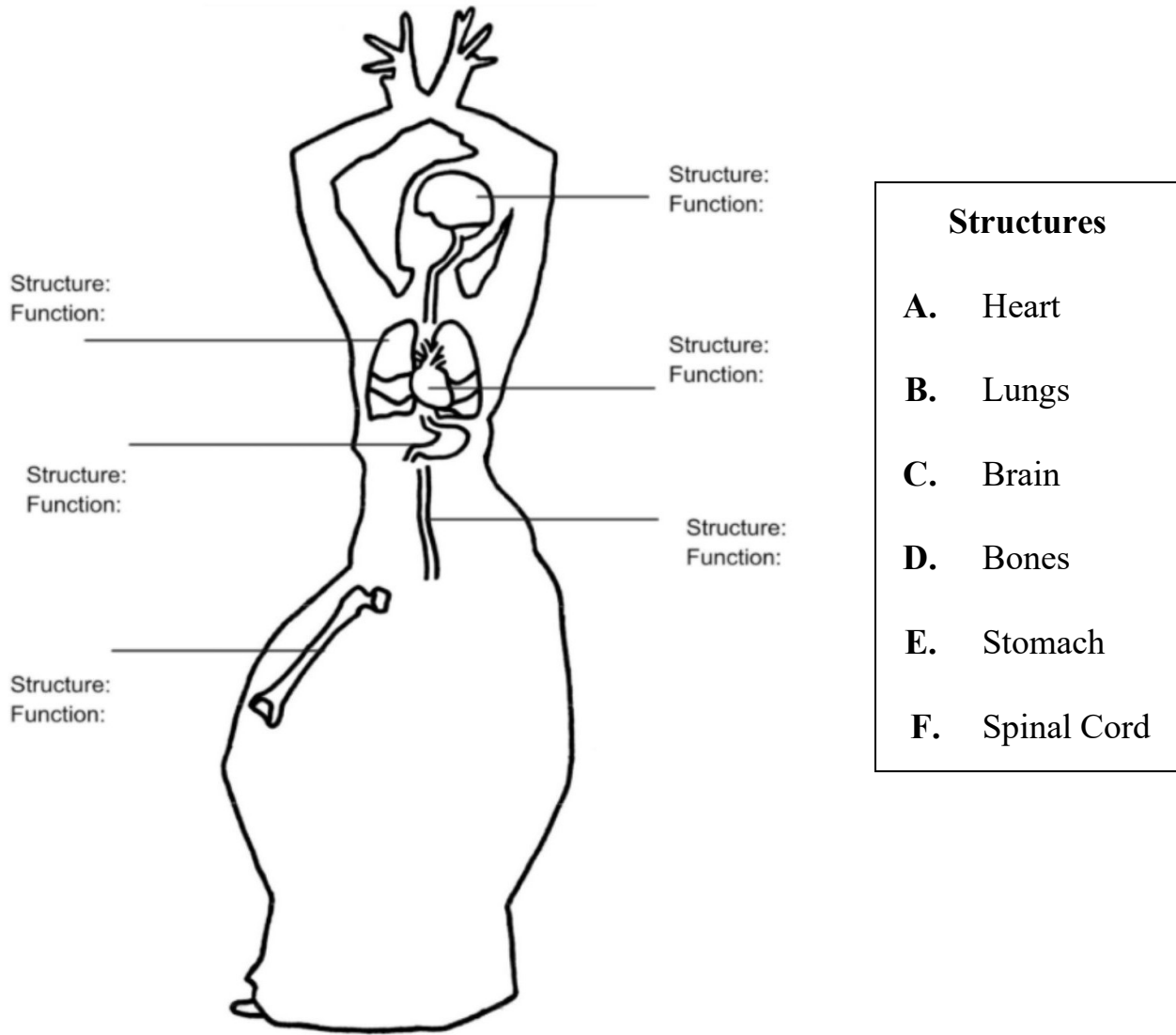
- d. Please discuss in your class how holding the vision of society as a human body can help us, as individuals, avoid and overcome conflict.

