

Talk at Orient-Occident-Unity Conference

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

Tonight I am most happy in presenting myself before an audience such as this. I am an Oriental and have come into the West to meet the people of the Occident. Praise be to God! Upon the faces of those assembled here I perceive the light of God. This I consider an evidence of the possibility of uniting the East and the West, of establishing a perfect bond between Persia and America — one of the objects of this conference. For the Persians there is no government better fitted to contribute to the development of their natural resources and the helping of their national needs in a reciprocal alliance than the United States of America, and for the Americans there could be no better industrial outlet and market than the virgin commercial soil of Persia. The mineral wealth of Persia is still latent and untouched. It is my hope that the great American democracy may be instrumental in developing these hidden resources and that a bond of perfect amity and unity may be established between the American republic and the government of Persia. May this bond — whether material or spiritual — be well cemented. May the material civilization of America find complete efficacy and establishment in Persia, and may the spiritual civilization of Persia find acceptance and response in America.

Some of the creatures of existence can live solitary and alone. A tree, for instance, may live without the assistance and cooperation of other trees. Some animals are isolated and lead a separate existence away from their kind. But this is impossible for man. In



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his life and being cooperation and association are essential. Through association and meeting we find happiness and development, individual and collective.

For instance, when there is intercourse and cooperation between two villages, the advancement of each will be assured. Likewise, if intercommunication is established between two cities, both will benefit and progress. And if a reciprocal basis of agreement be reached between two countries, their individual and mutual interests will find great development. Therefore, in the unity of this radiant assemblage I behold the link between Orient and Occident.[pg 36] Such unity is the means and instrument of cooperation between the various countries of the East and West. It is evident, then, that the outcomes from this basis of agreement and accord are numberless and unlimited. Surely there will be great harvests of results forthcoming for Persia and America. In Persia advanced material civilization will be established and the doors thrown open wide to American commerce.

Above and beyond all this, a great love and fountain of affection shall bind and blend these two remote peoples, for Bahá'u'lláh has proclaimed to the world the solidarity of nations and the oneness of humanity. Addressing all mankind He has said, "Ye are all leaves of one tree and the drops of one sea." The world of humanity has been expressed by Him as a unit — as one family. It is, therefore, hoped that the American and Persian nations may be conjoined and united in reciprocal love. May they become one race endowed with the same susceptibilities. May these bonds of amity and accord be firmly established.

Bahá'u'lláh passed forty years of His life in prison and exile in order that He might upraise the banner of the oneness of the world of men. For this He bore all these ordeals and difficulties. He was under the dominion of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd. I, too, was in the prison of 'Abdu'l-Ḥamíd until the Committee of Union and Progress hoisted the standard of liberty and my fetters were removed. They exhibited great kindness and love toward me. I was made free and thereby enabled to come to this country. Were it not for the action of this Committee, I should not be with you here tonight. Therefore, you must all ask assistance and confirmation in behalf of this Committee through which the liberty of Turkey was proclaimed.

Briefly, I have traveled this long distance, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to this western continent in the desire and hope that the strongest bond of unity may be established between America and Persia. I know this to be your wish and purpose also and am sure of your cooperation. We shall, therefore, offer supplication in the divine threshold that a great love may take possession of the hearts of men and unite the nations of the world. We will pray that the ensign of international peace may be uplifted and that the oneness of the world of humanity may be realized and accomplished. All this is made possible and practicable through your efforts. May this American democracy be the first nation to establish the foundation of international agreement. May it be the first

nation to proclaim the universality of mankind. May it be the first to upraise the standard of the Most Great Peace, and through this nation of democracy may these philanthropic intentions and institutions be spread[pg 37] broadcast throughout the world. Truly, this is a great and revered nation. Here liberty has reached its highest degree. The intentions of its people are most praiseworthy. They are, indeed, worthy of being the first to build the Tabernacle of the Most Great Peace and proclaim the oneness of mankind. I will supplicate God for assistance and confirmation in your behalf.

