

# Address Given By ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to The Spiritual Alliance

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original English



This world is non-existent, adorned in the form of existence.

— (Bahá’u’lláh in the Tablet to the Zoroastrians)

Chapter VIII

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We observe that every movement which establishes unity and amity brings in its train life and every cause which promotes differences and enmity carries death in its wake. Every



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philanthropic movement is born through love and unity and every movement which has produced ruin and devastation has been born through hostility and differences.

We must strive untiringly, perchance we may discover a plan whereby amity and unity will result. Today there are many affiliations inaugurated to bring about more or less unity.

The first link which creates love and justice is the family bond, the second is the patriotic bond, the third is the racial bond, and the fourth is the civic bond. These, although useful in their own limited spheres, are not potent enough to bring about the unification of the entire race. Have we not learned often and with much sorrow that there has been a quarrel between the members[pg 176] of a family, or the inhabitants of one land, or the denizens of various states, or the individuals of different cities?

A permanent peace in the world of existence can be established only through the power of the spirit. Spirit is the ruler over the body. If the people are emancipated through one spirit, there is not a trace of doubt but that the greatest bond of union and harmony will be established amongst them.

History informs us that every age has its special ties which bind the people together; but the strongest tie of all ages, the unbreakable tie which binds the hearts together, is the tie of true religion. Religion has been the means of uniting contending nations and harmonizing warring tribes. There is no agency on this planet more potent than the power of religion. Consider for a moment that in the era of Christ there were many nations who were thirsty for one another's blood, carrying at intervals fire and sword over the border lines. There were the Romans, the Greeks, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Egyptians. It was impossible to unite these conflicting tribes and peoples; but when the power of religion came into action it swept away all these barriers and cemented these nations that for ages had been waging war.

By the word religion I do not mean the present dogmatic and theological superstitions which are in the hands of the people. By religion I mean the world of celestial attributes. After the moral[pg 177] aspect of humanity becomes readjusted, then the greatest unity will be realized; but without this moral readjustment it is impossible to establish harmony and concord, for it is a

fact that war, conflict, friction and strife are but the visible results of deterioration of morality and corruption of character. But when the morality of humanity is beautified with praiseworthy virtues there will be an end to war.

For example, we observe that certain tribes and nations that are in a state of savagery desire warfare, such as the tribes of Peninsular Arabia and Central Africa. Their moral world is dark. Morality has reached a higher level in the western countries and whenever war is declared between two nations it is not always carried on with the same pitiless methods of torture and is more or less temporary. Many reforms are introduced among civilized nations — such as care of the wounded, non-molestation of the noncombatants and the observance of certain international laws entirely unknown to the savage tribes.

In these days there must needs be a mighty power of accord instilled into the nations. The principles of the oneness of the world of humanity must be proclaimed, understood and put into practice, so that all the nations and religions may again remember the long-forgotten fact — that they are all the progeny of primordial humanity, Adam, and the denizens of one land. Are they not breathing one air? Is not the same sun [pg 178] shining upon all? Are they not the sheep of one flock? Is not God the universal shepherd? Is he not kind unto all?

Let us banish the phantasmal thoughts of east and west, north and south, European and American, English and German, Persian and French.

Consider the creation of the infinite universe. This globe of ours is one of the smallest planets. Those stupendous bodies revolving in yonder immeasurable space, the infinite blue canopy of God, are many times greater than our small earth. To our eyes this globe appears spacious; yet when we look upon it with divine eyes, it is reduced to the tiniest atom. This small planet is not worthy of division. Is it not one home, one native land? Is not all humanity one race? Creationally there is no difference whatsoever between the peoples.

How short-sighted we would be should we try to divide a room into the eastern and western corners. The geographical division of this world is an exact parallel. Through our ignorance and lack of viewpoint we divide this common home, we divide the members of this family into

various races, we divide religion into different sects and then with those suppositional division we wage war against one another; we shed one another's blood and we pillage one another's possessions. Is not this unpardonable ignorance? Is this not the height of injustice? Were we just and could we observe without prejudice we would[pg 179] realize that there are no fundamental differences. For the last six thousand years there have been wars and contentions between the various nations and in every age we have had some great culminating catastrophe.

Were we given the vision of human brotherhood we could not have engaged in warfare. Consider how humanity has retrograded from its ideals, for it glories in fratricide. If one person kill another he is called a murderer and the civil authority brings him before the law; but if he kill one hundred thousand people on a battlefield, he is hailed as a conqueror. Is not this like unto some blood-thirsty wolf glorying in that he has wantonly strangled a hundred thousand sheep in a night? If a person steal one franc he will be branded as a thief, but if he pillage a whole country will be acclaimed a great hero. How ignorant is humanity!

From a physiological standpoint human beings differ from carnivorous animals. Their teeth, unlike the lion's, are not made for tearing flesh. All the functions of the human body are created for love and goodfellowship and it is evident that the continuation of this world of humanity depends upon the practice of these attributes and the destruction of the world of humanity lies in war and conflict. But through long custom and usage savagery and blood-thirstiness are kneaded into the very being of man and the Godlike attributes which contribute to the powers of treaty-making and international[pg 180] laws have not been sufficiently strong to stem the tide of warfare.

