

THE BAHÁ'Í NEW WORLD ORDER

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"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.

KING HAAKON OF NORWAY

(An audience recounted by Martha Root, international Bahá'í teacher)

Meet His Majesty King Haakon of Norway, O reader, and you will be as charmed as was the writer of this article. Here is a king with a most delightful manner. Why, he can laugh at himself and with everybody else! He speaks his thoughts so frankly, so sincerely, his sense of humour is so sparkling, his sense of proportion so balanced, he is an artist in knowing how to live. Is he spiritual? Yes, very! The fire of King Haakon the Good (who in 965 A.D. first brought Christianity to the attention of this great land of the North) burns in his deep, dark eyes, but he is one of the smiling kings who give to humanity religion full of joy. It was a merry audience full of fun and wisdom, but the man who can command this radiant, vital spirituality is a king of courage and evolved personality.

What impressed me most in this ever-memorable conversation in the Royal Palace in Oslo, May 9th, 1935, was His Majesty's profound belief that the security of the world and universal peace depend upon religion. If we had one religion that peoples could agree upon and live, it would bring the tranquillity of the nations. Every point touched upon came back to this one solution, the spiritual foundation for enduring peace. His most passionate desire is for world peace.

His Majesty King Haakon, I observed, knows very well the religious movements of the twentieth century and spoke of some of them with fine appreciation. He mentioned one which he says does much good and it does not ask to what church one belongs; some of His Majesty's bishops favour it we know, but as Norway has a state religion, Lutheranism, and also as His Majesty's government is composed of many parties, this wise king

did not permit the audience to become an interview.

If one could write what he says about religion, about the economic solution, if one could give his scintillating psychological comments on the universal principles needed to make a better world, it would be eagerly read. He told me it would never do, for if one quotes a king, something he may say with a smile, when one reads it without the smile and doesn't hear the nuance, the world, the political parties, the church, may take issue. He laughingly said it is hard to be a king; it is hard enough to be a president, but that is only for a term of years; it is more difficult to be a king because he is chosen for life!

However, there is another way of knowing this great king and that is through his life. What one could never learn from an interview with him, I relate to you as coming direct from the hearts of the Norwegian people and from me. I was ill in Norway immediately upon arrival, and after many weeks convalescing, I walked daily in a beautiful park of silver birches where many Norwegians came and went enjoying its loveliness. The first day I asked my nurse: "What is that great splendid building on the summit of this people's park?" She replied in astonishment: "Do you not know that is the Royal Palace and this is the king's park?" I saw the standard waving from the flag-staff and my inner eye saw his warmly-human heart that he shares so generously.

The Norwegian people said to me: "We love our king; he makes us feel he is one of us even though he lives in the great palace and we in our houses. He is so wise, so honest, so energetic. We call him our 'King Haakon the Good.' Every

Sunday he goes to the Palace Chapel or to one of the regular church services. The Palace Chapel is a place where everyone may come."

This tall, slender, handsome king moves among his people; he may be seen walking in the streets of Oslo, he is often at the opera, and very frequently at the social functions arranged to help the needy. One could hardly think of him—yet—as the father of his country. He seems more the brother who understands, sympathises; he is gentle, careful and has all the human perfections in activity.

An audience with His Majesty King Haakon may be more illuminating and unforgettable than an interview. This spiritually lovable King of Norway who will never talk about himself, who in the whole conversation did not use the words "me, I, my" or "mine," made me happy. It was so good to laugh, so Gibraltar-reassuring to find His Majesty standing firm for religion — liberal, vitalizing religion to change hearts and bring the enduring peace.

Gloriously the sun streamed through the palace windows of his room and fell full upon his pleasing, thoughtful countenance as he said goodbye. The sun did not need to say that morning, "I am shining," and the king did not need to give any interview, for his life spoke it!

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"That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world, is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician."—BAHA'U'LLAH.

BAHÁ'Í SUMMER SCHOOL

(fifth year)

July 26th—August 10th

CAWSTON HOUSE, RUGBY

General Subject:

THE WORLD ORDER OF BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

Recreation, Games, etc.

Secretary: Miss WELLBY,

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Belsize Park, London, N.W.3.

Divine Philosophy

'Abdu'l-Bahá

There are two kinds of civilization—material civilization which serves the physical world and divine civilization which renders service to the world of morality. The founders of the material, practical civilization are the scientists and investigators and the establishers of divine civilization are the celestial universal teachers.

True religion is the bases of divine civilization. Material civilization is like unto the body; divine civilization is like unto the spirit. A body without the spirit is dead, although it may be clothed in the utmost beauty and comeliness.

