

Talk at Home of Mrs. Corinne True

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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5338 Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Notes by Gertrude Buikema

I am well pleased with every person here this evening and most happy in meeting the friends of God and maidservants of the Merciful. Praise be to God! The faces are radiant, and the hearts are attracted to the Kingdom of Abhá. Faith is evident in the countenances of all, and this is a source of joy. The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, endured hardships and vicissitudes nearly fifty years. There was no ordeal or difficulty He did not experience, yet He endured all in perfect joy and happiness.

Those who beheld Him were assured of His great happiness, for no trace of sadness or sorrow was ever visible upon His face. Even in prison He was like a king enthroned in majesty and greatness, and He ever bore Himself with supreme confidence and dignity. When the officers and grandees of the government were presented to Him, they became respectful at once. His majesty and dignity were awe-inspiring. Remember: He was a prisoner — He was in prison. He endured ordeals and calamities for the sole purpose of illuminating us and in order that our hearts might be attracted to the Kingdom of God, our faces become radiant with the glad tidings of God; in order that we might be submerged in the ocean of lights and be as brilliant and shining candles, illuminating the dark recesses and flooding the regions with brightness. Now, as I look around, I observe that your faces — praise be to God! — are shining, your hearts are filled with the love of God, and you are thinking of service in the Cause of God. Therefore, I am very happy to be here, and I hope that this happiness will be with you always — an eternal condition.



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AUDIO

We visited San Francisco and from there went to Los Angeles. In these places we found most devoted friends. Truly zealous and aglow with the fire of the love of God, their sole purpose is ever to serve the Kingdom of Abhá. I hope that you may serve even more faithfully and take precedence over all the other friends. May the[pg 384] fire of the love of God be so enkindled in Chicago that all the cities in America shall be ignited. This is my hope.

My third visit here expresses the degree of my longing to see you and the extent of my love. It was thought that I should go direct from San Francisco to New York and thence to the Orient; but impelled by excessive love, I have visited Chicago again to associate with you in fellowship and fragrance. I hope that these three visits may be most productive of future results. May you all become signs of unity; may each one be a standard of Bahá'u'lláh, each one shine as a star, each one become precious and worthy in the Kingdom of God. May you attain such a condition of spirituality that the people will be astounded, saying, "Verily, these souls are proofs in themselves of the validity of Bahá'u'lláh, for through His training they have been completely regenerated. These souls are peerless; they are truly the people of the Kingdom; they are distinguished above the people about them. This is in reality a proof of Bahá'u'lláh. Behold how educated and illumined they have become."

When this Cause appeared in the Orient, the friends and followers were self-sacrificing to the utmost, forfeiting everything. It is a significant and wonderful fact that, although the most precious thing on earth is life, yet twenty thousand people offered themselves willingly in the pathway of martyrdom. Recently, in Yazd two hundred of the Bahá'í friends were cruelly slain. They went to the place of martyrdom in the utmost ecstasy of attraction, smiling with joy and gratitude upon their persecutors. Some of them offered sweetmeats to their executioners, saying, "Taste of this in order that with sweetness and enjoyment you may bestow upon us the blessed cup of martyrdom." Among these beloved and glorified ones were a number of women who were subjected to the most cruel manner of execution. Some were cut to pieces; and their executioners, not content with such butchery, set others on fire, and their bodies were consumed. Throughout these terrible ordeals not a single soul among the Bahá'í friends objected or recanted. They offered no resistance, although the Bahá'ís in that city were most courageous and strong. In physical strength and fortitude one of these Bahá'ís could have withstood many of their enemies, but they accepted martyrdom in the spirit of complete resignation and nonresistance. Many of them died, crying out, "O Lord! Forgive them; they know not what they do. If they knew, they would not commit this wrong." In the throes of martyrdom they willingly offered all they possessed in this life.

It is stated in certain prophecies that when the standard of God[pg 385] appears in the East, its signs will become evident in the West. This is truly good news and glad tidings for you. I hope that this promise may be fulfilled in you and that all may be able to testify to the spirit and truth of the prophetic announcement, saying, "Verily, the

standard of God did appear in the East, and its tokens have become resplendent in the West." This realization will be a source of great joy to all the friends in the Orient who anticipate the good news and await the glad tidings from the land of the Occident. They look forward to hearing that the friends in the West have become firm and steadfast, that they have distinguished themselves by establishing the oneness of the world of humanity, that they are even offering their lives for the foundations of international peace, that they have become the lights of the Kingdom and have proved to be the manifestations of divine mercy, that the friends in the West are the expression of the favors of the Blessed Perfection, the very stars of the bestowal of God, blessed trees and flowers in the garden of His purity and sanctity. Any good news from here is the cause of rejoicing in the East and a source of deep gratitude to them. They hold a feast and praise God for the blessed tidings. If the occasion demanded, they would give their lives for you without the least hesitation. The friends in the East are all united and agreed.