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**Matching Activity:** Different body structures have different functions. In the following image of a person dancing, match the various body structures to their corresponding functions.



- | Structures |             |
|------------|-------------|
| <b>A.</b>  | Heart       |
| <b>B.</b>  | Lungs       |
| <b>C.</b>  | Brain       |
| <b>D.</b>  | Bones       |
| <b>E.</b>  | Stomach     |
| <b>F.</b>  | Spinal Cord |

**Functions**

- a. Allow for the intake of oxygen and release of carbon dioxide during the dance.
- b. Coordinate movements, keep balance, and process music during the dance.
- c. Pump blood throughout the body, bringing oxygen and nutrients to the cells during the dance.
- d. Digest food, making nutrients and energy available for cells during the dance.
- e. While moving, support the body structurally and protect vital organs.
- f. Send information from the brain to the muscles, allowing dance moves to be executed.



## Social Action Journal

In an earlier lesson, we discussed the importance of regularly practicing acts of kindness and reflecting on them. To help us develop this habit, we started an “Acts of Kindness” journal.

Having progressed in our learning, we would now like to learn not only how to practice acts of kindness by ourselves, but also with others.

To get started, find at least one other person in the class, your family, or your community to perform an act of kindness with. When we perform an act of kindness with this other person, we can call it “social action”.

Once you have completed the “social action”, write a reflection on your experience. The format is similar to that of the previous unit. Here is an example of what you might write:

*Date: 4-12-2023*

*Action: Rahul and I helped an elderly lady buy groceries today. She was ill and weak and appreciated the help. She asked if she could pay us some extra money, but we refused.*

*Spirit: While helping her we practiced kindness and gentleness.*

*Effect on me: Helping her filled us with joy.*

*Effect on others: After helping the elderly lady, Rahul and I thought that there might be other elderly people nearby who need help. We will try to meet more of the elderly people around us and ask what they need. This will help us make new friends and bring the community closer together.*

Try to write in your “Social Action” journal every day for the next week. In doing so, you can either choose to work with the same person each day or choose a different person. Do not be discouraged if you are not able to find someone to work with each day. Just by trying to work with others, you will bring more unity to your community and society.

### Lesson 3: Unity and Justice

*Justice is necessary to create unity in society. The following lesson will help us explore the relationship between justice and unity in more depth.*

***Justice and the Individual:*** Each of us possesses the quality of **justice**. Justice helps us see with our own eyes and not through the eyes of others. It helps us see what is real without having to depend on the opinions of others. With justice, we are fair-minded in our judgments and treat others with equity. Practicing justice—that is, taking individual responsibility for seeing and understanding reality—requires constant effort.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Based on the above passage, what does justice mean for the individual?

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2. Do you think we should believe whatever we see in the media? Why or why not?

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3. Do you think we should trust news shared on social media from friends and family? Why or why not?

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***Justice and the Collective:*** Justice not only works at the individual level but also at the group or collective level. When justice exists in a community or in a society, everyone has fair opportunities to progress and prosper, and everyone trusts that they will be protected by fair rules and standards.

Justice also helps us think about how the interests of the individual and group are connected. It encourages us to create an environment in which everyone can share their thoughts and make appropriate decisions together harmoniously. In this way, justice can help us achieve unity in thought and in action.

By justice, we do not mean being overly strict or severe towards others. Rather *the purpose of justice is to build and maintain unity*. As such, justice is only effective when we combine it with other qualities such as understanding, forgiveness, and patience.

Discuss the following questions:

1. How do you think justice operates at the group level?

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2. What does the above text say is the purpose of justice? Is the purpose of justice is to punish others or is it something more?

