

Eight Years Near 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Diary of Dr. Habíb Mú'ayyad



Translated and Annotated by
Ahang Rabbani

Volume 3
Witnesses to Bábí and Bahá'í History

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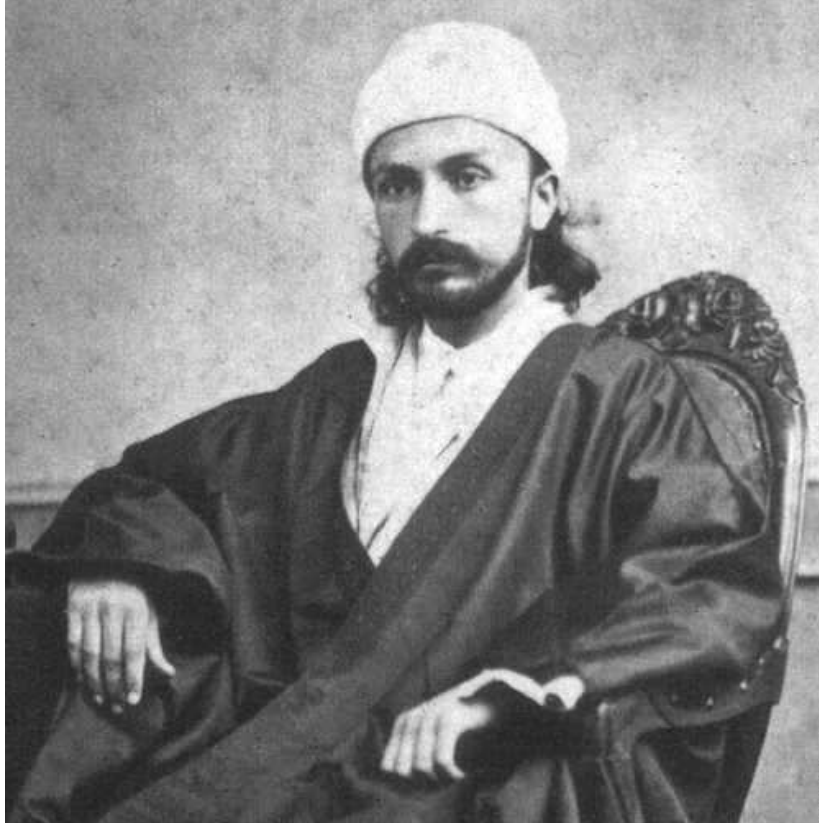
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Translator's Dedication



As a token of love and devotion,
this book is dedicated to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Contents

Translator's Foreword	1
Author's Foreword	9
1. Journey to Beirut for Education	13
2. Further Notes on the First Pilgrimage	36
3. Years of Study in Beirut	100
4. Mission to Germany, Summer of 1914	139
5. Holy Land, Fall of 1914	143
6. Abu Sinan: November 1914	194
7. Abu Sinan: January 1915	213
8. Abu Sinan: February 1915	236
9. Abu Sinan: March 1915	263
10. Abu Sinan: April 1915	286
11. Haifa: March 1915	317
12. Notes on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Utterances	355
Bibliography	470

Translator’s Foreword

God gave us memories
that we might have June roses
in the December of our lives.

—James Barrie, a Scottish poet

Mírzá Habíbu’lláh was born into a Bahá’í family of Jewish heritage on 19 January 1888 in Kirmánsháh, Iran, and the surname “Mú’ayyad,” meaning “confirmed,” was later bestowed upon him by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He received his elementary education in the city of his birth and continued his secondary education in a school founded by American Presbyterian missionaries in Hamadán.¹ His father, Khudábakhsh, was a devoted Bahá’í who, when his eldest son Mírzá Múrád was martyred because of his affiliation to the Bahá’í Faith, went to the authorities and interceded on behalf of his son’s murderer.

In October 1907, the young Habíb traveled to the Holy Land, where he spent a month receiving wisdom from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Although the plan had been for him to proceed to the United States to further his education, at the suggestion of an eminent Bahá’í, Mírzá Hakím Hárún, and with the approval of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Habíb instead directed his steps to Beirut. There he enrolled as a student at the Syrian Protestant College². During this period he had the bounty of frequent association with Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl of Gulpáygán and during regular visits to the Holy Land he sought spiritual knowledge from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and such outstanding Bahá’í scholars as Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí of Isfahán.

A portion of this period of tutelage in Beirut overlapped with

¹ In Iran most of the missionaries were either American Presbyterians or from the Church Missionary Society in England. The former established schools as well as hospitals throughout Iran.

² In 1922 renamed the American University of Beirut.

2 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

that of Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s grandson and future Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith. In Beirut, Habíb Mú’ayyad eagerly engaged in serving his fellow Bahá’ís, corresponding with various communities, extending hospitality to visitors and pilgrims, and receiving and dispatching ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Tablets to their ultimate destinations.

Habíb completed his medical studies at the Protestant College of Beirut in the Spring of 1914. In July of that year he and a schoolmate, ‘Azízu’lláh Bahádur, were requested by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to visit Germany to counter the activities of Dr. Amínu’lláh Faríd, who had withdrawn from the Bahá’í Faith and was traveling in Europe in defiance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s requests.

After completing this mission, Dr. Mú’ayyad returned to the Holy Land. World War I had begun. From November 1914 to May 1915 he operated a medical dispensary that was open to all in the Druze village of Abu Sinan [Abú-Sínán], northeast of ‘Akká, where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had settled the Bahá’ís temporarily. The modest room set aside for Dr. Mú’ayyad’s clinic also served as a school room for the classes taught by Mírzá Badí‘ Bushrú’í. Although the world during this period was greatly convulsed and troubles assailed the small colony of Bahá’ís on every side, Dr. Mú’ayyad was often heard to say in later years that this time spent near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the Holy Family was among the sweetest and most memorable periods of his life.

Dr. Mú’ayyad later returned to Haifa upon the instruction of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and, some weeks later, was instructed to proceed to Iran. His final days with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land were blessed with daily lessons in devotion to the Bahá’í Faith, which doubtless served to fill his heart and soul with illumination and guidance, directing his future endeavors in the Bahá’í Faith. On the occasion of Dr. Mú’ayyad’s departure for Iran, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed a letter to Dr. Mú’ayyad’s father stating that he should thank God for such a “worthy son” and describing Habíb as a “lamp enkindled with the love of God” and as one “engaged in the service of humanity.” The father should, in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words, “infinitely

rejoice in beholding his countenance and in inhaling the fragrances of his presence.”

Upon returning to his native land in spring of 1915, Dr. Mú'ayyad settled in Kirmánsháh, where he married Zínát Dádvar from a prominent Muslim family with considerable influence in government and in the religious life of the region.³ They had seven children, whom they named 'Inayat, Manuchir, Bahieh, Lili, Iskandar, Hushang, and Gity.

Pursuant of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's counsel, Dr. Mú'ayyad forged personal ties with local government officials and with people of every class and creed. While fully occupied with his medical practice, he nevertheless found time, as circumstances permitted, to impart the Bahá'í teachings to those whom he found to be responsive. He always stood resolutely firm in the face of difficulties, a shield protecting the Bahá'ís against periodic assaults by enemies of the religion. He was a member of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Kirmánsháh for some twenty-five years and also served on the Spiritual Assemblies of Tihiran, Qulhak, and Darús for a long period. In April 1945 he was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, on which body he served for a number of years with devotion and distinction.

Many times during the course of his professional career, Dr. Mú'ayyad was offered prominent positions in the Iranian government, including the directorship of various Ministries. He was also urged to become a member of the National Parliament, but he consistently refused these political posts and devoted himself to the practice of medicine, as this had been 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wish. For two years he headed the Bahá'í-owned Mithaqiyh Hospital, but he soon returned to private practice, as he always preferred ministering directly to his patients.

When informed of Dr. Habíb Mú'ayyad's death, the Universal

³ She was the daughter of the Muntasur'l-Mulk Dádvar and a niece of the Wuthúqu's-Saltanih Dádvar, the war minister during the Constitutional Revolution and a close ally of Reza Shah Pahlaví. Zínát's mother, the Navábu's-Saltanih, descended from the royal family of Fath-'Alí Shah Qájár.

4 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

House of Justice sent the following cable on 29 October 1971:

Grieved news passing faithful devoted steadfast promoter Faith Habíb Mu’ayyad whose life enriched through services rendered ministries Master Guardian convey loving sympathy family advise hold memorial meetings praying Holy Shrines progress his soul.



Dr. Mu’ayyad’s Diary

In his chronicle, Dr. Mu’ayyad writes that it was during his sojourn in Germany that he learned how the Europeans kept diary records. On his return to the Holy Land, he adopted this practice and kept very close notes of his daily observations, particularly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances from September 1914 to May 1915. It has been noted that he dearly treasured these precious notebooks during his years in Iran.⁴

⁴ The present descendants of Dr. Mu’ayyad interviewed by the translator are unaware of the whereabouts of these notebooks. It is likely that they are at the

On 11 June 1952, the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Iran, on which body Dr. Mú'ayyad was serving at the time, wrote him the following letter:

No. 1226.

7 Núr 109 BE, corresponding to 21.3.1331 Sh. [11 June 1952]

[To] the honored Dr. Habíb Mú'ayyad, may the Glory of God rest upon him.

We quote below a portion of a letter dated 23 May [1952] from the honored Dr. Lutfu'lláh Hakím, upon him rest the Glory of God, addressed to the [undersigned] secretary of this Assembly and request that you kindly advise us on this matter so that accordingly we may submit a report to the sacred presence [of the Guardian]:

“Today is 28 Sha‘bán.⁵ Yesterday afternoon, all the friends of God gradually assembled in the pilgrim house near the Shrine of the Báb, and it was nearly five past noon when the beloved Guardian joined the gathering as well. The Guardian’s address, which lasted about an hour and a half, was all about the martyrdom of the Báb, the construction of the Shrine of the Báb and the diffusion of the blessed Cause of God. Afterwards a portion of Nabíl’s narrative about the martyrdom of the Exalted One⁶ was recited. Some poems of ‘Andalíb were chanted as well, and a portion of the memoirs of Dr.

archives of the Bahá'í World Centre, although the translator has been unable to establish that. If not there, then it is feared that the originals may have been lost in recent tumults in Iran.

⁵ The Bahá'ís of the East observe the anniversary of the Martyrdom of the Báb based on the Islamic (lunar) calendar, on 28 Sha‘bán. In 1952, that date occurred on 23 May.

⁶ A reference to the Báb.

6 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Habíb Mú’ayyad regarding the Shrine of the Báb, which has been published in [the journal] *Abang Badí’*, were read also.

The Guardian instructed me to write you to request that Dr. Mú’ayyad provide your National Assembly with a complete copy of the memoirs he kept during the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, including His talks about the Shrine and the martyrdom of the Báb and other matters, for transmission to the Holy Land. Therefore, please convey the warmest greetings of this ephemeral servant to Dr. Mú’ayyad and ask that he kindly prepare a copy and forward it [to the Holy Land] at his earliest convenience, as the receipt of these records would be most timely and beneficial.”

We pray that unceasing confirmations may surround you.

[Signed] Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, ‘Alí-Akbar Furútan.

In accordance with the above request, Dr. Mú’ayyad quickly prepared a copy of his diary, which he supplemented with some other reminiscences of his years in the Holy Land, entitling the resulting memoir, *Khátirát Habíb áz Bayánát Mabbúb*⁷ [Habíb’s Recollections of the Beloved’s Utterances]. This manuscript was sent to the Holy Land in the same year. A few years later, in 1961, it was published by the Bahá’í Publishing Trust of Iran, along with several previously published articles by the diarist. This volume was reprinted by the Bahá’í-Verlag of Germany in 1998, with an index. Though it contains a number of typographical errors and suffers from other deficiencies, it is this version that is used as the basis for the present translation.

In 1972, Dr. Mú’ayyad published a second volume of his memories, this being principally devoted to the notes he kept from

⁷ In subsequent footnotes, *Khátirát Habíb* is used as an abbreviation for this title.

his mission to Germany in the summer of 1914. The present translation of Dr. Mú'ayyad's memoirs is a selection from the first volume.

The following notations have been adopted throughout the translation:

() parenthetical comments inserted by the diarist
[] bracketed clarifying phrases supplied by the translator
< > page numbers of the 1998 edition of the Persian text are indicated every five pages.

Footnotes contributed by the author are identified by the initials (HM). Other footnotes are by the translator.

As Dr. Mú'ayyad has noted in several places in the text, the remarks attributed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this diary represent the author's recollections after his return to the pilgrim house and often provide merely an outline of the many themes addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Therefore, while these notes are most illuminating, it should be understood that they carry no scriptural authority. The obvious exceptions are the various Tablets quoted in the narrative, the substance of which is translated in the present volume by the undersigned. Unless an authoritative source (published by the Bahá'í World Centre) is cited, these renderings pertain to the class of "provisional translations."

Occasionally, Dr. Mú'ayyad quotes words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá or certain events in Arabic. It is not clear to the present translator whether the diarist originally noted them in Arabic or if they are excerpts from other diary records, such as those kept by Dr. Zia Baghdadi, and were included by Dr. Mú'ayyad for the sake of completeness.

Various pictures have been added by the translator.

Acknowledgements

In 1997, after consultation with members of the Universal House of

8 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Justice about suitability of translating Dr. Mú’ayyad’s Diary and identifying an appropriate translator, I was honored to be approached by the family of Dr. Mú’ayyad to undertake this project. In the process of rendering this translation, I have been greatly encouraged by Dr. Mú’ayyad’s children, Mrs. Bahieh Moayyad-Khademi and Drs. Iskandar and Houshang Moayyad. I wish to hereby record my heartfelt gratitude to them for the bestowal of this great honor and trust. Dr. Mú’ayyad’s granddaughter, Mona Khademi, was helpful as my contact point with the family and ably facilitated a number of important interactions.

*Abang Rabbani
Houston, Texas
February 1999*

Note: While the original manuscript of this book was completed in February 1999, its publication was obstructed due to factors beyond my control. During this interval, I had the opportunity to reconsider parts of translation and to add further research notes. The project also greatly benefited from discussions on *Tarikh* Internet Discussion group when portions of the monograph were posted in installments in 2004. Subsequently, with great care and attention, my learned friend Phillip Tussing read the manuscript and offered a number of suggestions towards its improvement. All errors and shortcomings, however, are mine.

*AR
March 2007*

Author's Foreword

In the name of God,
the Glorious, the Most Resplendent!

In this monograph I will record selections from my diary that pertain to the period of my education at the American University of Beirut and the precious days I spent on the sanctified ground of 'Akká and Haifa. Moreover, I will share certain notes from the utterances I heard spoken by 'Abdu'l-Bahá—may my spirit be a sacrifice unto His steadfast Friends.⁸

Preamble and Exhortations

Unrestrained praise and salutation be upon that much-loved Creator Who has brought forth humankind from absolute nothingness and bestowed the robe of existence. God has provided humankind all manner of sustenance, and arrayed the entire creation and creatures to serve him, and to aid, educate, and edify him. He has assigned man specific duties and service unto others. Moreover, He has granted him a period of life consisting of a mix of sorrows and joys, sullied by desires and egos, combined with ease and discomfort, and joined by profit and loss – all of these coming to an end in an instant, much as a scroll is rolled up or a spider's web is smashed: "And these are of Thy everlasting decrees beneath the Tree of Thy Appearance, O my Lord." For Him the hidden and primary mystery [of creation] is evident and the ultimate purpose is achieved.

These struggles, fights for survival, tussles to earn daily bread, and all the other efforts that man exerts unconsciously – much like different parts of a mindless machine – these are necessary [for our spiritual growth]. Parts of man's character are his egotism, selfishness, self-centeredness, pride and arrogance, which are all

⁸ "The Friends" was and continues to be a term used to refer to Bahá'ís.

10 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

signs of his ignorance and negligence. That is, had man understood the divine purpose, comprehended the goal and objective of creation, and was he not subject to various desires and lusts, and had he humbled himself before the sacred laws and traditions, he would never subjugate himself to these childish proclivities and behaviors. He would instead consider himself part of a greater whole and unworthy of such immature inclinations.

If man understood how completely bounded and ephemeral he was, he would never allow himself the temerity to leave behind a mark or a sign. If he thoroughly comprehended how passing and unfaithful this world is, he would never be attached to this abode of dust or this life filled with agonies. Instead, untroubled, he would take refuge in fields and meadows, renouncing this world and everything therein.

But since manifold mysteries are concealed in every part of creation, therefore, this neglect and ignorance of man must also enshrine great wisdom. That is, there are great mysteries and wisdom behind this ignorance and disregard of man. And had it not been such, the world be engulfed in disorder, societal structure would be disrupted, and thorough confusion would result at every level of the functioning of this world.

The utterance “*Every name hath been created by His Word*”⁹ is an evident truth and no question, doubt or hesitation is permitted unto it. Therefore, one must observe instant obedience and unreserved submission.

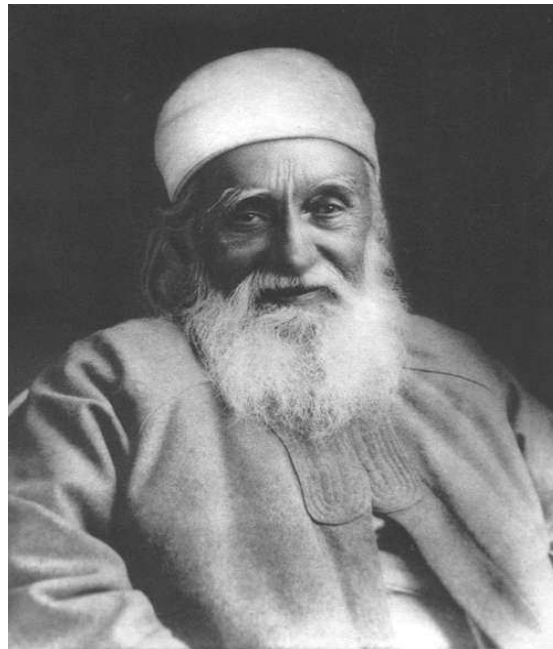
One must be of benefit to society and at every hour be ready to submit to the call of the Divine Creator. We must gather goodly spiritual fruits for presentation to our Lord when we leave this plane of existence. And upon you be peace!

Introduction

By the grace of God, this ephemeral servant, Habíbu’lláh (Dr. Habíb

⁹ Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb Aqdas*, K167.

Mú'ayyad), son of Khudábakhsh Kirmánsháhi, was elected to the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran in the spring of 1324 Sh [April 1945]. Since I was not otherwise occupied with work during the morning hours, as an exhortation for [the edification of] my descendants, I set myself to briefly writing my memoirs, describing what I had observed and what had occurred, the difficulties and tribulations that I had sustained in life, and to capture a general record of my recollections, (as the past is a mirror for the future and a guide for posterity). Inasmuch as what ultimately counts in life is its quality rather than its quantity, and that life must serve a purpose and bear fruit – regardless of the length of life in this transient world – therefore the only times I found worth recording were those I spent in the Holy Land in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and associating with the friends, pilgrims and residents of that sacred realm.



These events have penetrated my soul and being, have been ever-inscribed on my consciousness and will be recorded in these pages. The remainder of the events of my life will be written in a separate book and will be removed from this notebook.

12 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Happy was the hour spent with friends;
the rest was pointless and expended fruitlessly.

It should not remain concealed that I have several notebooks of memoirs and that I had wished to publish them all. However, my intention was that prior to their publication and becoming available to the general public, they first receive the approval of the beloved Guardian of the Cause, so that I would not egotistically disseminate records that might be incompatible with the interests of the blessed Cause and have them fall into the hands of nonbelievers.

As such, I will not reproduce the remainder of these diaries in this volume, but leave them instead for some future opportunity, and here limit myself exclusively to giving an account of [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] blessed utterances. I will also describe the circumstances associated with His heavenly words, so that matters are presented clearly for the reader.

[Dr. Habíb Mú’ayyad]

Chapter 1

Journey to Beirut for Education

[Departure from Iran]

Together with the honored Mírzá Isháq Khán Haqíqí and his wife, Firdaws Khánum, we left for the Holy Land in October 1907 by way of Qum, Tíhrán, Qazvín, Rasht, Anzalí, Bákú, Batum and Istanbul. In Tíhrán, we stayed with the honored Hand of the Cause Hájí Mullá 'Alí-Akbar, known as Hájí Akhúnd. We had met him in Qum, where he and some other [Bahá'ís] had come to pay homage at the burial place of the honored Manuchihr Khán¹⁰ Gurjí.¹¹

In Qazvín we were the guests of the most hospitable and gracious Mírzá Músá Khán Hakím-Báshí [physician]. At that time the entire transportation system of the region was under the control of Siyyid Nasru'lláh Báqiroff, and he had instructed his men to provide for our comfort and ease. All the inns on our route belonged to him, and every two hours we reached a new rest station where our carriage horses were changed and where we refreshed ourselves. Each location was informed of our arrival in advance and refreshments readied, and this allowed us to journey day and night with great ease, never feeling fatigue along the way. Filled with joy and elation, we constantly gave thanks for the divine grace that was so abundantly showered upon us. With feelings of ecstasy and rapture we pondered how, through God's bounty, strangers were turned into age-old friends, how the means for the universal unity of men were provided and how spiritual brothers and sisters

¹⁰ The Mu'tamidu'd-Dawlih. (HM)

¹¹ For the story of the Báb's stay in Isfahán with Manuchihr Khán see Nabil Zarandí, *The Dawn-Breakers*, chapter 10. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has revealed a Visitation Tablet (see, 'Abdu'l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, *Risálih Ayyám Tis'ib*, p. 195) for Manuchihr Khán and has noted that visiting his resting-place is exceedingly meritorious. As such, when possible, Bahá'ís often visit his resting-place.

14 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

surrounded all His servants. How wondrous indeed was the field of love and how vast the realm of fellowship spread before us! Exalted be His Grandeur and exalted be His Sovereignty! “Exalted art Thou to shine forth Thy eminent Effulgence over all created things!” “Exalted art Thou Who hast revived the dead earth by Thy Love!” “Exalted art Thou Who didst cause the water of unity to flow from Thine Overflowing Stream!” “Exalted art Thou Who hast called into being a new creation!” “Exalted be the Founder of this glorious Age!”

In Bádkúbih we were able to visit the divine friends. The honored Hájí Qalandar [served] in the [Bahá’í] guesthouse. Áqá Músá Naqíoff would frequently come in his personal and luxurious carriage. We learned from others that he was a man of great wealth and immense affluence, and was overheard to remark that, single and alone, he intended to use his fortune to raise a Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in Bádkúbih, similar to the one constructed in ‘Ishqábád. However, he procrastinated so long that he failed to make good use of his wealth and eventually spent the last part of his life in abject poverty and regret. Bahá’u’lláh has revealed:

No doubt hath there ever been or remaineth that whatever ordinances or exhortations have been revealed by the Supreme Pen are for the betterment of Our servants. Consider, for instance, that the law of Huqúqu’lláh was revealed. Were the people <5> to adhere to it, surely God would surround them with His bounties, and bestow their sanctified possessions upon themselves and their descendants. However, do thou observe that most of the people do not benefit from their possessions, for God allows unbelievers to take hold of them, or for them to be inherited by unbelievers in preference to their descendants.¹²

In short, Naqíoff did not survive to fulfill his desire. Several times, he was kidnapped by the riffraff who robbed him of his entire

¹² The present translator was unable to locate the original of this statement attributed to Bahá’u’lláh.

estate. On these occasions, he was made to suffer various tortures. For instance, [we later heard] he was hung by his arms over intense fires, which compelled him to pay a ransom. His pitiful friends were also forced to wear outworn clothing and sweep like janitors, until eventually they all dispersed with no trace to be found.¹³ “*Take notice, O ye possessors of discernment!*”¹⁴ Therefore, [as the poet states:]

Possessions can't be taken to the next world,
give to charity before going.

In Istanbul, we confronted manifold difficulties. The principal reason was that since the Iranian government had adopted constitutional rule, fearing that such [liberal political] philosophy would spill over to the Ottoman realm, the authorities, at the behest of the monarch, Sultan ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd II, barred entrance to all Iranian [subjects at ports of the Eastern Mediterranean].

¹³ For a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this regard, see Ishráq-Khavarí, *Má'idih Ásimání*, vol. 9, p. 44; and for more biographical details on Naqioff, see, Ishráq-Khavarí, *Yádgar*, pp. 22-23, and Fádil Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru'l-Haqq*, vol. 8, part 2, p. 1057. In these two accounts, it is explained that Naqioff was in extreme poverty and decided to rent some land from the Russian government and prospect for oil. His initial diggings produced nothing and he wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asking what he should do. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá encouraged him to persevere and he eventually found oil in such quantities that he went from poverty to being extremely rich in a short space of time. When Hájí Amín came to Baku to collect the Huqúqu’lláh, however, Naqioff wept profusely but handed over no money. (He appears to have been something of a miser in that it is said that even after becoming wealthy he dressed worse than a beggar did.)

When Hájí Amín reached the Holy Land, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked about Naqioff. When Hájí Amín told him that, despite the fact that he was sitting on so much money that he has to put it into storage, he had made no Huqúqu’lláh contribution, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá reportedly said, “Músá is of us but his wealth is not. If Hájí Músá gives us money now, in the future it will be said that the religion of the Ancient Beauty advance through the money of Hájí Músá ... Bahá’u’lláh wants nothing to do with such wealth.”

Hájí Músá died and his wealth went to people whom, during his life he had so disliked that he would not let them into his house.

¹⁴ Qur’án 3:11

16 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Our ship carried about two thousand pilgrims [on their way to Jeddah and Mecca] who had business and other financial dealings in Istanbul, which required meeting with the Iranian merchants in that city. However, when we arrived [at the harbor], our vessel was immediately surrounded by police who disallowed any disembarkation. Regardless of our repeated appeals, “By God, we are not pilgrims!”, the Turks nevertheless responded, “You must proceed at once to Jeddah, the port of Mecca!” Through my limited knowledge of geography, I was able to convince Haqíqí that, in light of the authorities’ refusal to permit landing at Ottoman ports, it was best to proceed to one of the nearby harbors in the Mediterranean, such as Greece, Italy, France, or others. From there, we could continue to Beirut [and eventually to ‘Akká].

We purchased passage on a Greek vessel and a week later arrived at the Aegean Islands. This freighter was used to transport poultry, and during this journey, as we sailed to different islands, our sole entertainment was to watch roosters and chickens play. Eventually we reached the port of Pierre in Greece, where we sojourned for a day and toured the renowned city of Athens.

[Visit to Alexandria]

Once again, we acquired tickets on a ship destined for Alexandria in Egypt. When we arrived at Alexandria, inasmuch as neither Haqíqí nor I spoke the language nor were we acquainted with the culture, a strange thing occurred: thinking we had arrived at Alexandretta, Haqíqí somehow managed to ask an Arab pedestrian if he knew ‘Abdu’l-Mihdí Hakkák. He responded, “Yes, indeed. He has a shop near the harbor where he makes seals. Come, I will direct you to him.” On hearing this, without the least reservation, Khán Haqíqí immediately followed him. His wife and this servant, however, were left behind in the ship with no money or passport and bereft of acquaintances.

The whole day passed without any news from Haqíqí. Meanwhile, hungry and tired, we were stranded on the vessel, not

knowing when he might return. Soon the sirens indicated that the ship was pulling anchor and was ready to sail, but still there was no sign of Khán Haqíqí!

As our ship began pulling anchor, Khán [Haqíqí] appeared accompanied by an Effendi¹⁵ and when I asked where he had been, he answered, “There is no time now for such discussions. Help me with the suitcases as we must leave the ship.” I did as bidden, and we immediately disembarked.

A short while later, we arrived at the residence of Hájí Muhammad Yazdí, brother of Áqá Ahmad Yazdí, who, with the utmost hospitality and joy, invited us to stay with him for a few days. After a short rest, I asked Mírzá Isháq Khán [Haqíqí] the reason for his delay [in returning to the ship]. He responded, “I had been in correspondence with ‘Abdu’l-Mihdí Hakkák in Alexandretta and mistakenly thought that this city of Alexandria is the same town. Moreover, the Arab we met further misdirected me. Therefore, after recognizing my error and having thoroughly searched the city [for Hakkák], I decided to locate the Bahá’ís, knowing they would come to our aid. Gradually, and after much inquiry and effort, I found the shops of the Iranian merchants and some of the believers. However, fearing my intentions and the possibility that I was one of the Covenant-breakers, they decided to thoroughly interrogate me. In the midst of the questioning, the renowned and courageous Hájí Mírzá Hasan Khurásání, much like a graceful lion or sharp saber, entered [the room] and, seeing that we were engaged in arguing and that I was being examined, interrupted the discussions and asked me directly, ‘Are you a thábit or a náqid¹⁶?’ In the same fashion, I replied, ‘By your life, I am firm in the Covenant!’ He rejoiced aloud; and with that, the interrogation was concluded and we all embraced and kissed each other in love and fellowship. He soon sent one of his experienced attendants with me to fetch you and our belongings from the ship and direct us to this location.”

¹⁵ A term used in Ottoman Turkish for learned or prominent men.

¹⁶ Those faithful to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá referred to themselves as thábit [steadfast] and to the followers of Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí as náqid [Covenant-breakers].

18 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It was evident that the foul odor of Covenant-breaking had reached that region and that the steadfast friends exerted much caution in their associations, as bidden “*Do not consider every speaker truthful, nor every caller firm in the Covenant.*”¹⁷ Therefore, they thought it prudent to investigate each visitor, which fortunately [in our case], concluded quickly through the intervention of Hájí Mírzá Hasan, and allowed the friends and us to come together in fellowship and enjoy each other’s company and discourse.

[In Beirut]

In short, after a few days of rest in Alexandria, we acquired passage and sailed towards Beirut. On this voyage, because of an epidemic among the [Muslim] pilgrims, we were twice stopped and quarantined: once at the port of Sinope, near the Tarabuzan [Dardaneiles], on the shore of the Black Sea, and again at [the Customs Office of] Beirut.

After release from quarantine, we met the honored Áqá Muhammad-Mustafa [Baghdádí], who was numbered among the firm and learned friends, possessed a poetic and cultured disposition, and in service to the Covenant and Testament was like a sharpened sword. This steadfast and brave soldier of the Faith was the son of the honored Shaykh Muhammad Shibl, who in his youth had accompanied the illustrious Táhirih [from ‘Atabát] to Iran and had devoted his life to the service of the Cause in the proximity of the Holy Land. He was a communications center for the friends and would forward Tablets to their destinations across the globe.¹⁸

¹⁷ A similar statement attributed to Bahá’u’lláh is quoted in a letter of the Greatest Holy Leaf (*Bahíyyih Khánum*, pp. 218-219): “*Place not your trust in every new arrival, and believe not every speaker.*”

¹⁸ Muhammad-Mustafa Baghdádí had settled in Beirut in 1880, establishing a trading business in that city, with a branch office in Alexandrine; see, Moojan Momen ed. “Esslemont’s survey of the Bahá’í community in 1919-20: Part VII: Iraq by Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn Wakil,” *Bahá’í Studies Bulletin*, vol 3, no. 3 (September 1985), pp. 5-6. Shortly after Baghdádí’s family, Siyyid Hasan Afnán settled in Beirut and thus the nucleus of the first Bahá’í community was formed in that city.

Moreover, he was specifically assigned to prevent dissemination of the Covenant-breakers' calumnies and to provide guidance to the friends and pilgrims. He closely associated with prominent figures and military generals of the Ottoman Empire and indeed served as the frontline of defense for the Holy Land, and its foremost protector.

In addition to shielding the Cause of God from various darts and machinations from its enemies, he provided every possible comfort and support to the Iranian students in that region, as well as to visitors and pilgrims. He indeed served as a critical center of the Cause and was its primary defense. He was a man of unique stature who was deeply respected by friends and foes alike and in whose presence no one dared insult the Cause or speak of it unjustly. Indeed, meeting him has left an indelible impression on my soul.

The honored 'Alí Ihsán made arrangements for our [travel] papers, and soon we boarded a ship destined for Haifa. I should note that toward the latter part of his life, although outwardly Áqá Muhammad-Mustafa¹⁹ had lost his sight, yet through divine confirmations, he possessed discerning eyes. He was blind, but light filled his being. He was a lover of the Moon of the Covenant and with great effect chanted verses he had composed. To this day, I recall one or two verses of those lines, which I quote below, and may the mercy of God be upon him:

O 'Akká, indeed thou art the loftiest place for my Lord,
And thy Branch²⁰ is my Master.

Thus the love of thy habitation is the ardent desire of my heart,

But especially the love for Him Who dwelleth within thee.

¹⁹ Muhammad-Mustafá had three sons who were all firm as a rock, and their names were: Husayn Iqbál, 'Alí Ihsán and Dr. Zia Baghdadi. (HM)

²⁰ A reference to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who was styled the Most Mighty Branch by Bahá'u'lláh.

20 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

And similarly:

O the Branch of My Lord, Bahá:

My heart is burned up by the fire of Thy separation,
The heat of Thy parting consumes my inner being!

[Arrival in ‘Akká]

At that time, Haifa was a small and insignificant port where only a few families lived. One of the friends [from Yazd], known as Áqá Nasru’lláh Chái-Chí [tea-server], had a humble coffeehouse across from the wooden landing-pier, and arranged the affairs of the pilgrims with the utmost wisdom.



Bay of Haifa circa 1905

We stayed at Haifa’s shore for only a short while and then departed for ‘Akká.



Haifa Port

Our two-horse carriage journeyed the distance on the sandy beaches and en route we sat quietly as we were wonder-struck by the beauty of the sea, the majesty of God's Mount Carmel and the approaching city of 'Akká. Our hearts quivered. As the city neared, our trepidation and anticipation increased until we finally passed through the iron city-gate and entered "The Strong City."²¹ It was Friday, the eighth of Dhi'l-Qa'dih 1320 A.H.²² The streets of the city were very narrow with exceptionally high walls made from limestone, which at once evoked deep awe and wonder in us.

We arrived at a caravansary known as Khán-i 'Umdán²³, with a courtyard filled with camels, horses and mules.²⁴

²¹ Bahá'u'lláh in *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 144, states: "Lend an ear unto the song of David. He saith: 'Who will bring me into the Strong City?' The Strong City is Akka, which hath been named the Most Great Prison, and which possesseth a fortress and mighty ramparts."

²² As the text consistently refers to 1907 as the date of this pilgrimage, it is believed 1320 is a typist error and the correct date should be 8 Dhi'l-Qa'dih 1325 A.H., which corresponds to 13 December 1907. *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 21, gives the arrival date as "Friday 8 Dhi'l-Qa'dih 1329 A.H. (1907)" which corresponds to Tuesday 31 October 1911 and is clearly inconsistent with other chronological data in this narrative. Therefore, "1329" is also considered a typist error.

²³ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 1, pp. 12 (and 1:9) incorrectly refers to it as Khán-i 'Umrán. This caravanserai is also known as Khán-i Avamid (the Inn of the Pillars) or Khán-i Jurayni. For more details see *Door of Hope*, p. 38 and p. 75.

²⁴ For a description see *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 230-231 and *Door of Hope*, pp. 75-76.

22 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá



Filth and dirt enveloped everything. Unwashed Arabs and persistent mosquitoes were a source of great irritation. An inn, known among the Arabs as Khán-i ‘Avámíd [the inn of the pillars], was the stopping place for the caravans carrying goods, grains and fruits. On the second floor, the friends of God had leased a few rooms where they resided. They utilized one section as a pilgrim house while the adjacent and connecting rooms were occupied by such resident believers as the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí²⁵,

²⁵ For autobiography see *Stories from Delights of Heart*.

Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin²⁶, Mishkin-Qalam²⁷, and some others.

These souls had closed their eyes to all the pleasures of earthly life, had forsaken all the comforts of present society, had renounced all the ease of modern civilization, and had fixed their gaze solely on the face of the Beloved. They consumed but little food, had abandoned desires or attachments to worldly affairs, and longed to attain [Abdu'l-Bahá's] presence, hold fast to the hem of His garment, hear His voice, partake of His bounties, and taste the joy and wisdom of His sweet, heavenly utterances. Beholding His countenance and hearing His eloquent words <10> was the source of their satisfaction and hope, and allowed them to renounce every regard and affection for this world.



'Akká (Acre) circa 1900

What serene lives they led! What spiritual, resplendent and unrestrained men they were! What tranquil and joyous atmosphere

²⁶ For biography see *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 150-153.

²⁷ For biography see *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 97-101.

24 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

they had created, causing one to forget all the affairs, the pains, and the cares of this world! No sorrow, no anguish, no avarice, no greed, no lust, no attachment, no anger, no dispute, no concern for today or tomorrow, no political conniving, no craving for rank or position – none of these were allowed into those hallowed and ethereal surroundings. Indeed, it seemed as if the promised Kingdom had materialized and the inhabitants of this celestial place had become the embodiment of what Sa‘dí²⁸, upon whom rest the mercy of God, described:

If you grant me the choice on the Day of Resurrection,
friendship would suffice me, while I leave all the
bounties of paradise to you.

Through self-effacement, self-sacrifice and self-renunciation, and through the breath of the life-generating Divine Breeze, they had attained the station of the true seeker. Their ego had left and spirituality had filled its place. They had indeed become spirit reincarnated. [As the poet has versed:]

Man can reach a summit that beholds naught save God,
Lo, how lofty is the station of man!

The sight and insight of those that have witnessed the instability and infirmity of this world and its dwellers, and have comprehended the end of things, and determined the volatility of the present order, and renounced all material desires is summed up in [the Arabic proverb], “The sweetness of it is as tribulation, and its reprimands like unto a passing cloud.” That is, earthly enjoyments are mirage, not reality. They are ephemeral, not lasting. To those endowed with understanding material pleasures are naught save childish desires – a fleeing delight – followed by darkness and gloom.

²⁸ Sa‘dí is the famed writer of Shiraz whose prose and verse remain among the foremost examples of Persian literary achievement.

Therefore, these things were unworthy of their attention as they did pass the stage of vain imaginings and arrived at certainty and understanding of the purpose of creation.

How true indeed were the penetrating insight and faithful sentiments of the renowned poet of Shiraz, Sa'dí, upon whom rest the mercy of God:

The world is not worth the envy that it produces in them,
they grieve for either its existence or its non-existence.
Indeed, one must admit that those who have the proper view,
are those who have not cast their vision at this heap of
dust.

Whatever the true knowers cannot find firm and permanent,
even if it is the entire kingdom of the world, they will not
pay anything for it.

Unless you disapprove of haughtiness and arrogance,
by God, in the kingdom there are many beasts like you.²⁹

My God, what had these sanctified souls seen or experienced that, in such wise, they had relinquished all the pleasures of the world and had decided to remain in this prison-city of 'Akká, with its foul air and water, a citadel for the most criminally-minded, a place more nefarious than any other?

This town was devoid of every merit or advantage. Even air and sun were reluctant to approach it. It was a prison for the enemies of the powerful monarchs of the Ottoman Empire, and the permanent grave for murderers, thieves, highwaymen, rabble-rousers and the most dangerous criminals of the realm. Anyone who received the judgment of banishment from any part of the Ottoman Kingdom – be it regions in Europe, Asia, or Africa – was sent to this prison-city, whence no hope of return could ever be entertained. It was a Bridge of Sighs³⁰ that allowed no return.

²⁹ The present translator is grateful to Prof Alan Godlas for his kind assistance in rendering these lines by Sa'dí.

³⁰ The Roman Emperors in Venice, Italy, constructed the Bridge of Sighs, where

26 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

However, for discerning souls, it was a verdant and flourishing orchard, with musk-laden scent. From the hair of its camels we inhaled the fragrance of life, and from its fleas³¹ and flies we heard the melody of divine verses. From its walls and owls we perceived the Songs of David, and from its prison and captivity wafted the sweet perfume of the garment of Joseph. Blessed are those who come upon it, happy are those that attain unto it, and glad tidings be upon them that visit it.

[First Pilgrimage]

During this first pilgrimage, I had the privilege of staying for nearly a month, that is, nineteen days, while Mírzá Isháq Khán Haqíqí was present, and then eleven more days with the Hamadání pilgrims [of Jewish descent]. Day and night I had the bounty of beholding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s countenance and drinking my fill of His engaging utterances. Sometimes I was thrilled to the depths of my soul and at other instances my tears flowed unceasingly. From the rapture of this wine of union, I was so intoxicated that I beheld no world save the realm of spirit and the paradise above.

Because of the provocations of the Covenant-breakers and the machinations of the Ottoman authorities, pilgrims could not attain the presence of the Master collectively. Often, two by two, we would walk the narrow alleys from the pilgrim house to the Master’s residence.³² These alleys were so narrow that if a pedestrian came

criminals sentenced to life-imprisonment would pass over on their way to permanent captivity. (HM)

³¹ The congestion of ‘Akká’s fleas is well beyond the imagination of those that have not experienced it. I recall that while in Khán-i ‘Umdán, my feet were covered with them, much like wearing a black boot. In this regard, it is revealed in a hadith, “And if you were bitten by one of its [i.e. ‘Akká’s] fleas, that would be more meritorious before God than sustaining a severe injury by an arrow in the path of the Almighty.” (HM) Compare with hadith cited in, Bahá’u’lláh, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 79, “He that hath been bitten by one of its fleas is better, in the estimation of God, than he who hath received a grievous blow in the path of God.”

³² ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His family lived at that time in a spacious building known as the

from the opposite direction, we had to press our backs against the wall to let him pass. However, when we arrived at the Master's house, particularly on the night that we gathered at His reception hall, we would be galvanized by the vivifying atmosphere, particularly when 'Abdu'l-Bahá began to speak. His utterance had such a profound effect on the audience that it seemed to penetrate the very depths of one's soul and being.



His words often centered on the harm and injury perpetrated upon His Holiness the Exalted One [i.e. the Báb] and the Blessed

House of 'Abdu'llah Pasha. It was in this building that the remains of the Báb were secretly kept for a decade and that Shoghi Effendi was born.

28 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Beauty [i.e. Bahá’u’lláh] and the opposition of the wayward, the sufferings the martyrs sustained at the hand of the ungodly and the detachment of the Chosen Ones of God. Occasionally He would speak of the infidelity of the followers of Yahya [Azal] and the wickedness of the violators of the divine Covenant. Afterwards, a Qur’án reciter would come in and, once he had received permission to sit, would chant Qur’ánic verses in a Hijází or Egyptian style; and when the Master said, “Sidq Alláh³³”, he would immediately stop. At that time, Áqá Husayn Ashchí³⁴ would serve coffee, and subsequently all would take their leave.

The tradition was that twice a week, on Friday and Sunday afternoons, we visited the sacred Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, the Point of Adoration of the dwellers of the Celestial Paradise. These visits were always the same and consisted of Isfandíyár going back and forth several times, taking the friends from ‘Akká to Bahjí in his carriage.

³³ lit. Truthfully said God.

³⁴ He joined Bahá’u’lláh’s household in Baghdad and remained with them throughout various exiles. He eventually passed away in the Holy Land in 1925. His fascinating memories are available at: *Áqá Husayn Ashchí, Táríkh Vaqá’i‘ Baghdad va Istanbul va Edirne va ‘Akká* (Lansing, MI: H-Bahai, 1997) at <http://ahang.rabbani.googlepages.com/> and rendered into English by the present translator at the same internet site.



There was a small pilgrim house near the Shrine where the believers would wash their hands and face, refresh themselves, and perform their ablutions. They would also be served tea and chant prayers, often led by Mírzá Mahmúd Káshí. When all the pilgrims and some of the resident believers had assembled, calmly and reverently, with hands folded over chest, we would walk to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; and afterwards, in the same manner, we would return.

Once or twice during the week, we would visit the Ridván³⁵ and the Firdaws³⁶ Gardens, as well as Tellu'l-Hamrá [the crimson hill] and 'Aynu'l-Baqar [spring of the cow]³⁷.

³⁵ For description see, David Ruhe, *Door of Hope*, pp. 95-102.

³⁶ For description see David Ruhe, *Door of Hope*, pp. 102-103.

³⁷ The spring is named from the Muslim legend that Adam watered his ox here, hence among other descriptions the spring-water is thought to be healing to oxen. This spring is mentioned by Bahá'u'lláh in *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 178 and p. 180, and joining another spring, 'Ayn'u-Sitt [the spring of women], it flows to the east of 'Akká, though their combined volume is inadequate for the city. For more

30 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It continued in this fashion until our allotted period of pilgrimage was concluded and instructions for departure were received. Since the plan was for me to go to the United States, the American pilgrims, such as [Helen] Goodall and [her daughter Ella] Cooper of San Francisco, were informed; and even in a general nightly meeting of the friends, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá specified that I should travel with the American friends and in consultation with them enter a university in America. He also remarked:

The Blessed Beauty has provided the means for the unification of the world of humanity and has removed religious and social conflicts. No longer is a person to be defined by such labels as Jewish or Christian. All are embraced by the effulgence of the Faith, and all dwell beneath the tabernacle of unity.

What occurred at that time was: the honored Hakím Hárún Hamadáni threw himself at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s feet and pleaded with Him that I may be permitted to undertake the same study at Beirut College [instead of going to the United States]. He entreated, “We know him [i.e. Habíb Mú’ayyad] and are acquainted with his background. We implore You to allow him to study in Beirut where he can associate with other Bahá’í youth.” A little while later, I was summoned into the presence [of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. I went in, bowed down and was greeted with the customary, “Marhabá³⁸!” Afterwards the billowing ocean of His utterance surged and His all-embracing grace and compassion surrounded me. He remarked, “Your honored friends have made such a request, but what do you say?” “Whatever is Your good wish,” I responded. “The Blessed Beauty has stated,” He commented, “My pleasure is in the pleasure of My creatures.”³⁹

details see, David Ruhe, *Door of Hope*, pp. 125-126.

³⁸ Lit. Well done, or welcome.

³⁹ Bahá’u’lláh’s Persian *Hidden Words*, no. 43, states: “O My Friends! Walk ye in the ways of the good pleasure of the Friend, and know that His pleasure is in the pleasure of His creatures.