There are none who waver in the East, none who oppose the Covenant of God. There is not a single soul among the Bahá'ís in Persia who is opposed to the Covenant. They are all steadfast. If any soul wishes to speak in this Cause, they will ask, "Is this a word of your own, or is it by the authority of the Center of the Covenant? If you have the authority of the Center of the Covenant, produce it. Where is the letter from Him? Where is His signature?" If he produces the letter, they will accept it. If he fails to do so, they say, "We cannot accept your words because they emanate from you only and return to you. We have no command from the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, to obey you. He has revealed a Book in which He has covenanted with us to obey an appointed Center of the Covenant. He has not covenanted with us to obey you. Therefore, the statement you make is rejected. You must furnish proof of your authority and sanction. We are commanded to turn to one Center. We do not obey various centers. The Blessed Perfection has made a Covenant with us, and we are holding to this Covenant and Testament. We do not listen to anything else, for people may arise who speak words of their own, and we are commanded not to pay attention to them."

It was not so in former dispensations. Christ, for instance, did not appoint a center of authority and explanation. He did not say to [pg 386] His followers, "Obey the one whom I have chosen." Upon one occasion He asked His disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Christ, wishing to make firm the faith of Peter, said, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church," meaning that the faith of Peter was the true faith. It was a sanction of Peter's faith. He did not say that all should turn to Peter. He did not say, "He is the branch extended from my ancient root." He did not say, "O God! Bless all who serve Peter. O God! Degrade those who are not obedient to him. Shun him who is a violator of the Covenant. O God! Thou knowest that I love all who are steadfast in the Covenant." This has been revealed, however, in all the Books, Writings and Epistles of

Bahá'u'lláh regarding the appointed Center of the Covenant in this dispensation. Therefore, the Bahá'í dispensation is distinguished from all others in this fact, the purpose of Bahá'u'lláh being that no one could arise to cause differences and disunion. After the departure of Christ various sects and denominations arose, each one claiming to be the true channel of Christianity, but none of them possessed a written authority from Christ; none could produce proof from Him; yet all claimed His sanction and approval. Bahá'u'lláh has written a Covenant and Testament with His own pen, declaring that the One Whom He has appointed the Center of the Covenant shall be turned to and obeyed by all. Therefore, thank God that Bahá'u'lláh has made the pathway straight. He has clearly explained all things and opened every door for advancing souls. There is no reason for hesitation by anyone. The purpose of the Covenant was simply to ward off disunion and differences so that no one might say, "My opinion is the true and valid one."

Any opinion expressed by the Center of the Covenant is correct, and there is no reason for disobedience by anyone. Be watchful, for perchance there may be violators (náqiḍín) of the Covenant among you. Do not listen to them. Read the Book of the Covenant. All have been commanded to obey the Covenant, and the first admonition is addressed to the sons of Bahá'u'lláh, the Branches: "You must turn to the appointed Center; He is the expounder of the Book."

Should any soul so clearly violate and disobey this command, can he even say he is a Bahá'í? If anyone disobeys the explicit command of Christ, can he truthfully say he is a Christian?

In conclusion, I would say that I am greatly pleased with this meeting. I shall pray for you, seeking confirmation from the Blessed Perfection. Praise be to God! You must be grateful that He [pg 387] has chosen you from among the people of the world, that such glorious bestowal and such endless graces and favors have been specialized for you. You must not look at present accomplishments, for this is but the beginning as it was at the time of Christ. Before long you will see that you will be distinguished among all people. In every way the divine confirmation will uphold you, and the radiance of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh will illumine your countenances. Be truly grateful for all these blessings. I hope I may always hear good news of you, showing that the friends in Chicago are occupied with service in the divine Cause, filled with the joy of promoting the Word of God, engaged in spreading the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and manifesting love and kindness to all humanity. This is my hope and anticipation. I am sure that you will endeavor to accomplish this so that the friends in Persia and I may experience the happiness of the good tidings. May you be a source of joy and happiness to us, a source of tranquillity and composure. [pg 388]

