

# Talk at Green Acre

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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## Talk at Green Acre

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Eliot, Maine

Notes by Edna McKinney

The physical beauty of this place is very wonderful. We hope that a spiritual charm may surround and halo it; then its beauty will be perfect. There is a spiritual atmosphere manifest here particularly at sunset.

In cities like New York the people are submerged in the sea of materialism. Their sensibilities are attuned to material forces, their perceptions purely physical. The animal energies predominate in their activities; all their thoughts are directed to material things; day and night they are devoted to the attractions of this world, without aspiration beyond the life that is vanishing and mortal. In schools and temples of learning knowledge of the sciences acquired is based upon material observations only; there is no[pg 262] realization of Divinity in their methods and conclusions — all have reference to the world of matter. They are not interested in attaining knowledge of the mysteries of God or understanding the secrets of the heavenly Kingdom; what they acquire is based altogether upon visible and tangible evidences. Beyond these evidences they are without susceptibilities; they have no idea of the world of inner significances and are utterly out of touch with God, considering this an indication of reasonable attitude and philosophical judgement whereof they are self-sufficient and proud.

As a matter of fact, this supposed excellence is possessed in its superlative degree by the animals. The animals are without knowledge of God; so to speak, they are deniers of Divinity and understand nothing of the Kingdom and its heavenly mysteries. As deniers



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of the Kingdom, they are utterly ignorant of spiritual things and uninformed of the supernatural world. Therefore, if it be a perfection and virtue to be without knowledge of God and His Kingdom, the animals have attained the highest degree of excellence and proficiency. Then the donkey is the greatest scientist and the cow an accomplished naturalist, for they have obtained what they know without schooling and years of laborious study in colleges, trusting implicitly to the evidence of the senses and relying solely upon intuitive virtues. The cow, for instance, is a lover of the visible and a believer in the tangible, contented and happy when pasture is plenty, perfectly serene, a blissful exponent of the transcendental school of philosophy. Such is the status of the material philosophers, who glory in sharing the condition of the cow, imagining themselves in a lofty station. Reflect upon their ignorance and blindness.

Nay, rather, the virtue of man is this: that he can investigate the ideals of the Kingdom and attain knowledge which is denied the animal in its limitation. The station of man is this: that he has the power to attain those ideals and thereby differentiate and consciously distinguish himself an infinite degree above the kingdoms of existence below him.

The station of man is great, very great. God has created man after His own image and likeness. He has endowed him with a mighty power which is capable of discovering the mysteries of phenomena. Through its use man is able to arrive at ideal conclusions instead of being restricted to the mere plane of sense impressions. As he possesses sense endowment in common with the animals, it is evident that he is distinguished above them by his conscious power of penetrating abstract realities. He acquires divine wisdom; he searches out the mysteries of creation; he witnesses [pg 263] the radiance of omnipotence; he attains the second birth — that is to say, he is born out of the material world just as he is born of the mother; he attains to everlasting life; he draws nearer to God; his heart is replete with the love of God. This is the foundation of the world of humanity; this is the image and likeness of God; this is the reality of man; otherwise, he is an animal. Verily, God has created the animal in the image and likeness of man, for though man outwardly is human, yet in nature he possesses animal tendencies.

You must endeavor to understand the mysteries of God, attain the ideal knowledge and arrive at the station of vision, acquiring directly from the Sun of Reality and receiving a destined portion from the ancient bestowal of God.