[Visit to Jewish Holy Places]

In short, it was decided for me to go to Beirut. Therefore, the American friends left and I remained for a few more days until the Hamadání believers were also dismissed, at which time I accompanied them. During this time, whatever He uttered and all that He commanded regarding travel in the Holy Land, applied to me as well. For instance, regarding the ancient holy places, He remarked:

All of these were the dwelling-places of the Prophets of old. All of them were blessed by the footsteps of the Divine Manifestations, Who spent their nights fervently praying and beseeching the Almighty for the fulfillment of His promised redemption. All these caves that you see, these are where the Prophets lived. They have trod upon every spot of this land. Therefore, every part of this land is hallowed and sacred.

All these Prophets and Chosen Ones also longed to witness such a Day as this. They spoke of the Coming of the Lord and the appearance of the Lord of Hosts. They affirmed that the Tabernacle of the Lord would be raised on Mount Carmel, beneath which the representatives of the Most Great Peace would assemble and from whence they would bestow a New Order upon the world.

This land is Palestine.⁴⁰ It is a Holy Land. Soon the Jewish people shall return to this land, and once more

That is: no man should enter the house of his friend save at his friend's pleasure, nor lay hands upon his treasures nor prefer his own will to his friend's, and in no wise seek an advantage over him. Ponder this, ye that have insight!

⁴⁰ I should note that at that time, that is, in 1907, the word "Palestine" was not commonly employed, as this area was under the Ottoman rule and was part of [the province of] Syria. Some of the Ashkenazi Jews referred to it as "Palistin" or "The

David’s sovereignty and Solomon’s splendor shall be made manifest. This is an explicit divine promise, and there is no doubt therein. The Jewish people will be made resplendent. They will gather under the banner of the Cause. All of these barren fields will become fertile and cultivated. The scattered tribes of the Jewish people will be united. This region will become a center of industry and commerce, and will be refined and populated. Of this there is no doubt.

The Shrine of the Báb shall be raised in the most excellent manner. The prayers and supplications of the Prophets of old will not go unanswered! Every divine promise will be fulfilled. <15> The banishment and dispersion of the Jewish people shall be transformed into evident glory and distinction. Even outwardly they will attain high honor and eminence. The Blessed Beauty prayed for the people of Israel in a supplication revealed some fifty years ago, “*O God, exalt and glorify the abased House of Israel⁴¹ and assemble this people in the Holy Land.*” Certainly, these divine promises will be fulfilled. There is no doubt about it.

You must go and with utmost reverence, veneration and humility visit these holy sites.

Afterwards, I returned to the pilgrim house and was pondering His words. Soon I was overcome with evil thoughts and was tested spiritually. I thought – and I take refuge in God! – perhaps the Master has erred and is not aware that I have come in this direction to further my education and, since I missed the opportunity to leave for America, I must now proceed to Beirut for this purpose. Possibly He was thinking that I was part of the group of pilgrims of Jewish descent and like them must now visit Jerusalem and other sacred spots. It is likely that such a delay would prevent me from

Land of Israel.” (HM)

⁴¹ Israel means, “hasten unto God,” and was a title of Jacob, father of Joseph.

enrolling in the university and cause irreparable damage to my academic pursuits. Moreover, I do not have the funds for such a journey, nor the desire to become a “Hájí”, and I do not think that one who has visited Bahá’í Holy Places needs to see other spots. I said to myself:

Hájí goes for the Ka‘bih and I too seek a pilgrimage,
he searches for the House, but I the Builder of the
House.

In short, such thoughts perplexed and disturbed me. In the pilgrim house I was sharing these concerns with the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí when, suddenly, one of the attendants entered the room and informed me, “You have been summoned [by the Master].” Immediately I went to His sacred presence and bowed down. He greeted me with “Marhabá!” and showered upon me expressions of bounty and grace. He made further remarks, which were approximately these:

All of this land is the Holy Land, and it bears traces of the footsteps of the Divine Prophets. Therefore, every grain of it is sacred and sanctified. The Prophets spent the nights fervently supplicating and praying in these mountains and caves, and the only desire of all of them was to attain the presence of the Blessed Beauty, and to behold such a Day as this! Now you are My deputy in taking this pilgrimage. I am a prisoner and not permitted to leave. My utmost wish is for the freedom to go and visit these places, but I cannot do so. Therefore, on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, you must go. With the utmost reverence and humility, visit these holy places, and pray for confirmation. I cannot go because I am confined here, and the authorities will not permit Me to make such a journey.



The Wailing Wall in Jerusalem

Together with the Hamadání pilgrims of Jewish descent, using horses and mules, we set out on this journey and for the following two weeks traveled from village to village.⁴² Nightly, as we visited each place, we heard from the Jews wondrous and remarkable stories pertaining to the miracles associated with each spot. With utmost respect and admiration, we listened to these accounts and, with hands extended beyond the sleeves of our ‘abás, we stood in prayer by each of the sacred tombs, reverently kissing the holy ground.

[In Beirut]

After a long journey to the Jewish sites, eventually I arrived at the American University in Beirut and after taking an examination, entered the fifth year of high school.⁴³ I must note that I should

⁴² *Khátirát Habib*, vol. 2, p. 35, gives the duration of this journey as 20 days.

⁴³ Fifth year of high school is equivalent to the eleventh grade.

have been enrolled in college classes, but since my school certification from the American school in Hamadán⁴⁴ was not authenticated, the school board consulted and decided that I should write an essay of 500 words in English on the history and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith. They determined to accept this paper in lieu of the entrance test requirements. Fortunately, as I had studied various [Bahá'í] pamphlets and booklets received from the United States, I was familiar with such big and prestigious words as “Manifestation” and “Divine Civilization”, and some others.⁴⁵

At the appointed time, I quickly penned a section on the history of the Cause, the Most Great Manifestation, and sacrifices of the martyrs in Iran, and devoted another section to whatever of the teachings I recalled. In all, two full pages were written and presented to Professor Hull, the chairman of the department. He was very impressed by my composition, which saved me a myriad troubles and allowed me to enter the final year of high school. From that date, which was early 1908, I enrolled as a boarding student in the S.P.C. [Syrian Protestant College]⁴⁶ and began to attend regular classes.



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a study of Bahá'í students in this college see the forthcoming article by Richard Hollinger, “An Iranian Enclave in Lebanon: Bahá'í Students in Beirut, 1906-1940”

36 Eight Years Near 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Haifa 1912

Chapter 2

Further Notes on the First Pilgrimage⁴⁷

Second Preface [By the Author]

It should not elude men of insight that it was in my youth that I was granted the privilege of attaining the presence of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At that time, I was neither overly concerned with spiritual issues, nor with matters pertaining to the world hereafter. My sole desire was to behold the luminous countenance of the Master, and, in a state of rapture, listen to Him speak. Hence, being unaware of their future significance, the notes I kept were very abbreviated, intended principally to aid me to remember the events of those days and the sweetness and joy of being in His presence. With pen or pencil, I recorded the essence of whatever I perceived to be important or beneficial in a small pocketbook that I always carried with me. Therefore the utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá [presented in this diary] are not His exact words, but rather, what I recalled after I had returned to the pilgrim house, when I committed them to paper, often using my own inadequate expressions.

Little did I imagine that one day these [records] would be of interest to the friends or be worthy of submission before the sacred presence of the Guardian of the Cause of God. Had I anticipated such an eventuality, I would have prepared several mighty books of the utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and recorded the very words as spoken by Him, as each of those words is endowed with a myriad spiritual potentialities. Alas, this thought occurred too late to me, and the little that could be assembled and copied from my various scattered papers is mostly from the time shortly after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had returned from His European and American travels. I, as well, at

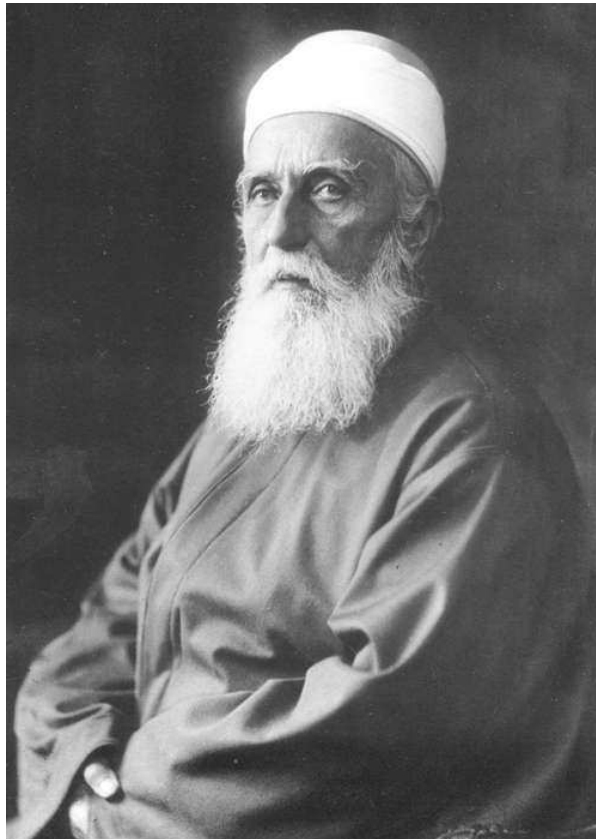
⁴⁷ This chapter represents diary notes kept by Dr. Mu'ayyad during his first visit to ‘Akká from 13 December 1907 to 13 January 1908 and reproduced in *Khátirat*, vol. 1, 25-81 (17-58).

38 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

His bidding, had sojourned in Europe and learned modern customs from the Europeans, including the keeping of notes on important matters.

[Dr. Habíb Mú’ayyad]

Utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá During My First Pilgrimage to ‘Akká, Dhi’l-Qa’dih 1329⁴⁸ A.H./1907 in the House of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá Jazzár



When I first attained ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence, I threw myself at His feet and was about to kiss them, when His blessed hands

⁴⁸ As noted in the earlier chapter, 1329 is a typist error and the correct year should be 1325 A.H. Dhi’l-Qa’dih 1325 A.H., which corresponds to 6 December 1907 through 4 January 1908.

lifted me, saying, “Astaghfuru’lláh, astaghfuru’lláh!”⁴⁹ We will embrace, we will hug!” After He had lovingly inquired of the journey and our difficulties en route, He spoke of the Blessed Beauty’s visit to Kirmánsháh [on His way to Baghdad]. He remarked:

How bitterly cold was that winter! We arrived at a caravansary located by a moat. The journey was full of sufferings and difficulties, but since it was in the path of God, it was filled with joy and delight, and we were so happy. In Asadábád it was particularly cold. The temperature was 38 degrees below zero. My socks were wet, which caused my feet to be frostbitten. That evening we were to eat some halvah. By mistake, however, pepper had been added in place of sugar, which severely burned our mouths and throats. That night we did not sleep, and constantly drank water. From the blessings of those adversities, those banishments, now the banner of the Divine Faith is hoisted most high!

A picture of the believers of Qazvín was presented, which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá kissed several times and said, “These resplendent friends;” “countenances illumined by the light of Bahá;” “well-pleasing gift;” and “with bright faces they fix their gaze on their Lord!”

[Hardship Endured by the Prophets]

Regarding the many exiles of Bahá’u’lláh and His banishment from Iran to ‘Iraq, Constantinople, Adrianople, and eventually to ‘Akká, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

Abraham’s migration precipitated the
manifestation and appearance of Moses, Christ,

⁴⁹ Lit. God forbid!

Muhammad, the Exalted One [i.e. the Báb] and Bahá’u’lláh.⁵⁰ Ponder what mighty influences and stupendous consequences will appear in the contingent world as a result of the exiles, hardships, and banishments of the Blessed Perfection. Of a certainty, it is difficult to imagine its full effect at the present, but for those endowed with discernment and possessing absolute certitude, such a concept poses no obstacle and [its realization] is manifest as the sun.

At one time during His migration journey, while surrounded by enemies who were exerting their utmost in killing the believers and in this regard were succeeding, the Prophet Muhammad ordered a trench to be dug so they could hide therein.⁵¹ As they dug, they came upon a large boulder that they found themselves unable to remove. With His stick the Prophet tapped on the rock and said, “Khusraw⁵² is conquered!” Once more He tapped on the rock and proclaimed, “Constantine⁵³ is conquered!” The lukewarm companions were puzzled, but later witnessed the truth of those words and testified to their veracity.

Regarding the migration of one of the Páshás who had been killed in the Arab-French war, He commented:

It caused his demise, because he was fighting for soil, which is the least worthy thing in creation. However, the migration and wandering of Abraham

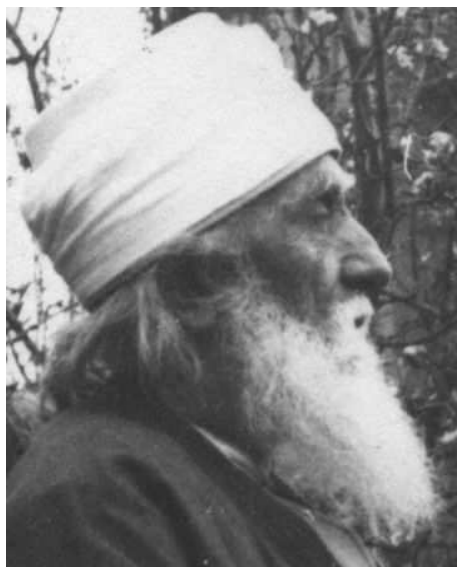
⁵⁰ See *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 281.

⁵¹ This incident took place in March 627 AD and the purpose of the moat was to discourage the enemies from using their camels and horses to overrun Medina. See Hasan Balyuzi, *Muhammad and the Course of Islam*, pp. 93-95.

⁵² The seat of the Sassanian Empire in Iran, situated outside of the present Baghdad. The demise of the Sassanian Empire was precipitated by the eastward expansion of Islamic rule.

⁵³ Seat of the Byzantine Empire.

resulted in the guidance of the entire world and precipitated the Manifestation of Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon, Christ, Muhammad and the Exalted One [the Báb]. Verily, Our exile and banishment also resulted in the proclamation of the Cause of God.



In another instance, He spoke the following comments:

Being thoroughly surrounded by enemies, in the course of the Battle of the Trench, known as Harbu'l-Ahráb [the Battle of All Battles], His Holiness Muhammad and His companions were so starved that they tied stones to their stomachs [to lessen the pain of hunger]. When in accordance with His instructions they were digging a trench, they came upon a boulder and were unable to dig further. His Holiness grew perturbed and with His staff hit the rock, proclaiming, “Verily, we have vanquished the sovereign of Constantine!” Once more He tapped the rock, announcing, “Verily, we have vanquished the king of Khusraw!” The companions were perplexed, and the lukewarm Hypocrites⁵⁴ were

⁵⁴ Munáfiqín is a reference to those who outwardly professed beliefs in Islam, but in

quietly ridiculing and mocking Him.

However, it was not long until His promises were fulfilled and Islam stood victorious. Then the Hypocrites were humbled and the enemies reduced, and they recalled the words of His Holiness. <20> The opponents of [His] Cause came from such tribes as Baní Kananih, ‘Atfán, Nazarih, Khazráj and Quraysh. When His Holiness was striking the boulder with His staff, some of the Hypocrites were remarking to their lukewarm friends [among the believers], “Out of fear, without trace of courage, we wet ourselves. Therefore, how can He speak so boldly?”⁵⁵ Which is why the following verse has been revealed, “*God shall mock them, and keep them long in their rebellion, wandering in perplexity.*”⁵⁶

In this battle the number of defenders were seven hundred, of which nearly three hundred were either of the Hypocrites or lukewarm in their convictions. But when they reached the Ayyán-i Khusráw⁵⁷ and saw the divine prophecies fulfilled, they were all ashamed and remorseful.

[Spiritual Orientation]

After we returned from visiting the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He remarked:

Pilgrimage has to do with one’s soul and, depending on one’s approach, one benefits accordingly.

reality opposed the Faith.

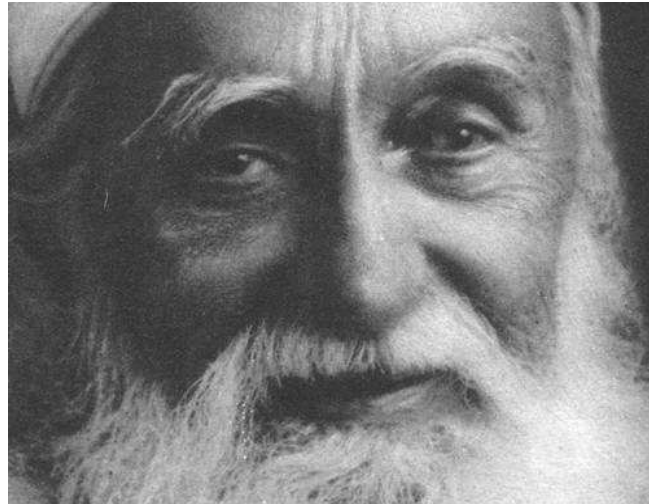
⁵⁵ A well-known hadith.

⁵⁶ Qur’án 2:15

⁵⁷ A reference to the legendary arch of the Sassanian palace. In 1915, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prophesized that a Mashriqu’l-Adhkar will be raised over the same spot which will incorporate the restored arch of the royal palace. See, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 20.

If one were to approach pilgrimage with the utmost devotion and consecration, then spiritual rapture would appear and benefits would be manifested. Otherwise, it is of no use.

Heart yearns for the abode of peace,
Where the wall builder resides.
But my longing is not for the city,
Nay, it is for the dwellers of the city.



Some come to this Land and are awakened and enkindled [with the love of God]. Others come and return in the same state as before. How often persons like Jamál Burújirdí and Khurtumí came and visited, but eventually lost all faith. Almighty God placed a resplendent crown upon the head of the center of sedition.⁵⁸ However, as he was not worthy, confirmations were cut and he was deprived of divine bounties. Shaykh Fadlu'lláh (Núrí) also rose in opposition to the Cause, which only resulted in his own downfall and demise.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Markaz-i Naqd* [center of sedition] is a reference to Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí.

⁵⁹ Shaykh Fadlu'lláh was a Shi‘ite cleric from Mázandarán. He was ashamed that the

[Bahá’í Hostels]

My father, the late Hájí Khudábakhsh Mú’ayyad, had built a hostel in the village of Sahnih⁶⁰ for the comfort of travelers and, to the extent of his abilities, showed hospitality to both Bahá’í and non-Bahá’í wayfarers. When his name was mentioned was made in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s sacred presence, He remarked:

This is very wonderful! The friends of God must do the same in every town and hamlet and provide a befitting place for the comfort of the itinerant believers so that when they go from town to town, they know that in a fixed location such hospitality is provided for them. It would be as if they had a personal residence in that spot and thereby would enjoy its comfort and be surrounded by tranquility. However, the friends must first build a Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, and only then a hostel. ‘Ishqábád’s Mashriqu’l-Adhkár was built in the midst of tumult and turmoil, and yet it is a mother that will constantly give birth. The Mashriqu’l-Adhkár is a magnet that attracts divine confirmations and draws divine assistance.

[Arrival of the Vakílu’d-Dawlih]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke ceaselessly in praise of Hájí [Mírzá Muhammad-Taquí] Vakílu’d-Dawlih Afnán⁶¹, and further remarked, “They wanted to take the honored Afnán directly to Jeddah. In these days, travel is extremely difficult. The [Iranian] travelers are not permitted to

Blessed Perfection was also from Núr and because of this rose in fierce opposition. Eventually, the constitutionalists hanged him during the Constitutional Revolt. (HM)

⁶⁰ A small village in the proximity of Kirmánsháh.

⁶¹ For a biography of Hájí Muhammad-Taquí Vakílu’d-Dawlih see *In the Land of Refuge*, translated by Ahang Rabbani.

disembark in any of the Ottoman harbors, but instead are taken directly from Batum to Jeddah.”

At the time of the arrival of the honored Hájí Vakílu'd-Dawlih Afnán, the sea was turbulent; and when he was going from the ship into a boat, the waves overwhelmed the boat, and the honored Afnán fell into the sea. With great difficulty, the sailors rescued him. Upon his arrival in 'Akká, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, “Let us go and visit the honored Afnán.” When he saw the Master, with trembling body, he threw himself at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's feet. The Master tenderly inquired of him, “Illustrious Afnán, today was most arduous on you. How are you?” The Afnán burst out weeping uncontrollably as pearl-like tears flowed down his white beard. Then with a broken and weak voice, he recited a verse, “Thy presence I craved, to unburden to Thee my heart,” but the outpouring of tears did not allow him to say the second verse of the couplet as he unceasingly and bitterly wept. Witnessing his condition, all those present were overcome with emotions and wept profusely.

[A Humorous Story]

Today, the Master was very cheerful and jubilant and wished for all the friends to be joyful as well. For this reason, He told us a story about Jamál Burújirdí:

‘Alaviyyih Khánúm, the wife of the martyred Mullá ‘Alí Jan [Mafuzaki], had a dream which she recounted to Jamál Burújirdí.⁶² She said, “I dreamt that Jamál Mubárák [the Blessed Beauty] came to this room and graciously spoke in praise of me.” In response, Jamál Burújirdí had remarked, “Yes, this is a true dream, for I have now come and am showing kindness to you!”

⁶² Áqá Jamál Burújirdí was among the most prominent believers in the time of Bahá'u'lláh, who had a strong base of support in such places as Qazvín, Tíhrán and Mázandarán, including Mafuzak a village near Sari of Mázandarán. After Burújirdí's rebellion against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he lost his following and prestige.

46 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It would have been good if she had dealt with Jamál Burújirdí the same way that the Princess dealt with a homely suitor. One time, the Princess had fallen in love with Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Khán Núrí. She was informed that a visitor had come and was sitting in the guestroom. Thinking that this was the same Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Khán Núrí, she had taken a lantern and quickly entered the room only to find a homely and sickly-looking man sitting there. With both hands she had hit him in the head such that his hat was torn, and loudly she had cried, “Is this you Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Khán Núrí? Is it really you Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar? How despicable you look, Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar!”



[‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Bounties]

Afterwards, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned me alone into His presence

and, after showering His infinite bounties upon me, remarked:

Marhabá! Praise be unto God that you traversed the lands, the seas, the islands, the meadows, the hills and the valleys until at last you arrived at this resplendent realm and attained this spiritual gathering! This is naught but a sign of the purity of your motive!

All the people of the world arose to exterminate the descendants of Abraham⁶³, but they failed. Truly, this is by reason of your faith and fidelity. “He bestows God’s bounties upon whomsoever He wishes.”

I am well pleased with you since in the Abhá Kingdom you have brought joy and felicity to the spirit of your illustrious Ancestor, Abraham. The prophecies of the Prophets were foretold for your time.

I stated, “I spent four years of my elementary education [living] in the home of the honored Hájí Músá Kalímí [Jewish], whose immense kindness constantly surrounded me and who exerted much effort for my sake. He has offered the gift of a silver candelabrum for Your august presence and has beseeched divine confirmations.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “Very well. For a few nights, I will keep the candelabrum on my nightstand. Afterwards, you are to take it to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and, with your own hands, place it there. This bounty is being bestowed upon Hájí Músá for the generosity he has shown you.” He also revealed a Tablet in his honor that is quoted below:

Through the honored pilgrim, Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh, son of Khudábaksh, [for the attention of] the honored Áqá Músá Kalímí, upon whom rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious!

He is God.

⁶³ A reference to the Jewish people who are descendants of Abraham.

O thou tree of the orchard of His Holiness Moses!⁶⁴, The honored Áqá Habíbu’lláh hath arrived at the Refulgent Land, attained unto the Sacred Threshold and partaken of spiritual reunion. Meeting him hath brought the utmost cheer and vitality. He hath written a letter and therein hath spoken glowingly and most appreciatively of thy abounding kindness and benevolence in raising him. Indeed, I was deeply thrilled and happy that, praise be unto God, thou didst show him such favor and generosity. You have been kinder than a father and truer than a brother! Verily, the service that thou hast rendered for his sake is a service that thou hast rendered to the Abhá Kingdom and is an act of servitude that thou hast manifested before the Sacred Threshold.

Since thy conduct, deeds, spirit and efforts have brought me such deep delight, I have sent the candelabrum thou didst donate to the Sacred Shrine, that a sign from thee may be preserved at that Blessed Threshold. This bounty is on account of the kindness and generosity thou hast shown this youth.

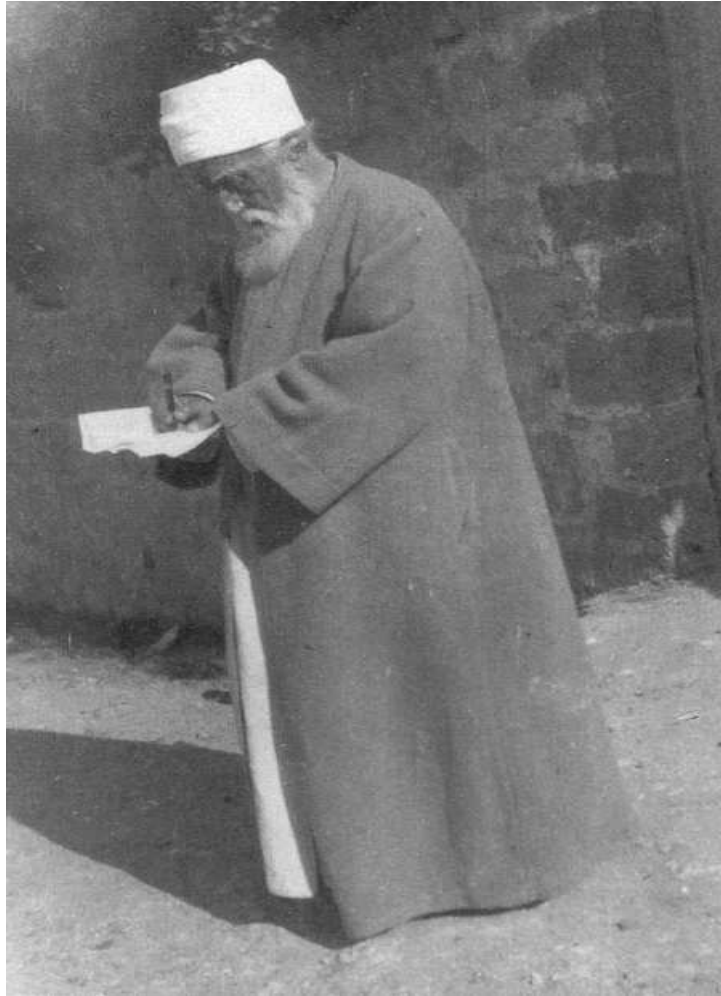
Upon thee rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

‘A ‘A.

In a general meeting of the friends, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated the following:

It rained all last night, which kept Me up. Farmers must be thankful for the divine bounties that help them reap the fruits of their labors. People should likewise be grateful that the outpourings of divine grace cause verdant greens and choice fruits to come from their efforts. However, this end is attainable if the process is allowed to run its course to its conclusion, free of plagues that damage crops. Otherwise all efforts are wasted.

⁶⁴ A reference to the Jewish people; the author was of Jewish heritage.



[Dealing With Opposition]

For some time I had benefited from the tutelage of the American Mr. N. L. Euver, the principal of the American school in Hamadán, where I had completed my primary education.⁶⁵ He had had high hopes to baptize me and convert me to Christianity. When he heard that I was leaving for ‘Akká, he wrote me, expressing great regret [for this decision], and referred to me as “a follower of the false Christ.” With much sympathy, he had lamented over my “waywardness.” This letter and the painful thoughts it evoked

⁶⁵ As noted earlier, this was a small Presbyterian school established in early 1900’s which grew from a home school to a formal school. In 1930s it moved to Tíhrán and was absorbed by the Tehran American School. For details see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Community_High_School_Tehran_Iran

continued to agitate me. Throughout the entire course of the journey [to the Holy Land] and whenever I had a spare moment, I had been composing a response filled with verses from the Bible, proving that indeed it was he who was the antichrist for having been so heedless towards the Person of the Manifestation.

I presented my thick proof-treatise to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and shared the details of the situation with Him. “Nay, nay!” He advised, “You are not to send this treatise. Do not write such things to the Americans. It will cause rancor. It will suffice to write, ‘Since you have been my teacher, I will never forget your efforts and your kindness. You are my spiritual father and will remain forever in my prayers.’ This should be enough.” I wrote according to His instructions and destroyed the treatise I had composed.

Regarding a polemic pamphlet that was published in Tíhrán, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated:

People are exerting [great efforts] to extinguish the Light of God. They have written and will write many polemics, as they recently wrote in Tíhrán. However, they do not understand that these polemics will only serve to propagate the Word of God. They will not be able to deny the Sun its radiance. If the entire world were to unite, it could never stop the surging billows of this ocean. With but one wave, it will discard all the froth and deadwood. Of course, the believers are vigilant to deal with such accusations convincingly. Those that serve the Cause, according to the explicit Text, are promised ultimate victory: “*We... shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels.*”⁶⁶ That is, with invisible hosts, the Almighty will support and preserve the servants of the Cause.

⁶⁶ Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb Aqdas*, K53.

<25> Addressing Mírzá Mihdí Rashtí, Mashhadí Bába and Karbalá'í 'Umrán Bádkúbih'í, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:

Mírzá Mihdí, how is your health? I am sure you have endured much hardship? It is most befitting to suffer troubles in the path of the Beloved. Consider the animals. The more delicate they are, the more their labor. Stones and rocks are given no burden. But the trees are assigned relatively more responsibilities. And yet more is expected of the animal, particularly those with a voice, and beyond them, man, who has more strain than all the rest. There is a Turkish poem that conveys this concept.⁶⁷ It is:

Collyrium must endure great hardship,
Be burnt, and crushed and mixed with dye
Before it is worthy of the beloved's eye.

[Benefits of Public Institutions]

'Abdu'l-Bahá further noted:

Whatever is public is divine, and whatever is private is devised of man.⁶⁸ Therefore, whatever is established by the friends of God must be public, whether a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, or other institutions. Whatever is public is divine, and whatever is private is manmade. The efforts of the friends must benefit all people. Recently, [the Bahá'ís] have founded a school and plan to build a hospital associated with the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár [of 'Ishqábád]. If the believers undertake philanthropic efforts, it must be public and

⁶⁷ 'Abdu'l-Bahá quotes two Turkish couplets.

⁶⁸ 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament*, p. 13, reveals, “*Universality is of God, and all limitations earthly.*”

not exclusionary against anyone. For instance, if they establish a school, none must be denied entrance. It pleases Me when the friends show utmost charity in all that they build, as in the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár of ‘Ishqábád, which is firmly established in that region. His Holiness the Exalted One [The Báb] has revealed, ‘Whatever is built on a firm foundation will receive God’s confirmations and blessings.’

The Incident of the Rabid Dog

Very quickly a dog entered the reception hall and hid under the chairs. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá commanded, “Chase out this untamed dog! It is dirty and unsightly. Chase it out!” Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh Qumí went to chase the dog outside when the dog bit him. The Master ordered, “Slay him! Slay the dog!” Quickly the attendants rushed forth and with sticks and shovels attacked and killed the dog. Then it was discovered that it was rabid and had already bitten a few other people who had contracted the disease.⁶⁹ In front of the door of the inner quarters, the dog was killed, and Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh Qumí was instructed to proceed to Constantinople for a remedy. Immediately, this wise old man departed for Constantinople, where he stayed for two months until he was cured.⁷⁰

The Bahá’í Mr. Dodd⁷¹

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

The Reuters news agency telegraphed that a Bahá’í

⁶⁹ It should be noted that at the time rabies was a death sentence – that is, incurable.

⁷⁰ At that time, ‘Akká was a particularly polluted city, with people living in close quarters, and special care had to be taken to protect the population. As there were no facilities for quarantine of sick animals, there was no alternative but to put a dangerous animal to death quickly.

⁷¹ A likely reference to Arthur Dodge, a prominent Bahá’í of a prominent family.

by the name of Mr. Dodd was proceeding to India. Reuters only sends telegrams for such prominent personages as the Prince of Germany, and the like. Sanctified is God! What bounty, what beneficence, what light, what spirit, what brilliance, what sun is this?! The [Iranian] authorities thought that once they exiled the Blessed Beauty, the matter would be concluded and [the Faith] would be eradicated and erased, without any trace, and this Light would be extinguished. Shortly after the ascension [of Bahá'u'lláh], when the difficulties had reached their zenith, I wrote a poem, which included these two verses:

In the Orient scatter perfumes,
 And shed splendors on the West.
 Carry light unto the Bulgar,
 And the Slav with life invest.⁷²

In a letter I wrote, “Soon will the East and the West embrace each other like two lovers.” Some of the lukewarm believers laughed [at this sentiment]. I responded, “It is revealed in the Qur’án, ‘Though ye scoff at us now, we will scoff at you hereafter even as ye scoff at us. In the end ye shall know.’⁷³” Praised be God that now, not long after that event, great victories have been won [for the Cause] in the East and the West, and confirmations from on high surround all unceasingly.

⁷² Translation from *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 270. The Master in the same Tablet confirms that this poem was composed a year after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh.

⁷³ Qur’án 11:38. Translation as given in the *Kitáb-i Iqán*, p. 7.



[Ever-Advancing Process]

In a gathering hosted by Mírzá Mihdí Áqá Akhaván-Safa and Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Samímí and held in ‘Akká’s pilgrim house, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

The Ottoman Ambassador in America has written the Mutasarrif [governor] of ‘Akká to investigate the Bahá’ís and to report the results [to him]. The Mutasarrif responded, ‘These people (that is, the Bahá’ís) never involve themselves in political matters, and the stories about them vary considerably. Therefore, the truth is not known. But what is clear is that they will surely perish after His passing (that is, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá).’ I liked what he reported, but his last remark is illogical and he has erred. The Cause of God is not dependent on My person. Hájí Mírzá Aqásí stated the same about Exalted One [the Báb], namely, ‘If we kill Him, then all this noise would subside.’ They have said the same about the Ancient Beauty, ‘If we banish Him from Iran, then the Cause will perish.’ They do not realize that whatever they do will be

of benefit to the Cause of God and will exalt the Faith. Though we are captive in their hands and they may do as they wish, yet they will not hear us complain.

The Honored Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl



Regarding the honored Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá commented as follows]:

Even though he is old and very frail, Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl devotes night and day to the service of the Cause of God and the diffusion of the divine fragrance. He is very weak and delicate. America’s climate was too cold and unsuitable for him. Mírzá is old and bent. He is broken and suffers from chest pains. He could not survive in those conditions, otherwise he would not have returned. He has served the Faith most diligently and has sustained much hardship.

They have sent a photograph of him [from America] that is very interesting. With his turban and walking stick, Mírzá is sitting in the midst of these Westerners as they circle him. It is wonderful to see. Lua [Getsinger] and Laura C. Barney have written, “Mírzá

does not eat anything we cook. Today, all three of us went into the kitchen to prepare a special meal, hopefully to his liking, but even that was not to his taste.”

The people of Iran are malicious; otherwise I would send several [teachers] for them to provide education and edification. That would have been very good. But, alas, Iran is not at ease, and her people are prejudiced. They have inflicted several damaging blows to the body of God’s Faith and have slowed its progress. The body of the world is ill, and even a well-trained physician would not be able to easily remedy these ills and reverse the damage. It is as if the doctor is busy with treatment, but they pour a pitcher of cold water over his head or feed him poison. This will not have a permanent effect though it will delay recovery. The thickest clouds are unable to prevent the sun from shining, but eventually the clouds will dissipate by the heat of the sun. The world-embracing sun gives light and energy. “When truth is manifest, falsehood is destroyed.”

In short, in all their undertakings, the friends of God must consider the common good. For instance, in their business and commerce, [they must] allow for the profit of others and not just focus on their own gain. The Exalted One [The Báb], may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him, has said, “When at a very young age, I was assigned to write the merchants’ names on their commodities, or recite the list of names, I would bow My head and praise God, so that even during this small undertaking, I would remember Him. My purpose was God, and under all circumstances, He was before My eyes.” The friends must also remember God in all their undertakings.

Mírzá Mihdí Akhaván-Safá asked, “In the Qur’án it is revealed, ‘Uẓair [Ezra] a Son of God.’”⁷⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá interpreted:

There were certain tribes in the old times, which no longer exist, such as Samaris or Pharisian. Another such tribe was Uzairiyh [who are no longer extant], and in much the same way that the Christians today refer to Christ as the Son of God, they referred to Uzair [Ezra] as the Son of God.

The background is that the people and the chiefs of Nijran and Fady came to Medina and attained the presence of the Prophet, arguing and debating with Him. At that time the mubahilih⁷⁵ verse was revealed, “Had we laid down such a law ...”⁷⁶

These people believed that the Logos of that peerless Essence had been made flesh. That is, lahut had become nasut.⁷⁷ And this is the present belief of the Catholics who claim that the Word was incarnated and that this Being [i.e. Jesus Christ] is God Himself. They maintain, “Prophethood is temporal”; meaning the body of Christ is derived from the Invisible Essence and has been materialized. This concept, however, is false and evident error.

It is clearly evident that the sanctified reality of Godhead is beyond any description and incomparable to any attribute. No matter how exalted human conception may be, it can never aspire to gain a glimpse into that sacred Realm, much less gain an understanding of its

⁷⁴ The complete Qur’anic verse (9:30) is: *The Jews call Uẓair a son of God, the Christians call Christ a son of God. That is a saying from their mouths; (in this) they but imitate what the unbelievers of old used to say. God’s curse be on them: how they are deluded away from the truth!*

⁷⁵ Lit. “mutual cursing”.

⁷⁶ Qur’án 4:69

⁷⁷ Láhút is a reference to the divine world and Násút represents the world of humanity.

reality. Nevertheless, these people [i.e. the Catholics] believe that the incomprehensible and indescribable Divine Essence, that Supreme Heavenly Reality, has been materialized in a body, made to suffer trials and tribulations, had died and then once more had risen.

However, hardships are limited to this plane, and the Almighty God is sanctified beyond such afflictions. There is no path to that Supreme Reality. “*The way is barred, and all seeking rejected.*”⁷⁸ “*This proof is His Word; His own Self, the testimony of His truth.*”⁷⁹ Whatever is subject to change and is temporal is of this plane. The Divine Reality is sanctified from all attributes, descriptions and praise. There is no admittance unto that Court and this world has no relation to that Dominion. All attributes are embodied in the Manifestations of God Who appear among the people. “*No vision taketh in Him, but He taketh in all vision: and He is the Subtle, the All-informed.*”⁸⁰

<30> It is evident and manifest that what can be conceived by the mind of man is limited and of course, the all-compassing Divinity is greater than that which is limited. The Sacred Reality can never be imagined. People envision an illusion, consider it God, and worship it. However, the Sacred Reality is above all imaginings and sanctified beyond all thoughts, and the only path [to Him] is by way of the Manifestations. Beyond Them is naught but mere invention.

These people [i.e. the Christians] think that the Divine Reality has been incarnated and appears in three parts, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Such attributes pertain to the Manifestations. “Whosoever believes in Them, believes in God; and whosoever separates himself from Them, has separated himself

⁷⁸ Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i Íqán*, p. 141.

⁷⁹ Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i Íqán*, p. 92.

⁸⁰ Qur’án 6:103

from God. Whosoever obeys Them, has obeyed God and whosoever denies Them, has denied God.” None are allowed access unto that Divine Reality. “He who soars on the bird of his own rational faculty in the exalted heaven will return to the same station whence he was created.” When a person dies, he ascends to that station which is enshrined within his essence.

Consider minerals that are but one of the effulgent rays of creation and constitute the lowest level of this world. No matter how they are perfected, they can never hope to attain unto the station of vegetables. And similarly, vegetables can never develop senses, nor can animals ever aspire to gain rational faculties and command exhibited by men. All the attributes of minerals are limited to the world of minerals, and the vegetables are bounded by their own limitations, as are the animals. They are all confined within the scope of their category of existence. Therefore, creation is hierarchical, and each level is incapable of understanding the higher realm. Now, it is evident how far apart man is from his Creator.

The purpose of these talks and these sentiments is to stir the heart, to rejuvenate the spirit, to deepen the faith, and to bring forth ecstasy, certitude and love for the Cause of God.

These people think that Ultimate Divine Reality has appeared in the contingent world and consists of flesh and bone, whereas His Holiness Christ has said, “The flesh is agitated, yet the spirit is in ecstasy.”⁸¹

[A Teacher for India]

⁸¹ Matthew 26:41 reads, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Mark 14:38 states essentially the same.

Áqá Mírzá Mihdí Rashtí departed for a teaching trip to India, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá [wished him well and] stated, “Honored Áqá Mírzá Mihdí:

The Indian parrots will become sweet-toothed,
from this Pársí sweet going to Bengal.⁸²

God willing, you will be confirmed, successful and triumphant. There was an Áqá Muhammad Javád of Turkish background who would recite this poem with his delightful accent.”

‘Akká’s Pilgrim House

The pilgrim house of ‘Akká consisted of a large room facing the sea and was on the eastern side of the city (located in Khán-i ‘Avámíd or otherwise known as Khán-i ‘Umdán). Two rooms with stone walls were built on its western flank where the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí and the esteemed Mishkín-Qalam resided. There was another room on the eastern side, which opened into the hallway and served as the kitchen, where visitors removed their shoes.

A parrot lived in a cage and whenever ‘Abdu’l-Bahá entered the room, in a loud and clear voice the parrot would say, “Allah-u-Abhá!” He would say this with such resonance that it could be heard from a considerable distance. Occasionally he would say, “Marhabá!” and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would smile and respond “Allah-u-Abhá!”

⁸² The poem is by Háfiz and was composed when he planned a journey to India – a journey that he never completed. The same verse appears at the beginning of Bahá’u’lláh’s renowned Lawh Shikar-Shikan Shavand (*The Bahá’í World Volume*, vol. 18, p. 11) revealed in response to the Iranian Foreign Minister, Mírzá Sa’íd Khan, who had suggested that Bahá’u’lláh leave Baghdad in favor of India – a scheme that Bahá’u’lláh foiled and rejected. “Pársí” means Zoroastrian, and some modern scholars (e.g. *Du Gufar* by Delárám Mashhúrí) have argued that Háfiz was a Zoroastrian.



The honored Áqá Muhammad-Hasan Khádím [servant], who was corpulent but very agile and efficient, arranged all the affairs of the pilgrims. Single-handedly, he prepared the pilgrims' meals three times a day, cleaned the rooms, shopped for provisions, cooked, washed the dishes, set the sufrih⁸³, served tea, and even occasionally washed the pilgrims' clothing. The meals were very simple and unceremonial. They typically consisted of a simple broth, at times served with yogurt.

[In the mornings,] he would bring water, fire up the samovar and serve breakfast that consisted of some pure wheat bread with one or two cups of sweetened tea. Then he would go to the bazaar and purchase meat, potatoes, onions, and other necessities. Once he had returned, he would commence making the broth. Afterwards, he would bring wheat flour, make the dough, and by late morning would carry a large pan of dough, often over his head, to the bakery. Once the bread was made, he would bring it back to the pilgrim house wrapped in a white tablecloth and would begin his other work. Very calmly, about an hour past noon, sometimes two, when all were hungry, he would spread the sufrih and place on it plates of raw vegetables and cheese. Each pilgrim was served some broth that contained one or two pieces of meat, about two pieces of potatoes and an occasional tomato.

All the pilgrims were the same and considered equal. All types of backgrounds, rich and poor, young and old, urbane and villager,

⁸³ Tablecloth, typically spread on the floor at mealtime.

and people of various religious descents could be found among the pilgrims. However, there was no favoritism or discrimination in their ranks whatsoever, nor was there any luxury or self-indulgence. In fact, during their free time, the pilgrims were asked to assist in sifting wheat. Each person would pour about a pound of wheat on a paper or a tray and, seed by seed, separate good seeds from the rejects. Áqá Muhammad-Hasan would take the good seeds to the mill, and then bring back bags of flour to the pilgrim house where he would make the dough. After he made bread with it in the bakery, the pilgrims themselves enjoyed the product. What wonderful taste and what great joy were concealed in this collaborative effort. Nothing else could compare with it. With utmost eagerness and delight the pilgrims, often numbering in excess of thirty or forty, ate this bread all by itself, and such joy would overcome them that it can never be described. Another reason why the bread was so satisfying was that Áqá Muhammad-Hasan was unable to serve lunch or dinner at the standard mealtime. Therefore, being very hungry, we pilgrims ate the bread with the greatest pleasure and enthusiasm. Indeed, no food can ever hope to rival the delight of that bread!

Day and night the pilgrims were in the utmost ecstasy and rapture, their spirits soaring to the Supreme Concourse, thoroughly oblivious to worldly concerns and such mundane things as food. Rich and poor were one and the same. All were profoundly devoted to the Beloved and adored His heavenly, moon-brilliant Countenance. Neither superiority nor inferiority existed among the pilgrims. Rich or poor, we all sat at the same table, enjoyed the same food and drank from the same chalice of love. “How magnificent is that assemblage of love where the deprived sits equal to the king!”

To cheer the friends, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often came and joined us in meals. After inspecting the kitchen and the situation of the pilgrims, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would provide the necessary instructions for improvements.

In addition to his services at the pilgrim house, which included cooking meals and arranging the affairs of the pilgrims, the honored Áqá Muhammad-Hasan greatly loved to engage in discussions and

discourse, and offering detailed opinions accompanied by historical deductions. If anyone raised a question, he would provide a long explanation that would thoroughly and completely explore all aspects of the subject matter. He was truly learned, particularly in the areas of mysticism, philosophy and proofs. He also had a deep knowledge of the Faith's history.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Utterances in the Pilgrim House of 'Akká

Since I had not seen the friends all day, I decided to come to the pilgrim house and visit you. The weather was stormy, I had the lingering trace of an illness and, therefore, thought it best not to leave the house so that my condition would not worsen. This was in accordance with the command of Bahá'u'lláh, Who has enjoined upon us the observance of wisdom. Consequently, I rested. Under all circumstances, we must be prudent, as the Sacred Text has explicitly ordained wisdom upon us all.

