

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Tablet of Seven Candles (Lawh-i-Haft Sham')

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



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O captive of the love of God! The letter which thou didst write at the time of thy departure hath been received. It brought me joy; and it is my hope that thine inner eye may be opened wide, so that unto thee the very core of the divine mysteries may be disclosed.

Thou didst begin thy letter with a blessed phrase, saying: 'I am a Christian.' O would that all were truly Christian! It is easy to be a Christian on the tongue, but hard to be a true one. Today some five hundred million souls are Christian, but the real Christian is very rare: he is that soul from whose comely face there shineth the splendour of Christ, and who showeth forth the perfections of the Kingdom; this is a matter of great moment, for to be a Christian is to embody every excellence there is. I hope that thou, too, shalt become a true Christian. Praise thou God that at last, through the divine teachings, thou hast obtained both sight and insight to the highest degree, and hast become firmly rooted in certitude and faith. It is my hope that others as well will achieve illumined eyes and hearing ears, and attain to everlasting life: that these many rivers, each flowing along in diverse and separated beds, will find their way back to the circumambient sea, and merge together and rise up in a single wave of surging oneness; that the unity of truth, through the power of God, will make these illusory differences to vanish away. This is the one essential: for if unity be gained, all other problems will disappear of themselves.

O honoured lady! In accordance with the divine teachings in this glorious dispensation we should not belittle anyone and call him ignorant, saying: 'You know not, but I know'. Rather, we should look upon others with respect, and when attempting to explain and demonstrate, we should speak as if we are investigating the truth, saying: 'Here these things are before us. Let us investigate to determine where and in what form the truth can be found.' The teacher should not consider himself as learned and others ignorant. Such a thought breedeth pride, and pride is not conducive to influence. The teacher should not see in himself any superiority; he should speak with the utmost kindness, lowliness and humility, for such speech exerteth influence and educateth the souls.

O honoured lady! For a single purpose were the Prophets, each and all, sent down to earth; for this was Christ made manifest, for this did Bahá'u'lláh raise up the call of the Lord: that the world of man should become the world of God, this nether realm the Kingdom, this darkness light, this satanic wickedness all the virtues of heaven—and unity, fellowship and love be won for the whole human race, that the organic unity should reappear and the bases of discord be destroyed and life everlasting and grace everlasting become the harvest of mankind.



TRANSLATION

O honoured lady! Look about thee at the world: here unity, mutual attraction, gathering together, engender life, but disunity and inharmony spell death. When thou dost consider all phenomena, thou wilt see that every created thing hath come into being through the mingling of many elements, and once this collectivity of elements is dissolved, and this harmony of components is dis severed, the life form is wiped out.

O honoured lady! In cycles gone by, though harmony was established, yet, owing to the absence of means, the unity of all mankind could not have been achieved. Continents remained widely divided, nay even among the peoples of one and the same continent association and interchange of thought were wellnigh impossible. Consequently intercourse, understanding and unity amongst all the peoples and kindreds of the earth were unattainable. In this day, however, means of communication have multiplied, and the five continents of the earth have virtually merged into one. And for everyone it is now easy to travel to any land, to associate and exchange views with its peoples, and to become familiar, through publications, with the conditions, the religious beliefs and the thoughts of all men. In like manner all the members of the human family, whether peoples or governments, cities or villages, have become increasingly interdependent. For none is self-sufficiency any longer possible, inasmuch as political ties unite all peoples and nations, and the bonds of trade and industry, of agriculture and education, are being strengthened every day. Hence the unity of all mankind can in this day be achieved. Verily this is none other but one of the wonders of this wondrous age, this glorious century. Of this past ages have been deprived, for this century—the century of light—hath been endowed with unique and unprecedented glory, power and illumination. Hence the miraculous unfolding of a fresh marvel every day. Eventually it will be seen how bright its candles will burn in the assemblage of man.

Behold how its light is now dawning upon the world's darkened horizon. The first candle is unity in the political realm, the early glimmerings of which can now be discerned. The second candle is unity of thought in world undertakings, the consummation of which will ere long be witnessed. The third candle is unity in freedom which will surely come to pass. The fourth candle is unity in religion which is the corner-stone of the foundation itself, and which, by the power of God, will be revealed in all its splendour. The fifth candle is the unity of nations—a unity which in this century will be securely established, causing all the peoples of the world to regard themselves as citizens of one common fatherland. The sixth candle is unity of races, making of all that dwell on earth peoples and kindreds of one race. The seventh candle is unity of language, i.e., the choice of a universal tongue in which all peoples will be instructed and converse. Each and every one of these will inevitably come to pass, inasmuch as the power of the Kingdom of God will aid and assist in their realization.