O thou who dost search after truth! Thy letter of 13 December 1920 hath come.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

نسخه اصل فارسی

— 23 —

O thou who dost search after truth! Thy letter of 13 December 1920 hath come.

From the days of Adam until today, the religions of God have been made manifest, one following the other, and each one of them fulfilled its due function, revived mankind, and provided education and enlightenment. They freed the people from the darkness of the world of nature and ushered them into the brightness of the Kingdom. As each succeeding Faith and Law became revealed it remained for some centuries a richly fruitful tree and to it was committed the happiness of humankind. However, as the centuries rolled by, it aged, it flourished no more and put forth no fruit, wherefore was it then made young again.

The religion of God is one religion, but it must ever be renewed. Moses, for example, was sent forth to man and He established a Law, and the Children of Israel, through that Mosaic Law, were delivered out of their ignorance and came into the light; they were lifted up from their abjectness and attained to a glory that fadeth not. Still, as the long years wore on, that radiance passed by, that splendor set, that bright day turned to night; and once that night grew triply dark, the star of the Messiah dawned, so that again a glory lit the world.

Our meaning is this: the religion of God is one, and it is the educator of humankind, but still, it needs must be made new. When thou dost plant a tree, its height increaseth day by day. It putteth forth blossoms and leaves and luscious fruits. But after a long time, it doth grow old, yielding no fruitage any more. Then doth the Husbandman of Truth take up the seed from that same tree, and plant it in a pure soil; and lo, there standeth the first tree, even as it was before.

Note thou carefully that in this world of being, all things must ever be made new. Look at the material world about thee, see how it hath now been renewed. The thoughts have changed, the ways of life have been revised, the sciences and arts show a new vigor, discoveries and inventions are new, perceptions are new. How then could such a vital power as religion — the guarantor of mankind’s great advances, the very means of attaining everlasting life, the fosterer of infinite excellence, the light of both worlds — not be made new? This would be incompatible with the grace and loving-kindness of the Lord.

Religion, moreover, is not a series of beliefs, a set of customs; religion is the teachings of the Lord God, teachings which constitute the very life of humankind, which urge high thoughts upon the mind, refine the character, and lay the groundwork for man’s everlasting honor.

Note thou: could these fevers in the world of the mind, these fires of war and hate, of resentment and malice among the nations, this aggression of peoples against peoples, which have destroyed the tranquillity of the whole world ever be made to abate, except through the living waters of the teachings of God? No, never!

And this is clear: a power above and beyond the powers of nature must needs be brought to bear, to change this black darkness into light, and these hatreds and resentments, grudges and spites, these endless wrangles and wars, into fellowship and love amongst all the peoples of the earth. This power is none other than the breathings of the Holy Spirit and the mighty inflow of the Word of God.