## THE PREVIOUSLY UNKNOWN PERSIAN TEXT OF A TALK BY 'ABDU'L-BAHĀ

## JOHN WALBRIDGE

On 2 May 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahā spent the morning receiving groups of visitors at the Plaza Hotel in Chicago. The previous day He had laid the cornerstone of the Mashriq al-Adhkār in Wilmette. His faithful chronicler Mīrzā Mahmūd Zarqānī recorded in his diary:

5 Jumādā I (2 May). In the morning until noon groups of visitors were received, at first in His room and then when they became numerous in the reception room (bīrūnī).

Badā'i' al-Āthār, 1:64.

He goes on to quote excerpts from several talks that 'Abdu'l-Bahā gave that morning. Allan Ward mentions that He spoke to groups that morning in a large parlour that held about 150 people. Later that day He spoke to a meeting of the Federated Women's Clubs and attended a reception given by the Bahā'ī women.

Star of the West 3:4 (17 May 1912) gives the English text of one of the talks given that morning, "translated by Dr. Ameen U. Fareed and taken stenographically by Mrs. Marzieh Moss." It is given in the same form in "Wisdom Talks of Abdul-Baha: Given at Chicago, Ill., April 30th to May 5th, 1912," p. 11, a collection of 'Abdu'l-Bahā' s talks distributed with Star of the West. A more polished text appears in Promulgation of Universal Peace, pp. 78-79. However, no text of this talk is to be found in Khitābāt-i 'Abdu'l-Bahā' nor is it quoted by Zarqānī.

In fact, the Persian text of this talk exists among the uncatalogued Persian manuscripts in the National Bahā'ī Archives in Wilmette. It is written on the back of a sheet of Plaza Hotel guest stationery with the printed date "191-." The writer is not identified, nor is there any indication as to how this single sheet reached the Archives. However, there can be little doubt that the writer was a member of the audience when the talk was given. Apart from

the hotel stationary, there is the handwriting. It begins as a neat, small script but toward the end becomes a large scrawl. Obviously the writer had been unable to keep up with the speaker. However, the text seems complete.

As for the text itself, it is a typical example of 'Abdu'l-Bahā's extemporaneous talks in America. He begins by remarking on an everyday subject--in this case the weather-- and uses it as an analogy to make an irenic theological point, comparing that morning's fog to the veils of religious imitation and fancy that cause disunity and prevent the people from recognizing the Manifestation of God.

The translation given here is literal and is based on the Persian text.

## BLESSED WORDS IN THE PLAZA HOTEL, 2 May 1912, CHICAGO.

You are most welcome. This morning I rose and saw the city wrapped in a mist that would not clear. On the days when I see no clouds or mist in the morning, I am very happy because for the moment there is no mist and the air is clear. Just as these clouds and mist conceal the sun, so too do the senses and blind imitation conceal the Sun of Reality. Behold how this sun shines and how clear and lovely is the air, how beholding it is a source of joy. But clouds and mist prevent man from beholding the sun.

This sun is the Sun of Reality, and the clouds that prevent its manifestation are the blind imitations. When these clouds encompass us and the Sun of Reality is hidden, each sect turns in its own direction. One says that the sun is here and another that it is there. One worships this point, and another that point. Each group chooses one point to worship, but the truth is that the Sun is exalted above all of them. Therefore, the various points and directions that the people worship become the cause of disagreement.

In short, the clouds of imaginings and the mist of imitation encompass all. If all these clouds and mist were to vanish and all were to see the Sun of Reality, no disagreements would remain and all would be united. But because of all the clouds and mist, it is quite impossible to see the Sun. Thus we must strive to remove these clouds as an obstacle so that the Sun of Reality will shine. All will be united and agreed, and disagreement will be entirely removed. The human world will become bright, and oneness and universal peace will encompass all. All will partake in the effulgence of the Sun because the Sun of Reality is one and the effulgence of the Sun is one. All partake of the effulgence of one Sun, are reared by

one Sun. It nourishes all and is not reserved for some one person. However, the clouds hinder the manifestation of the Sun of Reality and are the cause of disagreement and conflict.

Thus we must, heart and soul, strive to submit ourselves humbly to the Abhā Kingdom so that the eye of true vision may be opened in everyone, and every mind and perception may behold the lights of the Sun of Reality. God gave the mind to perceive the effulgences of the Sun of Reality. The eye was given to behold the lights. You must strive--nay, these clouds must be entirely removed--so that what the prophets have commanded will be established in reality. It is certain that if the souls were to refer to their minds and perception, they would perceive the reality and comprehend the divine effulgences, and behold the Sun of Reality shining and blazing with its brightest illumination.



