

# Talk at Bahá'í Banquet

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



124

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Notes by Joseph H. Hannen

I feel a keen sense of joy in being present at this banquet this evening, for — praise be to God! — before me are radiant faces, ears attuned to the melodies of the Supreme Concourse, hearts aglow with the fire of the love of God, spirits exhilarated through the glad tidings of God, souls sheltered beneath the overshadowing power of the Kingdom of Abhá. I see before me an assemblage of souls who are of the chosen and not of the many called. And it is my hope[pg 419] that through the favors of Bahá'u'lláh He may continue to attract you to His Kingdom and render you victorious and triumphant in your service to the oneness and solidarity of mankind. May He assist all who are firm in establishing the unity of the inhabitants of this earth. May all of you thereby become my partners and coadjutors in servitude.

O Lord! Confirm and aid this assemblage. Confirm these souls through the breaths of Thy Holy Spirit. Enlighten the eyes by the vision of these radiant lights, and make the ears joyful through the anthems of Thy call to service. O God! Verily, we have gathered here in the fragrance of Thy love. We have turned to Thy Kingdom. We seek naught save Thee and desire nothing save Thy good pleasure. O God! Let this food be Thy manna from heaven, and grant that this assemblage may be a concourse of Thy supreme ones. May they be the quickening cause of love to humanity and the source of illumination to the human race. May they be the instruments of Thy guidance upon earth. Verily, Thou art powerful. Thou art the Bestower. Thou art the Forgiver, and Thou art the Almighty.



ORIGINAL



AUDIO

In the world many banquets, assemblages and meetings have been organized, but those gatherings have been commercial, political, educational or social in their purpose and motive. Meetings are held for the promotion of financial plans or promulgation of the arts and sciences. Others have sought to establish agricultural industries or consummate territorial agreements. Innumerable assemblages have been held for consultation upon subjects of learning and education. All such meetings have for their object the advancement of civilization. But — praise be to God! — this banquet and this assemblage are for none other purpose than love, for the purpose of announcing the divine Kingdom, for the manifestation of the ineffable traces of God, for reflecting the effulgences of the Kingdom of God, for binding hearts together, for service to the world of humanity, for the promulgation of humanitarian and altruistic realities, for the advancement and advocating of international peace, for the illumination of the whole world. Therefore, such an assemblage is matchless and peerless because other assemblages are held for a limited object and personal motive, whereas this meeting is for God and God only, for His love and purpose. It is for love of the hearts of men and the oneness of the world of humanity. Therefore, we should offer thanks to God, for He has confirmed us in attaining to the happiness of this occasion. He has appointed us servants of the human world, advocates of peace and unity among the religions, heralds of universal agreement among the races and nations, founders of divine reconciliation among all peoples.

It is my fond and fervent hope through the favor of God that this present meeting may be instrumental in ushering in the day when the standard of the oneness of the world of humanity shall be held aloft in America. May it be the first real foundation of international peace, having for its object universal service to man. May it be divine philanthropy without distinctions or differentiations in humankind. May you consider all religions the instruments of God and regard all races as channels of divine manifestation. May you view mankind as the sheep of God and know for a certainty that He is the real Shepherd. Consider how this kind and tender Shepherd cares for all His flock; how He leads them in green pastures and beside the still waters. How well He protects them! Verily, this Shepherd makes no distinctions whatsoever; to all the sheep He is equally kind. Therefore, we must follow the example of God and strive in pathways of goodwill toward all humanity. May we endeavor with heart and soul to reconcile the religions of the earth, unify the peoples and races and blend the nations in a perfect solidarity. May we uphold the flag of international agreement and enkindle a light which shall illumine all regions with the radiance of oneness. May our purposes centralize in the earnest desire of attaining the good pleasure of God, and may our supreme energies be directed to welding together the human household. Let us not regard our own respective capacities; nay, rather, let us regard forever the favors and bounties of God. The drop must not estimate its own limited capacity; it must realize the volume and sufficiency of the ocean, which ever glorifieth the drop. The tender and

simple seed, solitary though it may be, must not look upon its own lack of power. Nay, rather, its attention must ever be directed to the sun, in the rays of which it finds life and quickening; and it must ever consider the downpour of the cloud of mercy. For the bounty of the cloud, the effulgence and heat of the sun and the breath of the vernal zephyrs can transform the tiny seed and develop it into a mighty tree. And may you remember that a single infinitesimal atom in the ray of the sun through a shining beam of the solar energy becomes glorified and radiant.

Therefore, let us ever trust in God and seek confirmation and assistance from Him. Let us have perfect and absolute confidence in the bounty of the Kingdom. Review the events surrounding souls of bygone times in the beginning of their day; and again consider them when, through the aid and assistance of God, they [pg 421] proved to be the mighty ones of God. Remember that Peter was a fisherman, but through the bounty of the Kingdom he became the great apostle. Mary Magdalene was a villager of lowly type, yet that selfsame Mary was transformed and became the means through which the confirmation of God descended upon the disciples. Verily, she served the Kingdom of God with such efficiency that she became well-known and oft mentioned by the tongues of men. Even today she is shining from the horizon of eternal majesty. Consider how infinite is the bounty of God that a woman such as Mary Magdalene should be selected by God to become the channel of confirmation to the disciples and a light of nearness in His Kingdom. Consequently, trust ye in the bounty and grace of God, and rest assured in the bestowals of His eternal outpouring. I hope that each one of you may become a shining light even as these electric lights are now brilliant in their intensity. Nay, may each one of you be a luminary like unto a sparkling star in the heaven of the divine Will. This is my supplication at the throne of God. This is my hope through the favors of Bahá'u'lláh. I offer this prayer in behalf of all of you and beg with a contrite heart that you may be assisted and glorified with an eternal bestowal.

