

# Some Answered Questions, Commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of Isaiah

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Translated. Original Persian



Some Answered Questions, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Fifth Edition, page 71

## Commentary on the Eleventh Chapter of Isaiah

In Isaiah 11:1–9 it is said: “And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice’ den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

This “rod out of the stem of Jesse” might seem to apply to Christ, for Joseph was a descendant of Jesse, the father of David. However, since Christ had come into being through the Divine Spirit, He called Himself the Son of God. Had this not been the case, this passage could have indeed applied to Him. Moreover, the events that are said to occur in the days of that rod, if they be interpreted figuratively, came to pass only in part, and if they be taken literally, failed absolutely and entirely to take place in the days of Christ.

For instance, we might say that the leopard and the kid, the lion and the calf, the sucking child and the asp, represent the various nations, the hostile peoples and contending kindreds of the earth who in their opposition and enmity were even as the wolf and the lamb, and who through the breezes of the messianic Spirit came to be endowed with the spirit of unity and fellowship, were quickened to life, and associated intimately one with another. But the condition referred to in the statement “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea” did not materialize in the Dispensation of Christ. For to this day there are various hostile and contending nations in the world: Few acknowledge the God of Israel, and most are deprived of the knowledge of God. Likewise, universal peace was not established with the advent of Christ; that is, peace and well-



TRANSLATION



being were not realized among the hostile and contending nations, disputes and conflicts were not resolved, and harmony and sincerity were not attained. Thus, even to this day intense enmity, hatred, and conflict prevail among the Christian peoples themselves.

But these verses apply word for word to Bahá'u'lláh. Moreover, in this wondrous Dispensation the earth will become another earth and the world of humanity will be arrayed with perfect composure and adornment. Strife, contention, and bloodshed will give way to peace, sincerity, and harmony. Among the nations, peoples, kindreds, and governments, love and amity will prevail and cooperation and close connection will be firmly established. Ultimately, war will be entirely banned, and when the laws of the Most Holy Book are enacted, arguments and disputes will, with perfect justice, be settled before a universal tribunal of governments and peoples, and any difficulties which may arise will be resolved. The five continents of the world will become as one, its divers nations will become one nation, the earth will become one homeland, and the human race will become one people. Countries will be so intimately connected, and peoples and nations so commingled and united, that the human race will become as one family and one kindred. The light of heavenly love will shine and the gloomy darkness of hatred and enmity will be dispelled as far as possible. Universal peace will raise its pavilion in the midmost heart of creation and the blessed Tree of Life will so grow and flourish as to stretch its sheltering shade over the East and the West. Strong and weak, rich and poor, contending kindreds and hostile nations—which are like the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and kid, the lion and the calf—will treat one another with the utmost love, unity, justice, and equity. The earth will be filled with knowledge and learning, with the realities and mysteries of creation, and with the knowledge of God.

Now, in this glorious age, which is the century of Bahá'u'lláh, consider how far knowledge and learning have progressed, how fully the mysteries of creation have been unveiled, and how many great undertakings have been embarked upon and are multiplying day by day! Soon will material knowledge and learning, as well as spiritual knowledge, make such progress and display such wonders as to dazzle every eye and to disclose the full meaning of the verse of Isaiah: “for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord”.

Consider likewise that in the short span of time since the advent of Bahá'u'lláh, people of all nations, kindreds, and races have entered beneath the shadow of this Cause. Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Persians all consort together with perfect love and fellowship, as if for a thousand years they had belonged to the same kindred and family—indeed, as if they were father and son, mother and daughter, sister and brother. This is one of the meanings of the fellowship between the wolf and the lamb, the leopard and the kid, and the lion and the calf.

One of the great events which is to occur in the Day of the manifestation of that Incomparable Branch is the hoisting of the Standard of God among all nations. By this is meant that all nations and kindreds will be gathered together under the shadow of this Divine Banner, which is no other than the Lordly Branch itself, and will become a single nation. Religious and sectarian antagonism, the hostility of races and peoples, and differences among nations will be eliminated. All men will adhere to one religion, will have one common faith, will be blended into one race and become a single people. All will dwell in one common fatherland, which is the planet itself. Universal peace and concord will be established among all nations. That



Incomparable Branch will gather together all Israel; that is, in His Dispensation Israel will be gathered in the Holy Land, and the Jewish people who are now scattered in the East and the West, the North and the South, will be assembled together.

Now, observe that these events did not take place in the Christian Dispensation, for the nations did not enlist under that single banner—that divine Branch—but in this Dispensation of the Lord of Hosts all nations and peoples will enter beneath His shadow. Likewise Israel, which had been scattered throughout the world, was not gathered together in the Holy Land in the course of the Christian Dispensation, but in the beginning of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh this divine promise, which has been clearly stated in all the Books of the Prophets, has begun to materialize. Observe how from all corners of the world Jewish peoples are coming to the Holy Land, acquiring villages and lands to inhabit, and increasing day by day to such an extent that all Palestine is becoming their home.