ي وخلاست ديد) تهروا مركزة معا لأرائة المروز مرائل الرومزت تمايح المنيغوركرا يزامر ومرافا بطانها مركد مستسلم وتفاليه مرفعفت لايهاى بوا مقريطن وتوضي وش بروش مقدس رديس آيا ا בונחיטת לטלחוטי تر و ل اخر أفاب مقدل لا لقرات الملاكمة وسع النمار؟ رائد من الفرط نه المسمع عمر المراق كذ كمريم وتنور ومهدفه الشهري عالمان دروش في دمدت دمع عمر كري ما عركز كرفوك بلع بعرو ونعب التيسكات ونيف كاب علي مع درفيل كما فا مبدر مدند كرد كان ترمت مثره المراكد بى نورد را رو بن لمرزم حبوب وبلغتلاف دفاع الهذا أمريان وط می نمایشم تا دین معر*ت مر از نود جو مقد ورد داک د* نور شرحقر قست به التيكم ا دراك نون ويتر حقيق كف ويودو وارث وانور المرات المرات الخيراني نرمونر كام ومحقق كردد لفسطف الرنول ور درالی رحی کنته حسول دراک کاند نومن الیموا عالمه که ت مقیعت در نه سایترای کا بع دالان گردر

## نطق مبارك در هوتل بلز مناكب ا ۱۹۱۲ مثل

بسیار خوش آمدید ـ امروز صبح بر خواستم ـ دیدم شهررا هر گرفته، صفا نگذاشته، هر روز صبح که می بینم ابر وهر نیست خيلي خوشم مي آيد زيرا وقتي هر نيست هوا باصفاست. همينطور كه اين ابر وهر آفتاب را پنهاني مي كند همينقسم احساسات وتقاليد شمس حقيقت را ينهاني مي كند. ملاحظه كنيداين آفتاب چه قدر روشن است وهوا چه قدر لطيف وخوش منظر، ومشاهده اش چه قدر سبب سرور است. اما ابر وهر سبب می شود که انسان از مشاهتهٔ آفتاب محروم میگردد. این آفتاب شمس حقیقت است وابرهائی که مانع ظهور این آفتابست تقاليد است، وجون اين ابر احاطه كند وآفتاب حقيقت بنهان شود همه فرقه ئی بسمتی توجه نماید. یکی می گوید آفتاب اینجاست، دیگری میگوید آنجاست، یکی این نقطه را می برستد ودیگری آن نقطه را، هر طبقه ئی نقطه ئی رااختبار کرده می يرستد، وحال آنكه آفتاب مقدس از كل است. لهذا بجهت ابنكه نقاط وجهات مختلفه را خلق ستایش می نمایند سبب اختلاف مي شود، خلاصه ابر اوها (م) وهر تقاليد كل را احاطه كروه. اگر اين ابر وهر زائل شود كل شمس حقيقت را مي بينند. هيچ اختلافی نمی ماند، کل متحد میگردند. اما با وجود ابر و هر مشاهدة آقتاب مستحيل ومحالى. يس ما بايد بكوشيم تا اين ابرها زائل شود، مانعی نماند تا شمس حقیقت اشراق کند، کل متحد ومتفق شوند، واختلاف بكلي از ميان بر داشته شود، عالم انساني روشن شود، وحدت وصلح عمومي كل رااحاطه كند، از فيض آفتاب كل بهره ونصيب برند زيرا شمس حقيقت يكي است وفيض آفتاب يك، جميع از فيض يك آفتاب بهر مندند، ازيك آفتاب تربیت شده اند. کل را رزق میدهد تخصیصی بکسی

ندارد، ولى ابرها مانع ظهور آفتاب حقيقت است وسبب اختلاف ونزاع، لهذا بايد بجان ودل بكوشيم تضرع وزارى بملكوت ابهى نمائيم تا ديده بصيرت كل باز شود، هر عقل وادراك انوار شمس حقيقت را مشاهده نمايد، خدا عقل داده بجهت آنكه ادراك فيوضات شمس حقيقت كند، چشم داده براى مشاهده انوار، بايد كوشيد بلكه اين ابرها بكلى زائل شود، آنچه أنبيا فر مودند ثابت ومحقق گردد، يقين است اگر نفوس بعقل وادراك رجوع ثابت حقيقت را ادراك نمايد، فيوضات إلهى إحاطه كند، وشمس حقيقت در نهايت اشراق طائع وتابان بگردد.