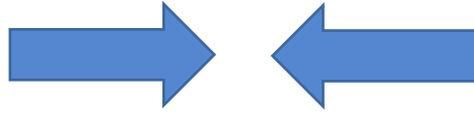


# Be The Change



## We Seek In Race Relations

### A STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

*Inspired by*

**The Vision of Race Unity – America’s Most Challenging Issue \***

#### *Discussion/Study Statement I*

*“Racism is the most vital and challenging issue confronting America. To ignore this problem is to expose the country to physical, moral, and spiritual danger.”*

1. Why is racism the most vital and challenging issue confronting us in view of other issues that impact all of America and the world, like for instance, environmental issues and global warming and gender equity?
2. Does racism really expose our nation to physical danger, and if so, how?
3. Does racism really expose our nation to moral danger, and if so, how?
4. Does racism really expose our nation to spiritual danger, and if so, how?

#### *Discussion/Study Statement II*

*“The oneness of humanity, the pivot round which revolve all the teachings of the Baha’i Faith, is a statement of principle and an assertion of the ultimate goal of human existence on the planet.”*

1. All faiths have central teachings and principles. Why does the Baha’i Faith single out “The oneness of humanity” as its central principle around which all its other teaching revolve?

\* This Study/Discussion Guide is inspired by a pamphlet, *The Vision of Race Unity – America’s Most Challenging Issue: A Statement by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha’is of The United States*. This guide prepared by Ramin Abrishamian and William H. “Smitty” Smith, Ed. D. Permission to duplicate is granted. To assist with gathering information on its use, please send a short email [info@raceamity.org](mailto:info@raceamity.org) regarding your activities. Note that the **italicized** Discussion/Study Statements in this guide are taken from *A Vision of Race Unity -America’s Most Challenging Issue* obtainable at <https://www.bahaibookstore.com/Search.aspx?k=Most+Challenging+Issue>

2. Participants should take fifteen minutes and reflect and write down what their personal vision of what the world looks like when humanity achieves the goal of human unity as the norm for societal interaction. Afterwards, each person take up to five minutes to share their vision with the group.)

### ***Discussion/Study Statement III***

*“In no other country is the promise of organic unity more immediately demonstrable than in the United States because it is a microcosm of the diverse populations of the earth.”*

1. How and why is the physical representation of humanity’s microcosm in the United States an important factor in the potential for human unity?
2. Why wouldn’t the same be true for England?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement IV***

*“The oneness of humanity, a spiritual truth abundantly confirmed by science, implies an organic change in the structure of present-day-society.”*

1. What does organic structure of society mean?
2. How would you describe the organic structure of American society?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement V***

*The application of the spiritual principle of the oneness of humanity to the life of our nation would necessitate and make possible vast changes in the economic status of people of color.*

1. How specifically would the spiritual principle of the oneness of humanity impact the economic standing of people of color in the nation?
2. Could this change carry with it a “pay back” mentality among people of color once they gained equity economic status?
3. What ways might this impact each participant in this group?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement VI***

*“The fundamental solution of racial and ethnic conflict rests ultimately on the common recognition of the oneness of humankind.”*

1. What are ways individuals can promote the recognition of the oneness of humankind?
2. What are ways that institutions can promote the recognition of the one of humankind?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement VII***

*Education in the principle of the oneness of humanity is the shortest route out of poverty and prejudice.*

1. What does this mean? Does it mean all people should be afforded a good education?
2. Does it mean educational curriculum be developed that teaches students in a gradual manner the moral and scientific truth of the oneness of humanity?
3. Are we familiar to the call the call for development of a K-12 Curriculum on Human Beings? (The concept was spoken of by anti-racist educator Nathan Rutstein. The idea being that students would be taught progressively, K-12, scientific facts and moral reasoning that substantiate the oneness of humankind.)
4. What might individuals and groups do to promote this concept?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement VIII***

*“America’s peace, prosperity, and even her standing in the international community depend on healing the wounds of racism and building a society in which people of diverse backgrounds live as members of one family.”*

1. How can the elimination of racism effect prosperity in America?
2. In what ways would its elimination affect those who benefit from a prejudicial system?

### ***Discussion/Study Statement IX***

*“The responsibility for the achievement of racial peace and unity in the United States rests [particularly] upon both Black and White Americans.”*

1. Why are these two groups singled out as having the racial peace and unity rest particularly upon them?
2. Should Black Americans and other minority people bear any of the weight of responsibility as they were not the ones who created the problem?
3. Please read the statement below. After reading with the group, reflect on and share what the statement means to you.

It has been observed that for racial healing and unity among Blacks and Whites to advance that “the white make a supreme effort in their resolve to contribute their share in the solution to this problem, to abandon once for all their usually inherent and at times subconscious sense of superiority, to correct their tendency towards a patronizing attitude to the members of the other race” and that Blacks “... show by every means in their power, the warmth of their response, their readiness to forget the past, and their ability to wipe out every trace of suspicion that may linger in their hearts and their minds.” \*\*

***Discussion/Study Statement X***

*“Blacks and Whites must understand that no real change will come about without close association, fellowship, and friendship among diverse people.”*

1. In what ways can blacks and whites and people of other backgrounds engage in close association with members of other races/cultures? Using the list below of possible association opportunities, develop specific opportunities available to you. Your follow-up action will be to pursue one of the examples you identify. Item “A.” below offers some specific examples.
- 2.

| <b>Area/Place of Association</b>  | <b>Specific Example</b>                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| A. Service Organization/Clubs     | NAACP, Urban League, ADL, AJC, Lions Club, Rotary, Book Club |
| B. Recreational Events/Activities | _____  |
| C. Schools                        | _____  |
| D. Musical Activities             | _____  |
| E. Home                           | _____  |
| F. Places of Worship              | _____  |

\*\* Advent of Divine Justice, Shoghi Effendi, pg 40; Baha’i Publishing Trust