It was in accordance with this ordinance [of Bahá'u'lláh] that I sent Áqá Siyyid Asadu'lláh to Istanbul to remedy (the bite of the rabid dog) so that it would serve as an example to the friends. Whenever sickness prevails and health is disturbed, seek the counsel of a competent physician. Protection of one's well-being and health is repeatedly enjoined in the Qur'án.⁸⁴ However, the Muslims do not follow the laws of the Qur'án and are unaware that it states fate is of two kinds, irrevocable⁸⁵ and alterable. It is revealed that one must guard against the alterable. Consider a lantern in which

⁸⁴ For example, the Qur'án 2:191 states: "... *throw not yourself with your own hands into ruin.*"

⁸⁵ The original term is "hatami", which implies being preordained.

the owner has deposited fuel and wick sufficient for ten nights. If no interference occurs, it burns brightly for ten nights. But with the gust of a strong wind, it will be extinguished, which is why it is revealed that one must guard against sudden gusts.⁸⁶

Similarly, it is revealed, “The knowledge of bodies and the knowledge of religions.”⁸⁷ Notice that the knowledge of the body is given preference over the knowledge of religion. Consider: A Christian has three children and exerts the utmost care in guarding their well-being and health. But a Muslim has twenty offspring and as he is careless in their affairs, they all roam the streets, expire and die.

A cholera epidemic broke out in Tripoli, and since the Christians were vigilant, only two of them died; whereas two thousand Muslims perished due to their lack of attention and safekeeping.

It was for this reason that I sent Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh so that none would speak critically. In truth, the root of wisdom is with God – He gave wisdom to the Prophets, and the physicians have inherited the same from Them.

⁸⁶ The *Gleanings*, LXVIII, p. 133, states: “*Know thou, O fruit of My Tree, that the decrees of the Sovereign Ordainer, as related to fate and predestination, are of two kinds. Both are to be obeyed and accepted. The one is irrevocable, the other is, as termed by men, impending. To the former all must unreservedly submit, inasmuch as it is fixed and settled. God, however, is able to alter or repeal it. As the harm that must result from such a change will be greater than if the decree had remained unaltered, all, therefore, should willingly acquiesce in what God hath willed and confidently abide by the same. The decree that is impending, however, is such that prayer and entreaty can succeed in averting it.*” Regarding “gusts” and predestination, the Qur’án 77 states, “*By the (Winds) Sent Forth one after another (to man’s profit); which then blow violently in tempestuous Gusts, and scatter (things) far and wide; then separate them, one from another, then spread abroad a Message, whether of Justification or of Warning – assuredly, what ye are promised must come to pass.*”

⁸⁷ This is a well-known hadith, attributed to Prophet Muhammad. Bahá’u’lláh evokes the same tradition; for example, see Tablet to Mírzá ‘Alí-Muhammad Ibn-Asdaq quoted in ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávárí’s *Ganjinih Hudud va Ahkam*, p. 244.

Unclad, Dark-skinned Arab

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá related the following story:]

One day in Baghdad, I went hunting with two or three of the friends. Riding a camel, an unclad Arab Bedouin came towards us. In jest, one of the friends raised his gun to scare the Arab, but another one prevented him. The Arab came, dismounted and asked for bread; we gave him some. He asked for tobacco and pipe, which we also gave. He asked for ammunition, and we provided it. But we had no coffee to give him. Pleased with us, eventually he left.

<35> The friend who had prevented the mock shooting said, “Do not be deceived by the appearance of this unclad, skinny and dark-skinned Arab. He is the chief of a large tribe and commands many men. If anyone were to attack him, he would raise a cry, which would summon multitudes of supporters to his aid. A huge commotion would ensue, and his men would exact severe revenge.”

Now, our condition is much the same as that dark Arab’s. Outwardly we seem naked and alone, with no support or champion, standing single and alone. But in reality, the invisible hosts of the Supreme Concourse are our aid, and whenever they see us attacked or threatened, They immediately rush forth to our assistance.



[Diffusion of the Faith]

Regarding the fact that each day the call of the Cause of God was raised in yet a new location, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked one-day:

When He had returned to Baghdad, one day the Blessed Perfection was passing over a bridge and someone mentioned to His blessed Person that a letter was received from Mosul in which reference had been made to Bahá’u’lláh. With greatest excitement and joy, the Ancient Beauty cried out, “Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí⁸⁸, come quickly and

⁸⁸ A younger brother of Bahá’u’lláh, he was raised by the Latter, shared all His exiles and hardships, and most devotedly served Him throughout his life.

hear the glad-tidings that the fame of the Cause has reached Mosul!"

Regarding Tíhrán

[About Tíhrán, and the effect of the Constitutional Revolt, 'Abdu'l-Bahá noted:]

Tíhrán is in great agitation. In truth, the late Muzaffaru'd-Din Sháh did all he could for his subjects. But it would have been better to have first educated the people of Iran, and then have given them liberty. It is like many well-fed and trained horses that have been raised on a ranch and then all of a sudden released and set free. The result is chaos and disorder.

Now in Tíhrán they are beating, killing and cursing each other. They desire civilization, and indeed civil society is a good thing; but it must depend on spiritual education. Otherwise, the outward evidences of civilization are the Krupp cannons, Henry Martin guns and other destructive weapons. This is not civilization.

In former Ages, at a time when no such notion as civilization existed, when a king decided to wage war against another monarch, at most two or three thousand would be killed. But now that [material] civilization has appeared, each hour hundreds, nay, thousands perish [on the battlefield]. When divine civilization is established, then out of necessity, material civilization will follow as well.

Ponder this: Amru'l-Qays had entrusted Samuel the Jew, who lived in the Island of Barlsham, with five bags of coins. The Isle's ruler heard of this and surrounded Samuel's fort, demanding the coins. Samuel refused on the grounds that they were a trust, and eventually the two sides came to blows, in the course of

which a son of Samuel was killed. But the trust was not violated. At last, a son of Amru’l-Qays came, and the bags were returned to him. Now, in which European country can a similar civilization be found? Nevertheless, the Europeans consider these people as animals and barbarians, whereas today, in truth, in none of the [so-called] civilized countries of the world can a similar civilization be seen.

My point is that the Bahá’ís of Iran live in peace because I have repeatedly written that they should not interfere in political matters. Praise be unto God that they never intervened and are now in safety. And if some did meddle in politics, then they alone suffered the consequences. Repeatedly and successively, I have written to the friends of God in Iran not to breathe a word about politics, even should they be slaughtered. I am well pleased with them and grateful that they have not entered into politics.

Anyhow, such affairs are not our concern; ours is to bring about spirituality and morality.

[On Satan]

The honored Akhavan-Safá inquired of the nature of Satan⁸⁹ and [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] response was:

Satan is the base self, which provokes destruction and impetuosity. Outwardly some individuals are refined and presentable, but in their essence they remain base. That is, externally they appear like others, but they harbor sordid intentions and designs.

⁸⁹ The Hebrew word “izazil” is used in the original. Izazil is equivalent to Lucifer, or to Arabic Iblis; see Isaiah 14:12.

Izazil, however, is the name of a person.

Utterances for the Pilgrims of Jewish Descent

[Addressing the pilgrims of the Jewish descent, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:]

You must be thrilled that on such a Day you have come to the Holy Land. Truly, it is because of your sincere intentions and pure hearts that in this Day you have heard the divine call and have immediately recognized it. How great are the tribulations that you have sustained at the hands of the Romans and the Muslims and others, and yet you have persevered. At last, the promise of the Prophets regarding you has been fulfilled. Soon, when others accept the Faith, you will be the source of great pride, and many will claim that they too were of Jewish descent and speak of you with admiration and praise. You must be very, very happy that in the Day of the Manifestation you were not deprived, but indeed attained unto it and came before the Sacred Threshold, arrived at the Sacred Land of Palestine and enrolled under the banner of the Lord of Hosts. This is an explicit promise and clearly enunciated by the Divine Prophets. They have foretold that even outwardly, the Jews will come to the Holy Land and once more reclaim their ancient splendor. I am very pleased with you. You have gladdened the spirit of your illustrious Ancestor, Abraham, in the Abhá Kingdom.

Be under the protection of the Blessed Beauty. Marhabá, fi ámani'lláh⁹⁰.

On another occasion, He remarked:

⁹⁰ Lit, Welcome, be under the protection of God.

No other spot in the world is as pleasant and vivifying as this realm, nor can any rival it in beauty and majesty. On this mountain (Carmel), the Prophets of Israel spent Their nights in prayer and supplication. Its soil has been blessed by the footsteps of the Prophets. Soon will the Jewish people return to the Holy Land, and even in outward appearance, they will be exalted. They will then be so glorified that they will be the object of the enemies’ envy. This is naught but a divine decree, and nothing can impede its fulfillment. The sovereignty of David and the splendor of Solomon will once more be manifested. This land will be the envy of the world. It will be the center of industry and sciences. ‘Akká and Haifa will be connected, and all this land will be fertile and developed.



He is God.

O God! In the Sacred Books and Scriptures, revealed through Thy Messengers, Thou didst give the Israelites the glad-tidings and promise that the Day would come when despondent Jews would prosper, and this captive and abased people would be

granted everlasting glory. This dispersed nation would enroll under the banner of the Lord of Hosts and would attain to abundance in the Holy Land. From lands far away, they would come together in Zion;⁹¹ and the outcast would be glorified, the needy would become affluent, the unknown would gain renown and the forsaken would become the beloved of the world.

Now praise be unto Thee that the Day of that promised comfort hath come and the means for joy and happiness are made evident. Israel will soon be exalted, and this scattering will be transmuted into unity. The Sun of Reality hath appeared and shone its guiding rays over Israel, so that with the utmost bliss from far away places they may gather together in the Holy Land.

O Lord, make evident Thy promise and glorify the descendants of Abraham. Thou art the Mighty and the Powerful, and Thou art the Seer, the Hearer and the All-Knowing.

‘A ‘A.



Regarding the publisher of the Egyptian newspaper al-Mú’ayyad

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá commented:]

⁹¹ In Qur’án 17:104 it is stated: “*And We said unto the Children of Israel after him: Dwell in the land; but when the promise of the Hereafter cometh to pass, We shall bring you as a crowd gathered out of various nations.*”

This man thinks that he is uprooting the Tree of the Cause and does not see that he is promoting the Divine Faith. The Ancient Beauty has stated, “Whosoever arises to harm us is indeed a teacher of the Cause of God.” This newspaperman writes, “Alas Muslims! With utmost audacity, these people [i.e. Bahá’ís] have built their mosque in Chicago and erected their Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in the mid-heart of America! Is there not a Muslim left, or has Islam been robbed of its courage to protest?” Because of his articles, so far, two individuals have embraced the Faith! Such attackers are the propagators of the Cause, and yet they do not know they can never hope to harm the Tree of the Cause. However, they can perpetrate what they wish upon My person.

Shaykh Mahmúd, the Mufti of Egypt, has written a polemic [against the Faith] and therein has noted, “None can deny or doubt His (‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s) humility and spirituality.” I wanted to write him and say, “Yes, there is a denier; he is My own brother!” Consider how the banner of the Cause of God has been hoisted upon the apex of the world, and yet the honored Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí wants to bring it down. Truly this is humorous! By God, besides Whom there is no god, they will never be able to harm the Cause in the least, but if they wish, they can injure Me any way they like. Insha’lláh, they will devise the means for Me, too, to drink from the chalice of martyrdom. I will be very grateful if they do such a thing. This is My highest aspiration.

At the time of the ascension of Bahá’u’lláh, as we were otherwise occupied, I gave him [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] for safekeeping two boxes containing divine Writings. He has concealed them. He has kept them so that after my passing he might bring them out

and use them in accord with his personal inclination. By God, besides Whom there is no god, each of these will only greatly harm his own self. Consider how, out of My sincerity, I entrusted him with two boxes of divine Writings, and instead he behaves in such a manner. He will not be able to do anything but bring complete ruin and regret upon himself. A wave of the Most Great Ocean will brush aside the froth and residue. Marhabá, fí ámánu'lláh.

[General Exhortations]

On the occasion of the arrival of Áqá Mírzá Mihdí, son of Hájí Hakím Hárún Hamadáni, who had come from Beirut, the latter organized a feast in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who remarked:

Earlier I was speaking with Áqá Mírzá Mihdí, and I said to him: You must be very happy as you have a father who is a believer. If you had been a son to the most powerful monarch on earth, you would not have attained such an exalted station. This is because we see that the kings of the realm perish completely and without trace, but the believers in the Day of the <40> Manifestation live forever. For instance, now, nearly thirty-five hundred years have passed since the Manifestation of Moses, and I am presently proving the truth of His Cause. Yesterday, incidentally, I was writing to a philosopher who maintained that the Prophets are barriers to progress, and I proved his error. I wrote him about the truth of His Holiness Moses. Consider how lofty is His sovereignty!

Conversely, consider the case of Pharaoh. There is no sign of him, no name of him, no trace of him. The little name that remains of him is because he was a contemporary of His Holiness Moses. Otherwise,

pharaohs were many.

Insha’lláh, Áqá Mírzá Mihdí will complete his studies, for I have much work for him. The friends of God are confirmed under all conditions if they do not merely busy themselves with their own concerns, seeking only wealth and position, saying, “I have become a doctor and must therefore lead an easy life, and do this or that.” They must have good intentions and consider themselves the servants of the world of humanity. They must endure hardship and seek comfort for others. If they succeed in attaining such an attitude, they will be confirmed, and divine assistance will surround them. No fruits whatsoever will be manifested from those who are educated in worldly things and remain unaware of spiritual matters. However, those among the believers who live in accordance with the divine teachings, ordinances and exhortations, shall be confirmed.

In science and acquisition of knowledge, the friends of God must excel over all people and rank first. If they study medicine, they must become teachers, so that others are taught the same science. They must endeavor to pass this learning to many others, because becoming a physician is not sufficient. This is how believers must act. They must remain focused on the will of the Blessed Beauty and not on the promptings of others. For instance, they must say, “Since the Blessed Beauty has willed that I be a servant of the world of humanity, then I will serve this patient, remedy his ills, soothe his pains, treat his injuries, and give him all the comfort he needs.” The friends of God must act in such wise; otherwise, their efforts will be of no benefit.

[‘Alíyu’lláhís]

Áqá Akhaván-Safá asked of the prominent figures of the

‘Alíyu’lláhi⁹² faction, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá commented:

We have nothing to do with the past. “What has passed is past. And what is to come has not appeared. Therefore do not compare two vacuities.” If any of them becomes a believer in this Day, then he is considered the essence of the world of humanity. If a tree was fruit-bearing in the past but is now dead, then it is no longer a tree. Today, it must manifest harvest and fruit. In short, there must be benefits in our endeavors, and we must consider each moment precious. We must remain joyful and radiant in this divine springtime.

Yahyá in Cyprus

[Regarding Mírzá Yahyá Azal in Cyprus, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

Repeatedly the illustrious American believers send missives, desiring to go to Iran and visit the native land of the Blessed Beauty. I reply, “Now is not the time as Iran is in turmoil and there is no security. Insha’lláh, you will go later. It is amazing and most remarkable.”

Yahyá is in Cyprus and his son, Ridván-‘Alí⁹³, has joined a [Christian] church. His other son, Ahmad, has

⁹² ‘Alíyu’lláhís or ‘Alí Iláhís, is the name often incorrectly ascribed to a Sufi order known as Ahl-i Haqq. The latter order traces its original to the tribes in Qara-Qyunlu Empire in the 15th century and constitutes a loose network of groups, each with their own set of beliefs. While the Twelver Shi’í Imams are revered by them, They are not central to their convictions. The ‘Alíyu’lláhís on the other hand maintain the supremacy of ‘Alí and believe in certain other extremist and skewed views. For details see, Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi’i Islam*, pp. 46-7 and Hasan Balyuzi, *Eminent Babá’ís at the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 314.

⁹³ He is remembered for having devoted much time to transcribing Bábí writings, particularly many manuscripts for Prof E.G. Browne. A number of Writings of the Báb and other prominent figures of that Dispensation, such as Quddús, have survived in the hands of Ridván-‘Alí.

become Protestant. His other children are all immersed in troubled waters of their own and have become a cause of embarrassment. It is good for you to go and witness the misfortune and remorse that is their lot. Even though a government such as the British, with all its might, is supporting him, yet he wallows in the depth of misery.

However, while laden with manifold tribulations in the Most Great Prison, we have managed to advance our purpose. Divine confirmations have ceaselessly surrounded us. The fiercer the troubles and difficulties, the more intense the divine succor. What rapture, what light, what spirit!

Once in a gathering in Tíhrán, the British Ambassador had said, “There is One in ‘Akká, in the Ottoman prison, Who appears with majesty, splendor and glory. And yet there is another in Cyprus who evinces the utmost incompetence and ineptitude.”

Regardless, it is good to go and see for yourself. Cyprus is near, not far. See under what conditions he lives.

[Service to the Cause]

In the course of our journey from Tíhrán to ‘Akká, the Holy Land, wherever we met the friends of God, they implored us to mention their names in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s august presence. We had made a list of these names and one day, the honored Mírzá Isháq [Haqíqí] and I presented it [to the Master]. He commented, “You are always present and observe how many letters I have penned for you. Despite all the work that I have – of which you are well-aware – I have written a very long Tablet, nay, a book.⁹⁴ Send it to Tíhrán so

⁹⁴ This long Tablet is printed in *Makátib ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, volume 2, pages 105[-112]. (HM)

they can transcribe and send it to all communities. It is very comprehensive. Insha'lláh, you will go and revive the world for the body of mankind is dead.”

Mírzá Isháq Khan Haqíqí responded, “By the grace of God, we will do so. Otherwise we have no such worth!” “Consider this tree,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “If it only focuses on its own merits, then it will have no hope, and will be deprived. However, if its hope is on the billowing waves of the sea of nature that send forth clouds, rain, merciful breezes and nourishment, the tree will eventually grow green and verdant, with leaves and blossoms. The sun will shine on it, and it will bear fruits and bring forth goodly results. It is the same as you have stated. If a person does not sense the same, remains unaware of his shortcomings, and exerts no efforts to improve himself, then he is no better than a stone. When a person is humble and becomes selfless, then he grows hopeful [of divine assistance]. We, too, are confident of the bounties and confirmations of the Blessed Beauty. Insha'lláh, you will also be fruitful and productive. Be confident.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá then brought a bottle of pure attar [of rose] and anointed our faces. “I wish to perfume your faces much the same as in past ages, when people cleansed and perfumed themselves, so that, God willing, you will be confirmed and successful and, through consultation with the friends of God, will try to exert your utmost.”

Afterwards, He turned to me and said, “You have many brothers and sisters there, and I wish to send a few of the Iranian [Bahá'ís] to America. For now you may take your leave. Marhabá, fí ámánu'lláh. Be under the protection of the Blessed Beauty!”



[Dr. and Mrs. Krug]

‘Abdu’l-Bahá had revealed a Tablet for someone in Canada. (Apparently, this person was Mrs. Krug, wife of Dr. Krug. When she embraced the Cause, her husband protested and disapproved of the Bahá’ís frequenting his house or for the gatherings to be held there. He was also unhappy that she was spending most of her time in the service of the Cause and less on household matters or on him. Eventually, their differences deepened and precipitated certain difficulties about which she wrote to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and beseeched His prayers so that either her devotion [to the Cause] would be lessened, or her husband would be enabled to recognize the Faith and no longer be in conflict with her. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed a Tablet and gave certain instructions, and eventually her husband embraced the Cause and attained a distinguished station in the Faith.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ Initially Dr. Florian Krug of New York was not a Bahá’í, but his wife, daughter and son were. He met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on His journey to the United States in 1912. Eventually he became a Bahá’í and went on pilgrimage in late 1921. He was there when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away and since he was a physician, was summoned by the family. Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant*, p. 452, states that it

Because he ranked among the philosophers and the learned, had mastered the natural sciences and was a man of liberal proclivities with great influence and power, who initially disapproved of his wife's religious tendencies, whenever he conversed with his friends after his conversion, he would remark, "The path we took was not the path of righteousness, but we thought it was."⁹⁶ And also, "We must seek the right path in the same way that it was sought by the righteous and mend our own ways."⁹⁷)

On this occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:

Consider the majesty of the Word of God! This girl came here when she was engaged to an American who was a very learned and prominent scholar of that land. All spoke highly of him. When she came here, she grew very spiritual. She wrote Me a letter stating that she deeply loved him, but asked that I pray so that this love would end; for he was not a Bahá'í, and in no wise did she wish to marry a non-Bahá'í. The parents of the fiancée also wrote Me. Firmly, I wrote her that she must show affection to her husband. That is, I said, she was most definitely to marry him. Eventually, they married and afterwards he embraced the Faith. Now both reside in Canada and are engaged in service to the Cause.

was he who closed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's eyes. There is also a short biography of Dr. Krug in Marzieh Gail, *Arches of the Years*, starting page 106.

⁹⁶ The statement could be a reference to the following verse of the Bible (Romans 10:3): "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

⁹⁷ It seems the following verse of the Bible (Isaiah 55:6-7) is being echoed: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near; Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

Lunch in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s House

All the pilgrims and a large number of the resident believers were at the house of the Master for lunch and benefiting from His utterances. A pitcher of warm water had been placed on the table from which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá poured so that the guests could wash both hands with soap. Standing next to the Master was Shoghi Effendi who would hand each guest a clean, white towel. Some of the friends were clever and also washed their face with the warm water and soap.



With Shoghi Effendi on his way to England

After we sat around the table, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá served food for everyone, looked after their needs, and commented:

Praise be unto God that through the generosity and benevolence of the Blessed Beauty, we have come to this resplendent spot and are assembled under the canopy of Bahá’u’lláh’s bounties. Such gatherings are held solely through divine grace and favor, and, therefore, we must be thankful for them. With deep devotion and longing, each of us has come from some distant land and has no purpose except the good

pleasure of God. It is a feast of love and fellowship.

The believers must be servants to the world of humanity. They must be kind to one another, nay sacrifice themselves for others. They must not just love their friends but should also be kind to their enemies and indeed count them as friends. Since these people have not drunk from the chalice of divine love, they know not [such sentiments]. But since you have been raised under the shadow of the bounties of the Ancient Beauty, <45> you must befriend all the peoples of the world. You must be a true servant to each member of humanity, not just by your words, but, verily, by your conduct and from the depth of your soul, heart and belief. You should do so not because people may recognize your good deeds, but because the Blessed Beauty has wished it and it meets His good-pleasure.

[Duty of Bahá'ís]

On the occasion of the departure [for Iran] of Mírzá Isháq Khan Haqíqí, Áqá Mírzá Mihdí Akhaván-Safá and Mírzá Habíbu'lláh Samímí, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá said]:

The spirit of the world is dead. Each of you, in accordance with your own capacity, must arise in service and sacrifice. Insha’lláh, with utmost joy and well-being, rejuvenated and renewed, and by the life-giving Most Great Spirit, in felicity you will return to serve the Cause of God. God willing, you will be confirmed and successful. Tell the friends of God in Iran that, at present, the government and the people have arisen to destroy one another. Now is your time: Arise and win the prize of everlasting happiness! You must guide the people. Each Bahá’í must teach at least one soul each year. Each believer can revive another soul during the

year, even through praise and prayers. And if a greater number is taught, so much the better. However, at least one person must be taught by each Bahá’í [every year].

Each night that I cannot sleep, I implore and beseech the Sacred Threshold of the Blessed Beauty with utmost intensity and fervor to confirm His divine friends under all conditions. Of a certainty, He will do so. If it had not been for My supplications, no trace could be found of My bones or those of the friends. Therefore, with fervent supplication, the friends must ask for whatever they desire from the Threshold of the Ancient Beauty.

When you go to ‘Iraq, convey my earnest greetings to each and every one of the divine friends and tell them that I was greatly perturbed and saddened by their differences. Praise be unto God that the news of their unity and peace was received and brought much joy to My heart. At the beginning, I was so grieved that I terminated My correspondence with them, but now I am very pleased and joyful with them.

In truth, if, God forbid, the slightest dust of disagreement clouds the relationship between two of the friends, others must quickly arise and do their utmost to settle the dispute and reestablish love and unity. Even if one or two days pass with an unresolved difference, it will become firmly rooted and animosity will develop. The friends of God must be peacemakers and in matters of common good, promote the general well-being. They must consider Bahá’ís and nonbelievers as one and the same. We have been created for the betterment of all people and nothing else!

When these friends were departing, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá affectionately embraced each and said, “The same way that I have embraced and kissed you, you must embrace and kiss each and every

one of the friends of God that you meet. Fí ámánu'lláh. Marhabá!”

After their departure, He noted, “Saying farewell is a bad thing, but what can we do? It is a tradition. It would be good to remove it from our ways because it brings sadness.”

[Husayn Sádiqí]

The story of the honored Husayn Sádiqí is very interesting and worth telling. I first met him in Haifa's Rahmání pilgrim house.⁹⁸ During the First World War, 1914-18, I returned to Iran and, on a postal card, received a Tablet which contained the news of [the imminent] arrival of Husayn Sádiqí. I waited for some time, but there was no sign or news of Sádiqí. Eventually in 1919, when Iran was embroiled in total turmoil, discord and disorder ruled the land and murder and chaos were at their height, one day I saw a very unkempt man with tribal headwear approaching me. I recognized him to be the long-expected Husayn Sádiqí, who had been in the Ottoman military and who had crossed the border of Iran, walked to Kirmánsháh and had now found me.

Since he was a soldier and a guard in the Ottoman army, he preferred sleeping during days and staying awake at nights, guarding our residence. I took advantage of his availability and gave him a gun, and all night he would pace the courtyard and protect us, while we slept at ease. At that time, midnight thieves would often attack homes and rob them of everything. It seemed that this heavenly guard was sent to me by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá for my protection and safety. After a few months with me, he left to teach the Cause in the surrounding regions, and wherever he went, he left behind unforgettable memories. The mercy of God rest upon his departed soul.

It is befitting to quote at this juncture a Tablet sent to Baghdad and revealed in honor of Husayn Sádiqí, son of Mírzá

⁹⁸ The pilgrim house of Haifa was built by Mírzá Ja'far Rahmání of Shiraz, known as Hádíoff, and in the early days was known by his name.

Músá Harf Baqá [the letter of eternity], which speaks about the differences among the believers of that region. The original of this Tablet I have sent to the [International] Archives on Mount Carmel.

He is the All-Glorious!

O ye eager souls trembling with the breezes of the love of God wafting from the meads of the Kingdom of the All-Glorious One! I swear by the one True God! Verily the Sacred Concourse, those essences of certitude in the divine unity, those temples of God’s singleness, all yearn for you, especially this pitiful servant, a stranger in this land, humble, broken, and lowly. I beseech God that “He may dispose of our affairs in the right way,”⁹⁹ and that He might ordain for me the joy of beholding the faces of the loved ones of God and associating with those dawning places of light in the assemblage of faithfulness. O my Lord! Grant me this bounty, inebriate me with this mystic wine and illumine mine eyes with the light shining from the faces of Thy righteous loved ones. Verily Thou art the Most Bountiful, the Giver, the All-Merciful.

Praise be unto God, the Provider of Divine Bounty and Nourishment, He Who is the Inscraper of the Point from which the letter Ha’ is derived, He Who turneth the luminous Day Star in the apex of the heavens, He Who casteth forth meteors dispersing the assemblages of selfish desire, He Who ignites incandescent lights in the globes of faithfulness, making them to be stars of His Abhá Kingdom. Salutations, glory, and praise be upon those holy souls who have humbled themselves, prostrated, and brought themselves low before the dust trodden by the footsteps of the beloved ones of God.

O ye chosen ones of God! It is incumbent on you to attain unity and concord and at all times to eschew dissension and estrangement, and to avoid hypocrisy. Be as one single cord, heavenly and united, and as the arrayed hosts of the concourse on high, a unifying force, that perchance in such wise God might assist

⁹⁹ Qur’án 18:10

you beyond all the peoples and nations and may raise your call amidst all the communities, tribes and sections of humankind, that He may send forth to you victory and success from the Realm of Abhá, and support you with the spiritually marshaled and engaged armies and regiments of the Sublime Concourse.

But if ye be divided and be afflicted with dissension, grace and bounty will vanish from your midst, the floods of divine generosity will be impeded, your Heavenly Beloved will show His wrath towards you, your portion of divine grace will diminish, and the Divinely ordained Physician will flee your company, your adversaries will defeat you, and they that hate you will achieve domination over you, your assemblage will disperse, your company will fragment, your lights will be darkness, your scintillating star will set, and your gathering will be scattered, your flowing water will completely ebb away, the fire of your spiritual torment will blaze deep, and you will become as bodies without spirit, as cups bereft of mystic wine, a bulb of glass without a light, lost in your ways, without any means of ascent.

I supplicate God, however, that He may open unto you the portals of unity under all conditions, sanctified from all limitations and imitations, that at all times ye may cling to the hem of singleness and detachment. I swear by the righteousness of God that the heart of 'Abdu'l-Bahá will never be joyous but in the unity of the friends, and love among the chosen ones of God. I beg God that He may vouchsafe this joyous bounty unto me.

'A. 'A.¹⁰⁰

Áqá [Muhammad-]Ridá Qannád¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Translation by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir.

¹⁰¹ Originally of Shiráz, Áqá Muhammad-Ridá had a confectioner's shop in Baghdad, which earned him the title of Qannád. When Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdad, Muhammad-Ridá accompanied Him to 'Akká. After the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh, he continued to serve 'Abdu'l-Bahá until his passing in about 1912. His son, Mírzá Habíbu'lláh, was a secretary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá during the first phase of His ministry

The late Áqá Ridá Qannád Shirází was a sincere and devoted servant. Though he was very old and broken, day and night he served with utmost diligence and obeyed the wishes of the Master with all his heart. In truth, whenever he was sent [by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] on an errand, he would run the whole way, much like someone who was being chased. Most of the external affairs of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s household and transmission of messages were conducted through him. He had a particular affinity for reading newspapers, and when Iranian newspapers subscribed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived in ‘Akká, he would read the whole thing and, in a few words, report the contents to the Master.

This day, like other days, he gained admittance to the presence [of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] and reported on the news of Iran, the Constitutional Revolt and the present government.¹⁰² [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] remarked:

We desire neither absolute despotism, nor unbounded liberty. We are concerned with the spiritual teachings and matters pertaining to the world above. If in Iran they grant absolute liberty with no opposition against the Faith, it would not be of benefit to us. This is because in the path of the Blessed Beauty we must endure a myriad injuries, insults and indignities and sustain every manner of harm and persecution. If we were at ease like the others, then we would not be able to propagate the Cause or achieve anything of merit. Today, the Muslims are free, but what benefit appears from them? Nay, freedom makes people lazy. We wish

and a strong defender of the Covenant. Later he sought service in the diplomatic field and became the Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Yemen. His son, Amír-‘Abbás Huvaiyda, served as the Prime Minister of Muhammad-Reza Sháh Pahlaví for some 15 years, while he always insisted on his Muslim identity..

¹⁰² On history of the Constitutional Revolt in Iran see E.G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution 1905-1909*, Janet Afary, *The Iranian Constitutional Revolution 1906-1911*, and in Persian, Ahmad Kasravi, *Inqiláb Mashrútiyyat Írán*.

neither the pogroms, the imprisonment, the beatings of the past, nor the complete freedom given in other countries.

Under all conditions we must remain evanescent in God. Some are immersed in contention. That is, they devote all their energy and time to disputes and conflicts. Others are engrossed in education and are busy at all times reading and studying, devoting their days and nights to the acquisition of knowledge. And yet another group is wholly absorbed in their profession or proclivities. But we are evanescent in God and remain oblivious to all save Him.



Mírzá Mihdí, Son of Hakím Hárúm

After the departure of Mírzá Mihdí, (who was a student of medicine

in the French University in Beirut,) son of Hakím Hárún, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “When he left, he was very happy, better than when he came. It is certain that divine exhortations are like the spring breeze, which generates joy and longing, and rejuvenates the soul. However, the discourse of others is like the fall’s blast, causing sadness and weariness. Praise be unto God that the divine breeze wafted over him and gave him joy and felicity. Surely it will have an effect.”

Situation in Iran

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá said,] “Presently, Iran is in turmoil, but it will be better later. Consider: First the wind blows, then the sky becomes cloudy which causes rain, hail and snow to descend, which in turn results in the ground being covered with ice and sleet. But then the springtime emerges. We too are hopeful that after these turbulences, the veils will be lifted and we will witness the emergence of the life-giving spring.”

In the midst of His utterances, the Iranian Consul came in and after the exchange of pleasantries, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá commented, “Yes, about four months ago I wrote that until the government and the people are mixed like milk and honey, <50> the desired benefit would not be realized. Did you see with what vulgarity and impudence the Rúh-i Nahs¹⁰³ (Rúhu’l-Quds Newspaper is intended) has loosened its tongue to criticize the king?¹⁰⁴ When they try to

¹⁰³ Lit, the ill-omened spirit.

¹⁰⁴ Rúhu’l-Quds or Rúhu’l-Qudus [the Holy Spirit] was the name of a newspaper printed in Tihrán under the editorship of the Sultánu’l-‘Ulamá of Khurásán. It printed a total of 26 issues from 5 August 1907 to 20 May 1908. This newspaper achieved special notoriety due to its extraordinary boldness, and published in its 13th issue a personal attack on Muhammad-‘Alí Sháh and his anti-constitutional actions, threatening him with the fate of Louis XVI, King of France, and recalling the French Revolution. In consequence of this article it was suppressed, but after a while resumed publication. E.G. Browne in his *The Press and Poetry of Modern Persia*, pp. 87-88, notes: “The editor of this newspaper was a man of extraordinary conviction and zeal, and took a personal share in the National efforts to defend the Constitution. Thus he participated *vi et armis* in the struggle between the Nationalists

force and pressure the monarch into concessions then how can they hope for royal bounties and support? Praise be to God that Bahá'ís are completely uninvolved in these affairs and are safe. These revolutions are for the enemies of the Cause. They do not realize that they are paving the way.”

Subsequently the Master instructed Mírzá Muhsin Afnán, “Take the Hamadání pilgrims (of Jewish descent) to meet the American pilgrims, Mrs. Cooper and Mrs. Goodall.”

Shortly before dusk, we collectively went to visit the Americans, and after the usual exchange of pleasantries, they asked the Bahá'ís of Jewish descent, “How did you come to be Bahá'ís? Did you first become Christian, then Muslim and then Bahá'í, or was it in some other manner? Please do tell.” “We were first Jewish,” was our response, “and unwilling to even hear the names of Christ and Muhammad, much less declare the truth of Their missions. However, once we became Bahá'ís, then we attained the shores of certitude regarding Them as well. Therefore, our belief in Them is through the teachings of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh, which has rent asunder the veils before us and has given sight to our blind eyes so we can discern the truth of Their claim.”

The American Pilgrims and the Feast at the Master's House

[In a feast held in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house, He remarked:]

This feast belongs to the illustrious pilgrims of Jewish descent. Through the favors of the Blessed Beauty, many diverse people have gathered in this

and the troops of Muhammad-'Alí Sháh on the occasion of the Reactionary *Coup d'Etat* of 23 June 1908, and fought valorously in defense of the Majlis [parliament]. Finally he was taken prisoner, was confined in chains in the Bágh-i-Sháh, and ultimately suffered a martyr's death, and was thrown into a well. The politics of the paper were Revolutionary.” The text of the issue 13, alluded to by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, appears in Browne's *Persian Constitutional Revolution*, pp. 156-161.

assembly and partaken of this spiritual sustenance – Jewish, Christian or Muslim descendents, and friends from both the East and the West – each coming from a different locality arriving at this Land. It is naught but heavenly confirmation that has enabled you to gather and be united in this Most Great Prison. This assembly is an example of how in the future, the whole of humanity will enter beneath the tabernacle [of the Cause], rest under the shadow of a single tree, drink from the same chalice and be sated from the same fountainhead. The effect of such gatherings will be manifested at a future time and will attract divine confirmations.

In the East it was prohibited for men and women to assemble in the same room. However in this Dispensation, the women have the same rank as men, and there is not the least difference between the two. In former Ages, equality and unity were limited to only one or two groups. However, this Supreme Dispensation has brought forth the unity of the whole world, and is not limited to any one group. The call [of the Kingdom] is for all, and the entire earth is invited to oneness.

One of the Renowned ‘Ulamá of Khurásán has Died

The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí remarked that one of the renowned ‘ulamá of Khurásán had passed away. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked, “In what way do they acquire learning and become recognized as scholars? By study of jurisprudence and scripture?” “By offering obligatory prayers,” the Hájí responded, “Whoever among them observes this law more frequently, he is more learned than the rest.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

These people study for fifty years to learn the signs of Return, and yet on the Day of the Manifestation, they

have remained deprived. Conversely, see how the unlettered and uneducated have attained unto this summit of glory. And it is because of this that [Bahá'u'lláh] has revealed, “*The abased amongst you, He shall exalt; and they that are exalted, He shall abase.*”¹⁰⁵

Consider how one person has labored hard as a merchant, knows all the details of trade, is experienced in maintaining accounting books and transactions, and yet his business remains unprofitable and bereft of expansion, while another who has no experience enters the field and quickly achieves success. There was a very wise person here, and I asked him, ‘How is our friend?’ He replied, ‘He is unlettered and unrefined.’ I asked, ‘How is his work?’ ‘Very profitable,’ was the reply. ‘And how is your own work?’ I inquired. ‘I do not know where I will get money for tonight’s bread.’ Nevertheless, such people are many, but divine confirmations must follow unceasingly and surround us, otherwise there is no lasting success.

Tea must be Good in Every Way

I took tea into the blessed presence [of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá], two serving pots on a clean tray. In one pot was tea, in another was boiling water. There were also two cups, one filled with hot water and the other empty and covered with a white cover. Next to these was a small crystal bowl of sugar lumps. He said, “This is very good. Tea must be like this: good sugar, excellent tea, purified water, clean cup and in every way neat and organized. Otherwise, it is better not to drink it. ‘What is not cared for at the beginning cannot be remedied at the end.’”

He continued: “The Egyptian chiefs want to become Wahhábí and promote Wahhábí convictions. Perchance they hope to resist

¹⁰⁵ Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i Íqán*, p. 146

European expansion through wars, violence, confrontations and slaughter. However, they are increasingly powerless and ineffective. They use this as a distraction. ‘A drowning man will cling to anything.’ But it will bear no result, none whatsoever, since its foundation is infirm and not based on divine teachings. These very designs will cause their own division and demise. They must first understand what brought about the progress of Islam and then follow suit. Their goals will not be achieved through political methods or nationalistic sentiments, especially when they are imitating others. The initiator is of course superior to the imitator. ‘And they who were foremost on earth – are the foremost still. These are they who shall be brought nigh to God.’¹⁰⁶ ‘And God will never forget the one who has rendered victorious His cause. There is no demise for him, and the converse holds as well. These people will not become righteous at the end unless they become righteous at the beginning.’”

[The Situation in Russia]

Addressing the honored Áqá Ridá Qannád, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired, “What news do you have?” He described whatever he had read in the newspapers about the turmoil in Russia, the killings of the Jews and the imprisonment of people from the Duma. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:

After these occurrences, it will be better. There was an incident that greatly saddened Me. They had written some time ago that two youths entered a hotel in Moscow, a boy and a girl. The receptionist was puzzled by their activities, as they never seemed to sleep. Being suspicious, he investigated the matter and reported the situation to the authorities who ordered the youths to be seized and searched. Their papers showed that there was

¹⁰⁶ Qur’án 56:10-11.

a slight difference of opinion between the two: one wanted to be the first in throwing a hand-grenade, while the other wanted also to be the first in this deed. In short, it was determined that these youth planned to oppose the Czarist monarchy and favored the establishment of an elected¹⁰⁷ government by throwing hand-grenades [as a prelude to a revolt]. It was ruled that they were to be imprisoned in Siberia. On the way they cried, "People, we are sacrificing ourselves for you!" Consider how they gloried in sacrificing themselves for a piece of soil, and how much more one should pride himself in sacrificing for the Lord of Hosts!

At one time [Count Leo] Tolstoy wanted an elected form of government in Russia, yet he acted in such wise that his actions did not provoke opposition. Through deeds he awakened the people, and not by mere rhetoric. He owned several villages, each with many inhabitants. He divided these estates among their dwellers in equal portions, giving himself a portion similar to theirs. Through this action, he made everyone equal, as he desired to demonstrate democracy through deeds, thereby rendering all the same and so to establish equity among all.

Tolstoy is a deeply learned man. I wanted him to embrace the blessed Cause and, therefore, I wrote him. His wife was very pleased with the letter I sent. Once I intended for the woman who gave drama-plays on His Holiness the Exalted One [i.e. the Báb] and the honored Tahirih to go and visit him.¹⁰⁸ However, during

¹⁰⁷ The word used in the original text is *jumbúrí*, which suggests a representative government elected by the general population.

¹⁰⁸ The woman who wrote about the Báb and Tahirih was Izabella Grinevskaya: 1) A Tragedy Named "Bab" and, 2) a poem named "Bahá'u'lláh". Her drama on the Báb was published in May 1903 and was played in St. Petersburg in January 1904. It was this drama that brought Leo Tolstoy a knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings. After

[Tolstoy’s] journey to Istanbul, Áqá Khan and Shaykh Ahmad¹⁰⁹ caused him to change his mind. These two related so many lies, falsehoods and accusations that he changed his mind and lost all interest in the Faith.¹¹⁰

Consider how through their negative words, some can change an eager seeker into one disinterested and indifferent. Yet sometimes, just a single word causes guidance and the awakening of a multitude. At times a medicine can cure a patient, and at other times, the same can cause his demise. Sometimes, it is the words of Abraham, at other times, the exhortations of Moses, or perhaps the teachings of Christ, or the words of Muhammad, or at times the sacred fragrance of Bahá’u’lláh that can influence and revive.

‘Akká’s Fleas

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated:]

So, tell me, Hakím Hárún, how are you coping with ‘Akká’s fleas?¹¹¹ These fleas help a person remain awake through the night to pray and meditate. Some

three decades from these dates Martha Root researched this subject thoroughly and wrote about it in several publications. For a short introduction by Martha Root see *Bahá’í World*, vol. 6, p. 707. Other references are: *Bahá’í World*, vol. 12, p. 632; *Star of the West*, 1#19:12 Persian; and “Isabel meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Alexandria 1911” in *Stories of My Heart*, p. 20, by ‘Alí-Akbar Furutan.

¹⁰⁹ Áqá Khán Kirmání and Shaykh Ahmad Rúhí were the two sons-in-laws of Yahyá Azal and his chief promoters. Both were highly political and were killed in the course of the demise of Siyyid Jamálu’d-Dín Afghání.

¹¹⁰ See Hasan Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá’ís at the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 185-190, on the mission of Áqá ‘Azízu’lláh Jadhhdháb to Tolstoy on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s bidding.

¹¹¹ These fleas are renowned and until a person has experienced them, one finds it hard to believe how terribly plentiful and bothersome they are. I remember that once I walked into a room and immediately my two feet were covered by them to near my knees, much like wearing a pair of black socks. (HM)

parts have fleas, as well as flies and ticks, which like the Covenant-breakers, will trouble, bite and cause one to flee.

[Consecration to the Cause]

Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí remarked, “My Master, I have found the Tablet addressed to Mírzá Yúsuf Khán.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:

May God increase your good deeds and multiply your blessings! In truth, Mírzá Yúsuf Khán’s is an exemplary story. He converted a prominent personage through his pure deeds, which is why the Blessed Beauty revealed, “*Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels.*”¹¹²

<55> Today, each believer must arise to teach the Faith and speak of it to seekers. We must rescue the world of humanity from all dangers that threaten it and sacrifice our own comfort for our Divine Beloved. Iranians have a saying, ‘The wasted oil is bequeathed to Sháh-Chiráq [mosque].’ This transitory existence and this temporary, illusory comfort must be devoted to the service of the Cause and be made a sacrifice unto its altar. Anything else is utter loss. This dead shrub must be sacrificed for that luscious Lote-Tree and this insignificant drop must be offered for the waves of His Ocean.

¹¹² Bahá’u’lláh, *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, K53



Charity to the Poor¹¹³

Once or twice a week, the poor received their allotment, which was distributed by His blessed hand. Most of them were disabled and would encircle the Master’s house in a single row. When all had assembled, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would emerge and with His own hand give to each as he deserved. Some would receive the alms, but then they would circle the line and stand at the end so that they might receive an additional share. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá called each by name, and when someone tried to get money a second time, He would say, “I have already given you some, but come and get some more.”

This time, the school children and the poor came and ‘Abdu’l-

¹¹³ These were professional beggars who regularly received governmental welfare and also alms from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. However each dawn, the Master would visit the homes of those that were truly destitute and give them whatever sum they needed. Each day, He visited a different street. In addition, every year, he distributed two or three hundred sets of clothing, several ‘abás, and other provisions and gave each needy person what he required. The entire city of ‘Akká, whether rich or poor, Jewish, Christian or Muslim, was a recipient of special bounties of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and each received His generous care and compassion. (HM)

Bahá said, “Give Me some money so I can distribute it among them and enjoy so doing.” He went and distributed the alms among the needy.

[Various Notes]

Each Friday morning, Bahá'í children attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and presented their weekly studies and exercises. He reviewed and corrected most and gave each student a prize. The children did their work in nasta‘lîq calligraphy, taught by Mishkín-Qalam and, because of him, all Bahá'í students had exquisite handwriting. This pattern in the Holy Land is now the model for all Bahá'í children's classes.

Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí inquired, “Áqá Siyyid Nasru’lláh Baqiroff has asked if Doctor Mírzá Muhammad Khán [Mahallatí] should stay with Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh [in Constantinople], or if he should return.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Why would he not stay? He has a merry time and in addition will complete his studies. However, he may not have sufficient funds, for when he left here, he stated that he had the necessary money for only four months of living. But when a person is confident and assured of divine confirmations, then the entire earth and heaven will serve him.

It is impossible to study medicine in Iran, since they teach [traditional] Iranian medicine, which is obsolete. It is the modern techniques of medicine that must be acquired. For that purpose, Europe is better.

The Faith of God has not penetrated Paris and the fire of the love of God has not enkindled her people to the depth it should. Of a certainty, there is wisdom in this. One reason is that, so far, a competent translator has not been found who not only can speak, but also has

a thorough command of the language.¹¹⁴ Sometimes, a translation is better than the original. A translator must fully comprehend the meaning [and the context] of the words. For instance, some citizens of Iran can read, write and even compose poetry, but do not have a thorough command of the Persian language. When competent translators are found who can proficiently translate into French and English, much benefit will appear and great tasks may be completed.

About that time the Qadí of ‘Akká and some other non-Bahá’ís entered and went directly upstairs to the second floor of the Master’s residence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to us, “The friends must excuse me. If I delay meeting these visitors, they will be annoyed. Forgive me.” With that, He left.