In short, by religion we mean those necessary bonds which have power to unify. This has ever been the essence of the religion of God. This is the eternal bestowal of God! This is the object of divine teachings and laws! This is the light of the everlasting life! Alas! A thousand times alas! that this solid foundation is abandoned and forgotten and the leaders of religions have fabricated a set of superstitions and rituals which are at complete variance with the underlying thought. As these man-made ideas differ from each other they cause dissension which breeds strife and ends in war and bloodshed; the blood of innocent people is spilled, their possessions are pillaged and their children become captives and orphans.

Thus religion which was destined to become the cause of friendship has become the cause of enmity. Religion, which was meant to be sweet honey, is changed into bitter poison. Religion, the function of which was to illumine humanity, has become the factor of obscurity and gloom. Religion, which was to confer the consciousness of everlasting life, has become the fiendish instrument of death. As long as these superstitions are in the hands and these nets of dissimulation and hypocrisy in the fingers, religion will be the most harmful agency on this planet. These superannuated traditions, which are inherited unto the present day, must be abandoned, and thus free from past superstitions we must investigate the original intention. The basis on which they have fabricated the superstructures will be seen to be one, and that one absolute reality; and as reality is indivisible, complete unity and amity will be instituted and the true religion of God will become unveiled in all its beauty and sublimity in the assemblage of the world.

Hence, to this honorable congress I say: "Tear asunder the veils and curtains of these dogmas, remove these accumulated, suffocating increments,

dispel these dark impenetrable clouds, that the sun of reality may shine from the horizon of eternity."

Praise be to God that this century is the century of sciences! This cycle is the cycle of reality! The minds have developed; the thoughts have taken a wider range of vision; the intellects have become keener; the emotions have become more sensitized; the inventions have transformed the face of the earth, and this age has acquired a glorious capability for the majestic revelation of the oneness of the world of humanity.

The Purpose of Life

The answer to this question will forever remain in that realm of true understanding where speech and sight and hearing are accomplished without tongue or eye or ear. In that state of inner consciousness man becomes aware of truths which can be expressed, only very inadequately, in words. Nevertheless we can implant in the inward mind, by using the outer faculties, certain truths which germinate within us until they are apprehended. The seed may be sown in fertile soil. The best seed for this purpose is the Word uttered by the Manifestation of God.

Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the purpose of life is to know and love God, a statement which only those of deep spiritual insight can understand. Again He says: "All men have been created to carry forward an ever advancing civilisation." This is far more within our range of understanding, and accords with our deep rooted aspirations. But inevitably we come to the question, what purpose is filled by the advancement of civilisation? Why must it be ever advancing? That it should be is something we feel to be essentially right. In answering this question Bahá'u'lláh also gives us some understanding of what it may mean to know and love God.

It was Jesus the Christ Who first stressed the validity and worth of the individual human soul. He taught us to acquire the Divine virtues, to become Christlike, and above all to find the Kingdom of God within ourselves, that is to develop those qualities implanted in us by the Creator of the human soul. A much earlier teaching, in the Book of Genesis, says that man is made "in the image of God," a statement which Jesus by inference, and Bahá'u'lláh directly, restates as meaning that man can manifest the attributes of God . . . such as wisdom, justice, love, mercy. "Upon the inmost reality of each and every created thing He hath shed the light of one of His names, and made it the recipient of the glory of one of His attributes. Upon the reality of man, however, He

hath focussed the radiance of all of His names and attributes, and made it a mirror of His own Self. Alone of all created things man hath been singled out for so great a favour, so enduring a bounty."

Here then is one answer to our question. The purpose of life is to know and love God by becoming a mirror for the reflection of His attributes, which is the same thing as developing the divine qualities within us. Those who succeed in this task are called saints, such as Saint Francis.

That is all very well for the individual, we say, but what about war and poverty and unemployment? The carrying forward of "an ever advancing civilization" means so ordering human society that every single individual will have the fullest opportunities for the unfoldment of his own soul, that is to develop those qualities within, which have been called "the image of God." So we return to our first answer. The purpose of life for the individual is to know and love God, and the purpose of an advancing civilization is to enable man to know and love God in a continually higher and increasing way, through the continual development of his own innate qualities. And too, human society, as well as human individuals, can reflect the Kingdom of God.

Who is the Christ?

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Each religion teaches that a mediator is necessary between man and the Creator—one who receives the full light of the divine splendour and radiates it over the human world, as the earth's atmosphere receives and diffuses the warmth of the sun's rays. This mediator between God and humanity has different designations though he always brings the same spiritual command.

