

Talk at Public Meeting Concluding Convention of Bahá'í Temple Unity

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Among the institutes of the Holy Books is that of the foundation of places of worship. That is to say, an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them. The real temple is the very Word of God; for to it all humanity must turn, and it is the center of unity for all mankind. It is the collective center, the cause of accord and communion of hearts, the sign of the solidarity of the human race, the source of eternal life. Temples are the symbols of the divine uniting force so that when the people gather there in the House of God they may recall the fact that the law has been revealed for them and that the law is to unite them. They will realize that just as this temple was founded for the unification of mankind, the law preceding and creating it came forth in the manifest Word. Jesus Christ, addressing Peter, said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church." This utterance was indicative of the faith of Peter, signifying: This faith of thine, O Peter, is the very cause and message of unity to the nations; it shall be the bond of union between the hearts of men and the foundation of the oneness of the world of humanity. In brief, the original purpose of temples and houses of worship is simply that of unity — places of meeting where various peoples, different races and souls of every capacity may come together in order that love and agreement should be manifest between them. That is why Bahá'u'lláh has commanded that a place of worship be built for all the religionists of the world; that all religions, races and sects



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may come together within its universal shelter; that the proclamation of the oneness of mankind shall go forth from its open courts of holiness — the announcement that humanity is the servant of God and that all are submerged in the ocean of His mercy. It is the Maṣḥriqu'l-Adḥkár. The world of existence may be likened to this temple and place of worship. For just as the external world is a place where the people of all races and colors, varying faiths, denominations and conditions come together — just as they are submerged in the same sea of divine favors — so, likewise, all may meet under the [pg 66] dome of the Maṣḥriqu'l-Adḥkár and adore the one God in the same spirit of truth; for the ages of darkness have passed away, and the century of light has come. Ignorant prejudices are being dispelled, and the light of unity is shining. The differences existing between nations and peoples will soon be annulled, and the fundamentals of the divine religions, which are no other than the oneness and solidarity of the human race, are being established. For thousands of years the human race has been at war. It is enough. Now let mankind, for a time at least, consort in amity and peace. Enmity and hatred have ruled. Let the world, for a period, exercise love. For thousands of years the nations have denied each other, considering each other as infidel and inferior. It is sufficient. We must now realize that we are the servants of one God, that we turn to one beneficent Father, live under one divine law, seek one reality and have one desire. Thus may we live in the utmost friendship and love, and in return the favors and bounties of God shall surround us; the world of humanity will be reformed; mankind, enjoy a new life; eternal light will illumine, and heavenly moralities become manifest.

Then divine policy shall govern the world, for the divine policy is the oneness of humanity. God is just and kind to all. He considers all as His servants. He excludes none, and His judgments are correct and true. No matter how complete human policy and foresight may appear, they are imperfect. If we do not seek the counsel of God or if we refuse to follow His dictates, it is presumptive evidence that we are knowing and wise, whereas God is ignorant; that we are sagacious and God is not. God forbid! We seek shelter in His mercy for this suggestion! No matter how far the human intelligence may advance, it is still but a drop, while divine omniscience is the ocean. Shall we say that a drop is imbued or endowed with qualities of which the ocean is devoid? Shall we believe that the policy and plan of this atom of a human soul are superior to the wisdom of the Omniscient? There is no greater ignorance than this. Briefly, some are mere children; with the utmost love we must educate them to make them wise. Others are sick and ailing; we must tenderly treat them until they recover. Some have unworthy morals; we must train them toward the standard of true morality. Other than this we are all the servants of one God and under the providence and protection of one Father.

These are the institutions of God and the foundations of His temple, the Maṣḥriqu'l-Adḥkár. The outer edifice is a symbol of the inner. May the people be admonished thereby.

I pray in your behalf that your hearts may be enlightened with [pg 67] the light of the love of God; that your minds may develop daily; that your spirits may become aglow with the fire and illumination of His glad tidings, until these divine foundations may become established throughout the human world. The first of these institutions and foundations is the oneness of humanity and love among mankind. The second is the Most Great Peace. Praise be to God! This American democracy manifests capacity, showing forth readiness to become the standard-bearer of the Most Great Peace. May its hosts be the hosts of the oneness of humanity. May they serve the threshold of God and spread the message of the good pleasure of God.

O Thou kind Lord! This gathering is turning to Thee. These hearts are radiant with Thy love. These minds and spirits are exhilarated by the message of Thy glad tidings. O God! Let this American democracy become glorious in spiritual degrees even as it has aspired to material degrees, and render this just government victorious. Confirm this revered nation to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity, to promulgate the Most Great Peace, to become thereby most glorious and praiseworthy among all the nations of the world. O God! This American nation is worthy of Thy favors and is deserving of Thy mercy. Make it precious and near to Thee through Thy bounty and bestowal.

