

# Talk at Home of Madame Morey

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Edna McKinney

In the Books of the Prophets certain glad tidings are recorded which are absolutely true and free from doubt. The East has ever been the dawning point of the Sun of Reality. All the Prophets of God have appeared there. The religions of God have been promulgated, the teachings of God have been spread and the law of God founded in the East. The Orient has always been the center of lights. The West has acquired illumination from the East, but in some respects the reflection of the light has been greater in the Occident. This is especially true of Christianity. Christ appeared in Palestine, and His teachings were founded there. Although the doors of the Kingdom were opened in that country and the bestowals of Divinity were spread broadcast from its center, the people of the West have embraced and promulgated Christianity more fully than those in the East. The Sun of Reality shone forth from the horizon of the East, but its heat and ray are most resplendent in the West, where the radiant standard of Christ has been upraised. I have great hopes that the lights of Bahá'u'lláh's appearance may also find the fullest manifestation and reflection in these western regions, for the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are especially applicable to the conditions of the people here. The western nations are [pg 290] endowed with the capability of understanding the rational and peerless words of Bahá'u'lláh and realizing that the essence of the teachings of all the former Prophets can be found in His utterance.

The teachings of Christ have been promulgated by Bahá'u'lláh, Who has also revealed new teachings applicable to present conditions in the world of humanity. He has trained the people of the East through the power and protection of the Holy Spirit,



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cemented the souls of humanity together and established the foundations of international unity.

Through the power of His words the hearts of the people of all religions have been attuned in harmony. For instance, among the Bahá'ís in Persia there are Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews and many others of varying denominations and beliefs who have been brought together in unity and love in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Although these people were formerly hostile and antagonistic, filled with hatred and bitterness toward each other, bloodthirsty and pillaging, considering that animosity and attack were the means of attaining the good pleasure of God, they have now become loving and filled with the radiant zeal of fellowship and brotherhood, the purpose of them all being service to the world of humanity, promotion of international peace, the unification of the divine religions and deeds of universal philanthropy. By their words and actions they are proving the verity of Bahá'u'lláh.

Consider the animosity and hatred existing today between the various nations of the world. What disagreements and hostilities arise, what warfare and contention, how much bloodshed, what injustice and tyranny! Just now there is war in eastern Turkey, also war between Turkey and Italy. Nations are devoted to conquest and bloodshed, filled with the animus of religious hatred, seeking the good pleasure of God by killing and destroying those whom in their blindness they consider enemies. How ignorant they are! That which is forbidden by God they consider acceptable to Him. God is love; God seeketh fellowship, purity, sanctity and long-suffering; these are the attributes of Divinity. Therefore, these warring, raging nations have arisen against Divinity, imagining they are serving God. What gross ignorance this is! What injustice, blindness and lack of realization! Briefly, we must strive with heart and soul in order that this darkness of the contingent world may be dispelled, that the lights of the Kingdom shall shine upon all the horizons, the world of humanity become illumined, the image of God become apparent in human mirrors, the law of God be well established and that all regions of the world shall enjoy peace, comfort and composure beneath the equitable protection of God. My [pg 291] admonition and exhortation to you is this: Be kind to all people, love humanity, consider all mankind as your relations and servants of the most high God. Strive day and night that animosity and contention may pass away from the hearts of men, that all religions shall become reconciled and the nations love each other so that no racial, religious or political prejudice may remain and the world of humanity behold God as the beginning and end of all existence. God has created all, and all return to God. Therefore, love humanity with all your heart and soul. If you meet a poor man, assist him; if you see the sick, heal him; reassure the affrighted one, render the cowardly noble and courageous, educate the ignorant, associate with the stranger. Emulate God. Consider how kindly, how lovingly He deals with all, and follow His example. You must treat people in accordance with the divine precepts — in other

words, treat them as kindly as God treats them, for this is the greatest attainment possible for the world of humanity.

