

Theosophical Society, Paris

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Since my arrival in Paris, I have been told of the Theosophical Society, and I know that it is composed of honoured and respected men. You are men of intellect and thought, men with spiritual ideals, and it is a great pleasure for me to be among you.

Let us thank God who has drawn us together this evening. It gives me great joy, for I see that you are seekers after truth. You are not held in bondage by the chains of prejudice, and your greatest longing is to know the truth. Truth may be likened to the sun! The sun is the luminous body that disperses all shadows; in the same way does truth scatter the shadows of our imagination. As the sun gives life to the body of humanity so does truth give life to their souls. Truth is a sun that rises from different points on the horizon.

Sometimes the sun rises from the centre of the horizon, then in summer it rises farther north, in winter farther south — but it is always the self-same sun, however different are the points of its rising.

In like manner truth is one, although its manifestations may be very different. Some men have eyes and see. These worship the sun, no matter from which point on the horizon it may dawn; and when the sun has left the winter sky to appear in the summer one, they know how to find it again. Others there are who worship only the spot from which the sun arose, and when it arises in its glory from another place they remain in contemplation before the spot of its former rising. Alas! these men are deprived of the blessings of the sun. Those who in truth adore the sun itself will recognize it from whatsoever dawning-place it may appear, and will straightway turn their faces towards its radiance.



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We must adore the sun itself and not merely the place of its appearance. In the same way men of enlightened heart worship truth on whatever horizon it appears. They are not bound by personality, but they follow the truth, and are able to recognize it no matter from whence it may come. It is this same truth which helps humanity to progress, which gives life to all created beings, for it is the Tree of Life! [pg 129]

In His teaching Bahá'u'lláh gives us the explanation of truth, and I wish to speak to you briefly about this, for I see that you are capable of understanding.

The first principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **The Search for Truth**

Man must cut himself free from all prejudice and from the result of his own imagination, so that he may be able to search for truth unhindered. Truth is one in all religions, and by means of it the unity of the world can be realized.

All the peoples have a fundamental belief in common. Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united.

The second principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **The Unity of Mankind**

The one all-loving God bestows His divine Grace and Favour on all mankind; one and all are servants of the Most High, and His Goodness, Mercy and loving Kindness are showered upon all His creatures. The glory of humanity is the heritage of each one.

All men are the leaves and fruit of one same tree, they are all branches of the tree of Adam, they all have the same origin. The same rain has fallen upon them all, the same warm sun makes them grow, they are all refreshed by the same breeze. The only differences that exist and that keep them apart are these: there are the [pg 130] children who need guidance, the ignorant to be instructed, the sick to be tended and healed; thus, I say that the whole of humanity is enveloped by the Mercy and Grace of God. As the Holy Writings tell us: All men are equal before God. He is no respecter of persons.

The third principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **Religion should be the Cause of Love and Affection**

Religion should unite all hearts and cause wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality, and bring life and light to each heart. If religion becomes a cause of dislike, hatred and division, it were better to be without it, and to withdraw from such a religion would be a truly religious act. For it is clear that the purpose of a remedy is to cure; but if the remedy should only aggravate the complaint it had better be left alone. Any religion which is not a cause of love and unity is no

religion. All the holy prophets were as doctors to the soul; they gave prescriptions for the healing of mankind; thus any remedy that causes disease does not come from the great and supreme Physician.

The fourth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **The Unity of Religion and Science**

We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other; a bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless. Any religion that contradicts science[pg 131] or that is opposed to it, is only ignorance — for ignorance is the opposite of knowledge.

Religion which consists only of rites and ceremonies of prejudice is not the truth. Let us earnestly endeavour to be the means of uniting religion and science.

'Alí, the son-in-law of Muḥammad, said: "That which is in conformity with science is also in conformity with religion." Whatever the intelligence of man cannot understand, religion ought not to accept. Religion and science walk hand in hand, and any religion contrary to science is not the truth.

The fifth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **Prejudices of Religion, Race or Sect destroy the foundation of Humanity**

All the divisions in the world, hatred, war and bloodshed, are caused by one or other of these prejudices.

The whole world must be looked upon as one single country, all the nations as one nation, all men as belonging to one race. Religions, races, and nations are all divisions of man's making only, and are necessary only in his thought; before God there are neither Persians, Arabs, French nor English; God is God for all, and to Him all creation is one. We must obey God, and strive to follow Him by leaving all our prejudices and bringing about peace on earth.

The sixth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **Equal opportunity of the means of Existence**

Every human being has the right to live; they have a[pg 132] right to rest, and to a certain amount of well-being. As a rich man is able to live in his palace surrounded by luxury and the greatest comfort, so should a poor man be able to have the necessities of life. Nobody should die of hunger; everybody should have sufficient clothing; one man should not live in excess while another has no possible means of existence.

Let us try with all the strength we have to bring about happier conditions, so that no single soul may be destitute.

The seventh principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **The Equality of Men — equality before the Law**

The Law must reign, and not the individual; thus will the world become a place of beauty and true brotherhood will be realized. Having attained solidarity, men will have found truth.

The eighth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **Universal Peace**

A Supreme Tribunal shall be elected by the peoples and governments of every nation, where members from each country and government shall assemble in unity. All disputes shall be brought before this Court, its mission being to prevent war.

The ninth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **That Religion should not concern itself with Political Questions**

Religion is concerned with things of the spirit, politics with things of the world. Religion has to work [pg 133] with the world of thought, whilst the field of politics lies with the world of external conditions.

It is the work of the clergy to educate the people, to instruct them, to give them good advice and teaching so that they may progress spiritually. With political questions they have nothing to do.

The tenth principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **Education and Instruction of Women**

Women have equal rights with men upon earth; in religion and society they are a very important element. As long as women are prevented from attaining their highest possibilities, so long will men be unable to achieve the greatness which might be theirs.

The eleventh principle of Bahá'u'lláh is: **The Power of the Holy Spirit, by which alone Spiritual Development is achieved**

It is only by the breath of the Holy Spirit that spiritual development can come about. No matter how the material world may progress, no matter how splendidly it may adorn itself, it can never be anything but a lifeless body unless the soul is within, for it is the soul that animates the body; the body alone has no real significance. Deprived of the blessings of the Holy Spirit the material body would be inert.

Here are, very briefly explained, some of the principles of Bahá'u'lláh.

In short, it behoves us all to be lovers of truth. Let us seek her in every season and in every country, being [pg 134] careful never to attach ourselves to personalities. Let us see the light wherever it shines, and may we be enabled to recognize the light of truth no matter where it may arise. Let us inhale the perfume of the rose from the midst of thorns which surround it; let us drink the running water from every pure spring.

Since I arrived in Paris, it has given me much pleasure to meet such Parisians as you are, for praise be to God, you are intelligent, unprejudiced, and you long to know the truth. You have in your hearts the love of humanity, and as far as you are able, you exert yourselves in the cause of charitable work and in the bringing about of unity; this is especially what Bahá'u'lláh desired.

It is for this reason that I am so happy to be among you, and I pray for you, that you may be receptacles for the Blessings of God, and that you may be the means of spreading spirituality throughout this country.

You already have a wonderful material civilization and in like manner shall spiritual civilization be yours.

Monsieur Bleck thanked 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and he replied:

"I am very grateful to you for the kind sentiments which you have just uttered. I hope that these two movements will ere long be spread all over the earth. Then will the unity of humanity have pitched its tent in the centre of the world." [pg 135]