There must needs be some tremendous force to upraise the standard of eternal friendship between nations and this force must come through self-sacrifice and universal service.

At a time when the Orient was in the dark night of cataclysmic ignorance, His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, like unto a glorious sun, shone forth from the eastern horizon. In the midst of contention and the clashing rivalries of the Oriental peoples he boldly proclaimed the doctrine of the oneness of the world of humanity. Numerous souls who had the courage of their convictions gathered under his banner.

In order to promote universal peace and the confederation of the nations, they were ever ready to give up their possessions and their lives. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh suffered imprisonment, exile and incarceration for fifty years. While under chains he raised his voice and summoned the people to the tent of unity. More than twenty thousand hastened to the arena of sacrifice and while singing songs of joy were martyred at the hands of the executioners.

The governments of the east arose with great determination to exterminate this cause. They held councils and said, "We must uproot the tree of this community and abolish the foundation of this palace of universal peace which these people desire to found"; they said, "We want to carry conquest to other countries, we desire [pg 181] to make other nations captive, we wish to extend the boundary of our dominions and defend our frontiers. How are we going to do all these things except through militarism? And as Bahá'u'lláh's aim is to prevent war we must destroy him and his followers so that his ideals may not take root and flourish."

This illustration proves that those who live in the divine law are self-sacrificing in this path; for they have proven it by their deeds. They are neither visionaries nor utopians. With the greatest might and strength they have arisen to serve their fellow-men. Through their marvellous power they are establishing amity between the various nations and religions; they are working incessantly day and night.

Today in the Orient those souls from amongst the various sects, religions and nations who have accepted the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are cemented together with the power of affinity and love. Were you to enter any of their conferences in the Orient you would behold the Mussulmans, Buddhists, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians associating together in a spirit of unity and brotherhood to such degree that no one could differentiate one race from another. It is as though they had previously been opposing forces and were welded into one consciousness.

These souls have reached the highest station of self-sacrifice. Should the occasion arise, all that they possess would be freely given in order to unfurl the banner of the solidarity of the human [pg 182] race over the religions of the east and the west, so that all differences might be annulled and all peoples from one end of the earth to the other might sing in accord the song of life and peace, that it might be borne on the wings of light to the throne of the father, there to

be blended with the symphonies of the heavenly angels and thus heaven and earth become harmonized with the golden strains of the music of unity.

Be it known that there is but one foundation to the religion of God. The apparent differences have come through ignorance. Words differ but the purpose is one.

Consider how ignorant and rapacious is man. Domestic animals live with their kind in peace and harmony. If you bring together sheep from various countries, from France, Persia, America, etc., not one would contend: "I am a Persian sheep," or "I am an American sheep." Let us at least live together as these animals would. Is it fitting that we should be more savage than they? Again, if you collect in one room doves from Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Australia, cooingly they will love one another.

Man, who is endowed with intelligence, must not be less than they; for the greatest bounty in the world of existence is the mind which should lead men to love and concord. We must exercise the functions of such a holy power in the path of love and not expend it upon the inventions of Krupp guns, Mauser rifles and Maxim's rapid-firing cannons. God has endowed us with intellects,[pg 183] not for the purpose of making instruments of destruction; but that we might become diffusers of light; create love between the hearts; establish communion between the spirits and bring together the people of the east and the west.

Every cherished effort must extend its powers to other souls. Is there anything more cherished than the mind of man? We must expend this faculty in the cause of human union, for we are the children of one father. A delicate spiritual power is ever exercising an influence over the hearts and minds of men. Why should we abandon the holy power which binds us together and cleave to the barbarous traditions which keep us apart?

The world of existence is like unto an orchard and humanity is like unto the trees. All these trees are planted in the same orchard, reared through the heat of one sun, watered with one rain. We must be the cause of the adornment of this orchard. The world of humanity is like unto a rose garden and the various races, tongues and people are like unto contrasting flowers. The diversity

of colors in a rose-garden adds to the charm and beauty of the scene as variety enhances unity. Why should we not look upon the human world with rose-colored vision?

If this warfare and conflict are not entirely effaced, if the whole world of humanity is not united and in accord, if the various races refuse to associate with one another, how can we ever aspire to the realization of that dream of the [pg 184] millennium of which it is said, "The earth will be transformed into a delectable paradise and all the children of men will live in the utmost happiness"? If the members of a family are perfectly united it will add to their comfort and joy. If the people of a city are inspired with civic unity the whole community will advance. If the inhabitants of a great continent become one spirit in different bodies marvelous progress will be made and if the people of the entire globe are welded into one great commonwealth the prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven," will be a reality for each will have the kingdom within himself.

What sublime happiness! What God-inspired progress! What a heavenly ideal! What a divine disposal!

I request that each one of you work for this great end and hold fast to every means of harmony, that this blood-thirstiness may be forever quenched; that the horizons of the world may become illumined by the rays of a divine humanity and the east and the west become radiant with the light of its Lord. [pg 185]