Furthermore, know ye that God has created in man the power of reason, whereby man is enabled to investigate reality. God has not intended man to imitate blindly his fathers and ancestors. He has endowed him with mind, or the faculty of reasoning, by the exercise of which he is to investigate and discover the truth, and that which he finds real and true he must accept. He must not be an imitator or blind follower of any soul. He must not rely implicitly upon the opinion of any man without investigation; nay, each soul must seek intelligently and independently, arriving at a real conclusion and bound only by that reality. The greatest cause of bereavement and disheartening in the world of humanity is ignorance based upon blind imitation. It is due to this that wars and battles prevail; from this cause hatred and animosity arise continually among mankind. Through failure to investigate reality the Jews rejected Jesus Christ. They were expecting His coming; by day and night they mourned and lamented, saying, "O God! Hasten Thou the day of the advent of Christ," expressing most intense longing for the Messiah; but when Christ appeared, they denied and rejected Him, treated Him with arrogant contempt, sentenced Him to death and finally crucified Him. Why did this happen? Because they were blindly following imitations, believing that which had descended to them as a heritage from their fathers and ancestors, tenaciously holding to it and refusing to investigate the reality of Christ. Therefore, they were deprived of the bounties of Christ, whereas if they had forsaken imitations and investigated the reality of the Messiah, they would have surely been guided to believing in Him. Instead of this they said, "We have heard from our fathers[pg 292] and have read in the Old Testament that Christ must come from an unknown place; now we find that this one has come from Nazareth." Steeped in the literal interpretation and imitating the beliefs of fathers and ancestors, they failed to understand the fact that although the body of Jesus came from Nazareth, the reality of the Christ came from the unknown place of the divine Kingdom. They also said that the scepter of Christ would be of iron — that is to say, He should wield a sword. When Christ appeared, He did possess a sword; but it was the sword of His tongue with which He separated the false from the true. But the Jews were blind to the spiritual significance and symbolism of the prophetic words. They also expected that the Messiah would sit upon the throne of David, whereas Christ had neither throne nor semblance of sovereignty; nay, rather, He was a poor man, apparently abject and vanquished; therefore, how could He be the veritable Christ? This was one of their most insistent objections based upon ancestral interpretation and teaching. In reality, Christ was glorified with an eternal sovereignty and everlasting dominion — spiritual and not temporal. His throne and Kingdom were established in human hearts, where He reigns with power and authority without end. Notwithstanding the fulfillment of all the prophetic signs in Christ, the Jews denied Him and entered the period of their deprivation because of their allegiance to imitations and ancestral forms.

Among other objections they said, "We are promised through the tongue of the prophets that Christ at the time of His coming would proclaim the law of the Torah, whereas now we see this person abrogating the commands of the Pentateuch, disturbing our blessed Sabbath and abolishing the law of divorce. He has left nothing of the ancient law of Moses; therefore, he is the enemy of Moses." In reality, Christ proclaimed and completed the law of Moses. He was the very helper and assister of Moses. He spread the Book of Moses throughout the world and established anew the fundamentals of the law revealed by Him. He abolished certain unimportant laws and forms which were no longer compatible with the exigencies of the time, such as divorce and plurality of wives. The Jews did not comprehend this, and the cause of their ignorance was blind and tenacious adherence to imitations of ancient forms and teachings; therefore, they finally sentenced Christ to death.

They, likewise, said, "Through the tongues of the prophets it was announced that during the time of Christ's appearance the justice of God would prevail throughout the world, tyranny and oppression would be unknown, justice would even extend to the animal kingdom, ferocious beasts would associate in gentleness[pg 293] and peace, the wolf and the lamb would drink from the same spring, the lion and the deer meet in the same meadow, the eagle and quail dwell together in the same nest; but instead of this, we see that during the time of this supposed Christ the Romans have conquered Palestine and are ruling it with extreme tyranny, justice is nowhere apparent, and signs of peace in the animal kingdom are conspicuously absent." These statements and attitudes of the Jews were inherited from their fathers — blind allegiance to literal expectations which did not come to pass during the time of Jesus Christ. The real purport of these prophetic statements was that various peoples, symbolized by the wolf and lamb, between whom love and fellowship were impossible would come together during the Messiah's reign, drink from the same fountain of life in His teachings and become His devoted followers. This was realized when peoples of all religions, nationalities and dispositions became united in their beliefs and followed Christ in humility, associating in love and brotherhood under the shadow of His divine protection. The Jews, being blind to this and holding to their bigoted imitations, were insolent and arrogant toward Christ and crucified Him. Had they investigated the reality of Christ, they would have beheld His beauty and truth.

God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. Each human creature has individual endowment, power and responsibility in the creative plan of God. Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise, you will be

utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God. Turn to God, supplicate humbly at His threshold, seeking assistance and confirmation, that God may rend asunder the veils that obscure your vision. Then will your eyes be filled with illumination, face to face you will behold the reality of God and your heart become completely purified from the dross of ignorance, reflecting the glories and bounties of the Kingdom.

