

Talk at Genealogical Hall

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original English



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Notes by Edna McKinney

This is a blessed meeting, for these revered souls have come together in complete unity and with an intelligent purpose. It is an[pg 438] occasion of great joy to me. Before me are faces radiant with the glad tidings of God, hearts aglow with the fire of the love of God, ears attuned to the melodies of the Kingdom and eyes illumined by the signs and evidences of Divinity.

All created things have their degree, or stage, of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit bearing. The maturity of a plant is the time of its blossoming and flower. The animal attains a stage of full growth and completeness, and in the human kingdom man reaches his maturity when the lights of intelligence have their greatest power and development.

From the beginning to the end of his life man passes through certain periods, or stages, each of which is marked by certain conditions peculiar to itself. For instance, during the period of childhood his conditions and requirements are characteristic of that degree of intelligence and capacity. After a time he enters the period of youth, in which his former conditions and needs are superseded by new requirements applicable to the advance in his degree. His faculties of observation are broadened and deepened; his intelligent capacities are trained and awakened; the limitations and environment of childhood no longer restrict his energies and accomplishments. At last he passes out of the period of youth and enters the stage, or station, of maturity, which necessitates another transformation and corresponding advance in his sphere of life



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activity. New powers and perceptions clothe him, teaching and training commensurate with his progression occupy his mind, special bounties and bestowals descend in proportion to his increased capacities, and his former period of youth and its conditions will no longer satisfy his matured view and vision.

Similarly, there are periods and stages in the life of the aggregate world of humanity, which at one time was passing through its degree of childhood, at another its time of youth but now has entered its long presaged period of maturity, the evidences of which are everywhere visible and apparent. Therefore, the requirements and conditions of former periods have changed and merged into exigencies which distinctly characterize the present age of the world of mankind. That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race could neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day and period of newness and consummation. Humanity has emerged from its former degrees of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moralities, new capacities. New bounties, bestowals and perfections are awaiting and already descending upon him. The gifts and graces of the period of youth,[pg 439] although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of the world of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity. The playthings of childhood and infancy no longer satisfy or interest the adult mind.

From every standpoint the world of humanity is undergoing a reformation. The laws of former governments and civilizations are in process of revision; scientific ideas and theories are developing and advancing to meet a new range of phenomena; invention and discovery are penetrating hitherto unknown fields, revealing new wonders and hidden secrets of the material universe; industries have vastly wider scope and production; everywhere the world of mankind is in the throes of evolutionary activity indicating the passing of the old conditions and advent of the new age of reformation. Old trees yield no fruitage; old ideas and methods are obsolete and worthless now. Old standards of ethics, moral codes and methods of living in the past will not suffice for the present age of advancement and progress.

This is the cycle of maturity and reformation in religion as well. Dogmatic imitations of ancestral beliefs are passing. They have been the axis around which religion revolved but now are no longer fruitful; on the contrary, in this day they have become the cause of human degradation and hindrance. Bigotry and dogmatic adherence to ancient beliefs have become the central and fundamental source of animosity among men, the obstacle to human progress, the cause of warfare and strife, the destroyer of peace, composure and welfare in the world. Consider conditions in the Balkans today: fathers, mothers, children in grief and lamentation, the foundations of life overturned, cities laid waste and fertile lands made desolate by the ravages of war. These conditions are the outcome of hostility and hatred between nations and peoples of religion who imitate and adhere to the forms and violate the spirit and reality of the divine teachings.

While this is true and apparent, it is, likewise, evident that the Lord of mankind has bestowed infinite bounties upon the world in this century of maturity and consummation. The ocean of divine mercy is surging, the vernal showers are descending, the Sun of Reality is shining gloriously. Heavenly teachings applicable to the advancement in human conditions have been revealed in this merciful age. This reformation and renewal of the fundamental reality of religion constitute the true and outworking spirit of modernism, the unmistakable light of the world, the manifest effulgence of the Word of God, the divine remedy for all human ailment and the bounty of eternal life to all mankind.[pg 440]

Bahá'u'lláh, the Sun of Truth, has dawned from the horizon of the Orient, flooding all regions with the light and life which will never pass away. His teachings, which embody the divine spirit of the age and are applicable to this period of maturity in the life of the human world, are:

The oneness of the world of humanity

The protection and guidance of the Holy Spirit
The foundation of all religion is one
Religion must be the cause of unity
Religion must accord with science and reason
Independent investigation of truth
Equality between men and women
The abandoning of all prejudices among mankind
Universal peace
Universal education
A universal language
Solution of the economic problem
An international tribunal.