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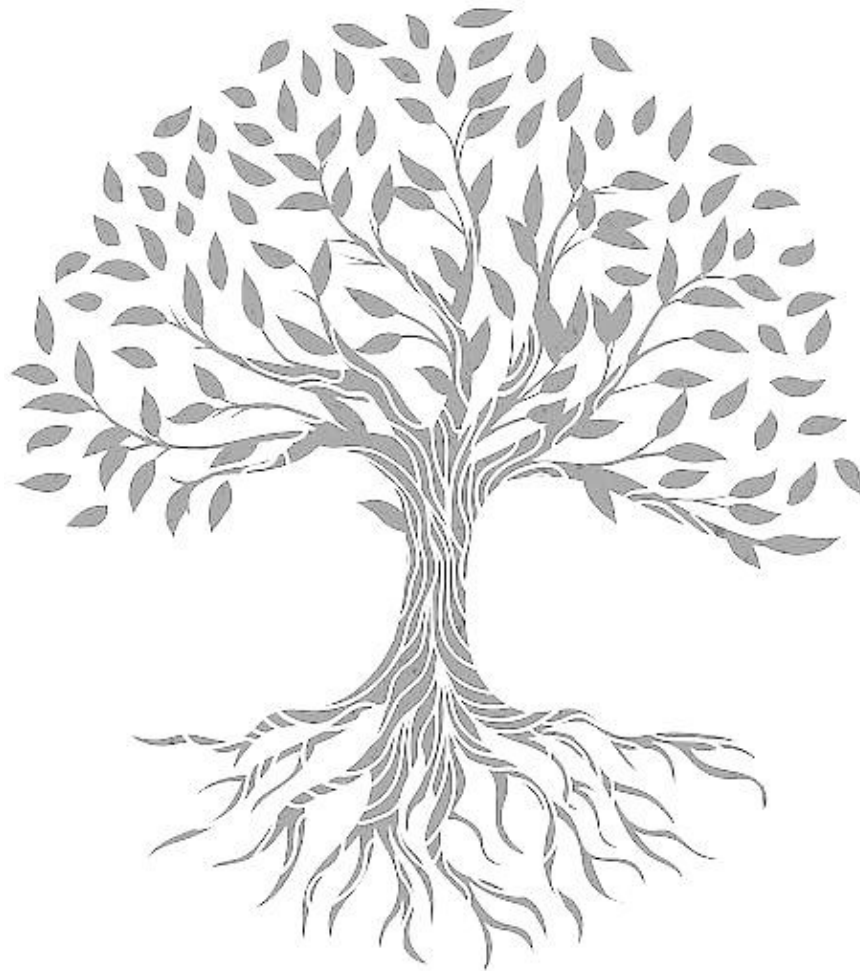
3. Why might justice be more effective when it is combined with other qualities such as understanding and forgiveness? Can you give an example of this from your own life?

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***Justice and Relationships:*** When greater justice characterizes the relationships in a society that society becomes more harmonious and prosperous. Many different types of relationships in society appear to require justice. Here are a few examples:

- The relationship between individual friends or acquaintances
- The relationship between family members
- The relationship between an individual and their community
- The relationship between an individual and their government institutions
- The relationship between a community and its institutions
- The relationship between an individual and their natural environment



You may wish to discuss the following question with a partner and share your thoughts with the class:

Exercise #1: What do relationships built on justice look like in a family? You may wish to think about the roles of, and relationships between, the mother, father, husband, wife, son, daughter, grandparents, and so on.

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Please go over the below exercise with a partner and share your work with the class:

Exercise #2: Draw a map of the different kinds of relationships that exist in a workplace (for example, between employees, managers, clients, owners). Discuss what just and fair relationships might look like between these different people in the workplace.

## Lesson 4: The Role of Power in Building Unity

In our efforts to use justice to build stronger relationships and thus greater unity, we have to rethink the idea of **power**. In society, **power** is typically believed to operate in one of three ways:

- A person with more authority or wealth **forces** someone with less authority and wealth to do something.
- A person with more authority or wealth **takes away the choices** of someone with less authority or wealth.
- Those with authority and wealth **use the media or other aspects of culture to manipulate** how others think and behave.