Holy souls are like soil which has been plowed and tilled with much earnest labor, the thorns and thistles cast aside and all weeds uprooted. Such soil is most fruitful, and the harvest from it will prove full and plenteous. In this same way man must free himself [pg 294] from the weeds of ignorance, thorns of superstitions and thistles of imitations that he may discover reality in the harvests of true knowledge. Otherwise, the discovery of reality is impossible, contention and divergence of religious belief will always remain, and mankind, like ferocious wolves, will rage and attack each other in hatred and antagonism. We supplicate God that He may destroy the veils which limit our vision and that these becloudings, which darken the way of the manifestation of the shining lights, may be dispelled in order that the effulgent Sun of Reality may shine forth. We implore and invoke God, seeking His assistance and confirmation. Man is a child of God, most noble, lofty and beloved by God, his Creator. Therefore, he must ever strive that the divine bounties and virtues bestowed upon him may prevail and control him. Just now the soil of human hearts seems like black earth, but in the innermost substance of this dark soil there are thousands of fragrant flowers latent. We must endeavor to cultivate and awaken these potentialities, discover the secret treasure in this very mine and depository of God, bring forth these resplendent powers long hidden in human hearts. Then will the glories of both worlds be blended and increased and the quintessence of human existence be made manifest.

We must not be content with simply following a certain course because we find our fathers pursued that course. It is the duty of everyone to investigate reality, and investigation of reality by another will not do for us. If all in the world were rich and one man poor, of what use are these riches to that man? If all the world be virtuous and a man steeped in vice, what good results are forthcoming from him? If all the world be resplendent and a man blind, where are his benefits? If all the world be in plenty and a man hungry, what sustenance does he derive? Therefore, every man must be an investigator for himself. Ideas and beliefs left by his fathers and ancestors as a heritage will not suffice, for adherence to these are but imitations, and imitations have ever been a cause of disappointment and misguidance. Be investigators of reality that you may attain the verity of truth and life.

You have asked why it was necessary for the soul that was from God to make this journey back to God? Would you like to understand the reality of this question just as I teach it, or do you wish to hear it as the world teaches it? For if I should answer you

according to the latter way, this would be but imitation and would not make the subject clear.

The reality underlying this question is that the evil spirit, Satan or whatever is interpreted as evil, refers to the lower nature in man.[pg 295] This baser nature is symbolized in various ways. In man there are two expressions: One is the expression of nature; the other, the expression of the spiritual realm. The world of nature is defective. Look at it clearly, casting aside all superstition and imagination. If you should leave a man uneducated and barbarous in the wilds of Africa, would there be any doubt about his remaining ignorant? God has never created an evil spirit; all such ideas and nomenclature are symbols expressing the mere human or earthly nature of man. It is an essential condition of the soil of earth that thorns, weeds and fruitless trees may grow from it. Relatively speaking, this is evil; it is simply the lower state and baser product of nature.

It is evident, therefore, that man is in need of divine education and inspiration, that the spirit and bounties of God are essential to his development. That is to say, the teachings of Christ and the Prophets are necessary for his education and guidance. Why? Because They are the divine Gardeners Who till the earth of human hearts and minds. They educate man, uproot the weeds, burn the thorns and remodel the waste places into gardens and orchards where fruitful trees grow. The wisdom and purpose of Their training is that man must pass from degree to degree of progressive unfoldment until perfection is attained. For instance, if a man should live his entire life in one city, he cannot gain a knowledge of the whole world. To become perfectly informed he must visit other cities, see the mountains and valleys, cross the rivers and traverse the plains. In other words, without progressive and universal education perfection will not be attained.

Man must walk in many paths and be subjected to various processes in his evolution upward. Physically he is not born in full stature but passes through consecutive stages of fetus, infant, childhood, youth, maturity and old age. Suppose he had the power to remain young throughout his life. He then would not understand the meaning of old age and could not believe it existed. If he could not realize the condition of old age, he would not know that he was young. He would not know the difference between young and old without experiencing the old. Unless you have passed through the state of infancy, how would you know this was an infant beside you? If there were no wrong, how would you recognize the right? If it were not for sin, how would you appreciate virtue? If evil deeds were unknown, how could you commend good actions? If sickness did not exist, how would you understand health? Evil is nonexistent; it is the absence of good. Sickness is the loss of health; poverty, the lack of riches. When wealth disappears, you are poor; you look within the treasure box but find nothing there. Without[pg 296] knowledge there is ignorance; therefore, ignorance is simply the lack of knowledge.

Death is the absence of life. Therefore, on the one hand, we have existence; on the other, nonexistence, negation or absence of existence.

Briefly, the journey of the soul is necessary. The pathway of life is the road which leads to divine knowledge and attainment. Without training and guidance the soul could never progress beyond the conditions of its lower nature, which is ignorant and defective.[pg 297]