The Shrine of the Báb – Mount Carmel

The following comments of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá are recorded [in Arabic] in the diary of Dr. Zia Baghdadi:

Consider the foolishness of the governments of Iran and the Ottoman Empire, how they banished Bahá’u’lláh from Iran to Baghdad and Constantinople, and from there exiled Him to ‘Akká. They perpetrated this deed in the hopes of destroying the foundation of the Luminous Cause, but they were not cognizant of the fact that by so doing they were rendering the greatest service to the Faith of Bahá, disseminating and spreading its benefit to the whole of the earth. They did not know the effect of their own deeds. Perchance it is because of this that Jewish people will embrace the Cause, since

¹¹⁴ On deficiencies of translations into French, see, Ahang Rabbani, *Two Prominent Iranians Meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, World Order magazine, winter 1998 (also available at: <http://ahang.rabbani.googlepages.com/>)

there is no other course left for them.

However, regarding the future of Carmel, I now behold the whole of this mountain basking in brilliant lights and the Haifa harbor as the anchor point of thousands of steam ships. I see the monarchs of the earth, having removed their crowns, reverently, submissively and humbly, with tears flowing, carrying baskets of colorful flowers on their heads, approaching the Shrines of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Much in the same way that Christ wore the crown of thorns on His head, the kings of earth will carry flowers to the Shrines. However others are not endowed with this insight.

Likewise verily I see and behold the future effulgence of hospitals, schools and sanatoriums and the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár established on this mountain.

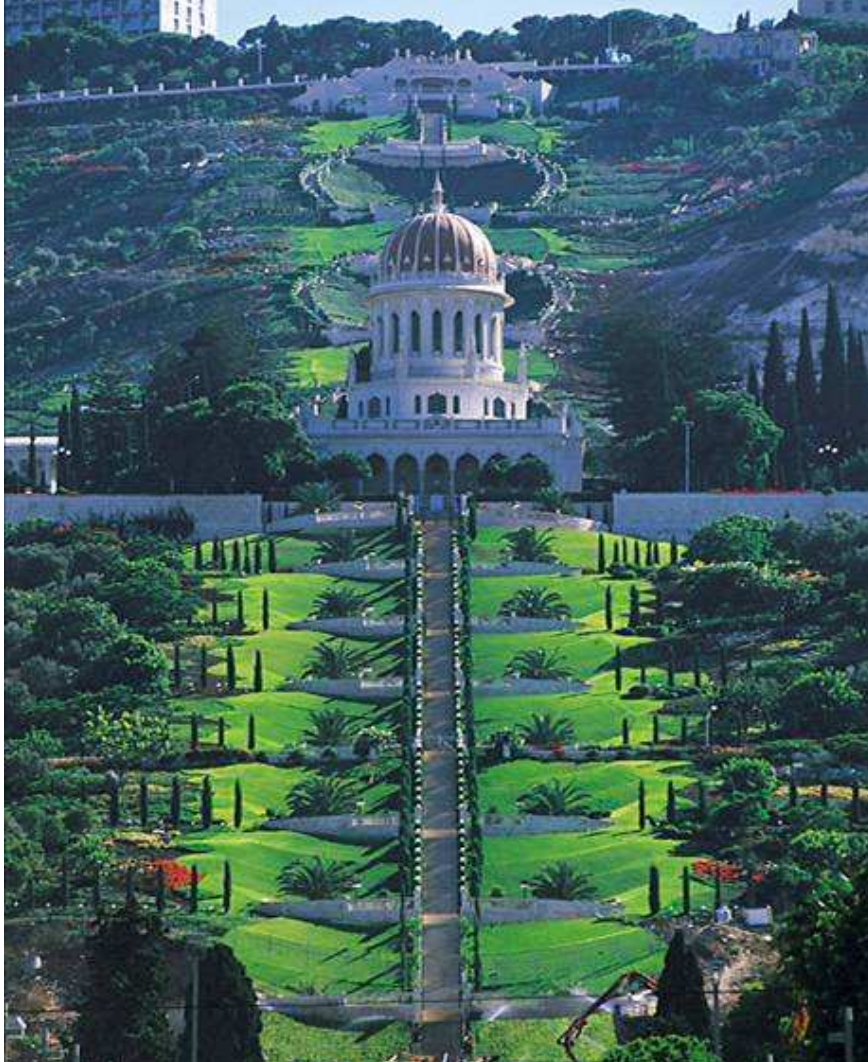
On another occasion, when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was strolling in the garden¹¹⁵, He paused and for awhile looked out to the sea at 'Akká, and after a few minutes of silence, said:

I have seen many places, but none has the vivifying air and the beauty of the Shrine of the Báb. Ere long this mountain will be developed. Many fine buildings will be raised upon it. The Shrine of the Báb will be constructed in the best possible way and most majestically. It will be surrounded with many gardens, displaying multitudes of flowers. Nine terraces will be constructed from the bottom of the mountain to the Shrine of the Báb, and nine more will be above it to the summit of the mountain. A boulevard will connect the seafront to the foot of the mountain, and it too will have gardens filled with flowers. Pilgrims who arrive by vessels will be able to see the dome of the Shrine of the Báb from afar. The

¹¹⁵ Presumably, a reference to the garden of the Shrine of the Báb in Haifa.

100 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

kings of earth, bareheaded, and the queens, will walk up the boulevard of the Shrine of the Báb carrying bouquets of flowers. They will prostrate themselves, kiss that Sacred Threshold and place their crowns on that ennobled earth.¹¹⁶



He then said to Áqá Rahmatu’lláh Khádim, “Send two or three of the squashes you have planted to the house so they can make Me a broth with them.” He left afterwards.

¹¹⁶ Previously a translation of this paragraph has appeared in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Babá’u’lláh*, pp. 225-226.

Chapter 3

Years of Study in Beirut

I completed the last year of high school and received my diploma. I then spent the spring of 1908 in Beirut and that summer in 'Alíyyih in Lebanon with Mírzá Ridá Khán Tahmasb who [years] later in Tabríz received the title of Shamsu'l-Atibbá [The sun of physicians]. He was a nephew of Najif Áqá, one of the chiefs of the 'Alíyu'lláhi [Sufi] order, and was my roommate and classmate. He was a wonderful and upright youth, and we spent two or three years together. Most of the time, he would associate with Protestants and had developed inclinations towards Christianity. When he met the believers, saw their ways and attitudes, and heard them speak of the Faith, he was enchanted by the Cause and would speak of it in meetings of the Protestants.

[The Brilliant Proof]

One day¹¹⁷ Mírzá Ridá Khán came to me and had brought along a repudiatory pamphlet written by [Reverend] Peter Z. Easton, one of the Protestant Missionaries in Tabríz. He said, "The Protestants gave me this pamphlet."¹¹⁸

I took it to the esteemed Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl and explained the situation to him, briefly outlining the content of the pamphlet. Residing in a hostel, the honored Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl was ill and bed-ridden, but immediately rose, placed his 'abá over his shoulders, and instructed me to take pen and paper to take down dictation of his

¹¹⁷ This incident must have taken place on 27 December 1911 and seems to be reported by Dr. Mu'ayyad out of chronological sequence.

¹¹⁸ This essay was published in *Evangelical Christendom*. Easton's attack followed a meeting between him and the Master in September 1911 in London. For details see Hasan Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 149-151.

rebuttal. For about one hour he dictated, and I wrote. It was not finished, but he grew very tired and had to return to bed, saying, “Fi ámánu’lláh. You go now and when I feel better, I will finish composing the reply.”

The following day, I went to the hostel [to visit Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl] and he informed me, “I have completed the reply to Peter Z. Easton. Submit it by post to the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to do with it as He deems appropriate.” <60> I mailed the treatise to the United States and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructed that both the Persian and the English translation be published in the United States. He titled this document *Burbán-i-Lámi* [The Brilliant Proof] and today is a well-known treatise among the friends.¹¹⁹

[Medical School]

Once more the academic year commenced [in Fall 1908], and I started as a freshman in the [Syrian Protestant] College. At the completion of the year and the beginning of the summer [1909], I went again to ‘Alíyyih in Lebanon and spent that season in ‘Aynu’s-Siyyidih, a very pleasant village located between ‘Alíyyih and Súqu’l-Gharb. This village has a vivifying air and most agreeable atmosphere.

After my sophomore year, I spent the summer [1910] in the company of Dr. Yúnis Khán Afrukhtih and Badí‘ Effendi Bushrú’í (a very bright young man whose studies were being financially supported by Miss Barney. She later became known as Madam Dreyfus and published *Kitáb-i Mufávidát* [Some Answered Questions of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]). We went to Haifa and spent the summer [of 1910] on Mount Carmel, under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb.

¹¹⁹ First published in 1912 by Chicago’s Bahá’í News Service.



Haifa's City Hall, 1910

Occasionally, we would go to ‘Akká, and at times, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would come to visit the Shrine of the Báb. It so happened that one time when He came, I was sick and in bed.¹²⁰ He visited me and offered me the remaining grapes that He was eating. I ate the grapes and a few hours later regained my perfect health! That illness was a thousand times sweeter than any state of well-being, and for the rest of my life, I will never forget their wonderful taste. What other fever brought such unceasing rapture and what other illness caused such perpetual joy and happiness! I have always wished for its recurrence, and many a night have I dreamt of its delights, that perchance it would revisit me and reunite me once more with my Beloved!

Shouldst Thou come by my bed as healer,
For its delight I would not barter both worlds.

But, alas, “take ye joy in the beauty of the narcissus of Najd, for night will fall and it will be no more.”¹²¹ Never again will I behold that experience, nor attain unto that longing [to see ‘Abdu’l-

¹²⁰ I had a fever for several days and those who were around me later said that it was very severe. (HM)

¹²¹ This is part of a well-known Arabic couplet; translation in: *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 258.

Bahá].

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá visited the Shrine of the Báb, He always spoke of the sufferings and hardships sustained by the Blessed Perfection and the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [i.e. the Báb]. He praised the invigorating air of Carmel and emphasized how richly the divine favors had surrounded these unworthy servants and how we stood under the shadow of the beneficence of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]! He would say:

Attaining unto this Mountain was the ultimate desire of the Prophets, and it is the point of adoration of the Supreme Concourse. All the past Manifestations have given glad-tidings regarding this place and this Dispensation, and their highest aspiration was to witness such a Day and to behold and take part in such happenings. Here the tabernacle of the Most Great Peace will be hoisted and the foundation of the wondrous Divine Order will be established. All this land will be built and developed.

After two thousand years of wandering, the Jewish people will return to the Holy Land and embrace the Cause of God. From here divine civilization will be propagated unto the whole of the world and provide it with serenity and comfort.

Know the preciousness of this favor! Inhaling this air and being in such a place was not granted to others or decreed for them. It is only out of the grace and beneficence of the Blessed Beauty that we have attained unto this mercy and become the recipients of “He bestows His bounty upon whomsoever He wisheth.”

The First Two Years of Medical School in Beirut

With hardship and hard work, I completed the first year of medical school, and during this time rendered some services to the Cause

not worthy of mention.¹²² Whatever the Holy Family requested, or the pilgrims to the Holy Land required, or other students in Beirut needed, I would gladly attend to and carry out. I would also disseminate to the surrounding communities whatever Tablets and correspondence were received from the Holy Land and dispatch the friends' missives, including the letters and writings of the illustrious [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl.¹²³ To the extent of my abilities, I saw to the comfort of the pilgrims by securing their visas or passports, purchasing their travel tickets and guiding visitors.¹²⁴ Fortunately, these insignificant gifts were accepted by the pilgrims, and for that, I always thank God's favors.

The second year of my medical studies was filled with difficulties. First, I was required to pass the mid-studies examination by the medical faculty in addition to another test administered by an examining board of the Ottoman government, which came from Constantinople. Second, since there was a delay in the arrival of my stipend, my [financial] situation was growing critical, and I did not even have the twenty-five liras needed for the examination fee. Third, because of my immense workload, I became very ill, requiring hospitalization and medical attention.

During my hours of solitude, I supplicated 'Abdu'l-Bahá in my heart and fervently besought His assistance. With tearful eyes and soul on fire, I would compose supplications and submit them unto His august and sanctified presence. Indeed, it was a strange year.

¹²² *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 36, notes that during this period the diarist was associated with such believers as, Áqá Muhammad-Mustafá Baghdádí, Dr. Berkat, Anton Haddád and 'Ináyatu'lláh Chái-Chí.

¹²³ Several Bahá'í communities in the Near East served as conduit for communication between 'Akká/Haifa and Bahá'í communities of Iran. On general migration patters of Iranian Bahá'ís see, Moojan Momen, "The Bahá'í Community of Iran: Patterns of Exile and Problems of Communication" in Asghar Fathi, ed. *Iranian Refugees and Exiles Since Khomeini*; (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1991) pp. 21-36.

¹²⁴ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 36, notes that with the departure of Áqá Muhammad-Mustafá Baghdádí for Alexandretta, the diarist became responsible for seeing to the needs of pilgrims and resident believers.

From every direction, troubles and difficulties beset me and I was overwhelmed by their stress and gravity. Every time a letter arrived from my father, it was filled with grievous and most unhappy tidings and lamentations. He informed me of the plunder of our house by the Sáláru’d-Dawlih and many other troubles that unceasingly surrounded them. My nerves were fatigued, my body weak, and my spirit depressed. All strength was drained from my being.

Below is a section that I recall from a poetic-missive that I composed at that time, which to some degree conveyed the intensity of the tribulations and the fire of misery, pain, depression and paralysis that had engulfed me, and yet I had to advance my studies and continue with life’s struggles:

O Hadrat-i ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
 O Center of the Covenant of Bahá,
 O builder of the House of God,
 Hold Thou my hand, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, have mercy on me,
 Sacrifice my life for Thee,
 Sacrifice it for Thy locks,
 Hold Thou my hand, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Thou art aware,
 Thou art life-taker and life-giver,
 Thou art the guide of every wayward,
 Hold Thou my hand, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, I am wretched,
 I have no hope and am lost,
 Like a babe in the cradle,
 Hold Thou my hand, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
 O Jehovah, resplendent Lord,
 Have mercy on this ill one,
 O promise of the tribe of Abraham,
 Hold Thou my hand, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ ‘Ali Nakhjavani is thanked for the rendering of this poem.

In response to my supplication, a Tablet was revealed that was the cure of all my ills. All my sorrow and melancholy vanished completely. I forgot every pain that had ever afflicted me and with new vigor and infinite enthusiasm resumed my studies and activities. A few days later, yet another Tablet was received that redoubled my joy and brought me an even larger measure of delight and felicity. I quote both Tablets:

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Thy letter arrived. A brief reply will be written, as there is no time. Do not be saddened by the occurrences in Kirmánsháh. God willing, thy health will return. I hope that thou remain protected in the face of trials.

And in the second Tablet it was revealed, exalted is His station:

O thou who art firm in the Testament! Thy mellifluous poems were most sweet, endowed with eloquent and fluent expressions. Talent is like unto a spring: from some will flow sweet streams, while from others naught save bitter, salty water is tasted. Praise be unto God that from the gifted faculty of that friend who stands steadfast in the Covenant such clear water issues forth. You must give thanks that thy talent billows forth and thy spirit is confirmed by the grace of the Almighty.

However, thou must employ this pure water in praise of our loving Lord, the Ancient Beauty and the Greatest Name [i.e. Bahá'u'lláh] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto His friends. You must sing His laudation since 'Abdu'l-Bahá is but a drop, but the Greatest Name is the mighty Ocean. When you have praised the ocean, it will also encompass the drop.

Convey my warmest greetings to the friends of God. Upon thee rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

'A 'A.

It was not long thereafter that my versed-missive became an anthem of the [Bahá’í] students in the [Syrian] College and was often sung in the gatherings, which brought great excitement and joy to all. The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, that love-intoxicated elder believer, would be filled with delight by hearing this chant.

Since during this time ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was on a journey to Egypt, Europe and America, Beirut had become an important center for the Cause. Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl, that ocean of knowledge and sincerity, was in Beirut, and Bahá’í travelers always frequented the city. Despite the lack of funds, whatever was needed would be arranged. I would convey ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s telegraphs and Tablets to the illustrious Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl. Some of my time was devoted to my studies and the rest to the service of the Faith, even during the hours of leisure. Indeed the conditions of Beirut and the activities of the friends attracted the repeated attention and the infinite bounties of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who sent many Tablets in honor of the students who regularly kept coming there.

In a blessed Tablet received in honor of another student in Beirut, Áqá ‘Abbás Khán, son of Sa‘ídu’l-Mulk Rashtí, known as Akbar, the following was revealed:

O honored Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh! The son of the illustrious Sa‘ídu’l-Mulk is in Beirut, and you must make every effort to ensure his well-being. Of course, from the outpouring of celestial favors, all the trees of the Abbá paradise in Beirut are verdant and flourishing splendidly.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

It was in the summertime [1911] that the illustrious Dihqán family came to Beirut, while I was in the mountains of Lebanon. The honored Mírzá Muhammad-Báqir Khán Dihqán¹²⁶ arranged for his children to remain in the mountains of Lebanon and he took me

¹²⁶ A prominent Bahá’í of Shiraz and an important governmental official of Fárs; see, Ahang Rabbani, *In the Land of Refuge*.

to Damascus and 'Albak for a few days of sightseeing. We subsequently returned to Lebanon.

<65> **The Illustrious Abú'l-Fadl in Beirut**

The number of students and visitors in Beirut had grown considerably when the illustrious [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl arrived to settle here. At first he rented a very modest house, but later moved to a hostel. During that period, the number of visitors was increasing each day, and many groups of friends visited in wave after wave. Whoever had heard that the esteemed Abú'l-Fadl was in Beirut eagerly came to benefit from seeing him. With a bent back and trembling hands, this learned and renowned philosopher would receive them and provide hospitality. He insisted on doing all the work himself and never allowed anyone to help. For instance, when guests visited him, he would go and fetch the water, place the kettle on the kerosene-burner, wash the cups, dry them with a silk handkerchief, place a lump of sugar in each and personally serve each person. When we implored him to at least allow us to serve tea, he would not consent to it and would devote two or three hours of time to this task. He never permitted anyone to serve him, and in fact, always insisted on serving others. We repeatedly entreated and beseeched him for permission to do his regular shopping or attend to his other needs, but even this he would refuse. With the utmost fervor we would beg him, "Your time is so precious and must not be wasted on mundane household chores. It is best if you spend these hours writing for the Cause, even if it is only a short piece." Yet he was insistent in his refusal.

We reported the situation to the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, thinking that perchance He would instruct Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl to accept the services of an attendant. He instead commanded, "Absolutely do not disturb him, or interfere in his affairs. Leave him to do as he pleases, as he is thus inclined." Even in a blessed Tablet addressed to this servant:

110 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Find a residence in Beirut for the illustrious Abú’l-Fadl in an upper apartment that receives adequate sunlight and air. None is permitted to interfere in his affairs.

Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl’s conversion is among the most astounding teaching stories of all time and was precipitated by Karbalá’í Husayn Na’lband [the farrier], who was an unlettered and ordinary man. The late Ustád Husayn, otherwise known as Karbalá’í Husayn, had a humble [black-smith] shop near the entrance of [the shrine of Sháh] ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím, where he proclaimed the Faith to his customers, who brought him their horses and mules to be shod. He would commence his task by tying down the animal’s legs, busy the customer with holding the bridle, and immediately engage him in teaching discussions.

One day, as was his custom, the honored [Mírzá] Abú’l-Fadl was going on pilgrimage to the [Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím] Shrine, when he had to stop by Na’lband’s shop for some repair. Ustád Husayn warmly greeted him and while engaged in the repairs, he inquired, “My master, I have a question.” [Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl] signified his permission for the query to be presented to him. The farrier asked, “I have heard that there is a hadith [i.e. Islamic tradition] indicating that angels do not visit a home wherein a dog dwells. Is this true?” “Yes, it is correct,” was Mírzá’s reply. “O honored Shaykh,” the shoe-smith responded, “now the matter becomes complex.” “Why?” asked Mírzá. “I have also heard that there is another true tradition that states that each raindrop is carried by an angel. Is this also correct?” “Yes, indeed,” Mírzá replied. “Well, your answer has added to my confusion, since in that case, rain should never fall on homes in which a dog is kept, whereas we see that it rains uniformly, regardless of the existence of pets.” Perplexed, the Mírzá admonished him and walked away. Later, he asked a companion as to the convictions of the farrier and was told, “Do not listen to him. Áqá Husayn is a well-known Bábí and not worthy of attention.” But this very comment impelled the honored Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl to take up a serious investigation of the Faith which eventually resulted in

his conversion by Áqá Muhammad-‘Alí Máhút-furúsh [a broadcloth salesman].

In short, the illustrious [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl remained in Beirut and made a proof copy of his magnum opus for which he had previously completed all the required research. This book was in response to all the polemics against the Faith, and one part, which by itself was a mighty tract, was in response to Athím ibn Athím¹²⁷. Another part, in itself a thick book, was a response to the Azalís and outlined irrefutable proofs for the validity of Bahá'u'lláh's claim. Another section addressed materialists and opponents of the Cause, while yet another was devoted to the Covenant and the activities of the violators of the divine Testament.

As was my habit, each day after completing my studies and finishing at the hospital, I would attain his presence and present him with telegrams, correspondence and any other Bahá'í news that was received, including news of the arrival or departure of visitors. In particular, when newspapers or periodicals mentioned the Faith, I would share with him an outline of the article and other pertinent details.

One day in the college library, as I was looking through various magazines and journals, I saw an advertisement in a Jesuit magazine published by the renowned Catholic scholar, Louis Shaikhuan, regarding the *Kitáb Nuqtatu'l-Káf* published by Prof. Browne. When I informed the honored [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl, without the least pause, he said, "Go immediately to Beirut Jesuit Publishing, inquire for the representative of Louis Shaikhuan¹²⁸, the owner of the publishing house, and ask the cost of printing a book, about one thousand pages, on good quality paper and large fonts, so that I can start composing it and give it to him section by section for printing."

He also instructed, "Write this question, have it signed by all the students in Beirut and send it to Prof Browne, the instructor of

¹²⁷ Athím [sinner] was a penname of Hájí Mírzá Karím Khán Kirmání, the self-proclaimed head of Kirmání Shaykhís. His son, Hájí Muhammad, also adopted the same epithet.

¹²⁸ The original text gives the name as Shaikhu.

Eastern Languages in Cambridge University, asking for the favor of reply.”¹²⁹ I did as bidden and with registered post sent the notarized petition to Prof. Browne. Twelve days later, I received a reply in Prof Browne’s own hand in Persian. This in truth was the best and most precious document in refutation of the *Nuqtatu’l-Káf* and the fraudulent attempt to tie it to the martyred Hájí Mírzá Jání [of Káshán]. When the late Mírzá [Abú’l-Fadl] saw this letter, he was so jubilant that he nearly started dancing and was constantly laughing and immensely delighted. Indeed his state of joy [over this admission] can never be described. With this irrefutable document, which Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl considered the best lightning rod against the enemies of the Cause, the decision to publish a response was finalized.

Often he would say, “As the Faith gains strength and as its influence is extended, its enemies will grow more determined and exert their utmost evil against it, resorting to any means, lies, or slanders to attack and eradicate the Tree of God. Even if our enemies are in disagreement [over ways to oppose the Cause], they will gain synergy from other camps attacking the Faith and will be united in their purpose.” In this regard, he often recited this verse:

*Verily they have plotted their plot, and their plot is with God, though their plot were one whereby the mountains should be moved*¹³⁰ and “*Had We sent down this Qur’án on a mountain, verily, thou wouldst have seen it humble itself and cleave asunder for fear of God.*¹³¹

In short, while we awaited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s approval, final

¹²⁹ The question posed to Prof Browne by Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl through the students of Beirut was about the source and authenticity of the book [*The Nuqtatu’l-Káf*]. He replied that he had acquired it from the library of [Comte Joseph A.] Gobineau. It is evident that Muhammad Khan Qazvíní had interpolated the text and deposited it in the library. (HM). [For Qazvíní’s own admission see, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá Meeting with Two Prominent Iranians”, Ahang Rabbani, *World Order* magazine, Fall 1998.]

¹³⁰ Qur’án 14:47

¹³¹ Qur’án 59:21

copies of his various notebooks containing his rebuttal were prepared and readied for submittal to the publisher. We telegraphed America, asking for the Master's permission, and He immediately cabled:

*From New York. The Iranian Khudábakhsb.¹³²
American College in Beirut.
Imperative publish book with great haste. Print in Egypt.
'Abbás.*

Upon the receipt of the above telegraph, Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl left for Cairo and, after a while, passed away in that realm, attaining his permanent place in Almighty's Grace, with the book remaining incomplete. [During his final days,] when he was not well and unconscious, a section of this manuscript was stolen by Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd, son of Mírzá Asadu'lláh Isfahání, who wished to publish it in his own name and thereby gain universal notice. This unscrupulous act, which severely harmed the Cause of God, greatly perturbed 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who expelled him from the Faith. The Master stated, "This thievery will result in his defeat and ruin. 'Soon the tyrants will know of their doing. Where art Thou, O Reformer of upheavals? Verily, thy Lord is the One Who schemes.'"

In short, in addition to his worldly achievements, the illustrious Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl possessed outstanding heavenly qualities. He was polite, unassuming, jovial, serene and spiritual. Those who had seen him in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá would readily testify to his utter humility and discerning eyes. On such occasions, he would leave his walking stick outside, and with hands folded over his chest and trembling body, would enter [the room]. He would then bow all the way down and, after receiving permission would sit, keeping his hands over his chest, his eyes cast downward and his body motionless. He never spoke in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and when a response was required of him by the Master, he

¹³² Cable-address for me. (HM)

would immediately stand and with a few words provide a sufficient reply, then once more regain his previous posture. In His presence, he was all ears and was, in truth, a manifestation of this verse of Hafiz <70>:

One cannot speak in the chambers of the Beloved,
As all faculties must become eyes and ears.

Most reverently, he would ponder every word spoken by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At leave-taking, he would back away towards the door, never turning his back to the Master. Once outside, he radiated immense joy, delight and rapture and at all times praised the bounties of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and divine favors, reciting this verse, “*They taunt thee with having embraced Islam. Say: Taunt me not with your having embraced Islam; God rather taunteth you with His having guided you to the faith -- acknowledge this if ye are sincere.*”¹³³

Though Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl was only a seminary student, yet the power of the Word of God and the influence of Divine Sovereignty can make a heap of dust the envy of the heavens and breathe a new spirit into moldering bones. This effect had transmuted this small, frail man into the envy of the world, whose writings shine resplendently as a sun in both the East and the West, guiding the seekers of the Beloved to their ultimate goal and diffusing his sanctified fragrance throughout the world.

If anyone spoke his praise, Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl would become very embarrassed and only speak of his own shortcomings, particularly expressing his immense regret over his weakness and ill state. He would note that because of these infirmities, he was not able to serve the Faith the way his heart demanded. He used to say, “My earnest desire is to be granted a thousand lives a day so I could sacrifice them all in the path of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!” In all gatherings, his sole expression was that of abject humility and nothingness. I take refuge with God, never was he heard to say, “I”, or in any way speak

¹³³ Qur’án 49:17.

of himself. He was the quintessence of lowliness and humility, and his tongue always turned in praise of God and the infinite bounties bestowed by the Author of Revelation. He repeatedly stated, "If it had not been for the divine grace, I would now be but a seminary student in a corner of a mosque."

When we asked him how it was that he had acquired such immense knowledge, depth of learning, complete mastery of the most abstruse subjects, and become a true mystic, he would say, "I learned everything in the school of God's Faith. I have partaken of the spiritual feast of the Center of the Covenant, as I have no powers or abilities of my own. The likes of me are many in Iran though because of their lack of recognition, they have come to naught. However, solely from the Grace of God, rays of the divine effulgence of our Sanctified Beloved shine unceasingly upon the believers and bestow on them manifold bounties. The heavenly feast is spread, and the door to the Lord's House is flung wide open. Under the standard of the Cause anyone can be a teacher to Abú'l-Fadl. Abú'l-Fadl is nothing! Abú'l-Fadl is most insignificant!"

The illustrious [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl always warned us and would exhort, "The enemies of the Faith and the evildoers are constantly scheming and poised to attack. You must be vigilant and not fall prey to the words of [ill-meaning] people. Our opponents will first approach you in the guise of friends so that they can subtly win your sympathies. Once they have gained your confidence, then they will sow the seeds of doubt in the soil of your heart and take an axe to the root of the Faith. The enemies of the Faith are not one or two or just a few thousand. All the diverse denominations and religious factions will arise in opposition to God's Faith."

Repeatedly, he recited this verse, "*Had we sent down this Qur'án on some mountain, thou wouldst certainly have seen it humbling itself and cleaving asunder for the fear of God.*"¹³⁴ and would recite this verse of Sa'dí:

¹³⁴ Qur'án 59:21

Snake will bite man’s foot,
When he fears that he would be killed.

He would also say, “The whole of mankind is trembling and fearful of the influence and the penetration of the Cause.”

The Reasons for the Expulsion of Dr. Amínu’lláh Faríd, son of Asadu’lláh Isfahání¹³⁵

For twenty years, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá funded the studies of this person [Faríd] and eventually he became a physician. [Having been showered with all these bounties,] it was hoped that he would become a sincere servant of the Cause, would grow as a fruitful and fertile tree under the canopy of the Faith and would devote his life to its service, thereby repaying all the effort of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on his behalf. Regrettably, egotism and self-indulgence, coupled with the lack of religious and spiritual conviction, finally brought out his true self and, for him, made materialism victorious over spirituality. His satanic self was ultimately triumphant and caused him to perpetrate such deeds that caused his expulsion from the Faith, earning an eternal curse. O Lord, save us all from ourselves!

On the occasion of the expulsion of Dr. Amínu’lláh Faríd, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned me one day and instructed me to travel to Europe. He spoke with great pain, and he paced back and forth with His headdress removed. He made His remarks with such incredible force and conviction that they truly made me tremble uncontrollably to the point that I nearly fainted. He said:

Do you know why His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] was martyred and the Blessed Beauty sustained such life-long hardships and sufferings? Do you

¹³⁵ Dr. Faríd’s mother was the sister of Munírih Khánúm, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wife. Mírzá Asadu’lláh was the emissary who had taken the remains of the Báb from Iran to the Holy Land. For details see “Efforts to Preserve the Remains of the Báb: Four Historical Accounts”, Ahang Rabbani, *Bahá’í Studies Review*, 2003, pp 83-95.

understand why such a large multitude of martyrs gladly drank from the chalice of sacrifice and closed their eyes to the pleasures of the world and the comforts of life? The reason is so that the rest of us would serve this world of humanity, detached from all considerations, and not follow the dictates of our carnal desires or seek worldly opulence, contentment and enjoyment.

He spoke of Faríd and said, “Never argue with anyone,” and then added:

Is it rational for us to aid him? If a thief wants to enter a house and rob it, should we help him? Judas sold Christ for a trifling thirty coins and Dr. Faríd has sold us for four or five dollars. This foundation has been laid through the sufferings and blood of many sacred souls; therefore, is it equitable of us to allow it to be demolished by the treachery of an ill-wisher?

From the time that he was very young, I raised him [Faríd] in the hope that someday he would serve the Cause. Conversely, through mendicancy and hoarding money, he has caused destruction. Several times, I concealed his misdeeds as I wished not to witness his abasement. Now he says that he was wronged and that the friends around Me were jealous of him and caused sedition, whereas the truth is that all were his well-wishers. Even his parents feel aversion towards him. He stole My seal, and I said nothing.¹³⁶ With immense hardship and despite his physical infirmities, the illustrious Abú'l-Fadl penned a book in proof of the Faith and for three nights, on the pretext that his house

¹³⁶ Prior to this incident, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s seal was square and the verse “Yá Sáhibu’s-Sijn” was engraved on it. He would sign the Tablets “‘Ayn ‘Ayn” and seal them on the upper right corner. Afterwards, He commenced signing, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.” (HM)

was cold, Faríd slept in Abú’l-Fadl’s residence and destroyed those precious papers. When I admonished him, he arose in opposition, ignoring the fact that the Blessed Beauty has established a Testament with each believer to turn to the Center of the Covenant and not to cause division. We live with such sanctity and detachment, and he begs for five dollars here and five dollars there. And now this is his letter.

Ask Mr. Kinney¹³⁷ in New York to tell you what large sums he [Faríd] collected, first saying that he wanted to build a hospital, then saying that the building had a mortgage and he needed more money, thereby receiving another sum. Presently that house is leased in Haifa. Despite this, from Egypt he wrote that he had established his medical practice and needed money. In New York he swindled some people and claimed that he possessed the secrets of the Cause.

In short, this was a brief outline of his deeds. Since we will not join him in destroying the Cause, nor will ever do so, then the good Doctor is unhappy with us. If anyone harms Me a thousand times, I will not reciprocate in the least, and in fact, will never even make mention of it to the point that he can mistakenly claim, “I was so clever that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not perceive my deception.” No, I see everything, but conceal it [with a sin-covering eye]. However, if anyone arises to harm the Cause, then I will no longer remain patient and will announce it publicly.

Ask Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání to tell you each of his [Faríd’s] actions and you inform the friends.

That afternoon, in accordance with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instructions, Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání came to see me and said:

¹³⁷ The first meeting of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the American Bahá’ís took place on 11 April 1912 at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Edward B. Kinney of New York.

In America, particularly in New York, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was fully aware and constantly admonished Faríd [in private], but when we entered [the room], He would cease His exhortations.

1. Faríd wanted to have a separate residence where he would live alone as he committed unseemly acts, incongruent with the teachings of the Faith, and no one was aware of his doings.
2. Faríd would forward his translation of the blessed Tablets that were revealed in honor of the believers in Washington [D.C.] without first presenting [a draft] to the Master or attaching the original Text and the signature of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It was heard that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had admonished him, “Was it not better for the text to bear My signature instead of yours? It is evident that you have evil intentions!”¹³⁸
3. Late one night, when Mrs. Pinchot¹³⁹ was resting, Faríd had gone to her claiming, “We need money for doctors and as we are leaving in the morning, there is no time.” She was deeply perturbed and through her attendant sent a message [to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá], “I have no time to

¹³⁸ The implication is that by not showing a draft to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and not enclosing the original Tablet, Faríd was mistranslating the Text and passing his own writings as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s.

¹³⁹ Gifford Pinchot (11 August 1865, Simsbury, Connecticut – 4 Oct. 1946, New York City), American conservationist and politician, was the first Chief of Forest Service, 1905-10 and later Governor of Pennsylvania. He invited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His travel-companions to his estate on 3 June 1912 in Milford, Pennsylvania. His mother was Mary Jane (Eno) Pinchot, (1838 New York City – 1914 Simsbury, Conn.). She was the wife of James Pinchot (1831 -1908) and in 1900 moved from New York City to Washington, DC. It was in the latter city that she met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on 10 May 1912.

meet You in the morning”, meaning ...¹⁴⁰ The next morning, the Master had given a gratuity to all her servants and en route when He saw green fields, remembering the sufferings of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and the Blessed Beauty, had sobbed, remarking, “What grievous stages has the divine Faith gone through and now how the disloyal misbehave so waywardly!”

4. Faríd corresponded with the violators of the Covenant, such as [Dr. Ibrahim George] Kheiralla and some others.
5. Everywhere Faríd had spread the rumor that he was the guardian [of the Cause] and the Master’s successor.
6. He had stolen ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s seal with the inscription, “Yá Sáhib’s-Sijnih”¹⁴¹, which resulted in the Master changing His signature to “‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás”, <75> and soon it was learned that, with this seal, Faríd was issuing receipts to Bahá’ís for the funds he had [inappropriately] solicited.
7. In the name of the Cause, but in fact for his personal gain and the benefit of his private hospital, he wanted to name several people as staff of the hospital, which greatly perturbed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. The Latter protested, “God forbid, God forbid! I have always protected the friends. Dispense with this idea, or blood will flow!”
8. Faríd had announced everywhere that he was the successor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and for this reason, one day, he invited the honored [Mírzá]

¹⁴⁰ Left blank by the author.

¹⁴¹ Lit, O my Two Fellow Prisoners, a phrase found in the Qur’án 12:39 and 12:41.

Valí'u'lláh Varqá to sit near him. With utmost affection, he had said, “You must know that if there is one person whom I dearly esteem and honor, it is you.” ([Zarqání] then told the history of the honored Mullá Muhammad-Mihdí, and the martyred Varqá and Ruhu'lláh.)

9. He stole papers of the illustrious [Mírzá] Abú'l-Fadl, intending to later publish them in his own name.

[Bahá'ís of Beirut]

During the years 1910-12, the city of Beirut had emerged as an important post for the Cause and through an increase in the Bahá'í students our number had grown to about forty. As they witnessed the joy, sincerity, humility, and unity of the friends, non-Bahá'ís also joined us and discontinued their association with other Iranians in Beirut. These included: Dr. Ridá Khán Tahmasb, Mahmúd Khán Fátih and Ya'qub Khán Armaní [Christian] Urúmíyyih.

From the port of Naples in Italy, the illustrious Shoghi Effendi, who was scheduled to leave with 'Abdu'l-Bahá for Europe, returned and joined us at Beirut University. Because of their conflicts with the Turks, the Italians in Naples had been dithering [thinking 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His entourage were Turks]. Dr. Amínu'lláh Faríd had taken advantage of the situation and, under the pretext that they had an infection of the eyes, prevented the illustrious Shoghi Effendi, Mírzá Munír Zayn¹⁴² and Khusraw Khádim [attendant] from joining 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was divine wisdom that brought Shoghi Effendi to the College at Beirut and bestowed this honor upon the American University.

¹⁴² A son of Zaynu'l-Muqarribín, he was one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's two secretaries. The other was Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání.



During his years at College, Shoghi Effendi conducted himself like any other student, without demanding the least preferential treatment or privilege. No one was aware of his future [office], and he himself did not expect any special consideration from anyone. Several times, the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí remarked, “This old servant has said to Shoghi Effendi, ‘It is sufficient for you to attend the school of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to wear a garb like His,’ but he paid no attention.” We heeded not such talk as our sole focus was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and we saw none besides the Master. All the rest, we considered to be different than Him, and if anyone spoke otherwise, we viewed it as disunity in the Cause. Even once, my father, the late Hájí Khudábakhsh, who for a second time had come to the Holy Land and attained the blessed presence, was critical of our behavior towards Shoghi Effendi. Several times he exhorted me, “Change your ways towards the eminent Shoghi Effendi and know that this wondrous youth is the Master’s successor.” But we had been so concerned with the Covenant and the Testament that we were uninterested in all else. When I heard my father’s words, I protested vigorously, saying, “What manner of talk and speech is

this? Discard such notions and thoughts! Despite [Bahá'u'lláh's] explicit commands and exhortations [to remain focused on the Master], you wish to name a successor for the Master?" My father remained silent, and only at the end he said, "By God, this youth will be the successor of the Master as his eyes are like the eyes of the Master and his manners are like His." He said this and no more, and I too thought it best not to pursue the matter, as my father was my guest for only a few days in Beirut. But now, I testify to my own spiritual blindness and my father's sagacity. Indeed it was the same discerning eyes [of my father] that, when the whole of mankind was heedless, upon hearing the Call of the Beloved, "Am I not thy God?" responded, "Yea, yea!" and ranked among the believers of the first epoch of this Cause, faithful to the very last breath.

During these years the number of students in Beirut had grown considerably, and the majority were enrolled at the [Protestant] College. Ghulám-Husayn Ibtiháj and Abú'l-Hasan Ibtiháj, two sons of the honored Ibtiháju'l-Mulk Rashtí, who were in Paris, were dispatched to Beirut by 'Abdu'l-Bahá with instructions for me to serve as their guardian. Soon thereafter, through the national bank, the honored Ibtiháju'l-Mulk sent me a check for sixty pounds. Though I was thoroughly destitute, I sent it back to him in accordance with the [Persian] saying, "Treasure in sleeve with pocket to let, rejecting the offer." I also enclosed a harshly worded letter. However, the Ibtiháju'l-Mulk did not heed my objection and, once more, sent the same sum in the care of Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, asking him to appeal to 'Abdu'l-Bahá that I be compelled to accept this sum. However, as the Master was aware of my inner thoughts, He revealed the following Tablet in honor of Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí:

The honored Áqá Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, upon whom rest the Glory of God.

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! The letter thou hast written for Mírzá Munír has been perused and despite the shortage of time, a brief reply is provided.

The response offered by Mírzá Habíbu’lláh [Mú’ayyad] is praiseworthy. Of a certainty, the honored Ibtiháj will need to expend this sum on other requirements of the Divine Path. That is, it must be sent to Dr. Muhammad Khán Mahallátí in Paris, because he had previously supervised Ibtiháj’s sons and for this service had received an annual stipend from the honored Ibtiháj. However, since I sent the sons to Beirut, this salary arrangement is terminated, but as means of uplifting his spirit, send him this money because he is in need. I was deeply delighted with the magnanimity of the honored Mírzá Habíbu’lláh. This way is the best of ways.

Regarding the repairs of the House in Madínatu’lláh¹⁴³, this is most important and were a person to succeed in attending to this, he would attain unto the greatest of divine bounties and that blessed person would shine resplendently on earth and among the Supreme Concourse like a brilliant star over the horizon of sanctity.

The sums that the illustrious Afnáns and others have contributed and you have spent towards the costs of the Shrine of the Báb and the pilgrim house are most acceptable. ...¹⁴⁴

My Third and Fourth Years of Medical School in Beirut, 1913-14

Overcoming various hardships and difficulties, I managed to complete the third and fourth years of my medical studies and, by divine grace, received a diploma from the Ottoman and American governments. I sent the following telegram to the sacred presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Haifa. Hadrat ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás. Successfully completed. Habíb.

¹⁴³ Lit. the City of God, a reference to Baghdad; see Arabic Tablet of Ahmad.

¹⁴⁴ The remainder of the Tablet not quoted by the author.

Praise be to God that under the shadow of the Master's guidance, I was able to complete my medical studies though I had no will of my own, and indeed had not thought about becoming a physician, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá guided and encouraged me to enter this profession. In a Tablet, He had revealed:

Since Iran is in need of physicians, it is best and of prime importance to study medical sciences.

Therefore, despite my own shortcomings and lack of ability, but through obedience to His wishes, this servant studied as bidden. Day and night, I was busy with my schoolwork, and when there was a little time left to me – moments when other students played, relaxed or swam – I devoted it to meeting Bahá'ís and being in their service. I spent the summers under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel – an immense bounty that bestowed untold benefits on me.

['Abdu'l-Bahá in Egypt]

During the time that 'Abdu'l-Bahá sojourned in Alexandria¹⁴⁵, on two occasions I attained His august presence with other students and for several days partook of the divine feast spread for the friends, gaining much from His heavenly teachings.¹⁴⁶ Rank upon rank of the friends and nonbelievers also attained the Master's presence and benefited from His association. His sun of glory radiated most brilliantly, and the billowing ocean of His utterances surged forth mightily, and the feast of His bounties was spread most abundantly, enthralling and captivating each listener. To the extent

¹⁴⁵ 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Alexandria from October 1910 to 11 August 1911, from December 1911 to March 1912, and from 17 July 1913 to 2 December 1913. For details see, Ahmad Sohrab, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in Egypt*.

¹⁴⁶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Egypt 329 records that Dr. Mú'ayyad and eight other Bahá'í students arrived at Ramleh, Egypt, on 18 September 1913.

of his own capacity, each person benefited from these heavenly words and stored those spiritual gems for future times. Spirits were filled with joy and delight, and tongues turned in praise and gratitude to God.

One day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned this unworthy servant, and in His presence, we walked the busy streets of Alexandria. As He walked, He described for me the glory, the majesty, the might and the splendor of the Imams of Islam, upon Whom rest God’s peace. He said that the martyrdom of each One was in the path of God and He particularly showered His praise and tribute on His Holiness ‘Alí and Husayn, peace be upon both. He then recited the following verses, and line by line translated them [from Arabic into Persian], interpreting each phrase. He explained and interpreted these with such potency that the sweetness of His words and the effect of that experience will never be erased from memory. Every time I am overwhelmed with sorrow and sadness, I recall those verses and that celestial scene, and instantly I am transported to a state of joy and bliss.¹⁴⁷

<80> During one of the nights that I was in His presence, He spoke about the enemies of the Cause:

They wanted to obliterate the name of the Faith from the pages of history. They killed, harmed, imprisoned, exiled and did what they could in murdering, plundering, injuring and banishing the believers; and no one was shown mercy, not even

¹⁴⁷ The poem in *Khátirát Habib*, vol. 1, pp. 111-113 (79-80), is not translated in the present volume. The present translator is grateful to Omid Ghaemmaqami for noting, “All of the verses are actually from one and the same poem. The ode can be found in the diwan that is attributed to Imam ‘Alí. The full citation is: *Diwan Amir al-Mu’minin wa-Sayyid al-Bulagha’ wa-al-Mutakallimin al-Imam ‘Ali ibn Abi Talib*. Beirut: Al-Maktaba al-‘Asriya, 2004. The poem is found on pages 78-82 of the diwan with the abyat recited by the

Master being on pages 78-80. There are a couple of discrepancies between the poem as recorded in the Diwan and as it has been mentioned by Dr. Mu’ayyad in his diary.”

infants, pregnant women, or the disabled. They committed such heinous deeds that history has never witnessed their like, and in no other age had the persecutions been so intense. However, despite the opposition of the people, the banner of God's Faith is hoisted most high and the sovereignty of the Cause and its divine splendor has enveloped the world.

His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] was martyred, though He was the quintessence of meekness. With bare head and feet, under a scorching sun, the Blessed Beauty was forced to walk from Niyávarán to Tihrán. He was held captive in the Síyáh-Chál, where His neck was made to bear the weight of the Qará-Guhar chain, and where He lived among thieves, murderers and criminals. The blood of many innocents was spilled. The Blessed Beauty was banished a number of times and eventually exiled to the Most Great Prison where every minute of His life was in peril. Nevertheless, under the sword of persecution, the call of the Kingdom reached the whole of mankind and the standard of the Cause was planted upon the highest peaks of the world.

Now, they still say the same things and think that if they slay Me, the divine light will be extinguished. God forbid! They inflicted the same upon His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and had the same purpose for the Blessed Beauty, but it only had the opposite effect. The lamp of God's Faith grew brighter, and the fragrance of divine love perfumed the horizons of the world. This is precisely why you see that the cry of "Yá 'Alíyu'l-A'lá!" has reached every hearer, and the call of "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" has penetrated every heart.