Exercise #1: Please write an example of each of the three types of power in the space below:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The above three types of power frequently involve **conflict** and **domination** with accompanying ideas of contention, division, and superiority.

*However, power does not have to be based on conflict and domination.*

There are powers of the **human spirit** that each of us have and that we can use in our daily lives. The powers of the human spirit include the powers of pure deeds, friendship, love, kindness, humility, honesty, and many others. If we think about it for a while, we see that some of the greatest heroes of history—Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Teresa, Malala, Nelson Mandela, and others—used these kinds of power to build unity even when they met great difficulties.

Exercise #2: Which of the following actions would you associate positively with power? Which of the actions would you associate negatively with power? Write a P (positive) or N (negative) next to the power-related action words below:

\_\_\_ To transform

\_\_\_ To manipulate

\_\_\_ To dominate

\_\_\_ To release

\_\_\_ To encourage

\_\_\_ To discourage

\_\_\_ To channel

\_\_\_ To block

\_\_\_ To force

\_\_\_ To guide

\_\_\_ To oppress

\_\_\_ To enable

\_\_\_ To unify

\_\_\_ To divide

Exercise #3: Reflect on the positive and negative action words above. In general, which types of actions do you think are limited in their power? Which are unlimited? Please explain your thinking.

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Exercise #4: Explain why some of the above actions **empower** others (and empower you)?

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Exercise #5: Act out a skit in which your family gets upset with you because they think you are going out too much. In the skit, use your powers in a positive way to bring unity to the situation.

## Lesson 5: The Equality of Women and Men

*Read the below passage.*

If we are to make progress towards unity, it may be helpful to reflect on the central role that the equality of women and men plays in our collective prosperity.<sup>[30]</sup>

One place to start may be to realize that: *women and men are, and have always been, equal.* Although historically women have lagged behind men, this is because men have had greater opportunities to progress and succeed than women. If we look carefully, we see that social, economic, and political systems and structures have been imbalanced in favor of men over women.

Even today, we see many examples of how women do not have equal chances to progress and succeed. Women do not have equal access to education. Women face unequal relationships in the family. There are harmful practices towards women in the workplace.

As we have discussed before, all humans – all of us – are rational, intellectual, moral, and spiritual beings. No one person is better than another. As such, we have to address and overcome negative practices against women in society.

The habits that govern our relationships with the world are largely formed within the family. The tendencies to be unjust or just, to act violently or with kindness, to be dishonest or trustworthy, are usually developed at home. These habits are then taken into every instance of social interaction, becoming either obstacles or stepping stones to progress, tearing apart or weaving together the very fabric of society.

- For example, if brothers are allowed to dominate their sisters, a habit is formed that will be carried from the living room to the classroom, the workplace and finally, the international arena.
- By contrast, when daughters are included in decision-making processes, when sons are encouraged to care for the household, positive habits are developed. Children learn that the intellectual powers of both boys and girls are vital and that the nurturing qualities for which women are known are equally praiseworthy when demonstrated by men.<sup>[31]</sup>



Exercise #1: Read and memorize the following quotation with a partner.

*“The world of humanity has two wings—one is women and the other men... Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible.”<sup>[32]</sup>*

Exercise #2: Please use the above quotation to create an artistic representation of the bird of humanity with its two wings, women and men. Share your art and reflections with the class.

Exercise #3: Please discuss the following (a through d) with two other classmates:

a. Please give some examples of gender inequality in our society.

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b. How does discrimination against women limit the ability of all of us to develop to our full potential?

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c. How can men support the achievement of gender equality?

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d. How is the equality of men and women connected to human happiness?

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Exercise #4: At the end of class, watch this video from the UN Secretary-General António Guterres on gender equality: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vz22dfw9NsE>

## Lesson 6: Unity and Hope

If we look at history, we can see that humanity has steadily achieved greater levels of unity: unity in the family, the tribe, the clan, the city-state, and the nation. Each stage of unity has released new capacities in human beings and in society.

