

## A talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

According to ancient custom, every nation has general holidays when all the people rejoice and are glad. That is, they choose the day of the year whereon a great or glorious event had occurred. On that day they manifest great joy and happiness. They visit one another; if they have any feelings of bitterness towards one another, they become reconciled on that day; hard feelings pass away and they unite in love for each other. As great events occurred on the day of Naw-Rúz for the Persians, that nation therefore made it a national feast and considered it a national holiday.

This is, indeed, a blessed day because it is the beginning of the temperate season and the commencement of springtime in the Northern Hemisphere. All earthly things, whether trees, animals, or humans, become refreshed; they receive power from the life-giving breeze and obtain new life; a resurrection takes place and, because it is the season of springtime, there is a general marvellous activity in all contingent beings.

There was a time when the Persian dynasty died out and no trace remained thereof. On such a day [Naw-Rúz] a new one was founded. Jamshíd<sup>1</sup> ascended the throne. Persia became happy and at peace. Its power, which had been dissipated, once more returned. Hearts and souls became possessed of wonderful susceptibilities, to such a degree that Persia became more advanced than it had been in former days under the sovereignty of Kayumars and Húshang.<sup>2</sup> The glory and greatness of the government and the nation of Persia rose higher. Likewise, a great many events occurred upon the day of Naw-Rúz that brought honour and glory to Persia and to the Persians. Therefore, the Persian nation, for the last five or six thousand years, has always considered the Feast of Naw-Rúz as a day of national happiness, and until now it is sanctified and recognized as a blessed day.

In brief, every nation has a day to mark as a holiday which they celebrate with joy. In the sacred laws of God, in every cycle and Dispensation, there are blessed feasts, holidays, and workless days. On such days no kind of occupation, commerce, industry, agriculture, or the like is allowed. All work is unlawful. All must enjoy themselves, gather together, hold general meetings, become as one assembly, so that the oneness, unity, and harmony of the people may be demonstrated in the eyes of all. As it is a blessed day it should not be neglected or left without results by making it a day limited to the fruits of mere pleasure. During such blessed days institutions should be founded that may be of permanent benefit and value to the people so that in their conversations and in history it may become widely known that such a good work was inaugurated on such a feast day. Therefore, the intelligent must look searchingly into conditions to find out what important affair, what philanthropic institutions are most needed, and what foundations should be laid for the community on that particular day, so that they may be established. For example, if they find that the community needs morality, then they may lay down the foundation of good morals on that day. If the community be in need of spreading sciences and widening the circle of knowledge, on that day they should proceed in that direction, that is to say, direct the thoughts of all the people to that philanthropic cause. If, however, the community is in need of widening the circle of commerce or industry or agriculture, they should inaugurate the means of attaining the desired aim. If the community needs protection, proper support, and care of orphans, they should act upon the welfare of the orphans, and so forth. Such undertakings as are beneficial to the poor, the weak, and the helpless should be pursued in order that, on that day, through the unity of all and through great meetings, results may be obtained, the glory and blessings of that day may be declared and manifest.

Likewise, in this wonderful Dispensation, this day [Naw-Rúz] is a blessed day. The friends of God should be confirmed in service and servitude. With one another they must be in the utmost harmony, love, and oneness; clasp hands; engaged in the commemoration of the Blessed Beauty; and thinking of the great results that may be obtained on such a blessed day.

Today, there is no result or fruit greater than guiding the people, because these helpless creatures, especially the Persians, have remained without a share in the bestowals of God. Undoubtedly, the friends of God, upon such a day, must leave tangible, philanthropic, or ideal traces that should reach all mankind and not only pertain to the Bahá'ís.

In all the prophetic Dispensations, philanthropic affairs were confined to their respective peoples only—with the exception of small matters, such as charity, which it was permissible to extend to others. But in this wonderful Dispensation, philanthropic undertakings are for all humanity, without any exception, because this is the manifestation of the mercifulness of God. Therefore, every universal matter—that is, one that belongs to all the world of humanity—is divine, and every matter that is sectarian and private is not universal in character—that is, it is limited. Therefore, my hope is that the friends of God, every one of them, may become as the mercy of God to all mankind.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

- 1 Legendary king of Persia. ↩
- 2 Kings of Persia from ancient mythology. ↩