

Talk at 309 West Seventy-eighth Street, New York

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Howard MacNutt

I am about to leave the city for a few days rest at Montclair. When I return, it is my wish to give a large feast of unity. A place for it has not yet been found. It must be outdoors under the trees, in some location away from city noise — like a Persian garden. The food will be Persian food. When the place is arranged, all will be informed, and we will have a general meeting in which hearts will be bound together, spirits blended and a new foundation for unity established. All the friends will come. They will be my guests. They will be as the parts and members of one body. The spirit of life manifest in that body will be one spirit. The foundation of that temple of unity will be one foundation. Each will be a stone in that foundation, solid and interdependent. Each will be as a leaf, blossom or fruit upon one tree. For the sake of fellowship and unity I desire this feast and spiritual gathering.

Whatsoever is conducive to unity is merciful and from the divine bounty itself. Every universal affair is divine. Everything which conduces to separation and estrangement is satanic because it emanates from the purposes of self. Consider how clearly it is shown in creation that the cause of existence is unity and cohesion and the cause of nonexistence is separation and dissension. By a divine power of creation the elements assemble together in affinity, and the result is a composite being. Certain of these elements have united, and man has come into existence. Certain other combinations produce plants and animals. Therefore, this affinity of the inanimate elements is the cause of life and being. Through their commingling, therefore, human affinity, love and



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fellowship are made possible. If the elements were not assembled together in affinity to produce the body of man, the higher intelligent forces could not be manifest in the body. But when these elements separate, when their affinity and cohesion are overcome, death and dissolution of the body they have built inevitably follow. Therefore, affinity and unity among even these material elements mean life in the body of man, and their discord and disagreement mean death. Throughout all creation, in all the kingdoms, this law is written: that love and affinity are the cause of life, and discord and separation are the cause of death.

Consider the bodies of all the natural organisms. Certain elements have gathered and combine in chemical affinity. The tree, the man, the fish are due to this attraction and cohesion which have brought the elements together. A composition or composite being has resulted. The outcome of certain atomic grouping, for instance, is a mirror, table or clock because a cohesive power has magnetized and bound these atoms together. When that attracting power is withdrawn, dissolution and disintegration follow; no mirror, table or clock remain — no trace, no existence. Therefore, commingling of the atoms brings forth a reality, while dispersion or dissemination of them is equivalent to nonexistence.

Study the law of affinity among the domestic animals. They manifest fellowship, they live in flocks and herds; the love of association is evident among them. Among birds we see evidences of instinctive fellowship and love. But the ferocious animals and birds of prey are just the reverse of the domestic. Sheep, cows and horses graze together in concord and agreement, but ferocious animals are never seen associating in love and fellowship. Each lives solitary and alone or with a single mate. When they see each other, they manifest the utmost ferocity. Dogs pounce upon dogs; wolves, tigers, lions rage, snarl and fight to the death. Their ferocity is instinctive. There is a creative reason for it. Birds of prey, like eagles and hawks, live solitary and build their nests apart, but doves fly in flocks and nest in the same branches. When an eagle meets another eagle, there is a furious battle. The meeting of two doves is a peace meeting. Therefore, it is evident that these blessed characteristics as well as the reverse are found among the creatures of a lower kingdom.

The great mass of humanity does not exercise real love and fellowship. The elect of humanity are those who live together in love and unity. They are preferable before God because the divine attributes are already manifest in them. The supreme love and unity is witnessed in the divine Manifestations. Among Them unity is indissoluble, changeless, eternal and everlasting. Each One is expressive and representative of all. If we deny One of the Manifestations of God, we deny all. To inflict persecution upon One is to persecute the Others. In all degrees of existence each One praises and sanctifies the Others. Each of Them holds to the solidarity of mankind and promotes the unity of human hearts. Next to the divine Manifestations come the believers whose characteristics are agreement, fellowship and love. The Bahá'í friends in Persia attained

such a brotherhood and love that it really became a hindrance in the conduct of material affairs. Each one into whatever house of the friends he went considered himself the owner of the house, so to speak. There was no duality but complete mutuality of interests and love. The visiting friend would have no hesitation in opening the provision box and taking out enough food for his needs. They wore each other's clothes as their own when necessary. If in need of a hat or cloak, they would take and use it. The owner of the clothing would be thankful and grateful that the garment had gone. When he returned home, he would perhaps be told, "So and so was here and took away your coat." He would reply, "Praise be to God! I am so grateful to him. Praise be to God! I am so thankful I have been given this opportunity of showing my love for him." To such an extreme degree this love and fellowship expressed itself that Bahá'u'lláh commanded that no one should take possession of another's belongings unless presented with them. The intention is to show to what an extent unity and love prevailed among the Bahá'í friends in the East.

I hope that this same degree and intensity of love may become manifest and apparent here; that the spirit of God shall so penetrate your hearts that each one of the beloved of God shall be considered as all; that each one may become a cause of unity and center of accord and all mankind be bound together in real fellowship and love.