Still, it may seem difficult to achieve unity in our diverse, complex world today. In this regard, it may help to us to remember that humanity has made great progress in many areas in the last two hundred years. Increasing levels of equality between people of different backgrounds and amazing advances in science are just two examples. If we can end slavery and go to the moon, are unity and peace really impossible to achieve?

***Class Exercise #1:*** Can you think of examples from history in which the actions of a small group of individuals changed society? Please list examples below:

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While striving to build unity in today's complex world, we also have to be aware of the constant influence of destructive (negative) and constructive (positive) social forces.

Destructive forces such as materialism, prejudice, and too much competition lead to various crises. Eventually these crises awaken human awareness and remove barriers to progress.

Constructive forces, on the other hand, actively help us to achieve greater unity. One of the most constructive forces that we should keep in mind is that for the first time in history, people from different nations and backgrounds are beginning to see humanity as one race and the earth as one common home.

**Class Exercise #2:** Please list and discuss destructive and constructive forces you see in society today.

### Destructive

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### Constructive

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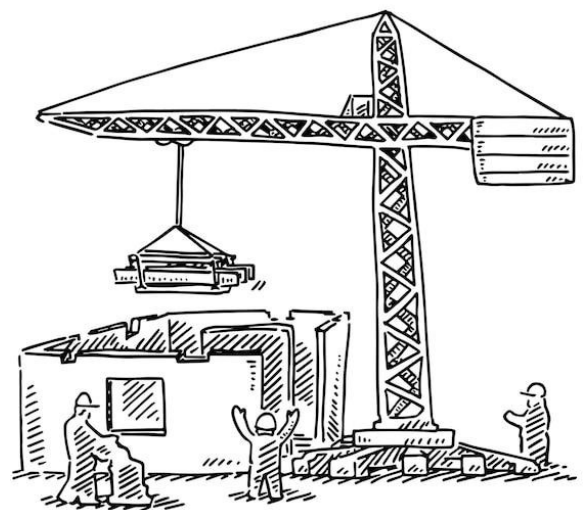
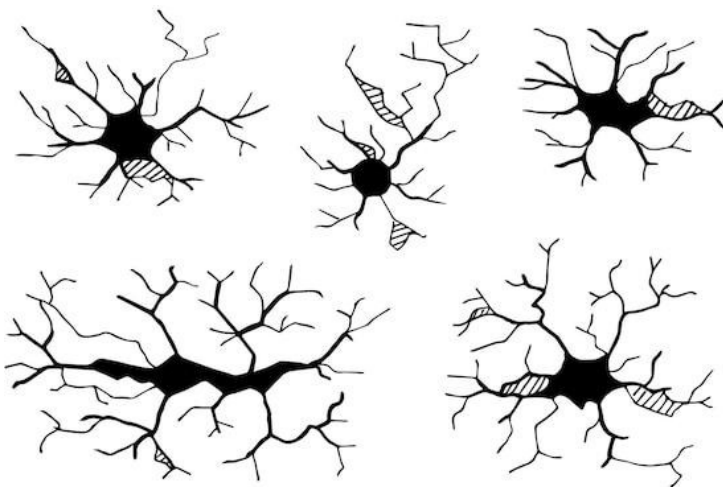
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We can be confident that, as more of us work for unity, society will advance in a positive direction. The power of pure deeds, kind words and actions, and sincere friendship will change the world around us.