Now is but the beginning of the Dispensation. The springtime of the Faith is yet to come. We have only seen the break of the dawn. Soon the sun of the Cause will rise, and its effulgence will envelop the whole earth,

bestowing life and energy.

If the intention of these people [i.e. the enemies] is [to harm] Me, I have repeatedly said that they may do unto Me as they desire; and if so inclined, they may slay Me, bury Me in the depths of the sea or crucify Me on a cross. But if their purpose is to extinguish the light of the Faith, “though they hate it, God will protect His light, despite the hatred of the infidels, hypocrites and violators of the Covenant.”¹⁴⁸ ...¹⁴⁹

He then recited several verses of poems of Abú’l-Hasan Muhammad ibn ‘Umrán ibn Yaqúb al-Anbárí composed in memory of Abú-Táhir Muhammad ibn Baqíyyih bin ‘Alí, surnamed the Násiru’d-Dawlih, the vizier of ‘Azu’d-Dawlih.¹⁵⁰ When He recited these lines, He expressed His longing for martyrdom and said, “I want to give a sermon when I am crucified,” and with both hands raised heavenward, He said,

Verily, thou rose to what thou didst preach,
And all rose to prayer.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Journey to Egypt, Europe and America

Once when we were in His presence in ‘Akká, the Master suddenly said, “Let us go to Haifa and visit the Shrine of the Báb.” In several carriages, all the pilgrims accompanied Him to Haifa and stayed in the pilgrim house on Mount Carmel.

¹⁴⁸ An expansion of Qur’án 61:8 and 9:32.

¹⁴⁹ Left blank by the author.

¹⁵⁰ This poem is anthologized in many sources and a discussion can be found in Mansur Ajami, “Death transformed: a counter reading of crucifixion (Ibn al-Anbari’s elegy of the vizier Ibn Baqiyya)” *Journal of Arabic Language* 21 (1990) 1-13. Original text in *Ibn Khallikan*, ed. I. ‘Abbas, Beirut 1977, vol. 5, pp. 120-121, and *Tárikh Bayhaqí* (ed. Khatib Rahbar, vol. 1, pp. 242-243). It is reported that the powerful ‘Azu’d-Dawlih had said that he wished he had been killed instead and this fine poem was composed for him.



Haifa

That night¹⁵¹, we saw a ship leaving the harbor going south. Some said that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was onboard. Soon afterwards, it was confirmed that indeed He had departed on that steamer, known as Manyih¹⁵² Khadivi. The next vessel took the illustrious Shoghi Effendi, the honored Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh Qumí, the esteemed Mírzá Núri’d-Dín Zayn and Áqá Khusraw Khádím [attendant] to the presence of our Beloved in Port Said. We spent that summer [of 1910] in Haifa under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb.

The story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey to Egypt, Europe and America is, by itself, a massive account. Each day of it opened a new vista in the history of the Faith. It has been thoroughly covered by Bahá’í chroniclers, and therefore this servant will refrain from further mention.¹⁵³

We spent the holidays near the Shrine of the Báb and both outwardly and spiritually partook of the heavenly feast of the Primal Point. All the students [from Beirut] were present, and in every way

¹⁵¹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left Haifa late August 1910.

¹⁵² Name was left blank in the original, but description given in *Khátirát Habib*, vol. 1, p. 133, n.1.

¹⁵³ One such account was kept by Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání and published under the title of *Badí’u’l-Áthár*, translated as *Mahmud’s Diary*.

130 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

we had a marvelous time. The glad-tidings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá were continually pouring forth from Egypt, Europe and America. Also at all times we attained the presence of the illustrious Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, that sage philosopher, and immensely benefited from his sweet utterances and learned counsels. We had no thoughts except singing the praise of the Beloved, meeting the friends, visiting the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb, enjoying the Garden of Ridván and climbing Mount Carmel. At every moment we chanted Bahá’í anthems and had no care or sorrow, nay, it was all bliss and felicity.

We were completely unconcerned with the world and all that is therein. This ephemeral servant had composed one or two paeans; and with utmost joy and elation, we sang these hymns, and our voices echoed throughout the mountain and the town of Haifa. Frequently, non-Bahá’ís came to watch us, and beholding our joy, they too became elated. This is the text of two of the humns:

With melodies, music and aria,
sing out the people of Bahá!

From beyond, cometh nigh this utterance:
lo, shineth forth the sun of His presence;

From the Countenance of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Grief and sorrow; anguish and ferocity,
fade to naught by His awesome majesty!

Do thou tell me, what sorrow now?
for hath spread the Cause of Bahá;

Through the efforts of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The wolf and the flock graze with amity,
while eagle and dove fly in harmony!

From the serpent cometh no harm;
for Isaiah's promise, fulfils this Dawn¹⁵⁴

Through the might of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Sayeth the world with abundant gaiety,
with melody, joy and ecstasy!

Dominion is His, the All-merciful God,
for He has vanished the burden of our wrongs;

Through the grace of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Once there appeared the Moon, the All-glorious,
the world turned into a paradise all wondrous!

Hail to ye, all dwellers of the earth,
for heavenly hath become this black turf;

Through the appearance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Afflicted since it was with ills and pains, our globe,
filled with evil and vice, this, our world!

A banner was raised of God's glory,
for manifested was the age of grandeur and
majesty;

In the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Time has come now for peace and unity,
so, do thou spread this tiding to humanity!

¹⁵⁴ Isaiah 27:1 states: In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea. (King James)

132 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

Evident it is to the entire world,
that hast perished tyranny and woe;

Through the majesty of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Witness the world so enthralled and rapturous,
with thy soul, behold His Covenant, so wondrous!

Every lover’s desire, do thou see,
now the very self of Bahá

In the vesture of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

And this is the hymn that was sung at the dinner table in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá residence:

O ye band of lovers,
melting away in separation’s pain!

Sing ye this song: for lo,
life hath been bestowed anew!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Darksome night of separation hath come to pass,
for the Sun of Glory hath dawned at last!

To abyss, hath perished every wicked;
for His Covenant hath now appeared!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The Light of Truth is shining bright,
the Sun of Reality is radiating light!

To sing His praises, we must;
for life hath been breathed into dust!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá

From the West, each and all,
those with woes, travails and trials;

be they Jews or gentiles;
have arrived jubilant and joyous!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Baha

The Messiah of the Age,
for the healing of the ails;

with the panacea of love and grace,
hath graciously arrived to grant benevolence!

<85> Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Baha

Our Commander and Master He is;
our Judge and Saintly Father He is!

Manifestation of the Lord of Hosts;
hath arrived like the King of the worlds

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal

our Master, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Baha

Merrily, with glory and splendour;
He hath come in the garb of servitude!

The Centre of the Lord’s Covenant;
The Beloved of our soul; so resplendent!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Baha

O, Thou majestic Beauty;
Manifestation of the essence of glory;

Fixing our gaze on Thy munificence;
We have gathered round Thy table of benevolence!

Let Him live forever this Branch Eternal
our Master, His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá¹⁵⁵

‘Abdu’l-Bahá from the Author’s Perspective

While I was in the Holy Land, people from all strata, races, ethnicities and backgrounds, whether visitors, resident believers, easterners or westerners, would attain the presence of the Master. Each would ask his questions, which hardly ever resembled the ones posed by others. One inquirer had materialistic tendencies, another, philosophical proclivities. One would be religious and deeply attached to his convictions, while another was afire by the love of his country or was universalistic in his approach, and considered all people equal and the same. Some were black, others white, some from Asia, and some were European. While one talked of feminist

¹⁵⁵ Translation of the above two hymns composed by the diarist were graciously contributed by Gloria Shahzadeh for this monograph.

movements and advocated women's emancipation, another spoke of the subjugation of women and the advantages of multiple wives. One spoke of the needs of the proletariat, while another would ask the Master of communism. One wished to know about literature and poetry, another, about history and philosophy. One would ask about the traditions and prophecies, and sought solutions to complex problems, while another inquired about the meanings of abstruse passages in the Sacred Books – passages that had perplexed him for some time. One was Arab and would present the problem of Arab liberation, inquiring of its solution; another was Jewish and wished to know of the future of Palestine.

In short, hundreds of people attained His sacred presence, and each had his own questions and inquired about matters that interested him, whether in the field of religion, science or spirituality. In every instance, they would depart from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence with the utmost joy and tranquility, praising and glorifying Him. They were all captivated by His charm and personality and considered Him an utmost expert and authority in their field of interest.

In addition to such inquirers, there were many with material needs and difficulties and they too approached 'Abdu'l-Bahá with hope of a solution. Whatever their troubles or material worries, or problems with adversaries in the governmental agencies or the military establishment, they considered the Master to be their sole support and confidant.

In turn, with utmost compassion, He would listen to their problems, heed their requests, solve their difficulties and, with words of encouragement and comfort, send them away happy and hopeful. When poets, scholars, scientists and men of letters attained 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence, they would instinctively begin to extol and exalt the Center of the Covenant. In particular Arab poets – whether Muslim, Druze¹⁵⁶ or Christian – would spontaneously compose

¹⁵⁶ Founded in the eleventh CE by the Persian immigrant Hamza Ibn 'Alí Ibn Ahmad, it is a sect of Islam which reveres the Fátimid caliph al-Hakím, and incorporates elements of Christianity and Greek philosophy.

136 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

elegant verses extolling the Master. At times, these poems exhibited the highest degree of eloquence and beauty, and were read by them in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and then decorated and given to Him with great respect. He always graciously received such papers and when they had left, would tear the papers up and throw them away.

In summary, He was a spiritual teacher for the world, and His sacred teachings were universal and of great benefit to all people. His knowledge was innate, not acquired. Despite the onrush of troubles and the onslaught of enemies, He was never gloomy or disconsolate. Each moment He was brighter and happier than the instant before and easily communicated His joy to others who were touched by His delight, elation and humility. His words penetrated the very core of one’s being and would even humble His most resolute adversaries. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s spiritual teachings were firmly founded on the basis of justice, the elimination of differences, the resolution of difficulties, the unification of men, the establishment of universal peace and the inauguration of a new divine order. He exerted great efforts to bring about spiritual and physical comfort, and material and eternal happiness to the grief-stricken inhabitants of this world, and give hope and courage to every despondent and desolate hearer of His words. Truly, His ways caused one to become detached from worldly cares, bestowed immense serenity and enabled one’s soul to ascend to higher planes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s eating habits were most amazing and noteworthy. Often at the dinner table, holding a pitcher of water and speaking, He would serve food and assure the comfort of His guests. He would eat only after everyone had dined. His bites were very small, less than the size of an almond, and would be chewed very well. He ate extremely slowly, did not like meat, nor cared very much for fruits, but occasionally took a tangerine or a sweet lemon. Most of the time His food was bread, milk, cheese, and raw vegetables, particularly mint, tarragon and sweet basil. Altogether, He ate little and drank very hot tea, which towards the end of His

life was changed to herbal tea¹⁵⁷. He ate and slept very little.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Eyes of Others

Many eastern and western observers and European and American travelers have written extensively about their experiences of attaining the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and their feelings during such encounters. Moreover, there are many oral accounts about the influence and the majesty of His blessed Person, or which share delightful memories of hours spent with Him. Nevertheless, no discerning writer has been able to befittingly sculpt words and phrases to describe the qualities and attributes that defined ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, nor has any skilled painter been able to befittingly capture His myriad expressions. However, if we were to carefully consider these accounts and to deeply reflect on the reports of those who attained His presence, we would arrive at the irrefutable conclusion that each, in his own limited way, has spoken of His majesty, splendor, power and perfection.

Before the august presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, each visitor considered himself most insignificant, his own thoughts flawed, his own pen erring and his understanding inadequate, testifying to his own inability to fully grasp the Master’s essence and attributes. For instance, one has likened Him to a powerful monarch with a corresponding measure of radiance and glory, Who was also the embodiment of humility, compassion and modesty, and saw himself as unimportant and petty in relation to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Another has described Him as an accomplished, true mystic, while another has emphasized His generosity and was awed by the Master’s depth of commitment to charity. Yet another has seen Him as an elderly man, but possessing utmost power and strength, while another has viewed Him as a prisoner, yet with sovereign might and unbounded grandeur. One has called Him a pillar of light, and another has

¹⁵⁷ The original refers to the use of the Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), a member of the mint family.

referred to Him as a manifestation of pure spirit. One has become self-renouncing upon meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, has testified to his own nothingness and poverty, and spoken of the wonder of His person. One has bowed before the heavenly radiance of His person, and considered Him the possessor of unimpeachable and trenchant judgment, life-giving breath and magnetic and wondrous spirituality. One has noted that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was unrivaled in the religious realm and sciences, likening Him to a teacher who has taught those subject matters for a great many years, possessing innate knowledge of all the Sacred Books of the past and capable of their absolute and total recall, able to discern and expatiate their innermost meanings and mysteries.

Yet another, out of prejudice and ignorance, has attempted to dispute with Him. For instance, there was a certain Sunni by the name of Hájí Sádiq Afghání who was deeply biased, odious, fanatical in religious matters, and antagonistic towards ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the extent that every time he saw the Master, he turned, looked the other way and changed his course. One day he became ill and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told Áqá Ridá Qannád to arrange for a doctor to visit this man each morning and evening and to charge the cost to the Master’s account. <90> Moreover, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá emphasized that all his medications be provided and that Áqá Ridá check and arrange for whatever provisions or funds this man’s family required. It proceeded thus for a while and the physician regularly visited him until the Afghání became well. He never forgot this compassionate charity of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and was frequently heard to remark, “Except for ‘Abbás Effendi, no one came to my rescue or saw to my needs. How am I to forget this immense kindness?!” From then on, his behavior and attitude completely changed, and whenever he saw ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he would rush forth and kiss the Master’s hands and express his obedience and servitude.¹⁵⁸

Another was the chief minister of education of Beirut, a thoroughly irreligious man, bent on dispute and contention. When

¹⁵⁸ A somewhat different version of the same incident is told in Myron H. Phelps, *Life and Teachings of Abbas Effendi*, pp. 8-10.

he arrived in 'Akká and attained 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence, he heard Him speak on such topics as divinity, oneness of God, and belief and certitude in the Authors of the sacred religions. However, he began to argue and rejected everything spiritual. No amount of exhortation had the least effect. He departed the following day for Beirut and assumed his previous post. But two or three days had hardly passed when he sent a telegram to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Turkish, stating, "I deeply regret my words and the manner of my conduct, and humbly kiss the hem of Your garment. Once more I apologize for what transpired and seek Your forgiveness."

In sum, in the course of the very first meeting with the Master and hearing His short and wise discourse, and witnessing His sanctified manners and conduct, the visitor would be overcome with awe and wonder and testify to His majesty and might. For instance, I remember well that at that time a very learned woman from England by the name of Miss [Alice] Buckton¹⁵⁹ came carrying a large case of books for the sole purpose of converting the Master to Christianity. However in the course of her first interview she was so impressed and enchanted with 'Abdu'l-Bahá that without ever opening the suitcase of books, she returned to England filled with profound love and admiration for the Master and for many years wrote of Him in various journals and spoke glowingly of the Cause of God, serving it with great distinction.

A philosopher would speak of sciences with the Master and [afterwards] would describe Him as superior in knowledge to all natural scientists of the past or contemporary philosophers. And when he had heard full and sufficient response to his complex scientific queries, he would express gratitude and praise and leave in a state of utmost joy and felicity.

There was a professor of literature who, after engaging 'Abdu'l-Bahá in matters of interest, had declared himself an unlettered child and had professed immense respect and humility for

¹⁵⁹ She was the author of the Christmas mystery play, *Eager Heart, the Dawn of Day*, and other plays. 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw this play on 22 December 1912 in London's Church House, Westminster.

140 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

the Master. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá interpreted this Arabic poem:

*The delicacy of glass and the grace of wine
are opposite yet similar,
As if there were wine but no cup,
or there were chalice but no wine.*

He spoke in Turkish in exposition of the works of Sa’dí and others.

A teacher of history spoke in the Master’s presence of the evolution and conflicts of history, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, much like a skilled painter, outlined for him a lively and meaningful perspective that truly evoked the wonder and admiration of the listeners, prompting everyone to testify to His all-encompassing knowledge and erudition.

Another was a physician who in the Master’s presence spoke of issues related to medicine and remedies. Like a seasoned physician and a highly trained specialist with years of experience who was singularly recognized for his learning and discoveries, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá commenced to discuss the minute details of medicine and anatomy. One by one, He explained the function of each organ and disclosed before our astonished eyes the hidden secrets of the body and the wisdom of creation behind various parts. In a state of wonder and utter astonishment, we bowed our heads in respect and exchanged words in praise of His greatness.

The words He spoke and shared were indeed but a drop from the infinite ocean of God’s knowledge, and represented a brief effulgence from the immense divine resplendence. In truth, what He uttered during this time is well beyond the comprehension of man in the present age and is meant for as yet unborn and distant generations that will benefit from them for at least a thousand years! His immense learning was not limited to one or two subject matters, but encompassed the whole range of knowledge, including science, literature, history, religion, philosophy, social issues, economics, and the reform and administration of the world. He spoke of and

exemplified things that are essential for happiness, promote spiritual growth and assure progress and attainment for humanity, and cause nearness to God. Whatever question or topic was presented to Him, without the least hesitation, He would provide sufficient and complete answers, causing amazement in the inquirer, who would readily testify to His superior knowledge and insights and share these sentiments openly.

What was even more bewildering was that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had not studied in any school. Everyone testifies that banishment, exiles, confinement in prisons, never-ending trials and tribulations, and the assault of unrelenting enemies consumed His life. Therefore, one may ask: From where did He acquire such refined moralities, the knowledge of the secrets and mysteries of nature and the world above? The answer is simple: for Him, there was no school but divine inspiration and no training except the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

With such power, majesty, mastery of knowledge and grasp of topics, every thought and moment of His precious life was consecrated to the service of others, the promotion of spirituality, the promulgation of divine teachings, the education of people in the fundamental doctrines of the Faith, reform and the betterment of the society of men and the universal brotherhood of mankind. His tongue and pen moved unceasingly to educate and exhort men and women to moral and ethical standards and the attainment of perfection. He labored until a large multitude from diverse backgrounds and races were enrolled under the banner of the Cause of God and were illumined by the recognition of the Divine Being, and became endowed by celestial attributes and human perfections. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá called them “*the Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh*”.¹⁶⁰

Despite all the troubles, difficulties, injuries, imprisonment, opposition, hostilities, and threats that surrounded every instant of His life, which gave no opportunity for a moment’s respite, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was never fatigued or depressed and was never heard to

¹⁶⁰ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often referred to the Bahá’ís of North America as “the Apostles of Bahá’u’lláh”; see, for example, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 49.

complain or show remorse. He was always happy and jubilant in the midst of difficulties and tribulations, and, unperturbed by the onrush of obstacles, would share humorous anecdotes to lighten the moment. In fact, during such times, He would engage in trimming flowerbeds, renovating the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and other Bahá’í Holy Places, and even organizing weddings and feasts. He was never saddened or depressed, except when the violators of the Covenant had caused the betrayal of a believer or news of disunity among the friends was received.

In short, from the beginning of His life until the very end, through divine bounties, He was joyful and confident in the ultimate triumph and victory of the Faith – a confidence that was communicated to all those around Him with great facility. During the height of difficulties and the assault of diverse troubles, He often recited these verses:

*O that life was sweet, instead of bitter,
O that people were agreeable, instead of wroth.
O that it was peace between you and me,
Even if there was ruin between the world and me.*

‘Abdu’l-Bahá slept very little, and at nights when He retired, instead of resting, He prayed and supplicated to the Threshold of Almighty God. Some nights, along with a few friends, I would quietly go near His room, and we would hear the murmur of His voice in meditation and, though we could not recognize the hushed prayers, nevertheless could make out the words, “O my God, my Beloved!”

Nevertheless, He was very strong and often walked long distances. When we went to visit the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, for nearly twenty minutes He would pump water without any rest.

Chapter 4

Mission to Germany, Summer of 1914

After I received my diploma from the American College of Beirut, I went to Haifa for a few days where I enjoyed 'Abdu'l-Bahá's immense hospitality, both outwardly and spiritually.¹⁶¹ Frequently, I attained His presence and was enraptured and enthralled by His soul-stirring utterances.

19 July 1914, Haifa

Today, without any prior notice, I was summoned to the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá where for over an hour I had the honor of being the only one in attendance. I stood at attention as He paced and spoke about the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and the exiles, banishment and tribulations of Bahá'u'lláh. He repeatedly emphasized that the purpose of sustaining all these trials in the path of the Divine Beloved was for the people to become repentant, awakened and detached, to walk in the ways of God and to grow in spirituality and sincerity. He then removed His táj¹⁶², allowed His hair to fall over <95> His jubbih¹⁶³ and in a resonant and clear voice said to me:

I want to send you to Europe. I wish for you to perform miracles in that land; give eloquent talks. Never consider

¹⁶¹ *Busbrú'í*, p. 23, states that he, Dr. Mú'ayyad and Ridá Khán Tahmásb, a non-Bahá'í Iranian student, graduated in June 1914. *Busbrú'í*, p. 44, states that the author arrived in the Holy Land on 22 June 1914. It is very likely that Badí' Bushrú'í was traveling with Dr. Mú'ayyad and both arrived at the same time.

¹⁶² Tall brimless conical hat, worn as a sign of prestige (from Persian word for "crown").

¹⁶³ A long cloak with open sleeves worn over the shirt, but under the 'abá.

your own shortcomings, but fix your gaze on the bounties and the favors of the Blessed Beauty that transforms a drop into a mighty ocean and a speck into a brilliant sun. For the first few minutes, focus your thoughts on the Abhá Kingdom as I do and implore grace and aid. You will see that confirmations will surge forth. We are servants of the Ancient Beauty and the revivers of moldering bones.

Twice more I was summoned that day into His presence and each time became the recipient of His special bounties and received His instructions for the [forthcoming] journey.

Together with Mírzá ‘Azízu’lláh Bahádur¹⁶⁴ we left for Europe.¹⁶⁵ Hájí Siyyid Yahya¹⁶⁶ and Mírzá Asadu’lláh Isfahání¹⁶⁷ also joined us, destined for London, where they planned to speak with

¹⁶⁴ Bahádur was a fellow student at Syrian Protestant College where Dr. Mú’ayyad had just graduated.

¹⁶⁵ The Diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, issue 17 May 1916) quotes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s comments “to two young college men from the orient as they started west to ‘promote the glad tidings of the Kingdom of good-will and peace.’” Given the date of the diary entry, it is clear that the two young men were Mú’ayyad and Bahádur. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words were:

You are the angels of the Kingdom of Abhá; guide the people. You are the rays of the Sun of Reality; bestow upon them light. You are the trees of the orchard of God; produce loving fruits. You are the water of eternal life; allay the thirst of mankind. You are the guides of the royal path of the Kingdom; lead the wandering ones back to the fold. On this trip, through the assistance and providence of God, you must perform miracles. Your speeches must be delivered with the utmost spirituality ... Speak in public meetings. God will support you. Deliver talks on universal love of Bahá’u’lláh, the penetration of the Word of God, and the general principles of the Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh. I hope you will fill the minds with the tumult and acclamation of the kingdom, set aglow the hearts with the fire of reality and spread far and wide the good news of the King of eternal life ...

¹⁶⁶ Munírih Khánúm’s brother.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s brother-in-law and Dr. Faríd’s father.

and admonish Dr. Faríd.¹⁶⁸ Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání left for India as well, and Mrs. [Emogene] Hoagg was sent on a mission to Italy.¹⁶⁹

We attained 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence several times that day and in the gatherings [of the friends] received His special and infinite blessings. Afterwards we departed on the Egyptian sailing vessel Monya.¹⁷⁰ The Master sent the illustrious Shoghi Effendi and a number of other friends aboard the ship to bid us farewell once more and to convey His bounties.¹⁷¹ Shoghi Effendi had brought for us the following Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a means of introducing us to the European Bahá'í community:

Europe.

For the purpose of the diffusion of divine fragrances and to visit the friends of God, the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíbu'lláh [Mú'ayyad] and Áqá Mírzá 'Azízu'lláh Khán [Bahádur] are permitted to journey to Europe that they may befittingly sacrifice in the path of God.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.

In short, we traveled to France, Italy, Switzerland and

¹⁶⁸ Hasan Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 407, has recorded the following:

By the middle of the year [1914] the defection of Dr Faríd had come into the open, and the Bahá'ís of the West had to be protected. Faríd was travelling in Europe in defiance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, announcing his arrival beforehand so that meetings would be organized for him. In London, the King's Weight Hall had been booked and the meeting was advertised. It was summer-time and Lady Blomfield was not in London. However the timely intervention of Dr Lutfu'lláh Hakím prevented Faríd from speaking. Some of the Bahá'ís were badly shaken by the incident and a few fell away.

¹⁶⁹ Hasan Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 407, informs that Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar Nakhjavání was sent at that time for Caucasus.

¹⁷⁰ The Egyptian Monya Khedive is the same ship that 'Abdu'l-Bahá used for His journey from Haifa to Port Said [in August 1910]. (HM)

¹⁷¹ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 42, gives the name of those sent to the ship to bid the travelers farewell as: Shoghi Effendi, Badí' Effendi Bushrú'í, Mrs. Sanderson, Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, Áqá Ahmad Yazdí and Husayn Áqá.

146 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Germany and in Germany witnessed the onset of the First World War, 1914-18. In addition, the honored Mr. [Charles Mason] Remey and Mr. [George] Latimer came to Stuttgart, and we had many warm and wonderful gatherings, and were able to propagate the divine teachings. I have recorded the details of this journey in three separate notebooks and, should the Almighty grant me time, I will publish these notes and make them available to all.¹⁷²

It was then that the following telegram was received from the Master:

*Through Consul Schwarz:
Remey, Latimer, Habib and ‘Azíz must come to Haifa.
‘Abbás.*

In light of this cable, therefore with the honored Mr. Remey and Latimer, we returned to ‘Akká and Haifa.

¹⁷² Dr. Mú’ayyad was able to publish some of these notes and they appear in *Khátirát Habib*, vol. 2, pp. 43-227.

Chapter 5

Holy Land, Fall of 1914

28 September 1914, Customs [Office] in Alexandria

We were distraught all day. They questioned us extensively, and closely searched our belongings, checked and rechecked our passports and scrutinized everything. Meticulously, piece by piece, the officials went through our papers and inspected every page and all of our possessions. They even confiscated the missives that Mr. Latimer was carrying [for 'Abdu'l-Bahá].¹⁷³ All of our pockets, the linings of our clothes and every conceivable nook and corner were very closely examined. Never in the past had we been subjected to such exact inspections or made to endure such inconvenience. When we left the Customs area, it seemed as if we were freed from a prison or had been cured of a severe illness.

We rested a little and then proceeded to the [train] terminal for Egypt¹⁷⁴, where we were welcomed by the honored Áqá Muhammad-Taquí Isfahání, Hájí Niyáz, [and Abú'l-Qásim] Gulistáníh, dining in the residence of the esteemed Áqá Muhammad-Taquí. Then we left for the Hotel Bristol to retire for the evening.

29 September 1914, Cairo

Hájí Niyáz came early in the morning, and together we went to visit

¹⁷³ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 229, states that the package of letters for 'Abdu'l-Bahá was stolen by the secret police in the Custom Office, and only after the travelers had reached Haifa had they realized that this package was missing. Some time later, these letters arrived for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, all opened and stamped by the censor's office. A few of them, however, never arrived.

¹⁷⁴ Presumably meaning Cairo.

Dr. Sálíh¹⁷⁵. Afterwards we went to see the editor of the Chihrih-Namá Newspaper.¹⁷⁶ That night over fifty of the divine friends were gathered in the home of the honored Hájí Mírzá Hasan Khurásání, and the honored Mr. [Charles Mason] Remey and the esteemed Mr. [George] Latimer gave extensive talks, translated by this servant. The friends wished me also to speak, so I told them about the amazing progress of the Cause of God in Germany. We went to our hotel afterwards.¹⁷⁷

30 September 1914, Cairo

Today, together with our American brethren, we went to see the Pyramids and the Sphinx [near Giza]. Then, in the company of Dr. Sálíh, we went to the resting-place of the illustrious [Mírzá] Abú’l-Fadl – may my spirit be a ransom for his remains – and when a súrih of the Qur’án was recited [in his memory], it seemed as if the spirit of Abú’l-Fadl had transformed the atmosphere.¹⁷⁸ A deep serenity and an overwhelming spirituality enveloped us and profoundly touched and affected our traveling party.

That night, a number of friends and seekers were present in the home of the honored Khurásání, and eloquent talks were offered. The honored Mírzá Ridá Gulistáníh and Shaykh Hasan also spoke, focusing on proofs about the Manifestation of the Great Announcement [Bahá’u’lláh].

¹⁷⁵ Dr. Sálíh was Egyptian and became the first Bahá’í to study in the Syrian Protestant College of Beirut in 1901; See, “Dr. M. Sálíh,” *Bahá’í World*, vol. IX, p. 606.

¹⁷⁶ Chihrih-Namá was a Persian weekly, and its editor was Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Muhammad Irání, the Mu’addibu’s-Saltanih, who in the past had been antagonistic towards the Faith, but upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visit to Alexandria had a change of heart and became very friendly. With great admiration, this paper reported ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s travels.

¹⁷⁷ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 2, p. 229, suggests that the night was spent in the home of Áqá Muhammad-Taquí Isfahání.

¹⁷⁸ Mírzá Abú’l-Fadl’s death took place on 21 January 1914.

1 October 1914, Cairo

Today was the day of farewells. A large number of the friends came to the [train] station and, unlike the time of our departure in Germany, great joy and spirituality surrounded all as we said our good-byes. What was most wonderful was the loving and affectionate exchange of farewell between the eastern and western believers, which made for a striking and heart-warming scene. This marvelous display of love attracted the attention of other travelers who were observing this heavenly scene, as the spirits in utter wonder exclaimed, “Sanctified art Thou, Founder of this resplendent Age!” I recalled vividly that in Stuttgart, when we were exchanging good-byes, tears streamed forth like spring rain, but now what an amazing difference!

On the express train, we journeyed from Cairo to Port Said in four hours, one of which was spent crossing the Suez Canal. In Port Said we stayed in the Hotel de la Poste [on Al-Gumhúriya Street].

2 October 1914, Port Said

Today we met the honored Hájí Siyyid Javad, Dr. Bashír and Ibráhím Effendi¹⁷⁹. In the afternoon we had a meeting, then visited the statue of De Lesseps¹⁸⁰, and that evening went to the home of Dr. Bashír where some thirty new converts were present. These friends had embraced the Faith about a year ago as a result of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey and stay in that region. Even though [Bahá’ís] were not permitted to openly teach the Cause in Egypt, yet these friends had investigated [and converted] and now, through the love of God, blazed like towering, flaming conflagrations. They hold regular unity meetings and when a disagreement appears among them and a problem comes up at the gatherings, they sit together on

¹⁷⁹ He was the first Egyptian in Port Said to convert to the Faith; see, Ahang Rabbani, *In the Land of Refuge: The Genesis of the Bahá’í Faith in Shiraz*.

¹⁸⁰ Ferdinand de Lesseps (November 19, 1805 - December 7, 1894) was a French engineer who built the Suez Canal and started building the Panama Canal.

150 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

the sands of the shore, speak of their peerless Beloved and resolve their differences with utmost love and affection. They had decorated and framed verses testifying to the appearance of the Great Announcement and placed them prominently in their shops. What warmth, what rapture and what devotion!

About a month earlier, two of them had been assaulted with watermelon rinds and [subjected to] insults and abuse, and the Shaykh of ‘Abbásí Mosque had cursed and slandered them from the pulpit, labeling them infidels and heaping all manner of slander and slurs upon them. Yet these sanctified souls had remained steadfast as a rock and radiant in the face of all tribulations. Their meetings were joyful, and they prayed for the guidance of their adversaries. Indeed, this is naught but the miracle of divine teachings!

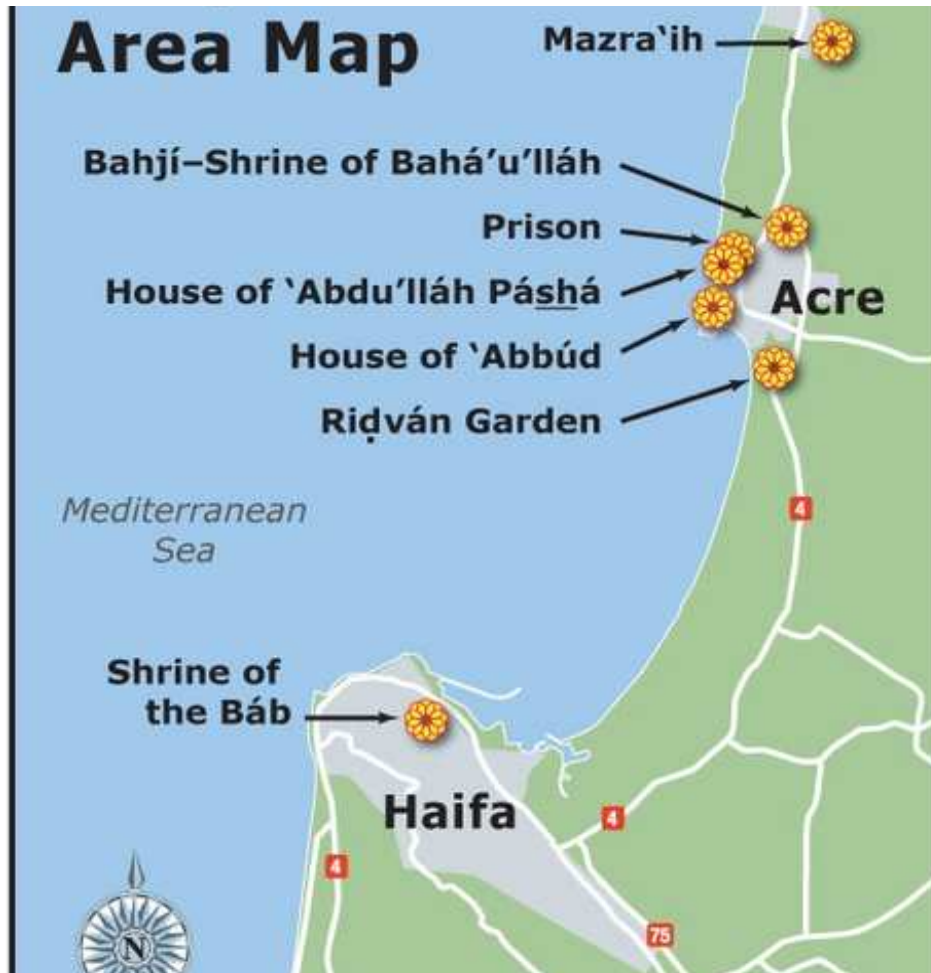
3 October 1914, ‘Akká and Haifa

Boarding the Italian ship Strakoz we departed for the Ka‘bih of the Beloved. The sea was angry on the fourth of October, and at a port near Jaffa, everyone in the third class cabins was quarantined, except us. Before the arrival of the Health Department’s agents, someone had locked the entrance to our accommodation and opened it only after the agents had left the ship, and thereby we were spared [from this inconvenience]. We never learned who this person was, but he must have been sent from the invisible realm as his action rescued us from an enormous waste of time – perhaps this divine bounty was bestowed upon us because we had been frugal with the Faith’s funds and had obtained lower class passages. The Almighty must have assisted!

That night, our ship anchored at the port of ‘Akká, where we learned that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had gone to Abu Sinan.¹⁸¹ The next

¹⁸¹ By this time, the situation all across the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East had become perilous with the British occupation of Egypt, the repressive measures of Jamal Pasha and the spread of the World War I to the region. In order to protect the Bahá’í community, some time around September 1914, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá withdrew them all to the Druze village of Abu Sinan, situated to the east of ‘Akká. In this

morning, we disembarked at the port of Haifa and spent the fifth of October visiting the friends of God. On the sixth, once more, the city was blessed with the presence of the Master.¹⁸²



In the afternoon we all gathered in His presence. Describing the effect and positive influence of this journey, He stated, “It was from God and unto Him it returned. It was a very productive voyage. Its full effect will only become manifest in the future.”

period, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself stayed in ‘Akká with one attendant and occasionally spent a night or two in Abu Sinan. In the past, Bahá’u’lláh had once stayed with these friendly people for three months in the foothills of Galilee. See, Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 410-411, and subsequent chapters of the present volume.

¹⁸² *Busbrú’í*, p. 39, confirms that Charles Mason Remey and George Latimer arrived in Haifa on 5 October 1914 and stayed for 14 days, leaving on 19 October.

152 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

I asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about the insidious rumors spread by the violators of the Covenant, that He was ill, bed-ridden and that others were administering the affairs of the Cause. He responded, “Those that spread such slanders know not that they are causing their own demise and destruction. Each word revealed by the Supreme Pen is endowed with a myriad hidden wisdoms and will cause worlds of good for the benefit of the Faith. Whatever I say is for their gain. However, their enmity prevents them from discerning this truth. This is their test! ‘Blackened will be the face of the one who is impure!’”

After the meeting, He summoned us and asked of the condition of the War in Europe. He said, “They asked a German woman if any news had reached her about her son in the battlefield. She responded, ‘I have no news. Should he be killed, what good would it do me if they gave me France in its entirety?’” Then He added, “Soon all the ethnic conflicts will be alleviated. National differences will be no more, and all will be considered one and equal. <100>Had it not been for the spirit of the Cause of God, by now, the people would have become so savage that not a single family could have been seen on the face of the earth!”

7 October 1914, Haifa

Early in the morning I attained ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence. He inquired of the condition of the believers in Germany, particularly of Consul Schwarz and his esteemed wife, and expressed His pleasure.¹⁸³ He prayed for the protection and safety of Mr. Eckstein’s¹⁸⁴ sons and smilingly said, “At times of trouble, hearts are softened and turn to God. It is then that people develop capacity to hear [of God].” He added, “Your journey was good. It served both to spread the Faith

¹⁸³ In April 1913, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had met Consul and Frau Schwarz in Germany.

¹⁸⁴ Herr Eckstein had served as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s translator on at least one occasion. On 3 April 1913, the Master addressed a large audience in Stuttgart’s upper hall of the City (Burger) Museum. Ahmad Sohrab translated into English and Herr Eckstein then into German. See, Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 380-1.

and to inspire the friends.”

Once more that afternoon in the German colony and under the olive trees, I attained ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence, and He again inquired of our mission. “The friends in Germany have written,” I responded, “and have asked, ‘O beloved Master! How can vicious wolves find their way to the lambs of the Kingdom when we have a kind Shepherd like You!’”



German Colony 1900

I reported on the sincere assistance of Mr. Eckstein, and the Master offered many affectionate words [for him]. I shared, “A large and wonderful gathering of the German friends was organized that was possible only through the power of God! One of the believers and I were speaking and saying, ‘If we were now in the presence of the Master, we would boldly implore, ‘O Thou Founder of the Celestial Sovereignty! Do not allow Thy heart to be perturbed by the actions of two or three violators of the Covenant.’” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Astaghfuru’lláh! I desire for them everlasting glory. I educated this youth (Dr. Faríd) so that he would be of benefit to the Cause, would render service to the Sacred Threshold and give light as a bright candle. However,

carnal desires and love of money prevented him and prompted him to rebel. He has always deceived the friends and through various means has extracted money from them. He spent seven hundred lira to acquire some land near here. He brought with him to America the Blessed Beauty’s Persian rug and sold it at an extravagant price. He sold a number of silk handkerchiefs for substantial sums claiming they came from the Greatest Holy Leaf.

Mrs. [Phoebe] Hearst is an affluent woman and was very sympathetic to the Cause. Yet Faríd’s father, Mírzá Asadu’lláh [Isfahání], caused her enthusiasm to diminish and die. And this occurred when he was receiving a stipend of fifty dollars a month from her, and since other [Bahá’ís] were also receiving a salary from her, he wrote her and complained that fifty dollars was insufficient. She then terminated all stipends. In my journey to America, I never spoke of her [Mrs. Hearst], and when others spoke of her, I maintained silence so that no one would think that we had an eye on her money. Upon arrival in California, Goodall and Cooper asked that I meet with her [Mrs. Hearst]. But after our meeting, that evening Faríd had tried to bilk a huge sum from her. In the next morning’s public meeting, I had Faríd serving as my translator and announced, “If anyone tries to elicit money from others, he is not a Bahá’í and not of the Kingdom. We reject such individuals, and the friends must beware such people.” Faríd understood My meaning and never again spoke of money [to Mrs. Hearst], but through various means and tricks, he extorted money from other believers.

People like Faríd destroy themselves and cause us trouble. With great difficulty I have brought seekers into the Faith, and how unabashedly he turns them away! We plant trees to blossom and bring forth goodly fruits, and

he cuts them down. The reason is that his heart desires deadwood. He wants to extinguish the light because it is only then that he can steal. That is why he does not want light.

I remarked, “The Bahá’ís of Germany have said, ‘Never has history recorded that One of the Sacred Personages Himself travels from East to West to propagate the Message and to raise the Call of the Kingdom. However, since the Master was all too aware of the need to exhort people to adhere to the divine teachings and could discern the perils that lay ahead for humanity, He Himself rose in this path so that the proof could be made complete.’”

“A year and half ago,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “I penned a general Tablet, and Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Milání published and disseminated it. Therein I spoke of all these matters and raised the call of the Great Announcement for the East and the West. Thus the proof is complete, and none may complain. Seek this Tablet and ponder upon it carefully.” He walked a few more paces and then said, “Locate the verses in the Bible that prohibit associating with the munáfiqín [hypocrites], as they will be necessary at the appropriate time.” Later with much care I read the whole of the Bible, extracted those verses and have kept them since.

Mention of the Lamparter¹⁸⁵ family was made to the Master, and He revealed the following Tablet, which was sent for them:

Stuttgart. Mrs. Lamparter, Friedrich Lamparter [and] Otto Lamparter, upon all rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O seekers of the Divine Kingdom! Happy are ye that ye have turned to God and have lifted your vision from this material world onto the realm above. This indeed is by reason of your high

¹⁸⁵ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

mindfulness and lofty aspirations. I cherish the hope that ye will remain firm and steadfast in this path.

The Greatest Name ringstones that ye had requested are enclosed.

*Upon ye rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.*

That night we attained His presence in a general meeting of the believers in His residence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

These honored friends have brought many glad-tidings from Germany. Twice I was in Stuttgart; once on my return [to the Holy Land]. The believers in that city are indeed sincere, true and virtuous. The purpose of the divine teachings and exhortations is precisely this: to aid us to become perfect people. It is not given merely for reading.

When after two years the Blessed Beauty returned from Sulaymáníyyih, He was wearing a dilapidated coat, a vest with no sleeves and a cotton headgear. The Kurds used to recall that each night Bahá’u’lláh’s voice was raised high in prayer and, though they could not make out the actual words, they could hear His supplications and invocations. It is good to ponder on the sufferings of the Blessed Beauty.

Áqá Siyyid Qásim, chant a prayer.

9 October 1914, the Sorrowful Incident of Bashír

Bashír was a sincere, faithful and hardworking servant in the Master’s house, and one of his responsibilities was to oversee the security of the house during the night hours.¹⁸⁶ Unsure of the night-

¹⁸⁶ *Busbrú’i*, p. 41, notes: “During the days of the Blessed Beauty, Jamál Effendi, known as Sulaymán Khán Tankábání, who was teaching the Cause in India [i.e. Burma], brought several youth of that land to the Holy Land for service in the Holy

guards' vigilance in their duties, he had awaken one night, circled the courtyard a few times and then had hid. One of the Bahá'í guards had inquired, "Who goes there?" But Bashír had given no response. A second time it was asked, and yet no response. The guard then had fired his gun and the bullet had struck Bashír in the midsection, causing severe injuries. No one dared report the incident to the Master, so I went into His presence and informed Him of the situation. He instructed, "Inform the police inspector, the public prosecutor and the medical examiner to come and investigate the matter." Immediately, His instructions were carried out, and the officers prepared a report of the incident. Bashír confessed to his own fault saying, "No other person is responsible, as I had no enemies. This injury was due to my own negligence."

Soon the internal inflammations, pain, fever and vomiting worsened, and his condition became critical. 'Abdu'l-Bahá came by his bedside and, for about ten minutes, stood there in silence. Suddenly Bashír opened his eyes and saw the Master standing over him. He extended his hand and said, "Allah-u-Abhá!" The Master replied, "Alláh-u-Abhá!" Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá placed His hand on his brow and heart and left. Pausing by the entrance, He turned and said, "It was a divine decree, a divine decree." He then mounted His donkey with Badí' Effendi [Bushrú'í] holding the bridle and Ustád Muhammad-'Alí and another believer walking on either side. I followed from behind. It was a dark night with the sky dazzling with stars. Total silence had enveloped us and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was also completely quiet. When we were near the Shrine of the Báb, He said, "The injuries of Bashír greatly saddened Me. Although the ascension of such holy personages is their ultimate bliss because they will soar like free birds into the heavens, yet their separation is very painful." On reaching the home of the honored 'Abbás-Qulí, ['Abdu'l-Bahá] said to me, "Áqá Mírzá Habíb, you worked very hard. May God grant you a befitting reward." A few minutes later Khusraw brought

Household. These included, Bashír, Khusraw and Isfandíyár, who all remained faithful in the Covenant to their last breath and were most devoted to 'Abdu'l-Bahá."

the news of Bashír’s ascension.¹⁸⁷

10 October 1914

The morning was devoted to meeting the friends. The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí spoke of the history of the martyrdom of the King and the Beloved of Martyrs.¹⁸⁸ That afternoon I was summoned into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence, and He kindly assured me, “You had a good and enjoyable journey. If you had traveled to London, it would not have been as pleasant. All the believers in Germany are firm, steadfast, faithful and sincere. Today, it is the spirit of the Covenant that animates the world. Wherever the believers are firm, there is a spirit, and that spirit stems from the Covenant. It is this spirit that gives life to all. Wherever doubts and misgivings are experienced by the friends and the odor of Covenant-breaking is inhaled, that place is dead and barren.”