In one era he is called Abraham, at another time Moses, again he is called Buddha, another time Jesus, and yet another time Muhammad. All turned to the divine reality for their strength. Those who followed Moses accepted him as the mediator; those who followed Zoroaster accepted him as their mediator; but all the Israelites deny Zoroaster, and the Zoroastrians deny Moses. They fail to see in both the one light. Had the Zoroastrians comprehended the reality of Zoroaster, they would have understood Moses and Jesus. Alas! the majority of men attach themselves to the name of the mediator and lose sight of the real purport.

Therefore did Bahá'u'lláh cry, "O God, deliver us from the sea of names!"

Man must turn to the light and not think that the form of the lamp is essential, for the lamp may be changed; but he who longs for light welcomes

it from whatever source it comes. If the Jews had comprehended Moses, they would have accepted the Christ; but they were occupied with the name and when the name was changed they denied the reality.

It is the same with the Christians to-day. What a pity that they are worshipping a title! They see only the garment. If one recognizes a king by his garments, one would not know him were he to clothe himself differently.

Who is the Christ? When one sees the Christ qualities shining from another source, one must recognize that light. We say this flower is exquisite; we do not say that it is the only beautiful one, for beauty is of the divine effulgence that is universal and unlimited in its manifestations. The marvelous bestowals of God are continuous. Should the outpouring of light be suspended, we would be in darkness. But how could it be withheld? If the divine graces are suspended, then divinity itself would be interrupted. Even men ask for continuity.

We have eyes and we desire eternal sight; blindness is an imperfection. We have ears; deafness is a deficiency. As long as we consider these as imperfections in the human world, are they not even greater defects in the divine world?

We must be adorers of the sun of reality from whatsoever horizon it may appear, rather than adorers of the horizon; for should we concentrate our attention in one direction, the sun may appear from quite another and leave us deprived of the sun's bestowals which are the wisdom and guidance of God and the favour of God, which constitute spiritual progress.

"The Secret Places of the Most High"

Marjorie Hofman

To every soul in the condition of human understanding there have come, at times, glimpses of what appeared to be another world, a state of abstract being.

To those souls not awakened to spiritual consciousness it seemed a far away place which they could not inherit until they had taken their departure from this visible state of existence. The awakened soul could discern that it was a spiritual realm in which all might dwell to-day—the Kingdom of Heaven that is always at hand.

This other world is the sublime essence of all reality—it is the infinite spiritual sea, in which we live, and move, and have our being, the divine

counterpart of everything that was, is or is to be. It is that world which is found on the supreme heights of all existence. To live in this world is to view the entire universe from the heights, and from that sublime view all is beautiful, all is good. To live in the spiritual world is to realize the purity, the divinity of the *real* nature of man—the absolute perfection of his *true* being. It is to know the truth about man—that he is created in the image and likeness of God. It is to live in the world of the great within, in the highest state of being, in the life of the soul, in tune with the Infinite, in the Secret Places of the Most High.

When the soul is not awakened, the mind is deprived of the guidance of the spirit, and as a result the person is almost buried in materiality and goes wrong more frequently—not knowing the reason why. Then arise sickness, troubles and adversities, the sum total of all the ills of life.

To awaken the soul and illumine the mind with the light of the Spirit, one of the great essentials—the greatest, in fact—is to live by faith. This can only be done by placing one's entire life and everything that pertains to it in the hands of God. Whatever is placed in the hands of God will be inspired and guided by Him and consequently will produce the greatest amount of good—spiritually and materially. The secret of faith is really simple and one can easily understand why all things are possible to him who has real faith. God can do all things and he who has faith places his life, his purpose, his plans, his desires—his all—in God's hands, knowing "He will not fail."

When one lives by faith one is constantly on the verge of the spiritual world because the power of God, into whose keeping we have given everything, is the spiritual world. Living, thinking, acting, in constant recognition of the Supreme Power of God, feeling through and through that His Presence is closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet, is to arouse every spiritual element in our nature—then do we ascend into God's own beautiful world, and life in the Secret Places of the Most High *does* indeed begin.

"At present Universal Peace is a matter of great importance, but unity of conscience is essential, so that the foundation of this matter may become secure, its establishment firm and its edifice strong. . . . Although the League of Nations has been brought into existence, yet it is incapable of establishing Universal Peace. But the Supreme Tribunal which Bahá'u'lláh has described will fulfil this sacred task with the utmost might and power." 'ABDU'L-BAHA.