**Exercise #3:** *As a last exercise, reflect on how your pure and goodly deeds, no matter how small, can make society better.*

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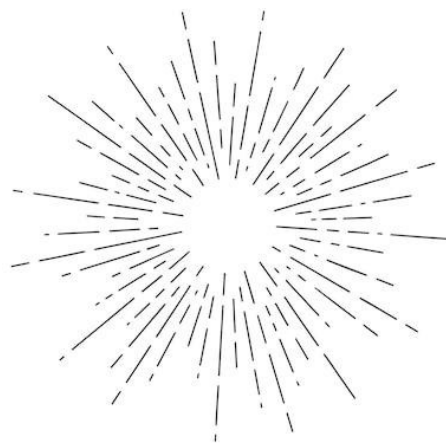
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*You may wish to end these lessons on unity by memorizing the following quotation. We hope that by remembering it, you will find the necessary joy and strength to build greater unity in your life, community, and society.*

**“If you desire with all your heart, friendship with every race on earth, your thought, spiritual and positive, will spread; it will become the desire of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the minds of all men.”<sup>[33]</sup>**



## Unit 3 Review: Unity in Society

### Goals for Unit 3

- a) To recognize that individuals and communities are affected by society and, in turn, affect society.
- b) To develop a vision of society in which unity and justice, and not competition and conflict, are our focus.
- c) To reconsider the concept of power and understand how we might each have access to nearly limitless power.
- d) To understand that there are both constructive and negative forces in society, and that we can be full of hope in aligning ourselves with the constructive ones.

Questions: Please answer the questions below.

1. How is man organic with the world?

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2. How is human society organized like the human body?

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3. What is the purpose of justice? How does it relate to unity?

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4. List some of the powers of the human spirit.

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5. Why is it important for men and women to be treated equally?

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6. How can pure and goodly deeds, even when they seem small, make society better? Please provide examples.

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7. Fill in the blanks for the quote and answer the question below.

**“If you desire with all your \_\_\_\_\_, friendship with every race on earth, your \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, will spread; it will become the \_\_\_\_\_ of others, growing stronger and stronger, until it reaches the \_\_\_\_\_ of all men.”<sup>[32]</sup>**

What is the meaning of the above quotation?

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## Notes and Reflections

## References

<sup>1</sup> *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> <https://humanorigins.si.edu/multimedia/videos/one-species-living-worldwide>. Downloaded 8.22.2021 at 3:47pm.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible* (King James Version), Genesis 26.

<sup>5</sup> *The Bhagavad-Gita* translated by Eknath Easwaran (2007).

<sup>6</sup> *Hadith Qudsi*

<sup>7</sup> Adapted from Saiedi, N. (2011). *The Birth of the Human Being: Beyond Religious Traditionalism and Materialist Modernity*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Based on (adapted from) a quotation from *Selections of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*.

<sup>12</sup> From "Unity in Diversity in India" by [Rucha](#).

<sup>13</sup> Adapted from Chapter 14 of "Education" by FUNDAEC.

<sup>14</sup> *Paris Talks*.

<sup>15</sup> Original version printed in 1982 in the book, "The Sacred Tree" by the Four Worlds Development Project . Adapted and reprinted in the "Inter-Tribal Times" October 1994.

<sup>16</sup> *Paris Talks*.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> "Yamakavagga: Pairs" (Dhp I), translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddharakkhita. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.01.budd.html>.

<sup>20</sup> *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*.

<sup>21</sup> *Star of the West*, Volume 8, No. 10, p 138.

<sup>22</sup> "Malavagga: Impurity" (Dhp XVIII), translated from the Pali by Acharya Buddharakkhita. Access to Insight (BCBS Edition), 30 November 2013, <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/dhp/dhp.18.budd.html>.

<sup>23</sup> *Selections of the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*.

<sup>24</sup> From the *Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi*, Introduction.

<sup>25</sup> *Arising to Serve*, available at [www.ruhi.org](http://www.ruhi.org).

<sup>26</sup> *Aesop's Fables*, available at <http://read.gov/aesop/040.html>.

<sup>27</sup> *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*.

<sup>28</sup> This Lesson draws on ideas from Chapter 2 of Building Vibrant Communities from the Ruhi Institute.

<sup>29</sup> Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 17 February 1933, Compilation on Social and Economic Development, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Adapted from: [https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/csw\\_61statement\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bic.org/sites/default/files/pdf/csw_61statement_2017.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> *Foundations of World Unity*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>33</sup> *Paris Talks*.