He then added, “Health-wise I am well. Today I read about one hundred letters. I am well, but some nights I cannot sleep. Last night I slept two hours, from four to six. If I stay in a place more than a few days, then I become sleepless. Nevertheless I am happy with this condition as I can pray and supplicate to the Abhá Kingdom, thinking of the friends and pondering the affairs of the Cause – all of which make Me happy.”

Regarding Freud von Schwarz, I mentioned that his younger brother had received a Tablet, but he had remained deprived of a similar bounty. The Master responded, “Very well, I will write. However all the communications have now been cut off. Foreign

¹⁸⁷ The accidental death of Bashír was reported in the Persian section of the *Star of the West*, issue dated 12 December 1914.

¹⁸⁸ The martyrdom of these two brothers, Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Husayn, the Mahbúbu’sh-Shuhadá [the Beloved of Martyrs] and Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Hasan, the Sultánu’l-Shuhadá [the King of Martyrs], took place on 17 March 1879 in Isfahán. For details see: ‘Abdu’l-Hamid Ishráq-Khavárí, *Kitáb Nurayn Nayyirayn*; ‘Izzatu’llah Nur, *Khábirát Mubájiriy az Isfahán*; Fadil Mázandarání, *Tárikh Zubúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 5, pp. 242-8; and in English, Hasan Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá’ís at the Time of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 33-51.

post offices are closed, and there are no other dependable means. <105> Besides, Europe is not at safety, and letters are lost. But I will write.”

Regarding the death of the late Bashir, He said, “There was a wisdom in this. Even in the minute details, there is a larger wisdom. And when I consider the divine wisdom, then I am comforted. In truth, he was honest, sincere, uncomplicated and faithful. He served with utmost devotion and earnestness. However, divine wisdom decreed it thus.”

That night, when we attained His presence, He showered this evanescent servant with much kindness and said, “You were tired and I sent you into town, which made you even more tired.”

He then inquired, “Did you use to ride automobiles in Germany, or did you walk?”

I said, “There were no cars as all were confiscated for military use. At times we used the metro; otherwise we walked.”

He responded, “It is evident that you are used to walking.”

He asked of the honored Consul Schwarz and remarked, “He had a nice automobile. He took us one day to [Bad] Mergentheim where there are warm-water springs.¹⁸⁹ For about four hours we were in his car.” I said, “That whole area is now made into a hospital.” “That is amazing,” He responded, “the [potency of the] blood of a single martyr will influence affairs until the end of time; yet the blood of so many innocent millions is spilled, and no one is there to protest. All of these wars are for the eternal graves. They remain here for a few days and then go to their everlasting tomb. This [war] is naught but for carnal desires. Otherwise, these few days of life are not worth such blood and carnage.”

He asked if many of the letters [intended for Him] were confiscated at the borders.

¹⁸⁹ In Germany, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wished to travel to Budapest on 7 April 1913, but Consul Albert Schwarz persuaded Him to visit Bad Mergentheim, about sixty miles distant from Stuttgart, where the Consul owned the hotel and the mineral bath. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stayed there for one night and left on 8 April.

“Three or four letters at the German border and one or two in Alexandria were confiscated,” I replied.

“It is very difficult to communicate now. How about using post cards for My correspondence?”

“It will reach them. The Tablets reached them as well,” I suggested.

[He instructed,] “It will reach its destination. Perhaps they will open some of the envelopes. Write to [Herr] Eckstein, [Consul] Schwarz, Koestlin¹⁹⁰ and others and assure them that their many kindnesses are always remembered by Me and that at the Sacred Threshold I will pray for the bestowal of divine bounties upon them. When it is wise, I will write Myself. There is no harm in [writing] such things.”

11 October 1914

A memorial meeting was organized in the Shrine of the Báb for the late Bashír Effendi, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke the following:

The tragic passing of Bashír was indeed sudden. Therein lies a great wisdom that will only become apparent at a later time.

He was brought here as a child and was raised in our house. He was a good-natured lad, and all enjoyed his company. In ‘Akká, while still very young, he once fell from a high roof, but no harm came to him. Immediately he rose and walked away. Indeed, destiny is an amazing phenomenon. In truth, he was a good youth and his death was noble too.

Length or brevity of life is of little consequence. What difference does it make to live for a hundred years or just a few years? This is a relative matter and is of no importance. What matters is the result of life. If a person

¹⁹⁰ In early April 1913, while in Esslingen, Germany, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá attended a festival organized by Anna Koestlin for the children, which He enjoyed very much; see Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 382-383.

derives benefit from his life, then dying sooner or later is the same because he has realized the benefits. However, if one's life has not borne fruits, then even if he lives for a thousand years it matters not. Consider this rock which has lived for twenty or thirty thousand years, but to what avail? One strives for a whole year as a merchant but gains no profit, while another goes for only a day and accumulates considerable wealth! That is, in a short time, one gains substantially, but another over a long span has seen naught but loss.¹⁹¹

Praise be unto God that Bashír profited handsomely from his life. When I went to visit him, he was unconscious. Suddenly he opened his eyes and looked at Me and said, "Alláh-u-Abhá!" I replied, "Alláh-u-Abhá!" God doeth what He willeth, ordaineth as He desireth, and none may question His choice!

What a fine youth! How good natured, righteous

¹⁹¹ A slight variation of these remarks is reported in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, issue 9 April 1917) and is quoted below for ease of reference:

The length and shortness of life is not considered important. Whether man lives a few years or a hundred years, the purpose of life is to achieve some definite results. If the tree of his life does not yield those luscious fruits, the purpose of his existence has not been accomplished even if he has lived many, many years. But if he has lived only a few years and the tree of his life has attained to fruition, he has obtained spiritual success. Consequently the duration of life is a conditional matter subject to the will of God. For example, this stone has existed 10,000 or 20,000 or 30,000 years but it has not advanced beyond the mineral kingdom. It has not achieved its final result. Again a merchant goes to his office every day in the year; he plans commercial enterprises, undertakes vast schemes, organizes large companies but at the end of the year he has not gained any profit. On the other hand another merchant through one stroke of good luck gains large profits in one day. Now the former merchant, although he worked harder all through the year, did not achieve any success, while the latter although he worked only one day yet the outcome of his activity was prosperous.

and happy he was! He was a friend to all and exerted his utmost to serve everyone. I troubled him greatly, yet he never became sorrowful. I even physically punished him because it was necessary for his training, and still he was not saddened. Sanctified be God! The more he was harassed, the greater was his love. That is astonishing. Now, there are others that if I greet them with slightly less regard than before, they become displeased. I punished him, and he remained jubilant. It is here that steadfastness and firmness is made evident, namely, in the chastisement of a person and his subsequent growth in constancy. In Baghdad, the Blessed Beauty threw Mírzá Mustafá¹⁹² on the ground and severely punished him with His feet, and all the while he was kissing Bahá’u’lláh’s blessed feet.

If you show kindness to anyone, he will reciprocate with affection. However, this response is not important. It is at the time of trials that the true nature of a person is made apparent, which is why the Imam ‘Alí has declared, “O God, if Thou wert to harm me for a thousand years, my longing and love for Thee would not diminish.”

13 October 1914

Last night, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked to Áqá Siyyid Husayn Afnán¹⁹³:

¹⁹² Also known as Abú-Hurayrih, he was a son of Mírzá Mustafá Naráqí and became a servant of Bahá’u’lláh after his father’s martyrdom in Tabríz. He and his mother, Sáhíb-Ján, accompanied the Holy Family throughout the various exiles. However, subsequent to Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension, he became a follower of Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí and lived towards the end of his life near Tiberias, on a property belonging to Mírzá Madjíd-Dín.

¹⁹³ Most likely a reference to a son of Siyyid ‘Alí Afnán. The latter had married Bahá’u’lláh’s daughter, Furughíyyih in 1886. Eventually, the entire family was expelled from the Faith because of their allegiance to Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí.

Praise be unto God that not once did I rest in the bed of comfort. At the time of His ascension to the Abhá Kingdom, His Holiness Christ had nearly sixty believers. However after our passing, there will be in excess of one hundred thousand believers. If the Blessed Beauty were in this world and I presented Him these letters from the believers in Germany, how jubilant would He be! Wherever We go, We kindle a light. Our enemies, the violators of the Covenant, however, exert themselves to extinguish that light. Wherever We plant a tree, our rebellious acquaintances try to uproot it. It would be good if they would go to a place where I have not been, not one that has already been illuminated.

Mírzá Áqá Khán Núrí, known as the I'timádu'd-Dawlih, was the Prime Minister of Iran. There was a disagreement between his son, Mírzá Kázim Khán, the Nizámu'l-Mulk, and the Blessed Beauty. In an attempt to resolve this problem, he gave his daughter in marriage to our uncle, Mírzá Músá [Kalím]. Even though the discord was not completely alleviated, outwardly there was peace. Mírzá Áqá Khán was related to all the viziers of Iran and, therefore, he virtually ruled over the whole nation. One night, the Nizámu'l-Mulk said, "The future influence of our family is destroyed because of our kinship to Mírzá Husayn-'Alí [Bahá'u'lláh]." The I'timádu'd-Dawlih overheard this comment and noted, "No, the families that are established on the foundation of religion endure forever. It is ours that is lost!"¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁴ The following is reported in the diary of Ahmad Sohrab to be the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoken on this day (*Star of the West*, 21 March 1918):

But now after the lapse of many centuries, his highness, the Almighty, has again looked upon them with the glance the mercifulness, and the cup-bearer of celestial bestowals became manifest in the land of Persia. The Sun of Reality shone forth, casting the effulgences of graces upon that country. He proclaimed the heavenly teachings and instituted the religion of the clement Lord...

14 October 1914

The departure of the students for Beirut elicited these comments from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

I have been informed that you are leaving today, and thus, I have come to bid you farewell. In every regard, you have had a wonderful summer, surrounded by the vivifying air of the Shrine of the Báb and its spacious rooms, orchards, flowers and greenery. One must always try to bring comfort and well-being to others; otherwise, bringing comfort to oneself alone is easy and can be readily achieved.

When the Commission of Inquiry came [in 1904], they made matters difficult for us. They closed the roads, installed a magistrate, guards and gendarmes and made us the object of their slander and calumny. All of our

But, alas, alas! Still the majority of the inhabitants of Persia are in sound sleep and have not heard, neither are they informed of the most eminent bestowal. The owner of the house has come to the door, but the dwellers in the house have shut the door and do not desire to let him in. They have treated the friend as though he were the stranger, and the known as though he were unknown. They seem to say: “We are satisfied with this degradation. We are comfortable amidst all these distractions, dissipations, groveling in dirt and uncleanness. We do not want the owner of the house. We are not seeking his faith. We loath him and are holding aloof from his favor and grace. This is not the kind Father but a foreigner. Even though he may be the beloved one of all nations of the world, his renown world-conquering, the fame of his grandeur reaching the ears of the rich and the poor alike, others from different parts of the world entering under the shade of his sacred tree by cohort and cohort, accepting his teachings and receiving a share from the table of his sustenance.

Following are the reported words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, (*Star of the West*, 21 March 1918):

The Cause of Bahá’u’lláh is the fulfillment of all the prophecies in all the books of the religions of the world.

enemies in or outside ‘Akká now became informants, preparing reports to send to Constantinople. The very people who had instigated this event were now appointed as investigators and inquisitors. It should be obvious what was wrought by these people. For instance, they wrote that I had established a new sovereignty in ‘Akká and had built a fortress on Mount Carmel. They accused Me of raising the banner [of the Greatest Name], circulating it in ‘Akká and then exporting it to the various Arab tribes and factions¹⁹⁵ through Mírzá Dhikru’lláh¹⁹⁶ in Galilee and Shaykh Mahmúd [‘Arabí]. The illustrious personages [i.e. members of the Commission] announced this as a grievous matter. Our enemies then wrote them that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had raised the standard of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá¹⁹⁷” and then appeared before the Commission of Inquiry to testify to the validity and accuracy of this charge. To affirm this falsity, they even arrayed a range of other witnesses. Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí had the Greatest Name inscribed by someone on a piece of white cloth which he presented to the Commission of Inquiry [as evidence]. The chief of the Commission¹⁹⁸ announced, “Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd has promised me the governorship of Beirut¹⁹⁹, and my first act will be to crucify ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the gate of ‘Akká!” Then by telegraph they inquired if an uprising did ensue should

¹⁹⁵ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 113, has interpreted this to refer to the Bedouins beyond Jordan.

¹⁹⁶ Son of Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, the faithful half-brother of Bahá’u’lláh, who had staunchly upheld the Covenant and stood firm by the side of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. By this date, Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí was deceased.

¹⁹⁷ lit. O Glory of the Most Glorious.

¹⁹⁸ It seems at this point in His talk, the Master had proceeded to tell of the events of the winter of 1907 as the threat of banishment to Fízáń belonged to that Commission of Inquiry – a four-man Commission, chaired by ‘Árif Bey.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Akká was under the lordship of the Valí of Damascus.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá be sent to Fízán²⁰⁰? The reply was negative.

My point is that in the midst of this commotion, I sent seventy of the believers [to Egypt], including Mírzá Asadu’lláh and his wife and provided them all with sufficient funds that I had borrowed from an American in Paris. My point is that I accepted a great burden [to secure the well-bring of the friends]. Then a cargo boat came to take Me. The owner of that ship is present at the gathering.²⁰¹ I asked a number [of the friends] to assemble. [They included:] Siyyid ‘Alí-Akbar, Siyyid Yahyá, Mírzá Asadu’lláh, Áqá [Muhammad-]Ridá [Qannád Shírází] and Áqá [Mírzá] Mahmúd [Káshí]. I then asked them to consult on the situation, since the boat was ready to take Me. These honored personages sat and consulted. Unanimously, they concluded that this departure was the best way out and that I should accept it. Included in their number was also this Áqá Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí. After they informed Me of their unanimous decision, I replied, “No, this would not be good for the Cause. I must do what exalts the Faith.” <110> The Commission of Inquiry had not yet reached Constantinople when God’s cannon fired and all these people were dispersed. Two hundred people were killed

²⁰⁰ A vast expanse of desert in Tripolitania.

²⁰¹ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 121, reports the following:

One night a man drove from Haifa to ‘Akká in a covered carriage. He was an Italian who acted as Consul for Spain. Members of his family had the agency for an Italian steamship company. Taking great care not to be noticed and recognized he managed to reach the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and asked to meet Him immediately. In the bay was an Italian cargo boat which this man, in his great love and regard for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, had kept waiting, moving it from one end of the bay to the other to avert suspicion; and now he had come to offer Him a safe passage to any port of His desire.

Busbrú’i, p. 12, gives the name of this man as Scopinoj and states that he was from Spain and the ship brought by him was from Italy.

near the mosque [in Constantinople]. When the illustrious personages [i.e. the Commission members] reached Constantinople, they were told that other matters had taken priority.

The essence of My words is that, at all times, a person must be thinking of protecting others and not concerned merely with himself.

Now, once more you return to your school in Beirut. Glorified be God that the Bahá'í students are renowned in that city for their righteous ways, upright character and honest deeds. Everyone speaks your praise. It is naught save the bounties and favors of the Blessed Beauty that have made you shine so brilliantly in all eyes. Verily, you have behaved in a manner that brings prestige to the Cause of God. The Blessed Beauty is pleased with you; people are pleased. I too am pleased, as are the friends of God. This is a divine favor. Seldom does it happen that both God and the people are pleased with someone. If you ask anyone, they would say, "The Bahá'í students are indeed wise, perfect and well-behaved. They devote all their time to their studies, never wasting their time on unworthy affairs." Everyone will testify to this.

I cherish the hope that, through the bounty and kindness of the Blessed Beauty, the grace of the Primal Point and the spirit of the Shrine of the Báb, the confirmations of the Abhá Kingdom will surround you, and that, befittingly, and congruent with your station as Bahá'ís, day by day, your characters may grow more resplendent. Insha'lláh, in every way you will become perfect and complete and cause the illumination of Iran.²⁰²

²⁰² The following is recorded in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, issue 20 August 1918). Sohrab's entry is dated 12 October 1914, two days earlier than Dr. Mu'ayyad's:

The character of the general public is very dark, and I pray that each of you will shine like a sun giving light to Iran; not like one man, but like a thousand. Insha’lláh, each of you by yourself will be like a hundred thousand others. Never be astonished by the divine munificence and grace. When His confirmations descend, the insignificant ant is transformed into Solomon, the lowly plant transmuted into a fruit-bearing tree and the transient speck into a brilliant sun. Never consider your own situation. Fix your gaze upon the bounties and the grace of the Blessed Beauty.

A shepherd was made Abú-Dharr Ghifárí, a date-dealer became ‘Ammár [ibn] Yásir, a prisoner became

Praise be to God, that the Bahá’í students in Beirut are well known for the beauty of their character, the purity of their deeds, and the loftiness of their morality. From whomsoever one inquires about the Bahá’í students, one will hear unstinted praise. This is through the favors and bounties of the Blessed Beauty, Who has assisted you to attain such a high station. For you have lived in a manner conducive to the glorification of the Cause of God. Bahá’u’lláh is pleased with you; all the people are pleased with you; I am pleased with you, and the friends of God are pleased with you. This is the special divine bounty, which is being realized at rare intervals. If one asks any person concerning the Bahá’í students, he will answer: “In reality they are intelligent, sober, industrious, diligent, displaying good manners and behavior and concentrating all their attention on their acquirement of knowledge. They do not spend their time in frivolous amusements and distracting recreations.” Even the enemies testify to your spotless character. I hope that through the favor and bounty of the Blessed Beauty, His Holiness the Báb, and the ineffable blessings which hallow this Holy Shrine, the confirmations of the Kingdom of Abhá may encircle you, and that you may be characterized with the shining qualities and brilliant attributes of the Bahá’í life. May your faith and assurance be increased day by day! May your attraction to the kingdom of Abhá be intensified day by day! May your attainment in sciences and arts become more universal day by day! Perchance, God willing, you may become perfect and accomplished from every standpoint and be the means of the enlightenment of Iran.

Salmán Fárs²⁰³, a fisherman was elevated to become the great Peter²⁰⁴, and there are many others like them.

These are among the uncommon characters of the time of the Manifestation, for such things do not occur at other times. Such days only come at the beginning of the Dispensation. “The abased amongst you, He shall exalt; and they that are exalted, He shall abase.”²⁰⁵ The “mystery of the Great Reversal in the Sign of the Sovereign,”²⁰⁶ “And we were minded to show favor to those who were brought low in the land, and to make them spiritual chiefs, and to make them Pharaoh’s heirs.”²⁰⁷ These people are weak; I wish to create men out of them. These are among the prodigies and miracles of each Manifestation.

Praise be God that, from an early age, each of you were under the shelter of the divine tree and drank from the sweet wine of the Lord. Marhabá, fí ámánu’lláh.

15 October 1914

‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired if news had been received of the students’ arrival at Beirut. “No,” I replied, “but their principal has sent a letter stating that they will be accepted despite the fact that their tuition will arrive late.” The Master remarked:

They have trust in us. When we first came to ‘Akká, we behaved in such wise that everyone trusted us.

²⁰³ Abú-Dharr Ghifárí, ‘Ammár ibn Yásir, Salmán Fárs and Miqdád ibn ‘Amr were close companions of Muhammad who, after Prophet’s ascension, refused to give their allegiance to anyone but ‘Alí. These four are acclaimed by Shi’is as the first four of their number.

²⁰⁴ The foremost apostle of Christ.

²⁰⁵ *Kitáb-i Íqán*, p. 146.

²⁰⁶ *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, K157.

²⁰⁷ Qur’án 28:4

There was a certain Qásim of Nayríz who was very weak. He was exiled from Baghdad to Mosul, and from there he walked to ‘Akká. He then went to Beirut but had no money. He noticed that a tobacco shop was selling Shírází tobacco in place of tobacco from Káshán. Shírází leaves were much more expensive. He bought one hundred and sixty bags of [Shírází] tobacco, and since he had no money, went to Matifarah and said, “I am of the Bahá’ís of ‘Akká and have made a purchase. I request your surety on my behalf.” The banker telegraphed ‘Akká and asked [‘Abbúd] if this was true. ‘Abbúd came to Me and inquired if Qásim Nayrízí was a Bahá’í, and I responded affirmatively. On hearing this, the banker [had such trust] that he advanced the entire sum for the bags of tobacco. Qásim then brought the bags to ‘Akká, Haifa and Jaffa. After selling them he made a considerable profit and immediately reimbursed the original loan.

On the other hand, after Qásim then came a certain merchant by the name of ‘Abdu’l-‘Ahd who borrowed a very large sum, never paid it back, and completely ruined our good name. If he had not done so, the entire trading business of the province of Damascus would now be in the hands of Bahá’ís.

The Master then addressed the American pilgrims:

Know this, that whosoever in America claims he is collecting funds in My name has no association with Me. Whoever has attachment to money is remote from the Kingdom. Whoever separates himself from money will experience nearness to the Kingdom. A person must be detached; he must be generous to others and never ask charity from anyone.

When I was in New York, I told the friends: His

Holiness Christ said when you leave a city, shake off the dust of that city from your feet²⁰⁸, but so far no one has been able to do so. I desire to attain this goal. Through Mírzá Ahmad [Sohrab], the American friends contributed thirty-two hundred lira to Me, but I did not accept. Friends must become detached and separate themselves from worldly inclinations. I never tell anyone to give money to a certain person or to accept a reward for the performance of a particular action, as it is the responsibility of the friends themselves to help one another and to aid the needy.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ Matthew 10:14 states, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.”

²⁰⁹ A slight variation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk for Charles Mason Remey and George Latimer is given in the diary of Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, issue 4 November 1916):

When you return to America say to all the believers in my behalf that whenever a person comes to that country, no matter to what nationality he may belong, and tries to collect money in my name, know that it has no connection with me. I am free from it. Whosoever asks for money for me, does so of his own volition. There are some people who desire to collect money under all kinds of pretexts. I desire to impress upon your minds that I have nothing to do with such affairs. I never ask anyone to send me money. Whosoever loves money does not love God and whosoever loves God does not love money.

On the other hand, if some of the believers voluntarily desire to help and assist one another or some philanthropic institutions, whose objects are for the public welfare and progress, it is very good and praiseworthy. I do not desire that anyone shall ask money in my name for any affair. The souls must be detached from the world. Those souls who are attached to this world and its wealth are deprived of spiritual advancement. The believers must live such an independent life that if one comes and begs them to accept money, they should refuse him. As long as the souls are not severed, how do they expect to journey along the ideal path?

On the eve of my departure from New York, I told a number of believers that His Holiness Christ has stated that “When you leave a city, shake its dust from off your feet.” So far, very few people have

18 October 1914

From afar, steam from a ship’s engine became visible, and some thought it was a warship. The Master remarked:

Why are they perturbed? They are restless. This is a sign of faithlessness. It is revealed in the Qur’án, “They think that every shout is against them.”²¹⁰ Every noise that is raised, they think it is the enemy. Like a thief who thinks every sound forebodes his arrest, they are disturbed and distraught. The hearts of believers are serene. They have a thousand enemies, yet they stand firm. The greatest of divine bounties is certitude of heart that one is protected from harm. Then whatever occurs, one is at ease, even if outwardly he be in a prison.²¹¹

lived according to this behest, but it is my will to live accordingly. Before coming to America, the believers of God, through Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, offered for my travelling expenses \$16,000 but I did not accept one cent. Man must live in the utmost sanctity and purity and we must ever think to assist others and not beg assistance from them.

In short, may you ever be confirmed and assisted. May you ever be illumined; may you ever be the means of the guidance of the people; may you ever breathe the breath of life in the hearts; may you be the signs of mercy to all mankind; may you be the shining lamps of severance and detachment in this dark world.

²¹⁰ Qur’án 63:4. The full verse is: “*They think that every shout is against them. They are enemies – beware of them then – God do battle with them!*”

²¹¹ The following version of the same talk is recorded in diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, 2 March 1918):

These people who called on us today were in a state of fright. They are expecting daily the bombardment of Haifa by the foreign warships. As soon as they see a little moving speck in the horizon of the sea, they look through their glasses, anxiously scanning to see whether there are the expected cruisers. Their hearts are in a state of anxiety. They are terror-stricken. They have no peace of mind. This is one of the signs of absence of faith. It is stated in the Qur’án, “They

Hájí 'Alí mentioned the school in Abu Sinan, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded:

There is no benefit in these [secular] schools. In Bahá'í schools children learn not only sciences, but also moral rectitude and are well protected. In such schools, however, the teachers must be Bahá'ís so that children are nourished with divine teachings. Teachers are exceedingly important [in the upbringing of children]. They are like gardeners raising a young plant.²¹²

One of the friends²¹³ came into His presence carrying a bundle of

imagine every cry raised is an enemy unto them.” For example, when a thief enters a house, the least noise causes his flight. He trembles and quakes.

But the hearts of the people of faith are assured. If they are surrounded by a thousand enemies they stand firm on their ground. The greatest divine bounty is a confident heart. When the heart is confident, all the trials of the world will be as child's play. Should they throw him into prison, should they cast him into a black well, should they heap upon him all manner of afflictions, still his heart is content, peaceful and assured.

²¹² The following version of the same remarks is recorded in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, 12 December 1916 and 1 August 1918):

The children must receive divine and material education at the same time, and be protected from temptations and vices. How wonderful will it be when the teachers are faithful, attracted and assured, educated and refined Bahá'ís, well grounded in the science of pedagogy and familiar with child psychology; thus they may train the children with the fragrances of God. In the scheme of human life the teacher and his system of teaching plays the most important role, carrying with it the heaviest responsibilities and most subtle influence. A teacher is like unto a gardener. Just as a gardener sows the seeds and watches carefully over their sprouting, looks after their growth and development – so also a teacher must watch over the education of the children and inculcate in their young lives the highest ideals of truth and justice, etc.

²¹³ Most likely, Muhammad-Ridá Qannád Shírází.

newspapers. The Master inquired, “What news do you have of the war?” He reported some of the events of the day. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá then shared some humorous stories and laughingly stated that once there were three passengers on a ship: a Muslim, a Christian and a Jew. The Muslim prayed, “O God, take the life of this Christian!” The Christian prayed, “Lord, slay this Muslim.” Then they asked the Jew why he was not saying anything, so he prayed, “O God, accept the prayers of both of them!”²¹⁴

22 October 1914

Today the Master came to the pilgrim house. Greeting Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, He inquired of his health. The Hájí responded, “If Your blessed Person is well, then everyone is well.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “I am well, too. I have been in many places, but never inhaled an air as vivifying as in this place. If the people of this region were not so deeply immersed in the acquisition of worldly riches, this entire mountain would have been developed. However, their sole objective is to acquire earthly wealth, and of what use, since at the end they will leave these riches for others and depart with a world of regret.” He then said to the honored Hájí [Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí], “I have asked for homemade bread to be baked.” The Hájí inquired, “With sesame seeds?” “Yes, I have requested that they put sesame on it as well.” [‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued His remarks:]

²¹⁴ The following version of the same story is recorded in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, 7 February 1919), but is attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s comments on 20 October 1914:

It is said that once a Mohammadan, a Christian and a Jew were rowing in a boat. Suddenly a tempest arose and the boat was tossed on the crest of the waves and their lives were in danger. The Mohammadan began to pray: “O God! Drown this infidel of a Christian!” The Christian supplicated the Almighty: “O Father! Send to the bottom of the deep this Moslim!” They observed the Jew was not offering any prayer, and therefore asked him: “Why do you not pray for relief?” He answered, “I am praying. I am asking the Lord to answer the prayers of both of you!”

Áqá Haydar-‘Alí always served chilu-kabob²¹⁵, and once accompanied by Hájí Amín, I was visiting him. He served sesame bread. Hájí Amín remarked that such bread did not require another dish. Therefore, he did not serve the customary chilu-kabob. In Baghdad when we had sesame bread or poppy-seed bread, we were delighted, as it was the best of meals.

Faith and certitude are solidified in times of trials and tribulations. In Tíhrán, all manner of comforts were available to us. However, during that storm, all was plundered, and nothing was left to us.²¹⁶ The Blessed Beauty was in prison, under chains, and we were forced to disperse. Anyone, anywhere, suspected of being among the friends [i.e. a Bábí], was seized and torn into pieces. There was a sixteen or seventeen year old lad by the name of ‘Abbásí who was an attendant of the late Sulaymán Khán. He knew all the believers and, together with seventy or eighty farrashes and an equal number of artillery-soldiers, searched for the friends of God. When one was spotted, he was immediately seized and martyred. Such misery can never be described. Our hardship had reached so severe a state that if we had only bread for meals, it was considered heavenly sustenance.

<115> In short, at the height of the bitter cold of winter, barely clad and alone, we were banished from Iran. The cold, snow and ice caused such misery and hardship that [the experience] remains beyond words. In such a state, we reached Baghdad. Such a winter has not been seen since. In Baghdad, we did not possess anything. The Blessed Beauty was gone, and we had no

²¹⁵ Rice with kabob.

²¹⁶ A reference to the aftermath of the assassination attempt on Násiri’d-Dín Shah which resulted in a Bábí pogrom and complete confiscation of Bahá’u’lláh’s estate.

news of Him. In the streets, we were the targets of the curses and abuses of every passerby. Our spirits, however, were high. Hardship had no effect on us.

When the Blessed Beauty returned from Kurdistan, we were still immersed in difficulties, though the situation was somewhat improved. My only garment was a cotton shirt that was washed so many times that it had become threadbare. In the winter, that shirt was my sole attire, with no other protection. Nonetheless, our spiritual joy was so complete that it can never be described. A small piece of meat was made into a broth for some fifty or sixty people. The late Mírzá Javád²¹⁷ could not eat the broth, so each day he was given five spoonfuls of yogurt. Among us, he received the most food. All the friends were happy. Thus, during hardship, one’s faith becomes reinforced and manifest.

There was a certain Hájí Muhammad-Taquí of Nayríz,²¹⁸ a man of immense wealth whose possessions were plundered [in 1850]. This old man walked the entire distance from Nayríz [to Baghdad]. This distinguished old man was most steadfast in his convictions and beliefs, and became an attendant to Mírzá Hasan Shírází, known as Gul-i Guláb²¹⁹. He barely earned bread money, but was profoundly happy and joyful. Each day he would come from Kázimayn to Baghdad to attain the presence [of Bahá’u’lláh]. He had a son named Mírzá ‘Alí, who lost conviction in his beliefs. Hájí Muhammad-

²¹⁷ Mírzá Javád was a believer in His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and had been a teacher to the ‘Imádu’d-Dawlih. He disliked Azal and Mírzá Áqá Ján and would often curse them, which caused the other believers to be annoyed with this behavior. He wrote a book on abrogation of traditions, and when he grew ill, the Blessed Beauty said to him, “Your remedy is to wash off that book.” He did as bidden and regained his health. (HM)

²¹⁸ For a detailed biography of Hájí Muhammad-Taquí, surnamed Ayyúb [Job], see Ahang Rabbani, *The Bábís of Nayríz: History and Documents*.

²¹⁹ Lit. the flower of the rose-water.

Taqí protested and demanded that his son should change his ways. He warned, “You are not my son and can come here no more!” [After his son was shot in the palm-groves of Baghdad,] I sent after Hájí with the message, “Mírzá ‘Alí is here and is wounded. Come and attend to him.” He responded, “You want me to see Mírzá ‘Alí?! Because he recanted his faith, I despise him. I will not come.” No matter how I pleaded, he did not consent. Finally, he declared, “The only way that I would again accept him is for him to repudiate his actions and for such repentance to meet with acceptance in the sight of the Blessed Beauty, earning His pardon. Then I will consent to meet him.” I appeared before the Blessed Perfection and presented the situation to Him. He forgave the lad, and Mírzá ‘Alí abandoned his past ways. Such was the lofty height of the Hájí’s faith! In truth, beholding the Hájí washed away every trace of sadness and replaced it with joy. What sanctified personages have belonged to this Faith!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá then pointed to me and asked about Germany. I made a few remarks about the believers in Weibkin and Kunstadt²²⁰, and shared the story of Mrs. Schwarz and the fact that she used to say, “I will make the German believers like a magnet, attracting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to our land.” The Master said:

The power and the efficacy of the Word of God has produced such an influence that, when one considers it closely, one becomes astonished. From Iran to Germany! It is all miracles. Certain wronged souls were banished from Iran, but this exile resulted in the construction of the Shrine of the Báb and the pilgrim

²²⁰ The present translator was unable to verify the correct spelling of these German towns. It is also possible that these are names of families among the early Bahá’ís of Germany.

house on Mount Carmel! This exile resulted in the establishment of the Faith in America and in Germany! This exile resulted in the propagation of the Cause throughout both the East and the West. This exile resulted in the diffusion of the Word of God and the divine fragrance throughout all corners of the globe!

With all his pomp and ceremony, Násiri’-d-Dín Shah died in the utmost misery, but this band, without any help or succor, became the recipient of infinite divine favors and confirmations. Indeed, the situation has reached such a state that when any of the friends travel to other parts of the world, they are received as beloved kinsmen and feel that they have loving relations everywhere.

I noticed that some Iranians and wayward friends²²¹ went [to Germany] and pretended to be believers. In turn, the [western] Bahá’ís accepted them with the utmost sincerity and love. These imposters caused considerable difficulties, and therefore, I wrote that those not bearing My notice and signature should not be received [as Bahá’ís].

Germany is now at war with all nations and has conquered them all. But we have conquered Germany. Is this conquest not the source of her everlasting glory?

23 October 1914

‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to the pilgrim house and inquired of the status of the students’ meals. He remarked:

Dinner must be ready soon after dusk so that it may be served whenever is desired. The best time for supper is right before sunset. It is good for breakfast to

²²¹ Presumably a reference to the Covenant-breakers.

be eaten two or three hours after sunrise, and for dinner to be served at dusk. One must go to bed early but rise in the final third of the night. This final third of the night is the best time for devotions as one's thoughts are concentrated and untroubled by worries; this meditation causes great ecstasy. However, since most are taught differently, changing habits is hard. Nighttime is for resting and comfort, and the day must be devoted to work, industry and earning a living. All animals sleep after sunset. Children, following their innate nature, go to sleep as soon as they drink their evening milk or eat their supper. What God has created has the utmost balance, but man corrupts His ways. "There does not exist in the contingent world better than what is created."

Consider this clock, how much trouble it requires to wind, repair, maintain, and so forth. However, despite their nomadic nature, the Bedouin Arabs accurately determine the time of the day using the stars at night time and shadows during the day. Traveling in whatever direction, be it Mecca, Baghdad, Damascus or Basra, they use the stars and find their way. It is a marvel how they determine their path.

'Abdu'l-Bahá then asked me, "Any news of your father?" I replied, "In Germany, I received his letter. He wrote about the opposition of the Jews of Hamadán, who are in concert with Muslims and Christians against the Bahá'ís, not accepting them in businesses or allowing them in the public baths or schools."

Addressing the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, the Master said, "And now the Jews are causing us trouble. Let us wait and see what happens. Indeed this feast of tribulation is bountiful and presents all manner of heavenly nourishment. This last one is needed too. Is it possible that all would mean us harm and the Jews would refrain?"

The honored Hájí responded, “I have written them (meaning, the Jews of Hamadán²²²) that the friends of God must ponder what they have done that they are no longer confirmed. When there were only two or three of them, they were triumphant over all others. Now that they are the majority, they are no longer successful. They must understand the underlying reasons and find solutions.”

The Master declared, “Whatever we endured must now be endured by them. Now the Christians and the Jews have arisen in opposition to us. Initially the Bábís were prepared to be torn into pieces for their convictions, but now they have no patience for the slightest guidance. We must deal with them [i.e. the opposition] with patience. The contentiousness of the Muslim clergy is due to their fear of losing [the position of] leadership.”

The Hájí said, “During the days of Bahá’u’lláh, wherever the Muslim divines protested against the Faith, the Blessed Beauty would say, ‘Give them some food. They want food.’” Smilingly, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá shared:

The late Mírzá Ridá-Qulí had an argument with his maternal cousin. The cousin bribed Mírzá Ismá‘íl Savihchí with a meal, inducing him to present false testimony to the ‘ulamá, and thereby winning his case. One day Mírzá Ridá-Qulí was walking by Tihrán’s moat when he saw Mírzá Ismá‘íl, who said to him, “Why do you look at me so angrily? Your cousin fed me and tricked me into testimony. Now, if you feed me, instead of him, I will support you!”

Shaykh Báqir, father of [Áqá] Najafí, had asked one of the believers, “What do the Bábís say about me?” “Áqá, I am ashamed to say,” was the response. “No, do tell,” insisted the Shaykh. “They consider you the antichrist.” The Mullá had responded, “If they would

²²² The intent of the author seems to be the Bahá’ís of Jewish descent. It is also possible that the author means the Jewish people who had grown to majority in Hamadan and were persecuting the Bahá’ís.

not say such things and would be more considerate, then such disturbances would not occur.”

24 October 1914

Today the honored Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí shared a few stories which I committed in my diary and record below:

First story: Mírzá Mihdí Rashtí was the Iranian Qádí [jurist] in Constantinople. Previously he had been a friend of the esteemed Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, but then had become a dervish though he never adopted the accessories that this cast is wont to display. After a time, the honored Hájí said to him, “Our ways are very different,” and thus each went his own way. Arriving in Constantinople, the Mushíru’d-Dawlih²²³ had appointed Mírzá Mihdí the Qádí. Soon Siyyid Muhammad Isfaháni²²⁴ befriended him and said, “Previously everyone drank wine, but in secret. His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] came and discarded all these superstitions and proclaimed complete liberty. Therefore, should not wine be included among the allowed ordinances?” Mírzá Mihdí liked this reasoning and therefore became an Azalí, and was greatly aided by the Azalís. He then sent a polemic to the Blessed Beauty. Bahá’u’lláh, in the name of Áqá Muhammad-‘Alí Tanbákú-furush (tobacco trader), revealed a 410-page reply known as the Kitáb-i Badí‘. All the Azalí objections are answered therein.

Second Story: Until God manifests a certain attribute, it is hard to imagine it. But once it is made apparent, its effulgence will emanate from minds and spirits. It is revealed in the [Persian] Bayan by the Báb, “You must recognize Man-Yuzhiruhu’lláh²²⁵ through your

²²³ Mírzá Husayn Khán was the Iranian Ambassador to the Ottoman court and at a later time was appointed the Prime Minister of Násiri’d-Dín Sháh for three years.

²²⁴ He was one of the most venomous enemies of Bahá’u’lláh and the main inciter of Azal. (HM)

²²⁵ Lit. Him Whom God will make manifest, a Bayánic term referring to all the

182 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

heart, never seeking proof of Him, and immediately accept His Cause.” Though the Ancient Beauty had privately declared His Mission in the year nine²²⁶, a few of the friends saw in themselves such spirituality, <120> discernment and attainment that they proclaimed themselves to be the [awaited] Man-Yuzhiruhu’lláh. [For example,] Mírzá Músá Qumí in Tafrish declared himself the bearer of this Office. In his meetings, one side would be served tea and the other side would drink wine. [Eventually] the inhabitants of Tafrish raided their homes, plundered their possessions and banished [the Bábís]. Thereafter, Mírzá Músá declared his intention to proceed to Baghdad to convert the head of that faction, Jináb-i Bahá²²⁷. He came, attained His presence, and was so transformed that with his turban and beard, he used to sweep the entrance of [Bahá’u’lláh’s] house and serve all the friends of God. He was an old man of frail stature, and when the believers came out of the house, he would wash their clothing and serve them in many other ways.

Third Story: Nabíl Zarandí came to the Abode of Peace [Baghdad] to convert the Ancient Beauty, but when he attained His presence, he was so overwhelmed that he repented. Then he cut his beard and used it to sweep the entrance of Bahá’u’lláh’s abode. He used to wear a cotton headdress and serve by the door until the Ancient Beauty departed for Constantinople. In Adrianople, when [the Great] Separation took place [between Bahá’u’lláh and Mírzá Yahyá Azal], Nabíl went to Tíhrán and then, each day, proceeded to a different destination in Iran for [the purpose of] propagating the Cause.

25 October 1914

This afternoon Haifa was engulfed by the fire of separation and

future Manifestations of God.

²²⁶ A reference to Bahá’u’lláh’s prophetic experience in October 1852 in the Síyáh-Chál.

²²⁷ Bahá’u’lláh was known in the early years as “the honored Bahá”.

‘Akká illumined by the beauty of the Beloved of the Horizons.
“Sorrow hath enveloped this land, whilst another land rejoiceth.”²²⁸

26 October 1914

In accordance with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instruction, a number of us joined Him in the carriage, went to ‘Akká and remained under His sacred shadow. In the afternoon, He came to our room, inspected our situation and arranged for our bedding and other provisions. The evening meal was taken in His presence.

27 October 1914

In ‘Akká, the blessed house [of Bahá’u’lláh] was known as the Bayt ‘Abbúd. The Blessed Beauty spent two years, two months and eleven days in [the upper chambers of] the city’s Prison. Friends coming to see Him journeyed for several months. They would tarry in the surrounding regions of ‘Akká waiting [to see Bahá’u’lláh]. Their sole delight was to behold the Blessed Beauty waving His hand or handkerchief from the window of His prison cell and uttering words of greeting. With gladdened spirits, the friends would then return to their native homes.

After the Ottoman authorities permitted [the Holy Family] to leave the prison and reside in the city, they changed two or three homes during a short period of time²²⁹ until they were eventually established on the eastern side of the house of [Ilyás] ‘Abbúd. The Kitáb-i Aqdas was revealed in an eastern room of this house.²³⁰ When the time came for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wedding, the landlord,

²²⁸ Slight modification of the translation in *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 227.

²²⁹ After the barracks, Bahá’u’lláh lived in the house of Málík for three months, house of Mansúr Khavván for a few months, and four more months at the house of Rábi’ih.

²³⁰ This house belonged to the Christian merchant ‘Udí Khammar. Only later when this house was joined to the house of ‘Abbúd was the totality referred to as the house of ‘Abbúd.

‘Abbúd, opened a new entrance connecting the eastern and the western portions of the house and prepared a special room for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.²³¹

During the early days, ‘Abbúd was not very happy that his house was occupied by the Holy Family, but as he witnessed ever-increasing kindness and consideration, his resentment and enmity gradually subsided. In later years, he gave the entire western section of the residence to the Holy Family. In all, the Blessed Beauty lived in this house for twenty years²³². Even when the Blessed Beauty resided in the Mansion of Mazra‘ih or in the Mansion of Bahjí, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued to live in this house and, from this location, organized the affairs of the Cause.

Today, while pacing in the hallway [of the house of ‘Abbúd], the Master remarked:

This room was the kitchen. The smoke bothered the Blessed Beauty, so I changed its location. For twenty years, the Blessed Beauty resided in this house, and for nine years, He did not descend these stairs. It is well evident how He suffered!

Good or bad, compared to other locations, this house was a royal palace for us. Whoever became ill, I would send them to this house because its air was relatively pleasing. Nevertheless, the enemies of the Cause, these inequitable people, who in order to undermine the truth of the Faith will stoop to spreading any and all lies, have written that despite all the complaints by the Blessed Beauty of the conditions of the Most Great prison, He lived in gardens and orchards. Consider how unfair! The Blessed Beauty always said –

²³¹ The marriage of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took place in late August or early September 1872.

²³² The last nine years of those twenty years, Bahá’u’lláh resided almost exclusively in the Mansion of Bahjí. During this period, two of Bahá’u’lláh’s wives and their children were with Him at Bahjí, while Ásíyih Khánum, known as Navváb, and her children lived in the House of ‘Abbúd.

even during the height of our tribulations in the prison – that this captivity would not last very long and gave hope and promise for victory that soon both our sufferings and the glory of the foes would end. When Professor Browne came, there were days of comfort for the friends. They were days of happiness.

That night we all assembled in His blessed room and He sweetened our soul with heavenly utterances:

Pilgrimage must take place in a state of utmost entreaty and fervent supplication, otherwise it is not pilgrimage and merely a tour. In reality, all these people that go to Mecca and Medina do so for sightseeing. Pilgrimage must be in a condition of supplication for it to have benefit and influence. Many came and attained the hallowed presence of Bahá'u'lláh, witnessed His heavenly ways, the warmth of His smile, His divine attraction and His infinite bounties, yet they would leave the same way that they came, unchanged. However, others, upon their very arrival, would gain a new life and be thoroughly transformed.

Jamál Burújirdí, and two others from his native town, attained the august presence of Bahá'u'lláh in Adrianople. One of these [travel-companions] was Mírzá 'Abdu'r-Rahím. He was among the Mírzás of Burújird. He observed the celestial attraction and beauty of Bahá'u'lláh and was profoundly moved and completely recreated. Later the Blessed Beauty commented, 'During his ten minute visit, he stepped from this ethereal world unto the realm of immortality.'²³³

²³³ The following version of the incident, based also on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comments, is reported by Dr. Zia Baghdadi (*Star of the West*, 27 September 1918 issue, notes from 27 June 1914): "During the last days in Adrianpole, Agha Djamal and Agha Mírzá Abdul-Rahim Boroodjerdy, twice came to the Most Holy Threshold. After their first

Now, receptive souls are needed. What pleasure is there if beautiful songs are sung but a listening ear is not to be found? No matter how fragrant the flower, the person sick with a cold cannot partake of its fragrance. If the sun shines and the breeze blows and the rain falls, but the soil is salty, naught but weeds will grow. Receptivity of soul is needed.

Some of the chieftains of the Jáf tribe, who had gained deep esteem for Bahá’u’lláh in Sulaymáníyyih, were moved to Baghdad on the orders of the Valí of that city. While in Baghdad, they would attain Bahá’u’lláh’s sacred presence after first beseeching His permission. Then, with utmost reverence and humility, they would sit before Him. There was a Kurd who was truly enamored of Bahá’u’lláh. He said to me, “Once previously did I meet Shaykh Muhammad (that is, the Blessed Beauty). I earnestly desire to once more behold that luminous Visage.” When I saw how he longed to see the Blessed Beauty and how truly he adored His sacred Countenance, I did not want him to wait and guided him directly into Bahá’u’lláh’s presence. He went in, and the Blessed Perfection warmly welcomed him, designating a place of honor for him to sit among the chiefs of the Jáf tribe, and He then showered the Kurd with His infinite bounties.

