

A Talk on Naw-Rúz (New Year's Day)

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Friday evening, March 21st, 1913, at 15 rue Greuze, Paris. In the east this date is celebrated as New Year's day.

I am extremely glad to see you on this Nau Rooz occasion. This day is the anniversary of many historical events, among them the victory of the Persians over the Arabs who invaded Persia and were successfully repulsed.

This day in Persia inaugurates a feast which continues for thirteen days and in which all take part, rich and poor alike. They adorn themselves with new clothes and their houses are open to all. Money is distributed, music is played and the houses are decorated with flowers, for it is a fete; work is put aside and enjoyment invited. Travelers in Persia feel this transformation, for the country is in a state of complete renewal. A town which seemed dead yesterday comes to life today. People who looked anxious[pg 75] yesterday, today have faces shining with gladness. The poor man of yesterday, with sordid garments, is well dressed today and the whole national life is infused with joy. From time immemorial this day has been consecrated, for in this there is a symbol.



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At this moment the sun appears at the meridian and the day and night are equal. Until today the north pole has been in darkness. This sacred day when the sun illumines equally the whole earth is called the equinox and the equinox is the symbol of the divine messenger. The sun of truth rises on the horizon of divine mercy and sends forth its rays on all. This day is consecrated to this commemoration. It is the beginning of the spring. When the sun appears at the equinox it causes a movement in all living things. The mineral world is set in motion,, plants begin to sprout, the desert is changed into a prairie, trees bud and every living thing responds, including the bodies of animals and men.

The rising of the sun at the equinox is the symbol of life and the human reality is revived; our thoughts are transformed and our intelligence is quickened. The sun of truth bestows eternal life, just as the solar sun is the cause of terrestrial life.

The day of the appearance of God's messenger on earth is ever a sacred day, a day when man commemorates his lord.

Among the ancient Persians this day was [pg 76] looked upon as the holy day of the year — a day when hospitals and charitable institutions were founded, collections for the poor were made and every effort put forth that it might not be allowed to pass without leaving some divine trace and throughout Persia one sees these historical traces.

I am spending this New Year's day in Paris. I hope for considerable results from this fact. May a powerful influence remain in your hearts, signs of eternal joy and happiness that will illumine the kingdom in this city. May the breezes of the Holy Spirit waft upon you, that your intelligence may progress and your souls rejoice in your lord. Thus will you become eternal beings shining in the divine kingdom.



'Abdu'l-Bahá seated himself in his usual chair by the window. A band of street singers just below struck up noisily. A girl in the flat above was practicing on the piano. 'Abdu'l-Bahá sat quietly till

the noise ceased and still looking out of the window gave the following talk on the celestial music of the spheres:

Last night a Hindu professor of music came to see me. He brought with him a musical instrument called the vina and sang for us certain Oriental verses, accompanying himself on the vina. Overhead, our neighbor was playing the piano, but as soon as the professor began, the piano became silent till the Hindu finished. This teaches us a lesson — whenever we hear[pg 77] superb music we must listen; then we will forget all inferior music. For instance, when a lover of music hearkens once to the entrancing notes of a great master, his love for music will no longer be satisfied by the playing of a pupil. If he listen with equal pleasure to the pupil, it shows a lack of artistic appreciation.

Let us suppose that the most accomplished artist of Paris is playing for us in this room, inspiring the hearts by immortal songs and charming us with celestial harmonies — is it possible that any one of us could leave this room and going through the streets stop to enjoy the crude notes of a hurdy-gurdy?

Today there are many melodies; from every studio divers strains are floated to our ears, but these tunes have become antiquated and covered with the rust of time. For thousands of years the same notes have been heard. They lack their original charm and purity, for the singers have grown old and decrepit and lost their voices. The song of life has lost its virility. From every direction melodies are sounded and we must needs have discriminating ears.

Let us seek the song with the sweetest strains, so that it may be taken up by the angles and carried to the supreme concourse. Let us hearken to the melody which will stir the world of humanity, so that the people may be transformed with joy.

Let us listen to a symphony which will confer[pg 78] life on man; then we can obtain universal results; then we shall receive a new spirit; then we shall become illumined. Let us investigate a song which is above all songs; one which will develop the spirit and produce harmony and exhilaration, unfolding the inner potentialities of life.

Whenever the sun of reality dawns, the lower sphere expresses the virtues of the highest world.

Why does not man harken to the soul-stirring music of the supreme concourse and not run wild with joy over the jarring notes of a street organ!

Strive day and night; perchance these sleeping ones may be awakened by the celestial strains of the city of melody and hear the soft, delicate music which is streaming down from the kingdom of Abhá.[pg 79]