Everyone who truly seeks and justly reflects will admit that the teachings of the present day emanating from mere human sources and authority are the cause of difficulty and disagreement amongst mankind, the very destroyers of humanity, whereas the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the very healing of the sick world, the remedy for every need and condition. In them may be found the realization of every desire and aspiration, the cause of the happiness of the world of humanity, the stimulus and illumination of mentality, the impulse for advancement and uplift, the basis of unity for all nations, the fountain source of love amongst mankind, the center of agreement, the means of peace and harmony, the one bond which will unite the East and the West.

After every night there is a morn. In the supreme wisdom of God it is decreed that when the gross darkness of religious hatred and hostility, the obscurity of religious ignorance, superstition and blind imitations cover the world, the Sun of Truth shall arise and the spirit of reality become manifest and reflected in human hearts. At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh appeared upon the horizon of the Orient. For fifty years He endured the greatest hardships and ordeals, ever striving to dispel the darkness of religious conditions, to remove the cause of enmity and rancor, to awaken the world of humanity from the beds of negligence and heedlessness by the flashing light of the glorious glad tidings and trumpet tone of the heavenly call and summons. For the

spread of this message He offered [pg 441] His life and bore every vicissitude.... He was always under the threat and menace of the sword, yet He uplifted the standard of divine teachings and flooded the world of the East with illumination. In the Orient today the light of the heavenly glad tidings is visible everywhere, the divine call is heard, the effulgence of the Sun of Reality is shining, the precious rain is pouring down from the clouds of mercy, and the breaths of the Holy Spirit are bestowing fresh life upon the hearts of men. Ere long the darkness will pass away entirely, and the regions of the East will become completely illumined; enmity, hatred, ignorance and bigotry will no longer remain; the satanic powers which destroy human equality and religious unity will be dethroned, and the nations will dwell in peace and harmony under the overspreading banner of the oneness of humanity. Therefore, we supplicate the Lord our God with sincere and contrite hearts, asking aid and assistance in the accomplishment of this mighty end: that the nations shall be unified in the Word of God; that war, enmity and hatred between races, religions, native lands and denominations shall disappear and be forever unknown; and that peoples and nations shall spiritually embrace each other in the indissoluble bond and power of the love of God. Then will the world of humanity become radiant and the human race enjoy to the fullest capacity the graces of divine bestowal. So long as religious discord and enmity continue among mankind, the world of humanity will find neither happiness, rest nor composure.

Pray that God may assist in this heavenly undertaking, that the world of mankind shall be saved from the ordeals of ignorance, blindness and spiritual death. Then will you behold light upon light, joy upon joy, absolute happiness reigning everywhere, the people of the religions consorting together in fragrance and felicity, this world in its maturity becoming the reflection of the eternal Kingdom and this terrestrial abode of man the very paradise of God. Pray for this! Pray for this!

O my God! O my God! Verily, Thou dost perceive those who are present here turning unto Thee, relying upon Thee. O my Lord! O my Lord! Illumine their eyes by the light of love, and enkindle their hearts by the rays streaming from the heaven of the Supreme Concourse. Suffer them to become the signs of Thy bestowal amongst the people and the standards of Thy grace amongst mankind. O Lord! Make those who are here the hosts of heaven, and through their service and instrumentality subdue the hearts of humanity. Cause Thy great mercy to descend upon them, and render all Thy friends victorious. Direct them that they may turn toward [pg 442] Thy Kingdom of mercy and proclaim Thy name among the people. May they lead the people to the bounty of Thy most great guidance.

O Lord! O Lord! Cast the glance of Thy mercy upon them all.

O Lord! O Lord! Ordain for them the beauty of Thy holiness in Thy Kingdom of eternity.

O Lord! O Lord! Protect them in every test, make every foot firm in the pathway of Thy love, and help them to be as mighty mountains in Thy Cause so that their faith shall not be wavering, their sight shall not be dimmed nor hindered from witnessing the lights emanating from Thy supreme Kingdom. Verily, Thou art the Generous. Thou art the Almighty. Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Merciful.