Were all the divine confirmations to descend, yet a soul not be receptive, no result will be forthcoming. There was a certain Muhammad-Ridá who, each morning and evening, would attain the presence of Bahá’u’lláh either in Qahvih Sálíh or in His house. After we left Baghdad, he would boast, “I associated with these people for ten years, but it had no effect on me!”

visit with Baha’o’llah [He] said: “When Agha Mírzá Abdul-Rahim entered he was a person, when he left he was transformed.”

**28 October 1914, Corresponding to 10 Dhi'l-Hajjih 1332,
‘Íd-i Qurbán²³⁴**

Early this morning, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to the Jamí‘ al-Jazzár [Mosque of Jazzár], and from there, proceeded directly to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh.



Masjid al-Jazzár

Soon thereafter, His carriage returned, and the honored Isfandiýár, the carriage driver, informed us of the joyous news that we had been summoned [to Bahjí]. We immediately proceeded to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh.

²³⁴ Literally “Feast of Nearness [to God]”. Another name for ‘Íd al-Adhá, the Islamic “Feast of Sacrifice” of a lamb at the end of the month of pilgrimage.

188 Eight Years Near 'Abdu'l-Bahá



It was in the flower gardens around the Shrine that the beauty of the Master illumined our eyes. Indeed, the beauty of the Adored One had robbed the flowers of their charm! That luminous Person, with His celestial traits, clothed in a completely white garment, with white headdress, white shirt and white outer garment, stood out amidst the multitude of jasmine and multicolored flowers.

As He paced, we entered His presence, bowed down and were warmly greeted. My God, what immense bounty this is! Are we asleep or conscious, intoxicated or sober? How truly exalted are the divine favors bestowed so graciously upon us! How magnificent the feast spread before us and how profound is such delight! How truly fortunate we are!



May 1921 in Bahjí's Garden

With His own hands, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was trimming and pruning trees and blossoms and tending to the needs of the gardens. The flowerbeds and fragrant plants on the path had perfumed the air so profusely as can never be adequately described. The sun shone most pleasantly. On the horizon, the brilliantly clear sky had embraced the blue of the sea, creating flawless harmony and accord. The sea was perfectly clear, transparent and calm, with the blue sky displaying no clouds or blemishes. The trees perfectly framed the image of our divine Beloved, and were anyone to behold this portrait that was indeed a reflection of the high heavens, crazed, enchanted and bewildered he would cry out in joy and take leave of his senses. O Lord! My tongue is speechless to adequately thank Thee for Thy manifold bounties, so plentifully conferred upon us! Praise be to God! Praise be unto Him!

<125> Soon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to the hand-pump and began to vigorously pump. By our watches, He pumped for nineteen minutes, and the gardeners used a large quantity of water for the flowerbeds and trees. It so happened that one of the friends, Áqá Badí‘ Bushrú’í, kept a close count and informed us that the Master pumped 361 times, that is, 19 x 19 times.

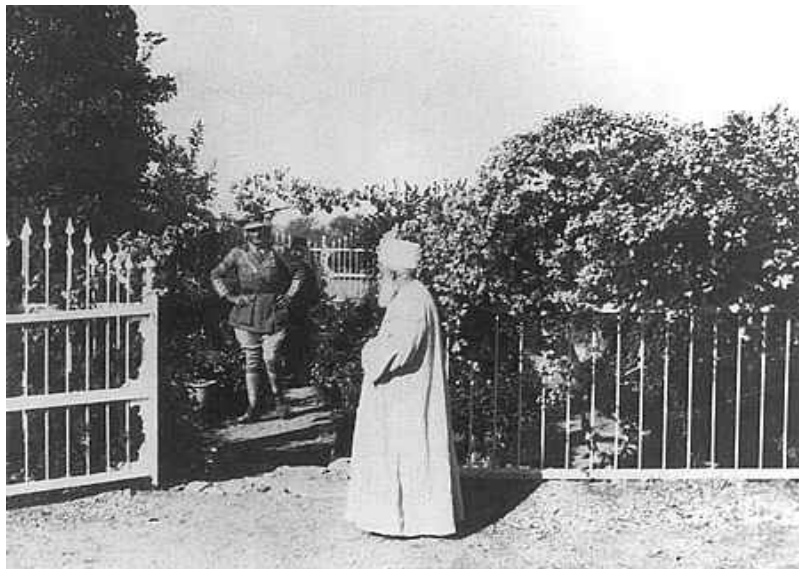
Previously, there had been no wells at Bahjí. It was very difficult to water the shrubs, which had only recently been planted around the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and regularly required watering. Early in the evenings, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and some faithful friends would fill copper buckets with water and placing these on their heads, would walk from ‘Akká to Bahjí, to water the plants.²³⁵ Along the way, those with melodic voices would chant prayers and supplications. In the utmost reverence and humility, the beloved Master, carrying a bucket of water on His head, led the procession. As He proceeded, He quietly uttered prayers and holy verses until arrival at the Shrine. This is what they did every night! Eventually, a well was dug which supplied water to the gardens, and thus the believers no longer needed to transport water to Bahjí.

It should be noted that carrying water from ‘Akká, which was the sole means of providing much-needed water to the newly planted shrubs, also served as a method of protecting the faithful believers within the fortress of the Covenant. In addition, it demonstrated sacrifice, selflessness and readiness for martyrdom in the path of the Blessed Beauty. In the dark of night, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, dressed in white attire, would lead the procession to Bahjí. As such, He was a target for the enemies as this was at a time when, exhibiting their full-blown hatred and opposition, the violators of the Covenant were most active, and constantly watched for opportunities to harm and injure the Master. While He remained an easy target, the denizens of the supreme concourse, the dwellers of the celestial paradise and the angels of the exalted realm above, were the protectors of the Covenant and did not allow the least harm to

²³⁵ The distance between ‘Akká and Bahjí is about five kilometers.

befall 'Abdu'l-Bahá. They rendered the enemies of the Cause impotent and defeated, and put fear in the hearts of the violators and the hypocrites.

In short, after attaining the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we followed Him reverently to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, where we prostrated ourselves before the sacred Threshold and listened to the Master chant the Tablet of Visitation with His heavenly and melodious voice. I must confess that His celestial intonation on that day has never left me in all these years. O Lord, how inestimable are Thy bounties and how unworthy and wicked are Thy servants.



Bahjí 1918

We then proceeded to the pilgrim house of Bahjí where a room next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room was given to us. Only a single wall separated us from Him. A *sufrih* was spread for the meal, and unleavened bread was also included. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Bread is more important than any other dish. Anything that the body requires can be found in bread and also in milk. The body needs elements that are absorbed easily. These are readily available in bread and milk. If good bread is not available, nothing else will take its place. Good bread can be eaten with all other things, but stew cannot be eaten with bad bread. That is why Christ declared, 'I am

the bread.²³⁶”

At night, after another visit to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, the Master spoke in gratitude about the manifold bounties of the Blessed Beauty and the fact that the invisible hand of destiny had assembled us all in this resplendent spot. Praised be God, praise be unto Him!²³⁷

Friday, 30 October 1914, the Pilgrim House of Bahjí

Inasmuch as the Mansion of Bahjí was in the possession of the Covenant-breakers, who exerted every effort, both secretly and outwardly, to destroy the Cause of God and harm the blessed person of the Master, the friends avoided meeting and confronting them to the extent possible. Nevertheless, for the purpose of ablutions, washing of hands and face, short rests, shaking off the dust of the journey, praying and drinking tea, the friends tarried in this spot [the pilgrim house] for a short time. Afterwards, from a narrow passageway on the western flank of the Shrine, we would walk to the Point of Adoration of the Supreme Concourse in the utmost reverence, respect and attention.

This small building (the pilgrim house of Bahjí) connected to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and was comprised of three or four rooms with a hall situated in the middle of the building. At the rear of the building, there was a small courtyard. The washroom and kitchen were on the north side of the building. For now this location serves as the pilgrim house. Later, we shall see what God decrees. Undoubtedly, in the near future, the situation will change.²³⁸

We spent our days and nights in this pilgrim house under the

²³⁶ John 6:35 states, “And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst.”

²³⁷ *Bushrú’í*, pp. 52-3, has a diary entry for 29 October and indicates that it was on this date that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to Bahjí.

²³⁸ A spacious and modern pilgrim house was constructed under the supervision of the Universal House of Justice in the 1990s, and presently serves visitors to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh.

shadow of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and in the proximity of the room where the Master resided and rested, and where we benefited from His divine favors. There was only a thin wall between our room and the Master's. Every night, we would hear the murmur of His prayers and the melody of His supplications.

Twice a day, in the mornings and the afternoons, we would visit the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. The Master would chant the Tablet of Visitation with such reverence, humility and longing that all who were present would be profoundly moved. May my life be a sacrifice for the Master! May it be a ransom to this peerless Servant! He teaches us the lessons of servitude and modesty, sets the example for humility and altruism, instructs selflessness and self-annihilation, proclaims the ways of meekness and consecration, and embodies the meaning of certitude and worship. He has no desire for praise and recognition, and only seeks to manifest the true nature of obedience and love –physically and spiritually, outwardly and inwardly, as an expression of His very essence. He lived in utter love and absolute adoration of the Blessed Beauty. Truly, the Ancient Beauty was well served in such a magnificent Son and such a verdant Branch. And such a beloved Son well beseemed such a glorious Father! That is, the Father was to be praised and recognized for such a Son, and the Son was befitting and worthy of the trust of such a Father! Father and Son are connected by one sanctified Spirit, and may my soul be a sacrifice unto Both!

We tarried at this sacred spot for three days and three nights in the presence of the Friend, away from the commotion of life and daily routine. Led by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we frequently attained the honor of visiting the Shrine, and afterwards spent time in His presence and enjoyed the feast of His manifold bounties. Both spiritual and material sustenance were provided. How many among the people of bygone centuries and ages have prayed, meditated, fasted, longed and implored to attain unto this Day, and yet perished without beholding a glimpse. However, undeservedly, the infinite grace of God surrounded these insignificant servants of His Threshold. Indeed, we were not worthy of even a small drop of this ocean of

194 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

bounty. Whatever we saw, heard or witnessed, was naught but a sign of His munificence and sovereignty, and an image of heaven above. Methinks this was paradise, and save for gratitude, my tongue should hold its peace.

In the course of a meal, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked on an article [written] by Archibald²³⁹:

My purpose is this: others testify that the Cause of God is universal, that it contains the reality of all religions of the world and will be spread throughout the globe. Now consider this testimony by a westerner. When a westerner so testifies, it is worth repeating. Never will a Christian praise the religion of Islam in this manner, nor a Jew testify similarly to the validity of the message of Christ. Now all other faiths will affirm that in this new age this religion will embrace all past Dispensations. All the newspapers in Europe and America have testified that the teachings of the Blessed Beauty shall penetrate the world of humanity.

<130> **31 October 1914, Bahjí**

We woke early and following ablutions and offering supplications unto the Threshold of the Almighty, Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab and I walked to the beach and on our return attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. His utterances were about His unfaithful kinsmen:

I gave a Tablet to Jamál Effendi²⁴⁰ and instructed that traveling through certain cities and following an unfrequented route he should reach Qum and deliver the Tablet to the Sadr A‘zam [Prime Minister]. He was to

²³⁹ *Busbrú’í*, p. 54, identifies the article published by *Plain Dealer* in 18 August 1914 issue of Cleveland’s newspaper, which has been in continuous circulation since 1842.

²⁴⁰ His given name was Sulaymán Khán.

win an audience with the vizier, and exhibiting utmost courtesy, respect and submission present him, in private, the Tablet. I had told him to refuse any gratuity if his host offered it, nor to attempt a second visit, but if he were to insist on such a meeting, then to visit him once more at the time of his departure from the city.

He carried out the mission as instructed, but afterwards, upon arrival at Tíhrán, revealed the details of his successful mission to Jamál Burújirdí. Jamál and his son subsequently began to visit the vizier, frequently demanding money, until at last, resenting the situation, he refused them further audience.²⁴¹

At lunchtime, the Master noted, “Presently the ravages of war are unfolding [in Europe], but we are at ease. We are under the shadow of the protection of the Blessed Beauty.” In the afternoon, regarding the Ottoman-Russian war, He said, “Constantinople is in turmoil.” Then He said to this ephemeral servant, “All roads are closed, especially to Germany. No mail is delivered.”

²⁴¹ The mission spoken by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took place in 1898 and the vizier in question was Mírzá ‘Alí-Asghar Khán, the Amínu’s-Sultán. Two years earlier, at the time of the assassination of Násiri’d-Dín Sháh in 1896, the Amínu’s-Sultán was the Grand Vizier. Balyuzi, *Bahá’u’lláh King of Glory*, p. 393, n.1, states: “It was his stratagem which saved the day and prevented the outbreak of disorder. Some modern writers have made the ridiculous suggestion that Amínu’s-Sultán himself was implicated in the murder of Násiri’d-Dín Sháh.” The Amínu’s-Sultán retired to Qum after his dismissal by Muzaffari’d-Dín Sháh. The fallen Minister had previously spoken in favor of the oppressed Bahá’ís and Jamál Effendi’s mission was to win his further sympathy which he initially promised. Once he regained office, however, he soon forgot his pledge, apparently as result of Jamál Burújirdí’s misbehavior.

Chapter 6

Abu Sinan: November 1914

1 November 1914, Bahjí

Today marked the third day that we dwelt under the shadow of the sacred Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and partook of both the material and the spiritual feast of His beneficence. Each morn and eve, we were blessed with paying homage at the Shrine and enjoying the Visitation Tablet chanted by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which enthralled and enchanted every soul and being.

Twice daily, each time for about twenty minutes, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá pumped water for the trees and plants. This watering of the shrubs by the Shrine was much the same as nourishing the souls of the sincere servants of God by the divine teachings and regular reading of the Writings.

It was two hours after noon when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá suddenly instructed us to prepare to leave for Abu Sinan. We boarded His carriage; He sat up front, and the rest of us in the back, as we proceeded towards Abu Sinan. A gentle breeze passed over Him. His hair flowed softly over His shoulders, and the scent of His rose-perfume was delightfully sweet and fragranced the nostrils of us in the back seat.

The perfume which emanated from that hair,
Was sweeter than the smell of flowers.

En route we stopped at a military camp, and, while we waited in the carriage, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to meet the commander. The commander had recounted the following to the Master: “There were seventy thousand of us in the Battle of Sarab, and yet we were defeated. During our retreat, soldiers would steal each other’s clothing.” [In sharing this] ‘Abdu’l-Bahá smiled and said, “Witness

their condition!” He then added:

The Blessed Beauty journeyed to the village of Yirka three times.²⁴² On the first visit, I walked at the side of Bahá'u'lláh's steed until the proximity of Abu Sinan. Those days were marvelously pleasant! Turks have a saying, “The memory and reminiscence of those days are worth the world!”

At one time, after eight or nine years of confinement in 'Akká, [my uncle] the late Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí and I came out to explore the countryside. The trees had only recently blossomed, the countryside was most enchanting, and we immensely enjoyed the scenery. There, the late [Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí] encountered a friend and inquired about his destination. The friend responded, “I am going to Abu Sinan and Yirka.” My late [uncle] sighed in sadness, and I said to him, “Do not be sad, for one day we shall do the same.” Now, every time I visit this village, I think of him.

Along the way, wherever we encountered groups of people, men or women, young or old, they would immediately rise to their feet and with great humility, would greet the Master. They would approach Him and kiss His hands with utmost reverence and affection. In this manner, we made our way to Abu Sinan.

We were guests of Shaykh Sálíh²⁴³, and on that evening he organized a large feast in the main hall of his residence, where a

²⁴² Abu Sinan is a village on the eastern side of 'Akká and the village of Yirka is situated to the east of Abu Sinan. Most of their inhabitants are Druze and have an affinity towards the Cause. They are not Bahá'ís, but are devoted to the Center of the Faith. (HM)

²⁴³ *Busbrú'í*, p. 36, indicates that in accordance with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's encouragement, Shaykh Sálíh had served in 'Akká as the Iranian Consul.

number of the friends of God as well as non-Bahá’ís were present. Speaking on the raging World War ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

In these days, wise and sound policies are needed in political affairs, but leaders are not prudent. In the Russian-Iranian War, Iran was defeated; and, afterwards, seventy-six of the victors were assigned to settle various affairs and to dispatch the [Iranian] captives to Russia. There was a woman who had two children, whose husband had resisted arrest and avoided being sent [to Russia]. As a result, the Russians kept the wife under surveillance, and, once having discovered her in the public bath, seized her as she emerged. A tremendous commotion broke out in which the entire group of Russians perished.

This incident had grave repercussions on Iran’s position. [The Prime Minister] Qá’im-Maqám²⁴⁴ promised to find an amicable solution and prevent further fighting. He wrote a long letter to [St.] Petersburg, and explained the critical importance that the Iranian people place on womanly virtues of chastity and honor. In fact, he went so far as to say that such conviction had become a blinding prejudice to the Iranian population. He expressed his deep regret, nay, profound shame, over the incident and suggested that if they wished to exact revenge, instead of offering a few rebels to be killed by the Russians, he would send a greatly admired prince to be slain, in hopes that this act might lessen the burden of remorse suffered by the

²⁴⁴ Mírzá Abú’l-Qásim Farahání, the Qá’im-Maqám, (d. 1835) became the Prime Minister of Fath-‘Alí Shah in 1821 and was one of the ablest statesmen and authors of modern Iran. He was a close friend of Mírzá Buzurg Núrí, Bahá’u’lláh’s father. Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have frequently honored him with such expressions as, “*the Prince of the City of Statesmanship and Literary Accomplishment*” (*Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 65.)

Iranians.

When the prince was sent to St. Petersburg, the Russian Czar grew fond of him. He said to the prince, "You are like my own son" and did not harm him. Indeed, he showered the prince with his favors.

At the present, the world needs such wise and prudent men.

Abu Sinan

Day by day, the situation of the war grew worse and intensified. Correspondingly, the means to acquire daily necessities and provisions became more difficult and restricted. With the passage of each day, worries and apprehensions grew more desperate. Power rested in the hands of a number of ruthless military men who did not consider themselves accountable to anyone. It was a day of mayhem and plunder by the Ottoman officials. They caused difficulties for whomever they chose and destroyed the innocent with the most meager charges. No one had the least control over his possessions or life. The government was in the control of a number of faithless, bloodthirsty and cruel men who were truly the embodiments of "He doeth whatsoever He willeth and ordaineth whatsoever He pleaseth."²⁴⁵ Gallows were active in every town, and all prominent citizens were eliminated.



²⁴⁵ *Tablets of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 109; also *Gems of Divine Mysteries*, p. 62.

200 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It was a time for Pashas to settle accounts with their opponents and to exact revenge [through hanging]. As soon as the smallest complaint was raised against anyone, immediately a file would be prepared for him and his demise was assured. Complete and absolute power was in the hands of the military commanders, and not a breath was left of anyone.²⁴⁶

Jamál [Cemal] Páshá was an independent-minded military commander and a man of truly ruthless character. He would instantly kill anyone whom he discovered to have a prominent reputation.



Jamál Pasha and his officers

²⁴⁶ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 409 notes: “War had come to Europe, and Turkey [i.e. Ottoman Empire] was about to commit herself to the cause of the Central Powers: Germany and Austria-Hungary. Although she had had successive and decisive defeats in Tripolitania and in the Balkans, within the previous three years, her rulers, the Young Turks, and particularly the triumvirate of Enver (Anvar) Pasha, Tal‘at Pasha and Jamál Pasha, forced her into another trial of strength, the outcome of which must have seemed hazardous and uncertain. By the end of October 1914 the die had been cast, and in the first week of November, Russia, Great Britain, and France found themselves obliged to declare war on Turkey, which was followed on November 14th by Turkey’s declaration of holy war. That declaration was wrested from the Caliph, Sultan Muhammad V, by the reckless directors of the destinies of the Ottoman Empire.”

As one of the highest army generals, he had assembled an enormous force to attack and reduce Egypt and [capture] the Suez Canal. Tens of thousands of camels were arrayed solely for the transportation of the army's water rations. His agents had confiscated whatever food, clothing, weapons, money, surplus and stored grains they could find. Thoroughly desolate, the citizens were left without the most basic provisions as the realm was cleansed of everything useful for the needs of the military. If anyone protested, hanging was the immediate response. They would perpetrate whatever act of tyranny, oppression, injury, calumny, murder, treachery and sedition that was needed to achieve their end under the umbrella of the Committee for National Defense.



Taking advantage of this most perilous situation, the spiteful Covenant-breakers came up with a new way each passing day to provoke Jamál Páshá against the Faith and further agitate him in this regard. Sometimes they went to Damascus and provoked the enemies of the Cause [into action]. At other occasions they sought the help of Jerusalem, presenting such extravagant gifts as the tent of the Blessed Beauty, which was the tabernacle of the Most Great Peace and a precious memento of Bahá'u'lláh's days. In addition, they offered whatever sacred [Persian] carpets had remained from

His time.

When giving these gifts, they always registered a complaint against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, appearing as the wronged and the victimized. At times, they depicted ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a political mischief-maker and a religious rabble-rouser, thereby sowing seeds of sedition. At other times, they accused the Master of having designs to inaugurate a new monarchy and described His communications with the East and the West as a means for inciting political chaos; or they accused Him of being a foreign agent. In other instances, the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb were presented as military forts, and at other times, as the [new] Mecca and Medina. To confuse and provoke [Jamál Páshá], they had painted the Greatest Name on a flag and presented it as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s new “Standard of Monarchy.”

In response, in a meeting of the ‘ulamá in Jerusalem, Jamál Páshá, being a ruthless and rash man, had promised to slay ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and to level both the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb. This had greatly excited the Covenant-breakers, giving them courage to redouble their efforts against the Master.

This time, they submitted another written complaint, outlining various charges against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In this appeal they noted: ‘Previously, every time that the government has tried to adjudicate, we (i.e. the Covenant-breakers) have also suffered bitterly [in the process]. Therefore, we now proclaim, loudly and clearly, that we are not associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. [We] ask not to be entangled in any investigation of Him, and to be left secure in the course of whatever transpires.’

Clearly, the friends of God needed to avoid troubles during such a time when the entire Ottoman Empire was in turmoil and revolution, the government in disorder and unsettled, when blood was being spilled at every turn, when no accountability or responsibility was assumed by anyone, and the Covenant-breakers unceasingly appealed to this ruthless man (Jamál Páshá) for action.

However, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s method was always to make His own breast the target of His enemies’ darts, thereby shielding the friends of God from hardships and sufferings. <135> That is, He would

present Himself to danger, to protect the friends from abuse.

Particularly during this perilous period when horizons were dark with enmity and everyone feared the imminent bombardment of the port cities, 'Abdu'l-Bahá sent every member of the Bahá'í community of 'Akká and Haifa in a different direction, far away from trouble. [During this interval,] He closed the door of association to all and would neither meet with anyone, nor receive any correspondence. Of the entire Bahá'í community, only the Master and a single servant remained in 'Akká. The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí was the sole occupant of the Haifa pilgrim house. All other believers – men and women, young and old alike – were sent to Abu Sinan where, for six months, they remained far from the turmoil. This precaution was particularly necessary since, in addition to other considerations, it silenced the mouths of the enemies of the Cause.

For instance, it was said that people were summarily hanged merely for having had their lights on at night, because they were suspected of being spies, engaged in preparing reports. As a result, everyone spent the evenings in total darkness in order not to evoke the suspicion of the secret police, winning a spot on the hanging row. The Bahá'í community's departure for Abu Sinan also allowed the Master to distance the friends of God from the constant barrage of rumors about the imminent bombardment of the port cities and allow them to live in peace and tranquility.

The village of Abu Sinan was a hamlet on the eastern side of 'Akká, situated on a choice hill, with pleasant and vivifying air and water. The people cultivated fig and olive trees and grew grapevines. The inhabitants were mostly Druze, with a few Catholic or Jewish residents, all of whom were engaged in farming.



The Druze are mostly robust people adapted to mountain life. Though their religious convictions are not known with any degree of certainty, they consider themselves monotheistic; that is, they believed in a single, all-powerful Omnipotent One Who revealed Himself through His manifestations. [They traced their origin to] one of these manifestations, al-Hakím, the sixth Caliph of the Fatimid dynasty [and believed that] at the end of time, when the world was filled with tyranny and oppression and believers were surrounded by repression and hardship, then, once more, al-Hakím would appear and establish justice and equity throughout the world

and his religion would then be triumphant.²⁴⁷ They believed he would then reassemble the dispersed Druze tribe in Syria and then, when the standard of his faith was hoisted over Mecca and Jerusalem, he would bring the whole of the earth under his own rule and establish justice throughout the realm.

The Druze of Abu Sinan had a particular affinity and attachment towards the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and considered 'Abdu'l-Bahá as one of God's chosen ones. When one of them fell ill, they would have him circumambulate the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and give the ill one food leftover from the Master's plate. They showed great consideration and attraction [to the Bahá'ís]. Since the old days, all their chiefs and shaykhs had profound affection [for Bahá'ís], because from the time of the Blessed Beauty they had only experienced love, sincerity and spirituality. With great devotion and sincerity, they sought the presence of the Master.



For three months, Bahá'u'lláh had stayed in the village of Yírka, in the home of Shaykh Marzúq. The sons of the late Shaykh

²⁴⁷ For further details on the Druze history see Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi'i Islam*, p. 55.

[Marzúq], Shaykh Sa‘íd and Shaykh Salmán, had shown great devotion to Him and dealt with the believers with utmost affection. They considered Bahá’u’lláh’s room [during His sojourn] as a sacred shrine, illuminating it each Friday night with a candle. They never allowed anyone into that room, nor furnished it in any way; and indeed considered it a sanctified spot. During three months, Bahá’u’lláh’s tent was pitched in the hills of Yirka.

The house of Shaykh Sálíh in Abu Sinan displayed the same respect, and the Shaykh and his sons eagerly, humbly and warmly welcomed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. They considered His presence in their midst a profound source of bounty, honor and distinction, and His shadow, the fount of their everlasting happiness and salvation.

2 November 1914, Abu Sinan

This morning, once more, a group of Druze and their chiefs attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Their chief, Shaykh Sálíh, was a sincere old man who considered himself but a servant at the threshold of the Master. When the Shaykh was expressing his fear of the war, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] said [to him]:

You have not experienced genuine difficult times, for if you had, such occurrences would not perturb you. One night we owned a vast estate and possessed all manners of comfort, but in the morning we were evicted and deprived of all belongings. Not even a coat was left to us. In the midst of the most agonizing cold, we were banished from one country to another. I went to my mother, asking for some food, but she had none to give. I asked for some flour and ate it in place of food. En route, in the hope of a good meal, I purchased syrup, flour and oil [to make halvah]. Instead, they mistakenly added a large quantity of pepper to it, which severely burned our mouths and insides.

One of our friends was branded seventy times.

Others had their noses cut off. Yet others were hanged upside down, until all their intestines fell out.

We have weathered such storms. I pray that everything goes well and that God will protect all.

At lunchtime, Shaykh Sálíh gave a magnificent feast with a variety of dishes. He had invited fifteen of the Arab chiefs and, indeed, had exerted much effort for this event. Before lunch, when all were assembled in the large guestroom of Shaykh Sálíh, the Master stated:

There was a fanatical Protestant minister that always wanted to argue. One time he came to Me and said, 'Given His large body and girth, with what kind of ladder did Muhammad ascend to heaven?' I responded, 'With the same ladder that Christ used [to reach heaven].' He became angry and said to Me, 'I will eventually make a Christian out of You!' A short while later, he became ill and the doctors instructed him to be circumcised.²⁴⁸ Afterwards, I went to visit him, and he was worried that I might say something; but I did not embarrass him.²⁴⁹

Someone asked about Manes, the Painter²⁵⁰. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded:

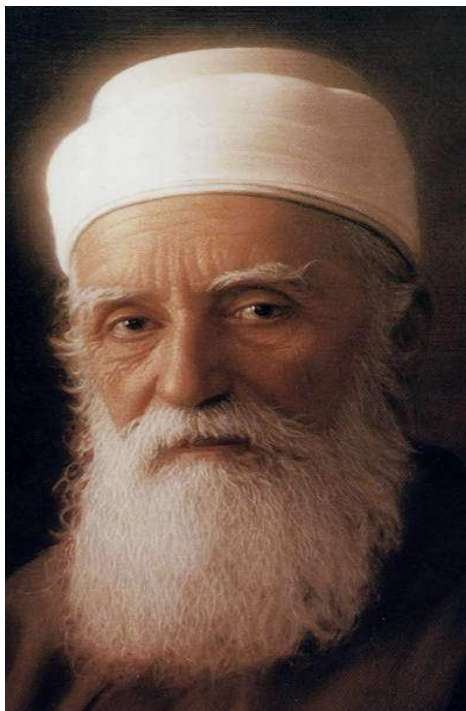
Without [the aid of] a compass, he could draw circles. He did this using two equal, perpendicular lines and like

²⁴⁸ The law of circumcision is enjoined on all Muslim males.

²⁴⁹ Implying that since the minister had spoken critically of the Prophet Muhammad, divine retribution had decreed for him to be subject to an Islamic law.

²⁵⁰ Manes, or Mani, or Manichaeus (210-276 CE) was the Iranian founder of Manichaeism and he resided in Babylon, which at the time was one of the many provinces of the Persian Empire. The religion he founded is essentially extinct today.

a ruler or a compass would draw [a circle]. He had drawn four hundred sketches on a single skin of a gazelle, which was kept in the Kasra palace. His designs were inscribed on the jeweled carpet and taken from Kasra palace to Medina [by conquering Arabs]. One piece of this carpet was sold for twenty thousand dinars.



[Our Residence]

This servant, working as a physician, and Badí‘ Effendi Bushrú’í, as a teacher, remained in Abu Sinan while the blessed person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá returned to ‘Akká. Our home was a small, mud-walled room with a low ceiling and a warped door. When we were cold, we would light a fire, although the smoke was most bothersome, but opening the door meant letting in the bitter cold. I treated Bahá’í or non-Bahá’í patients who came to me²⁵¹, and in the meantime Badí‘ Effendi taught both boys and girls.

In reality, our room was my dispensary, my office, Badí‘

²⁵¹ Sitt (an honorific meaning “lady”) Lua Getsinger was my aid and assisted me in all surgeries, which were plenty. (HM)

Effendi's school and the pilgrim house of the Master. And yet, I can state unreservedly that never in my entire life had I experienced such joy and tranquility, nor do I anticipate ever again tasting such sweetness. The reason was, while the war had deprived us of all means of comfort, yet our spirits were elated and, falcon-like, soared to the heavens. Outwardly we were on earth, but in truth we resided in the pavilions of the Supreme Concourse. Unceasingly we would chant prayers and, since our room was only seven or eight meters away, our voices and laughter carried to the next house where the Holy Family resided. All of our meals were prepared and sent by the Holy Family and, once or twice a day, we would receive greetings and words of comfort from the Greatest Holy Leaf.



We were submerged in a sea of bounty and free from all earthy attachments. However, the news of the War, the worries they generated and the absence of food and other provisions consumed people everywhere.

[Bahá'ís of Abu Sinan]

During our sojourn in Abu Sinan we were in the company of the

entire Holy Family and the whole of the Bahá’í communities of ‘Akká and Haifa. Only ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and one or two servants had remained behind. People were deeply perturbed over the possibility of bombardment of the port cities, the constant preoccupation with which had deprived them of a moment’s rest. Consequently, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had sent all the Bahá’ís to Abu Sinan so that they would be away from the turmoil.

Moreover, the inhabitants of Abu Sinan and Yirka were Druze and for years had shown deep affection towards the Faith. Whenever one of them fell ill, they would take him to circumambulate the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and give him a little of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s leftover food. They believed that such remedies could cure afflictions. Often they [would visit] the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and, having removed their shoes, would enter and pay their homage. Even in Yirka, they would not allow the room once occupied by the Blessed Beauty to be used by anyone else, and would light a candle in there every night, considering it a hallowed precinct.

Shaykh Sálíh was the chief of the Druze and his two sons, Shaykh Salmán and Shaykh Yúsuf, also ranked among their notables. Once every few days, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would come to Abu Sinan to visit the friends and oversee affairs. After a stay of one or two nights, He would return to ‘Akká.

Pilgrim House of Abu Sinan

Most of the dwellings in the village of Abu Sinan were dilapidated farmhouses, which the Bahá’ís temporarily rented, with the Holy Family residing in the home of Shaykh Sálíh. Once or twice each week, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would come and stay for one or two nights. He would then attend to the needs of the believers, arrange their affairs, uplift their spirits, <140> and generally give them a new lease on spiritual life, and thereafter returning to ‘Akká or Haifa.

The Greatest Holy Leaf, the Holy Mother [Munírih Khánum] and others, such as the American Miss [Edith] Sanderson and Lua

Getsinger (Sitt Lua), were residing in Abu Sinan in the same home.



Lua Getsinger

To keep us from being idle, we (Áqá Badí‘ Bushrú‘í and myself) were given certain duties: Badí‘ Effendi taught the children and I engaged in the practice of medicine.

Since all the Ottoman physicians were taken to the battlefield by the military, there was an acute shortage of medical personnel. Therefore, day and night, this servant was busy performing surgery and other medical procedures for both the Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís. Often I was taken on horseback to nearby villages to attend to the sick and do what I could for them. Sometimes the patients would first go to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, seeking His handwritten instructions for me to remedy their ills. He would write with His blessed hands:

*Áqá Mírzá Habíb, heal this person.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.*

Obedient to His wish, I would then examine the ill person and treat him with a little medication, and within a short time the person

would always recover. Since no physicians were left in this region and it was very difficult for the sick to go to Damascus or Beirut [for treatment], they all came to me, and I always did my utmost to help [and treat] them.

In addition to practicing regular medicine, I occasionally performed surgery, during which Lua Getsinger acted as the anesthetic technician.²⁵² At times, Badí‘ Effendi would help by providing anesthetics. The wonder of it was that all of these operations were successful, and I often performed surgeries that I had never performed before, particularly because I had only recently completed medical school and did not have much experience, nor adequate surgical supplies. Nevertheless, the results were most satisfactory, and everywhere I was known as the “Tabíb-i ‘Abbás Effendi” [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s doctor].

One hundred percent of my practice was successful and never once did I lose a patient. Despite the lack of medication and proper instruments, I attempted every necessary procedure and the Almighty always granted the healing. During every operation, I whispered prayers and supplicated God for divine assistance:

If Thou wishest me to live
 Through me blow Thy holy breath.
 The touch of Jesus Thou wilt give
 To me, who’ve lain an age in death.²⁵³

Indeed, if His grace surrounds us, every undertaking will be adorned with brilliant success. But if carnal desires motive us, then naught but loss and regret results. O God, save us all from the evil of the self!

²⁵² According to *Bushru’i*, p. 42, Lua Getsinger had arrived in January 1915 from India and stayed for seven months with the Holy Family, first in Abu Sinan and later briefly in Haifa.

²⁵³ Translation of poem from *The Memorials of the Faithful*, p. 31.

[Our Room in Abu Sinan]

Our room was at street level and its walls were made from clay bricks. It was seven or eight meters long and three or four meters wide and had the same height. The ceiling's only supports were four bent and termite-infested beams. The room had a single door and window. When closed, it was totally dark, and when opened, the unbearable cold, particularly during cloudy or rainy days, cut through us. In fact, when it rained, it flooded the room, and we had to find ways to keep the water out.

There was a spot about two square meters in front of the entrance that was lower than the rest of the ground. There, several baskets of dried figs were placed, and through the sale of these our landlord made his living. That is, our room, in addition to all its other purposes, including serving as the pilgrim house, was also the place of business of our landlord!

Even though all the roads were closed and no communication was possible, we occasionally had two or three visitors, so that, in total, five or six people lived in our room.

All of our meals were prepared graciously by the Greatest Holy Leaf with her own hands. Though we lacked basic food ingredients and people were in dire straits, we had no worries. There was plenty of bread and most food items were made from groats. We had an adequate supply of bread, cheese, olives and figs, and could comfortably live on those. Occasionally, meat would become available, and the Greatest Holy Leaf would make kabob, which we would eat with indescribable joy, praising Almighty God. It was most bewildering that all around us people were dying of bullet wounds, and yet we enjoyed heavenly nourishment!

At nighttime, we placed the bedding very tightly next to each other on the floor and, with much difficulty, made enough room for five or six of us. However, we were so thoroughly filled with joy and ecstasy that most evenings we only slept two or three hours, or not at all, particularly during the nights that we had guests. Praise be unto God! While people on the outside were overwhelmed with sorrow and grief, had no hope of survival and constantly feared for

their very lives, we in turn were filled with joy and bliss, our spirits soaring to the heavens, and had no care for the world and its worries. At all times we sang Bahá’í songs, chanted poems and our sole yearning was to know when the Master would visit [us again]. As we chanted prayers, our voices would reach the Holy Family:

What use ‘tis at springtime,
To tell a nightingale to remain silent.

It was truly amazing, but all who came to Abu Sinan soon became like us, carefree. Even when old men came to our pilgrim house, they would become unconcerned with all else and, like us, would be filled with joy and delight. In the evenings, as soon as someone suggested that he was tired and wished to sleep, all others protested that we should not waste precious hours in slumber, and considered sleep a manner of loss and regret. Indeed, we devoted every minute of the evening to chanting and singing.

That bright old man, Hájí Siyyid Javád Yazdí, was the source of constant amusement and ceaseless laughter. He rolled over the beddings and made us happy by constant brief jests. At times he pretended to be a Qur’án reciter and chanted verses [of the Holy Book] as they would by the gravesites; at other times he raised the [Islamic] call to prayer in a loud voice; and yet on other occasions he retold the story of Áqá Zaynu’l-‘Abidín Shikárchí [the hunter] and prevented us from falling sleep. In short, through various entertaining acts, he would urge us to stay awake.

In this same pilgrim house, Áqá Badí‘ Bushrú’í, who was accomplished in the field of education and child development, conducted daily classes for the Bahá’í children. He exerted his utmost to properly train the youngsters and was very successful in his efforts.²⁵⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would say, “Every time I remember that

²⁵⁴ *Bushrú’í*, p. 37 states that after a short while, a location other than their bedroom was assigned for the Bahá’í school. Twenty-five students, consisting of children of the Holy Family, Bahá’í residents and Druze chiefs, were enrolled at the new location.

in that environment we had such a school, I am exceedingly overjoyed and praise the Blessed Beauty.”

In reality, this clay room was our pilgrim house, children’s school, my office, an operating room and also our landlord’s shop for dried figs – all of these took place in that single room.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁵ *Bushrú’í*, pp. 55-56, has an entry for 4 November 1914 which indicates that some remnant Bahá’ís in Haifa came to Abu Sinan and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left for ‘Akká on this date. Also, according to *Bushrú’í*, p. 56, it was during this period that the box containing Tablets and holy relics were sent to Abu Sinan for safekeeping. *Bushrú’í*, pp. 56-57, indicates it was during this time that Prince Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís arrived in the Holy Land and the Birth of the Báb was observed on 19 November 1914 at Bahjí. With utmost joy and excitement, all the Bahá’ís residing in Abu Sinan walked to Bahjí where a feast was given by Áqá Mírzá Siyyid Husayn of Haifa. Twice the friends visited the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and before dusk returned to the village of Abu Sinan. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís returned to ‘Akká. The following day, the Birth of Bahá’u’lláh was celebrated in Abu Sinan where 19 Bahá’í children sang songs and engaged in a period of questions and answers. *Bushrú’í*, pp. 57-58, has detailed entries for 21 and 22 November.

Chapter 7

Abu Sinan: January 1915

<145> 9 January 1915

Today the land of Abu Sinan was blessed by the footsteps of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. At night, a number of Bahá’ís and certain Arabs attained the Master’s presence, and all [His] utterances concerned the situation of the war. He stated:

This war is indeed ruinous and devastating in its effects. However, afterwards, the number of peace-loving people will grow considerably, and these commotions, uproars and the mighty tumult will precipitate [universal] peace. For the West, the most important thing is the war. If Germany is victorious, then the Ottoman Empire will be triumphant as well. Otherwise, if the Ottoman army advances into Egyptian territory, it will not be lasting.

May God deal justly with those who caused these wars and conflicts which have caused so much bloodshed and trouble. Indeed they have undermined the prosperity of the people.

10 January 1915

This morning a number of non-Bahá’ís attained the presence of our heavenly Beloved [in Abu Sinan]. All His utterances were formal and magisterial. In the afternoon, Shaykh Salmán said to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “My Guide, my brother Shaykh Yúsuf and I have been discussing a certain point and as yet, have not arrived at an agreement. My view is that children must be educated through modern means, whereas my brother states that most schoolchildren are ill-mannered. From Your speech it can be concluded that my brother is correct. I say

this because earlier You stated, 'Druze in this region are better behaved than the Druze in Lebanon since they are simpler people.' From this it can be surmised that the more civilized the people, the greater is their degeneracy." 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded:

It is universally recognized that evil is stronger than good. Evil has rapid influence, where good is slow in its impact. If a trustworthy person and a thief were together, the thief would never become righteous, but the converse may occur. Because of their association, a truthful person may become a liar, but it is rare for the perjurer to become truthful, or for the penurious to become generous by reason of his association with the charitable, or for the wicked to become virtuous, and so forth. This is because evil is stronger and its influence is more penetrating. This issue does not require proof, as it is evident like the sun at noontime.

If there were a thousand healthy men, but one among them had a contagious disease, the thousand would have no effect on the ill, but the illness of that one would spread to the remaining thousand. For instance, if a person is afflicted with smallpox and comes in contact with many healthy children, all will be infected, while it is not possible for the healthy to influence the sick. It is similar with the black plague or leprosy, where the healthy may be affected, but the converse would not hold.

Consider how much time it takes to raise a building, but dynamite can destroy it in blink of an eye. It takes five years to build an armored ship, but only a minute for a torpedo to sink it to the bottom of the ocean. It takes twenty years to raise a person to maturity, but he perishes in an instant by the assassin's bullet.

Therefore, if you desire for your children to be raised properly and remain protected, then they must be

cared for adequately. You must ensure that they do not meet or associate with ill-mannered persons. Either establish your own schools or do as we are doing. We have many students in the [Beirut] University. Last year there were thirty of them. They associate only with each other [i.e. other Bahá’ís] and at the time of instruction attend classes. Therefore they are well-protected. However, there are other [Muslim] Iranians in Beirut and they are all vagabonds. Even the teachers despise them, to the point that they are expelled from school. It is amazing! Most bewildering!

The Iranian children in ‘Akká were like angels, but alas, some of them associated with the Arabs or with ill-mannered children. When they argued, all their speech was in Persian, but then they would curse in Arabic since they were not taught similar words in Persian. When they became youth, they associated with non-Bahá’ís and became totally corrupt. Soon I had no choice but to expel them all.

There is a story of a Shaykh meeting a Bektashi²⁵⁶ and saying to him, “Why do you continue causing mischief and spending your time gratifying your carnal desires? Come with me and pray, meditate, fast for forty days, fear God and become righteous. Once you have become accustomed to praying and fasting, then you will no longer commit unseemly acts.” The Bektashi responded, “There is no need for forty days of prayer. You stay with me for just one night and all religion will be forgotten to you!”

Therefore I exhort you to protect your children from the evil influence of the wayward.

²⁵⁶ The Bektashis were the followers of the Bektashiyya Order named after the semi-legendary Sufi Haji Bektash Khurasani (died circa 1337 CE). The order associated with the Janissaries until their fall in 1826.

At nighttime, they told us that His blessed person would not come in to our midst and consequently we began singing hymns and poems. When we had finished, they gave the glad tidings that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would come and visit us. That night, He spoke of European prejudice: “When we arrived at the port of Naples in Italy, they thought we were Turks and intensified their mistreatment. Therefore, I told Shoghi Effendi, Mírzá Munír and Kusraw to return.”²⁵⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá then said to Shaykh Yúsuf:

Our companions in Europe report that some people have been killed there. In France they killed Monsieur Bernard nearly a month ago. This person never even harmed an ant. He despised war and confrontation so much that it is beyond description. He greatly disdained even the mention of the word ‘war.’ If there was ever a person who truly loved peace, it was he. His contempt for war was not because he desired to protect his own self, but was due to his hatred of conflict and killing. In truth, he was unique in all human perfections and spiritual attributes. He was a well-wisher to everyone.

One of his philanthropic efforts was that he had brought a number of Indian children [to Paris] and provided for them to grow and be educated. One of them became a doctor, another an engineer and yet another a teacher. At the dinner table, there was no difference among any of them, and he loved them all like his very own. Despite this, he was sent to the battlefield and, in the end, was killed. In Europe, the situation is such that if a person pays a million lira in ransom, they are still not exempt from military service.

²⁵⁷ In 1912, the blessed person of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá journeyed to Europe and America. Italy was at war with the Ottoman government. Therefore, due to this enmity, they caused difficulties [for those traveling from Ottoman controlled regions]. Therefore, certain companions, like the illustrious Shoghi Effendi, Munír Zayn, and Khusraw Khadím, returned. Dr. Faríd had a hand in this mischief. (HM)

Also yesterday, report was received that another one of our friends was killed.

Shaykh Yúsuf said, “the Matran²⁵⁸ of ‘Akká was dismissed from office and all his possessions were confiscated. He is not planning to stay in ‘Akká any longer.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Indeed, in Paris he had given talks to five hundred of the Ottomans saying that Syrian Christians are oppressed, the government is tyrannical and does not grant them the least bit of freedom, but the Bahá’ís are free! Each year this person (Matran) would go and, on behalf of the Syrian Christians, collect large donations, [bringing the funds with himself to ‘Akká]. When he saw that this melody had receptive ears, and this policy worked, he began to give speeches to generous Christians, urging them against the Ottoman government and enmity towards her. Then the matter was reported in the newspapers, and authorities confiscated all his possessions.

Each year this man would deposit all the funds he had collected under various pretexts with the haddad [ironworker] and charge interest. At last, the Christians learned of the details and protested, ‘You collect funds in our name, but instead of spending them on charitable ends, you deposit them with Fu’ád Effendi and personally benefit from the interest?!’ Indeed, “It is evident that God manifests what He has decreed.”

I should explain that I asked Áqá Siyyid Husayn Afnán²⁵⁹ the details

²⁵⁸ Matran (or Metropolitan in Western usage) is a title used in the Assyrian, or Chaldean Church, designating a rank above archbishop and below patriarch. In the Western Church, it refers to a rank equivalent to archbishop.

²⁵⁹ Siyyid Husayn Afnán was the older brother of Nayyir Afnán, and both were sons of Siyyid ‘Alí Afnán, and grandsons of the Blessed Beauty. With ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s

of this Matran, and he wrote the following description in my notebook:

The Matran of 'Akká was one of the entrenched enemies of the Faith and a close companion of the arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí] and Siyyid Mihdí Dahají. He always exerted efforts to sow the seeds of doubt and tried to precipitate all kinds of injuries, desiring to eradicate the blessed Tree of the Cause. The violators of the Covenant had given him most of the Tablets²⁶⁰, and he always warned that he had written a book of refutation and threatened to perpetrate various things.

Among his dealings with the arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí] was the following incident: one time when 'Abdu'l-Bahá had left Haifa for Egypt, the arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí] immediately informed the deposed and despised Matran that the Master – and I take refuge unto God! – had escaped. At once, the Matran telegraphed a certain Christian associate in Jaffa who had gone to the vessel [carrying the Master] and inquired [of 'Abdu'l-Bahá], “Are You 'Abbás Effendi?” “Yes, it is I,” was the response, “What do you want?” “I had heard of Your fame and came to see You,” the Christian replied. After returning to Jaffá, one of our friends followed the Christian and noted that he had gone directly to the telegraph office and cabled the Matran, “The Gentlemen is on a ship.”

Similarly, in Alexandria, another person came and

financial support, both completed their studies at Beirut College, but satanic thoughts caused them to leave the straight path of the Cause, to discard their everlasting crown of glory and to die as violators of the Covenant. (HM)

²⁶⁰ Presumably a reference to the Tablets stolen by Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí on the night of the ascension of Bahá'u'lláh.

inquired, and as in Jaffá, cabled the Matran of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s arrival.

The point is that the enemies, together with the arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí], were constantly conniving and spreading false rumors among the people.

This was a short glimpse of the many mischiefs caused by this wicked man. “*For thy Lord standeth on a watch tower.*”²⁶¹

([Written by] Siyyid Husayn Afnán.)

<150> **11 January 1915**

In the afternoon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to ‘Umqih and returned near dusk. Praise be unto God that His health was in perfect order and He often smiled, laughed and shared humorous stories. Shaykh Salmán said [to the Master], “An order has been issued for a trench to be dug in Súr and Saydá²⁶² to serve as a defensive measure against the enemy’s attacks.” Smiling and pointing to Shaykh Sálíh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “They should have taken Shaykh Sálíh since, for such projects, an engineer is needed, particularly an accomplished one. Therefore, they have erred by not taking Shaykh Sálíh. But in truth, your father is even scared of the sound of trumpets and horns; how much more the roar of cannons!” [Addressing Shaykh Sálíh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá humorously said,] “How about if you go to the border and become the army’s commander?” The Shaykh responded, “I abhor [war]. Even in my sleep I dread such frightening things. Last night I dreamt that they had fired a cannonball into the village of Abu Sinan. With much anxiety I awoke immediately.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated:

Because you are so frightened, your dreams are also

²⁶¹ Qur’án 89:13.

²⁶² Súr and Saydá are Tyre and Sidon, two large and important towns in southern Lebanon.

disturbed. Your situation is like the story of the man who attended rawdih-khánís²⁶³ and, as soon as he heard the sermon and the story of the martyrs of Karbalá, would pull out his handkerchief and cry profusely. He would pray, “O that we had been with you and had won a great victory!” He always wished to be present on the plain of Karbalá. It so happened that one night he dreamt that Yazíd and his many men had attacked the camp of the Imám Husayn and he was among the defenders of the Prince of the Martyrs. First, ‘Alí-Akbar came and asked the Imám for permission to die and then went into the field and was martyred. Then Qásim came, likewise asking for permission, and then went into the field of sacrifice. Gradually, one by one, all the Imám’s men came and then went out to become martyrs, and he was the only one left.

The Imám said to him, “Go forth and fight.”

“But I have no horse,” he replied.

“Take mine,” the Imám offered. He took the horse and mounted. Then he complained, “I have no sword.”

“Take mine,” once more the Imám offered.

Having taken His horse and sword, the man realized that it was actually best to escape, so he abandoned the Imám standing there with no horse or saber and quickly fled the area.

When he awoke in the morning, he told this story to his household and friends. Soon it reached the Válí’s ear, who summoned him forthwith. The Válí said, “I have heard that you had an interesting dream. Pray do tell it, as it is amusing.” The man described his dream from the beginning to the end. Then the Válí asked, “What would you estimate to be the worth of that horse?”

²⁶³ Meetings for the recital of the tragedies of Karbalá and the martyrdom of the Imám Husayn.

“At least, four hundred tumáns.”

“What about the sword?”

“Another three hundred tumáns,” confessed the man.

The Váli ordered the man fined seven hundred tumáns and then dismissed. He said to him, “O iniquitous man! Not only did you not aid the Imám, you stole His horse and saber! While surely they are more precious than this amount, I will let you go with a fine of seven hundred tumáns.”

Now (addressing Shaykh Sálíh), you also always speak of war and battle, but in reality you fear even the sound of a trumpet, never mind cannons and artilleries! However, I had a dream the night before that the Páshás²⁶⁴ arrived and told the Bahá’ís of this dream. Is this not true? (‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired of us and we all bowed down in affirmation.) And my dream was this:

I saw a mighty and straight highway opened up in ‘Akká and, at its entrance, a cannon was discharged. All the city’s inhabitants, including Myself, leaned to one direction and the shell passed by without injuring anyone. However, a great commotion ensued among the people because, as the cannon-shell passed, red objects similar to birds were discharged from the shell. People said these were dynamite and, if struck, would explode and cause damage. But none of them struck anything and no harm was done.²⁶⁵

I related this dream to My friends, and the

²⁶⁴ A reference to the four members of the Commission of Inquiry who came in 1907 to investigate the Master. For details see Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 118-122.

²⁶⁵ *Busbrú’í*, p. 10, states that the Commission of Inquiry headed by ‘Árif Bey arrived at the beginning of the winter of 1907 and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had a dream which He shared with the friends: “I dreamt that a ship had anchored in the bay of ‘Akká and several doves that were like dynamite flew from the ship towards ‘Akká. They circled me as I was standing amongst the deeply frightened citizens and then returned to the vessel without causing any harm.”

following day the illustrious Páshás arrived. I told [My companions], “An immense storm will blow, but it will be of no consequence as it will subside with no harm.” When the gentlemen [Páshás] came, they connived with our enemies, and I was aware of all their doings though I did not heed them. You are aware that the commotion reached a point where no one could come or go. No matter how hard they tried to convince Me to go and visit these [Páshás], I refused and said, “Perhaps they wish to report on a truthful and accurate matter, and it is best for Me not to go see them so that our enemies would not be able to say, ‘He has connived and bribed the investigators, thereby derailing their purpose.’” Because of this, no matter how they pleaded, I declined to go [visit the Páshás]. My very refusal added to their enmity and malice because they had said, “There is no insult greater than this! We represent the Sultán and bear a royal mission, and He [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] does not even come to see us and inquire about our comfort. What a great insult!” Despite this, I did not go and continued to ignore them.²⁶⁶

They sent the chief of the court²⁶⁷ to Me. He was with them and on their side, but feigned friendship with us. He said, “I deeply regret Your inattentiveness. At

²⁶⁶ “I did not consent to their request for a meeting. Yet Hikmat Bayk came to me and implored – indeed even cried in conniving – saying, ‘O my Master, I am honored to have attained your presence even if briefly. They have come for investigation, and it is best that you refused to meet them.’ Afterwards, the Valí of Beirut issued commands, and his vizier, ‘Abdu’r-Rahmán al-Hút, thought the commission had reduced their indictment and had dismissed charges through some bribery [on My part]. However, I wrote him, ‘My dearest wish is to be crucified, so they would subside [in agitation], much like pouring cold water on fire.’” (HM) [This footnote is given in Arabic and may represent an extract from the memoirs of someone else, perhaps Dr. Zia Baghdadi.]

²⁶⁷ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 120, has understood this to be a reference to Shaykh Muhammad who was the presiding judge of the Criminal Court.

least meet them for a brief session to lessen their enmity and to bridge this divide. They rank as viziers and have come on behalf of the Sultán. It is not good to remain so heedless of them and ignore them so thoroughly. I am in pain for You.” I responded to him, “Convey my greetings to the Páshás and say, ‘If you had come to ‘Akká to investigate some other issue or problem, then unhesitatingly and with great pleasure I would come and see you, and eagerly welcome you and give feasts in your honor. However since you are the investigators of the government and have come to investigate My doings, then it is not prudent of Me to visit you as some would claim that I was currying favors.’”

The news of My sentiments had greatly fueled their animosity and malice. They had said, “When we return to Constantinople and the Sultán asks us, ‘What does ‘Abbás Effendi look like?’ what are we to respond? We must see Him at least once!” I did not even agree to this [one meeting] and relied upon God, continuing to thoroughly ignore them.

However, during this time, our enemies were most jubilant and happy. ‘Árif Bek²⁶⁸ had said, “Upon my arrival in Constantinople, I will be immediately named the Váli of Beirut and the very first order of business will be to crucify Him [i.e. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] by the gate of ‘Akká.” The court’s chief had taken this news to My brother, Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí, who was forgathered in the shop of [Muhammad-]Javád Qazvíní. He had become so thrilled with the prospect that he had quickly served lemonade to the messenger of this wonderful tidings; and not just once, but twice he served him lemonade!

From another direction, Khalíl Páshá, the Váli of

²⁶⁸ In Turkish, his name is spelled ‘Árif Bey.

Beirut, had ordered his deputy, ‘Abdu’r-Rahmán al-Hút, to write, “Interrogate ‘Abbás Bahá’í.”²⁶⁹ I said to the Mutasarrif of ‘Akká, “Firstly, I am very pleased that he referred to Me by My given name [‘Abbás], thereby placing Me in the same category as the Prophets. Has anyone ever heard of Moses Bek, Moses Áqá, or Moses Effendi? Or perhaps Jesus Bek, Jesus Áqá, or Jesus Effendi? Or heard of Muhammad Bek, Muhammad Áqá, or Muhammad Effendi? Never! When they wish to speak reverently of Them they say, Moses son of ‘Amram, Jesus son of Mary, or Muhammad son of ‘Abdu’llah. Therefore I am very grateful that he has used My real name and nothing else. Secondly, know that God has not created abasement for Me. You may think that beating, slaying, murder, pillaging are abasement, or you may consider being dragged in mud, compelled to sustain the weight of a heavy chain around one’s neck, receiving injuries in the head, or being crucified is abasement, but in truth, these things will be My everlasting glory!²⁷⁰ ‘I am exalted in life and in death, and, in truth, this is one of the miracles.”

He said, “They²⁷¹ claim that two Europeans – one an Austrian and the other a German – have come to You, are presently in hiding, [and that You are aware of

²⁶⁹ When I was alone with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He showed me the official telegraph which said, “‘Abbás Bahá’í,” without any title. (HM)

²⁷⁰ “Know that the most beloved of all is the one who will imprison or crucify Me, much the same that My Murshíd, His Holiness the Báb, was dealt with. Upon the cross I will give a sermon, speaking what He spoke, saying, ‘There is no need for twin witnesses and you are free to perpetrate on Me whatsoever harm you desire. However, know of certainty, that God has not created abasement or humiliation for Me, and no one is able to deprecate Me. This telegraph is the cause of My boundless gratitude for they have placed Me in the rank of the Prophets.’” (HM) [Presumably words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as recorded in an Arabic diary accessible to Dr. Mu’ayyad – likely the diary of Dr. Zia Baghdadi.]

²⁷¹ Presumably a reference to Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí and his collaborators.

their whereabouts]. They also claim that You received seditious documents.²⁷²»

I responded, “Last year, twenty-five of our friends came, visited and left. However, this year, no Austrian or German [Bahá’ís] have come. Besides, I am a Bahá’í and therefore do not interfere in the affairs of politics.”

“What if we arrayed witnesses who testified otherwise,” he said.

I responded, “I say that no Austrian or German has come this year and that’s that! But if you want to establish a case against Me, I am willing to write, sign and seal whatever you dictate and give you the document. Whatever your accusation, be it murder, theft, embezzlement, infidelity, whatever you want, I will write and give you. But you must dictate the precise text so I may write and sign it. However, if you ask me, I will say that no German or Austrian has come and that I do not interfere in political affairs.”

The honored Páshás left ‘Akká with books filled with lies, and My brother [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] sent them an elegantly scribed emblem of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá,” claiming it was the same standard that I had raised in order to establish my monarchy. At this time our enemies were jubilant, but we relied upon God.

<155> However, I offered defense. That is, when Constantinople sent Me the original of the accusatory indictment, I vigorously responded.²⁷³ [In My defense] I

²⁷² Apparently a reference to correspondence received by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from the Bahá’ís of Europe, which, at the instigation of the Covenant-breakers, had attracted the suspicion of the Ottoman secret police.

²⁷³ The diarist has provided the following footnote, which appears to be words spoken by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

I forwarded my written defense through Shaykh Badra’d-Dín to Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd and told the Bahá’ís to consult as to the course we should take. They consulted and decided that it was best for Me to flee onboard an Italian ship that had been waiting for this

wrote, “The honored investigators have indicted Me on four counts:

Firstly, [they claim] I have established a new sovereignty. I thank the honored gentlemen for this accusation since therein lies a great compliment for Me. How can a prisoner, banished from His land, without any succor or friend, single and alone, forsaken by the entire world, forgotten and disregarded by all the peoples, and at most being called Qazal-básh²⁷⁴, make a claim to the throne? Indeed if such a person harbors this ambition, he is a most distinguished, powerful and mighty man. Therefore, in reality, the gentlemen have not condemned Me; nay, they have greatly honored Me, and I am most grateful to them.

Secondly, they have claimed²⁷⁵ that I raised an evident standard, hoisted it over ‘Akká and surrounding villages, and subsequently sent it to Badíyatu’l-‘Arab [Lebanon] by Shaykh Mahmúd, inciting all the Arabs [to insurrection]. Have the investigators seen this

purpose in the bay for three days. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá then smilingly turned to Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí and said, “Mírzá, you wanted Me to escape?!”

Bushrú’í, p. 12, indicates that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructed nine Bahá’ís to consult on this issue.

²⁷⁴ Lit “red hat.” It became the designation of a section of the Sháh Ismá’il’s army who were of Shí’í religion and protected the Safavid dynasty. They were called Qazal-básh because of the red hats they wore and eventually the entire Safavid army acquired this epithet. By evoking this appellation, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in effect is calling Himself a soldier in Bahá’u’lláh’s army.

²⁷⁵ “What is promoting my gratitude and thanks to the honored Commission is that in their charge they have prominently accused Me of being the center of acclamation, praise and honor, and have attributed great miracles to Me. How can a prisoner in a strange land, desolate, single and alone manifest such powers that defeat the influence of mighty governments and be able to inaugurate a new sovereignty? If he is able to do so, then he deserves the reward. I say, by God, they have understood incorrectly.” (HM) [Presumably extracted by Dr. Mú’ayyad from someone else’s Arabic diary.]

standard?²⁷⁶ The people have never seen this standard, nor have any of the spies, nor has mention of it been made in the newspapers²⁷⁷, nor has Rashíd Páshá or anyone else become aware of it. Consequently, it is a sign of might and power for an imprisoned man that a company of angels came down from the sky, seized the standard on earth, ...²⁷⁸ blinded everyone of their sight, and even erased memories of this evident standard which has been waved above the heads of divers Arab tribes!²⁷⁹ Therefore, this is an irrefutable miracle and testifies to my might and power. Consequently, the gentlemen have praised me and I thank them for it.

Thirdly, they have said that I have raised a fortress.²⁸⁰ Once more, this accusation testifies to My might, and for that I thank them.

Fourthly, they have accused Me of having acquired three or four parcels of land, which again speaks to My influence and standing. However, should you by

²⁷⁶ The viziers had complained to ‘Árif Bey, “Where is this evident standard? Where is it located?” (HM)

²⁷⁷ Due to the prevalence of spies during [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd’s rule, and various conniving, intrigues and settlings of personal accounts, one of the Páshás one day, after drinking wine in a tavern and being intoxicated, had stated the known adage, “Give me one more glass of wine, O bartender, as every two must become three.” His meaning was that after two drinks, he wanted a third, but the spies interpreted it to mean that now that Sultán ‘Abdu’l-‘Azíd and Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Majíd had died, Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd would perish as well. This very comment resulted in the death of that wretched man. (HM)

²⁷⁸ Left blank by the diarist, Dr. Mú’ayyad.

²⁷⁹ The last two sentences are in Arabic and may be excerpts from another diary, such as the one composed by Dr. Zia Baghdadi.

²⁸⁰ “Again I repeat that indeed I am grateful for this third complaint as it indicates My great might and power, nay, My ability as a prisoner to cause great miracles! It requires great influence to raise a fort despite an immense naval presence. Therefore any prisoner that can manifest such might deserves any laurels they bestow upon him. By God, amazing is their understanding!” (HM) [These words are given in Arabic in the original text.]

telegraph designate someone, I am willing to sell him [the properties] for two thousand lira.

Let this serve as your response.”

When they [i.e. Páshás] reached Constantinople, God's cannon roared. When [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was going to the mosque [for Friday's congregation prayer], someone threw a bomb that killed and maimed two hundred people. Constantinople was in turmoil. ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd pronounced, “Now is not the time [for the prosecution of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. You must search and identify the authors of this mischief and revolt. This is far more important.” With that, our trial ended.

Sometime later, when the armies of Niyází Bey and Enver Bey conquered Constantinople and declared martial law²⁸¹, ‘Árif Bey was passing through the streets at night when he was ordered three times to stop by a gendarme. Out of his pride, he did not heed the order and, with three bullets, was sent to hell. His friend [another colleague on the Commission] escaped and perished. Faríq, [the third member of the Commission,] was inflicted with typhoid and died shortly thereafter. [The final member of the Commission], Míraláy Adham Bey, the Damascene, fled to Alexandria where he was safe, but his servant stole his bag and all his money and then disappeared. Having lost hope for aid from every quarter and having no means of support, in desperation, he went to Áqá Siyyid Yahyá²⁸² in the business-house of Mírzá Hasan Khurásání, known as Hájí Sharif. To his question, “Do you know me?” he received a negative response. He said, “I am Adham Bey, the Damascene, and I went to ‘Akká as a member of the Commission of Inquiry. Out of enmity, I, in truth, did all I could [against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. However, now I need your help. My

²⁸¹ “Qánún-i ‘Urfí” can also mean military law, which is a form of martial law.

²⁸² ‘Abdu’l-Bahá's brother-in-law.

servant has taken all my money and possessions and has fled. I am without funds and desperate. Without even a coin for the train to Cairo, my hope lies in your charity.” Hájí Siyyid Yahyá gave him thirty qárúsh and wrote of the situation to Me. I sent ten lira for him since that wretched man had worked hard for us. So many nights he had been deprived of sleep, filling books with lies against us! Now to give him only thirty qárúsh was unfair! He deserved more. So I sent him another ten lira.²⁸³ He subsequently left Alexandria and perished.²⁸⁴

They martyred His Holiness the Báb in Tabríz and pierced His blessed breast with thousands of bullets. His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh was compelled to sustain the weight of chains on His sanctified neck. Am I, who consider myself a Bahá’í and a servant of that Threshold, afraid of similar trials?!

After this fervent presentation, with an excited visage that was filled with joy and energy, He arose and left. The influence of this amazing spectacle indeed would penetrate even a dark stone!

²⁸³ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, pp. 317, notes: “The four members of the ill-fated Commission of Inquiry, dispatched from Constantinople to seal the fate of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, suffered, each in his turn, a humiliation hardly less drastic than that which they had planned for Him. ‘Árif Bey, the head of the Commission, seeking stealthily at midnight to flee from the wrath of the Young Turks, was shot dead by a sentry. Adham Bey succeeded in escaping to Egypt, but was robbed of his possessions by his servant on the way, and was in the end compelled to seek financial assistance from the Bahá’ís of Cairo, a request which was not refused. Later he sought help from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who immediately directed the believers to present him with a sum on His behalf, an instruction which they were unable to carry out owing to his sudden disappearance. Of the other two members, one was exiled to a remote place, and the other died soon after in abject poverty.”

²⁸⁴ Mírzá Badí’u’lláh had given a promissory note to [the chief of police] Yahyá Bey Tábúr Áqásí that if they exiled ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Fízán he would receive 1200 pounds. [Even though ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was not banished] Tábúr Áqásí received this sum owed him. (Based on comments of Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí) (HM)



12 January 1915, Abu Sinan

We boarded ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s carriage and went to Haifa to accompany Miss [Edith] Sanderson for her departure. We stayed in Haifa on the 13th and 14th [of January].²⁸⁵ We tarried for one more day after Miss Sanderson’s departure onboard an Italian ship.

[14 January]

At about one hour after noon, we arrived in ‘Akká and came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house. He inquired, “Did Sanderson leave?” We responded positively. “Praise be to God that she left [safely]. Truly she is a peerless woman. May she always remain under the

²⁸⁵ *Bushrú’í*, p. 64, has recorded more details on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances on that day.

protection of the Blessed Beauty.” Then we left for Abu Sinan.

In the course of my medical practice in Abu Sinan, I had earned thirty bishlak and presented this [to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] with a request that flour be purchased and distributed among the poor. This entreaty was graciously accepted, and He instructed the honored [Druze] Shaykhs to inform the needy of Abu Sinan to gather that afternoon by the entrance of the residence [of Shaykh Sálíh]. Because of their affection and goodwill, the Shaykhs had responded, “Out of the benevolence of our Guide, the Effendi [‘Abdu’l-Bahá], everyone in Abu Sinan has his annual food and provisions,” and consequently they did not inform the people.

That afternoon none of the poor came, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was irritated. Angrily, He protested to the Shaykhs, “Every time I want to give alms, you find some excuse to prevent Me! The good doctor has raised this money from seeing patients, and now he wishes to distribute it among the needy. Take it and disburse it between the Druze and the Christian poor.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá added to my contribution a sum from His own pocket, and the whole amount was given to the Catholics.

Praise be unto God that this insignificant gift received the honor of acceptance at His threshold. And this is naught save by the grace and the favor of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who rejects the immense contributions of the affluent, but graciously accepts these most negligible gifts from the likes of me.

19 January 1915

Today was my birthday.²⁸⁶ In the years past, particularly during the time that I had been working hard outside the Holy Land on my studies, I never celebrated my birth. However, this year, having the incomparable bounty of being under the canopy of the favors of the Beloved, and partaking of both material and spiritual feast of His kindness, I thought to mark this day by giving thanks. Though

²⁸⁶ Dr. Mú’ayyad gives his birth date as 19 January 1888.

[because of the war] not a soul in the East or the West was at ease, we were spending our time here in such marvelous happiness, drinking our fill from the wine of the Almighty's love.



Bahá't women in 'Akká

Members of the Holy Family are seated in the second row: Second from left is Munavvar Khánum, then Túbá Khánum, the Greatest Holy Leaf, Muntrih Khánum, Diyá'tyyih Khánum and Rúhá Khánum

Today was a truly festive day. With gifts such as a bottle of perfume, silk handkerchiefs, sweetmeats and expressions sweeter than honey, the Greatest Holy Leaf – may my spirit be a sacrifice unto her bounties – and the blessed Holy Mother converted the earth of my heart into a mirror of the heaven above!

<160> **22 January 1915**

Together with some of the friends we went to the village of Yirka today. This hamlet is located on top of a hill and has about one thousand inhabitants who are all Druze. This is one of the sacred spots sanctified by the footsteps of the Ancient Beauty Who tarried here for three months. To this day, His blessed room is kept the same way in the home of Shaykh Sa'íd and Shaykh Salmán (sons of the late Shaykh Marzúq), who consider their village hallowed

because at one time it received Bahá’u’lláh, His tent was pitched there and its soil was blessed by His footsteps. They have the greatest affection for the friends of God [Bahá’ís] and regard them in high esteem. As a sign of their great fondness, after having warmly welcomed us and most affectionately offered hospitality to our party, they prepared several Arabian horses for our journey back to Abu Sinan. They even placed several of their servants at our disposal for this journey.

Except for the original carpets on which He walked, the honored Shaykhs have placed no other furniture in this room [occupied by Bahá’u’lláh]. They regard this place as highly sanctified and light a candle in it every Friday night.

30 January 1915

A number of notables and affluent citizens of ‘Akká came to Abu Sinan, including, Nazmy Bey Báshí, Alay Amíní, Jawdat Bey, Yuzbáshí Nazmy Effendi Bey and the city’s physician, Dr. Táhir Bey. The honored Druze Shaykhs had prepared a dinner feast, and Badí‘ Effendi and I were invited as well. Before dinner, the guests had gone to another house and were engaged in drinking wine.

When Áqá Mírzá Tarázu’lláh, son of Áqá Mírzá Mahmúd Káshí, went to guide the guests to the dinner hall, the ranking member of these military officers, Bey-báshí Nazmy Effendi had said to Mírzá Tarázu’lláh, “Today in ‘Akká, a feast was held in front of the spruce-fir trees.” This feast was organized by Mírzá Badí‘u’lláh, the violator of the Covenant, who had invited the military commanders of Haifa and ‘Akká, especially Haydar Bey, the chief of gendarmes. The guests were entertained with great quantities of food and [alcoholic] drinks, and then [Mírzá Badí‘u’lláh] adorned his daughter, Sadhíjih, and sent her in for the men’s entertainment. His intention was, while they were engaged in drinking and dance, for her to ask a favor from Haydar Bey that would result in either imprisonment, exile or murder of the blessed Person [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. He knew that Haydar Bey and Mahmúd Bey

had complete control over the administration and military forces of the region. Whatever they did could not be questioned by anyone else, particularly during the state of war and martial law, which rendered them thoroughly omnipotent and unrestricted. Therefore with this sordid scheme, which cost the Covenant-breakers their worth and chastity, they were trying to attack [the Master]. Alas, they did not recognize that even if the Holy Ghost materialized and rebelled against the divine Covenant, it would be lifeless and impotent [to do so], much less such men who place no value on their own honor.

Once the news of this feast in 'Akká had spread, there was a huge uproar among all the diverse creeds of people saying, "Mírzá Badí'u'lláh's perfidy has deeply disgraced all Iranians, robbed them of honor and stained them with grievous shame. How is it possible for someone to attack his own Benefactor in such ways and even be willing to sacrifice the virtue of his own daughter and wife? Sanctified be God, what enmity and malice is this?" Openly the city's physician, Táhir Bey, would say [regarding the Covenant-breakers], "Satan must have been incarnated in their human temple to sow seeds of infidelity." [He would add about 'Abdu'l-Bahá,] "But praise be unto God that a diamond shines amidst all the coal surrounding it. Good deeds will glow like the brilliant sun and likewise evil deeds and base conduct will manifest their true character. From their doings it is now clear why His Holiness ['Abbás] Effendi has separated Himself from them and expelled them from the community. Such incidents must occur so that no one could be critical of the esteemed Effendi for having severed His relation with them."

Sanctified is God! Nonbelievers speak with such clarity of vision of the ascendancy of the Center of the divine Covenant and the degeneracy of the enemies of the Cause! Even though Truth cannot be compared with its opposite, nor the heavens above with mere soil, thankfully there are those who have perceived the essence of this situation. "Take ye notice, O men of understanding!" Yea, it is stated that history repeats itself. In place of the appointed Yúshí'

ibn Nún they place man-carved idols.

The entire world is seized in the grasp of His [i.e. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] sovereignty. This is a flawless gem nurtured in the bosom of the Blessed Perfection. This is a peerless plant watered by the blood of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]. This is a matchless tree raised by the blood of thousands of martyrs. These clouds of enmity and hatred can never hope to cover the brilliance of this sun, nor can this tree be barred from bringing forth everlasting fruits. This is an impossibility, which the honored gentlemen [i.e. Covenant-breakers] should recognize.

Chapter 8

Abu Sinan: February 1915

7 February 1915

I went to Haifa and in the streets beheld the moon of the orb of the Covenant.



Haifa 1915

He greeted me with these words, “Marhabá, marhabá! Áqá Mírzá Habíb, you are welcome. When did you come?” I said that I had just arrived. “How are the friends?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired, “I hope all are happy, delighted, consecrated and joyful.” “By Your grace,” I responded, “all are well and long for Your arrival.” “I have some work to do now,” [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] said. “Once my work is completed, then I will come. But I have much to do. What is happening there?” I informed Him, “Áqá Mírzá Munír [Zayn] had come and told us that, in case of the arrival of battleships and the

bombardment of the city, the Master had designated a safe haven for the friends. I have come to retrieve my diplomas.” He responded, “There are no worries, but I did this so that whenever there is a difficulty, the friends would know how to deal with such contingencies, how to prepare for such events so that if they do transpire, they will not be agitated or confused. The remedy for illness must be ready beforehand. Because of this, I prepared that haven. What you are planning to do is very good. Take your documents with you. Caution must be observed.”

He then went to the home of one of the Turks and assured me of a second meeting [that day]. Soon, in fact, He returned, and we boarded His carriage. Áqá Mírzá Ahmad [Sohrab] was also summoned, and together we went sightseeing. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “I go to dangerous places by myself, but for sightseeing, I like to take the friends with Me. Today I want to take you on this excursion. Tell Me, how do you spend your time in Abu Sinan?” I replied, “By performing surgeries, and at night responding to polemics and reading books. I spend the afternoons doing operations and the evenings outlining [responses to] polemics of [Muhammad-]Javád Qazvíní. He has translated A‘zam as ‘Great’ and Akbar as ‘the Most Great’ whereas it should be the reverse.²⁸⁷ (‘Abdu’l-Bahá smiled.) Among his base accusations is that instead of bringing unity, the Master separated men from their wives, fathers from sons, and daughters from their mothers.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “I never caused their separation. They separated themselves. The Blessed Beauty established a Covenant and they broke it, therefore, separation took place. If they obey and remain firm, there will be unity. The Cause of God has united easterner, westerner, southerner, northerner, Turk,

²⁸⁷ It is most likely that the issue had to do with the translation of “Ghusn-i A‘zam” (the Greater/Greatest Branch, referring to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) and “Ghusn-i Akbar” (the Larger or Greater/Greatest Branch, referring to the Covenant-breaker Muhammad-‘Alí). Both A‘zam and Akbar are strictly speaking comparative, but are often used in the superlative sense in Arabic. Because Bahá’u’lláh stated in the Book of His Covenant (His last Will and Testament) that He had chosen Akbar after A‘zam, Bahá’ís rank A‘zam over Akbar and the former is therefore translated “Most Great” and the latter “Greater.”

Arab, Indian and American. All are united and would give their lives for one another. The ones that were far became near; the enemies, became brothers. But he who violates the Covenant, be it one's brother, sister, father or mother, naturally a firm believer will sever his relations with him."

I said, "I take refuge with God for saying this, but even if it was the Master's fault, then the Blessed Beauty would have done the same. The very first person that He expelled was His own brother and His kinsman. Similarly His Holiness Muhammad dealt with Quraysh in this manner. His Holiness Christ said, 'I have brought a sword.'²⁸⁸ He also said, 'In the latter days, God will separate father from son and mother from daughter.'²⁸⁹ And 'He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.'²⁹⁰ Moreover, [Qazvíní] claims that Badrí [Bedri] Bey was present, but that the Master instructed the American [visiting] ladies not to speak French and to say that they did not know that language." [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] said:

This is sheer calumny. Badrí Bey was my translator and always spoke with them in French. And how is this issue related to anything? Repeatedly, I told Mírzá Ahmad [Sohrab] not to speak English. This is because of the requirements of the time and the conditions of that place. No one listens to such unfounded attacks anymore. People want something that will benefit them and solve their difficulties. The most such people [as Qazvíní] can do is to inject doubt into some of the believers. These polemics are written by Mírzá

²⁸⁸ This is a paraphrase of Matthew 10:34, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword."

²⁸⁹ Luke 12:53 reads, "The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."

²⁹⁰ Matthew 25:32.

Muhammad-‘Alí, circulated in the name of Javád [Qazvíní], and four or five of our foes have published them. <165> Another time Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí wrote similar things and disseminated them in the name of Mírzá ‘Abdu’lláh. These very papers will cause their eternal damnation. Today the ultimate judge in the world is the power of the Covenant. At nights, you should discuss such things, because it is better than to speak about politics and who has done what and said which.

Badrí²⁹¹ Bey, who later became Badrí Páshá, was one of the prisoners of ‘Akká who was extremely bright and well educated. Frequently he attained the presence [of the Master], and subsequently he became a believer. One time an English doctor²⁹², who had his office in the front rooms of the house of ‘Abdu’llah Páshá, invited the Master to dinner. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to Badrí Bey, “You come as well, but if you see something that you do not like, tolerate it and say nothing. These people have peculiar habits.” He responded, “Whatever is Your will, I will obey.” At the dinner table that night, all of the doctor’s attention was focused on the well-ornamented [western] ladies, who were acting like proud peacocks. He had showered the ladies with his lavish praise and esteem, but had paid very little attention to His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Badrí Bey. The latter was greatly perturbed and agitated, but the Master motioned him to remain calm and jovial. The night passed, and Badrí Bey had a miserable experience.

A few days later, three carriages arrived bringing American visitors, both men and women. The English doctor came forth thinking that the visitors had come for him, since typically he had

²⁹¹ Bedri is the Turkish spelling.

²⁹² This English doctor was with the Church Missionary Society, a British missionary organization. In 1897, Dr. Cropper was stationed in ‘Akká. The British missionaries rented the rooms that are to the right of the entrance of the main building of the House of ‘Abdu’llah Pasha on the ground floor. These are the rooms now used as the pilgrims’ rest area and dining-room.

western guests. But the Americans told him that they had come to pay homage to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. A few days later the Americans went to Bahjí for a visit to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh. They were secretly followed by the English doctor who saw them prostrating on the ground and singing such hymns as “Nearer my God to Thee.” Then they returned to ‘Akká, where they attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Badrí Bey was serving as their translator. The English doctor came by the door and sent in his business card with a request to meet the visitors.

The American pilgrims gave the card to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saying, “We do not know this person, but will follow whatever You guide.” The Master responded that this was their decision to make in accordance with their custom. The Americans said, “When we are ill, we need a doctor. However, praised be God, since we are now under Your shadow, we are well and have no need for a doctor.” They sent the card back, refusing to meet. Badrí Bey announced that he had then understood the full wisdom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ways and gained a deeper appreciation for the majesty of the Faith, and had become filled with joy.

I said to the Master, “God, verily, doeth what He willeth, and ordaineth what He pleaseth. The Blessed Beauty has revealed verses in refutation of such polemics of the violators. His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] has said in one place, ‘David appeared after His Holiness Moses. And none is permitted to question this matter.’” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “He has revealed, ‘He appeared before Moses.’” I said, “Yes, ‘before Moses’ is revealed. I stated it in error.”²⁹³

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s carriage at that point reached the cave of Elijah, and about two hundred needy women and children were on hand.

²⁹³ The Báb refers to David coming before Moses in *Dala’il Sab’ih* [The Seven Proofs], but at least two Azali transcriptions of this work have the order reversed. Bahá’u’lláh was asked about this and He responded that even though it is contrary to our understanding of the Qur’an and other Scriptures, that the Báb is the Manifestation of God and His words are divine wisdom. One of the texts which refer to this is in Fadil Mázandarání, *Amr va Khalq*.

The Master said, “Take this money, Isfandiyár²⁹⁴, and distribute it among them. But do not allow them to receive a second time.” About one hundred of them were given alms, but the money ran out. We then boarded the carriage and went about one hundred steps further when the Master, and His beauteous Countenance, also boarded. We returned to His residence.



Cave of Elijah on Mount Carmel in 1893

About thirty of the believers were assembled that night in the house of the Master. He said to the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, “Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh cures the ills of all, except he does not examine Me. Praised be God that out of the favors of the Blessed Beauty, I am well and healthy. Indeed, I am very well. After such an arduous journey [to Europe and America], I needed a repose. Now I am forced to rest a little, otherwise I would not relax. Ustád Muhammad-‘Alí, chant a prayer!”

²⁹⁴ Isfandiyár was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s coachman and had written this verse above his carriage, “I am Isfandiyár, servant of the Threshold, assured of Thy favor and bounty.” (HM)

8 February 1915, Haifa

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was sitting by the entrance, under the sun. Áqá Mírzá Fadlu’lláh Banán Shírází²⁹⁵ was present as well. The Master said, “The call of the Supreme Concourse and the fame of the Cause of God has enveloped the whole earth, but the Iranians have not yet awakened to it.” A Christian entered, carrying a basket. When he saw the Master, he was overwhelmed and quickly dropped the basket, saying, “There was no porter, so I was forced to carry the basket myself.” “A person must be proud of his labor,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “and only ashamed of his sins, not of his work and service.”



‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Residence in Haifa

A shining cat was sitting next to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and constantly pressed herself against the Master’s ‘abá. He said, “This cat has such bliss that none of earth’s monarchs can rival her. She has no fears or worries and is completely protected and cared for by God!” About this time, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s gaze fell upon a donkey belonging to the son of Áqá Nasru’lláh. He said, “It is amazing that in America I did not see any donkeys. They have zebras, but only in zoos. They are

²⁹⁵ A prominent believer, who served as the secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of Shiraz during 1930s and 1940s; see Ahang Rabbani, *In the Land of Refuge*, chapter 15.

246 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

truly remarkable animals, displaying beautiful stripes. It is marvelous that in all the museums they have collected various items and kinds of animals, particularly birds. It takes a month to completely tour the whole place. Consider how they have tamed wild beasts. They have caged and trained remarkable lions and spectacular bears; but they have not been able to edify a single human being! In Paris, at a certain location, they had caged a polar bear and people would come and mockingly watch him. The bear would also look back at them amusingly, probably thinking, ‘What happened that I was seized by these people? What am I doing here?’” He then laughed.



‘Abdu’l-Bahá at His Residence in Haifa circa 1915

Then, several Ottoman soldiers came and attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. After a while, they sought permission to leave and left. The Master said, “At least these Ottomans [make good soldiers]! I saw several Iranians in Paris. One of them was a young man and had studied military science for a few years in France. Afterwards, he had spent a few more years in Germany. Iranians wanted to enlist him in the war and spoke highly in his praise, emphasizing the excellence of his education in the military. When he came to me I tested him and realized that he was

particularly ignorant of the science of war and that the only thing he was able to take back to Iran was syphilis, which had already consumed half of his throat. Ottomans are better.”



‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His Residence in Haifa

In the afternoon we had tea in the presence of the Master. He said, “Bring my overcoat so we can walk to the Shrine of the Báb.” I accompanied Him, and soon a number of other friends joined us. His carriage was coming from behind. En route, He rested on two locations and called each the first and the second rest area. On the way, He asked this servant, “Are you practicing medicine for free?” I said, “For the needy.” “Do you give them medicine too?” I replied, “To those who cannot afford it.” We reached a location where the road bent, and He spoke of the benefit of paved roads. He noted, “This is indeed an amazing mountain and now has good roads as well.” (He meant that the large boulders had been removed.)

Hájí Siyyid Javád asked, “Will there be a time when electricity will be available on this mountain?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “Without a

doubt! But not so soon. Eventually this mountain will be filled with light.”

Then we reached a particular location, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “I purchased this parcel of land in order to make the road wider. The wretched Matran seized it and fenced it with a wall; but he eventually lost it as well.”

Midway through, His carriage arrived and He boarded. He spoke most appreciatively of the almond blossom, saying how it had adorned the mountain. After He chanted the Tablet of Visitation, we returned. In the pilgrim house He said to the resident believers, “Plant fruit trees since they are productive. I am very fond of fruit trees, though I never eat fruits, except an occasional sweet tangerine. Nevertheless, I love for the tree to bear fruits. Similarly I like people that produce goodly results. Otherwise it is of no use.”



Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel

That night some of the friends were gathered in the house of the Master when, all of a sudden, the sound of two gunshots was heard. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

The people in this region express their joy by firing their guns. One time we were guests in Nahariyya²⁹⁶ and they fired their guns so much that eventually I had to protest and say, ‘This is not a sign of jubilation. It is enough.’ Then the guns became silent. It was like this in Iran as well. There would be a huge commotion during Naw-Rúz. Indeed, they observed it well. The Europeans also observe festivities appropriately, especially Christmas. They are joyous and festive, and send gifts or congratulatory cards to one another. In short, they celebrate such festivities well. But the true festival is Ridván. It is of long duration, in the midst of spring, and in utmost refinement. It has been a few years that we have not observed it properly. Insha’lláh, this year we will celebrate it befittingly.

In Iran, rooms are filled with the smoke and the filth of cigarettes and water-pipes, which greatly lessens the joy of the festivities.

Hájí Siyyid Javád said that people in Egypt use a considerable amount of tobacco products. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Filth seeks filth. Cleanliness has a profound effect on the spirit. Even though cleanliness is related to worldly affairs, yet its effect is manifested in the soul. Now the Cause of God is not established, but when it is, you will see that cleanliness and refinement is one of the foundations of God’s religion. <170> Sometimes I am invited to places that serve wonderful food, but since it is not made in sanitary ways, I hesitantly partake of it. And actually there is no choice but to eat it.

People in this region are relatively cleaner than Egyptians. Christians, though outwardly cleaner than

²⁹⁶ A popular tourist town midway between Haifa and the Israeli-Lebanese border at Rosh ha-Niqra.

250 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

Muslims, are in reality less so. In Iran, once I passed by a restaurant serving chelo-kabob. The cook’s clothing was so filthy that never again did I desire that dish.

The honored Hájí Siyyid Javád said, “The shops that fry poultry’s hearts and livers are very dirty.” [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] remarked:

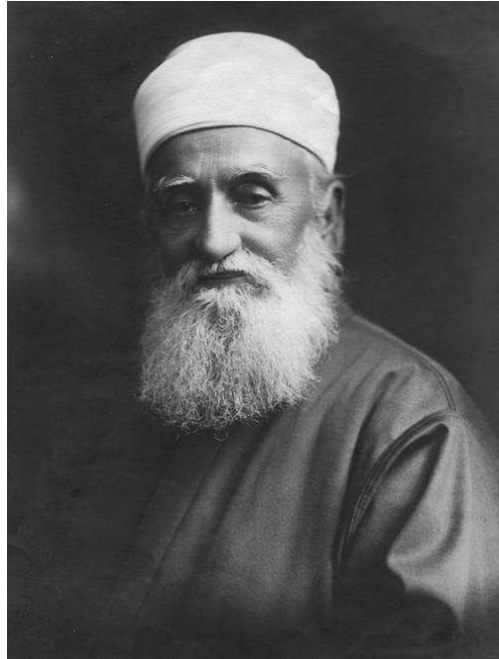
Unlike the East, chefs in Europe are distinguished by their white clothing. They must be clean and spotless from head to toe, wearing white, otherwise they are not permitted to do their job. In fact, chefs are known by their white hats.

Even though some things are earth-bound, they have great effect on the soul, such as cleanliness or a good voice. Voice is no more than airwaves that reach one’s ear and cause the vibration of the eardrums. Yet, consider its profound effect on the spirit. Similarly, cleanliness effects the soul.

Ustád Muhammad-‘Alí, chant a prayer.

9 February 1915, Haifa

Early in the morning I had tea in the presence of the Master. He remarked, “Tell the friends to pray that I may soon conclude these affairs and be able to join them [in Abu Sinan]. I am surrounded with difficulties; roads are closed and no news reaches Me. However, unceasingly, glad tidings are pouring forth from the Supreme Concourse.” I said, “If You are well and in good health, then the whole world is well.” “Out of the Blessed Beauty’s grace and bounty,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “I am well and happy. If some illness sets, it is superficial and has no lasting effect. It is like the ocean’s froth: it comes and then disappears. The surface may be in turmoil, but the depth of the ocean is calm and tranquil. Fí ámánu’lláh. Go and catch the carriage.”



It was nearly noon when I reached ‘Akká and saw the friends deeply perturbed and agitated. The violators of the Covenant had falsely spread the news that the Prince of the Friends [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] was exiled to Damascus. This news was circulating in ‘Akká; but when I left ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence and Haifa two or three hours ago, such a rumor was not heard there. God’s curse be upon the Covenant-breakers! I feared that this falsity would reach Abu Sinan and would disturb and upset the Holy Family.

Therefore, despite heavy rains and muddy conditions, I hastened to Abu Sinan with the utmost speed to refute this rumor. However, I was late, and this disturbing news had reached there ahead of me. They thought that perchance after my departure [from Haifa] this had happened.

Later it became clear that in order to upset and perturb the friends, the violators of the Covenant had spread such news. “*The hand of God was over their hands!*”²⁹⁷ Whatever hole they dig, God will throw them in the same pit. “*Fain would they deceive God and those who have believed; but they deceive themselves only, and know it not.*”²⁹⁸ And “*God*

²⁹⁷ Qur’án 48:10

²⁹⁸ Qur’án 2:8

*shall mock them, and keep them long in their rebellion, wandering in perplexity.”*²⁹⁹

The German Mr. Rothschild³⁰⁰ was a competent artist and had skillfully drawn a portrait of the Master. He presented this drawing to Him and asked that a few words be inscribed below the picture so that a German translation of them would further adorn the portrait. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote:

Man is created in the image of the Merciful [God], with spiritual attributes. Therefore, the human temple will perish, but his heavenly character will endure. The soul is an effulgence of the divine, while the human body is of the earth. Upon thee be the spiritual attributes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Illness of the Honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí

The pillar of the Covenant, Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, was among the last of the teachers of the Faith’s first epoch and faithfully served until his last breath. He had no thought other than the diffusion of the heavenly teachings and promotion of the divine Covenant. The friends of God for the most part are well acquainted with his heavenly character and spiritual demeanor. His letters, like life-giving water, are in the hands [of Bahá’ís] in diverse regions. These very papers and writings testify to his humility, sincerity, knowledge, wisdom, piety, detachment, sacrifice and the self-abnegation of this pearl of creation. His politeness, humanity, good-natured discourses, profound knowledge of Sacred Books, ready mind, witty speech, and amusing, brief and convincing replies to various questions are well renowned among all.

Nevertheless, it is inconceivable that one can fully appreciate and describe his qualities and manifold characters. Indeed the only

²⁹⁹ Qur’án 2:14

³⁰⁰ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

way that one can gain insight into his God-given traits of this most illumined man is to attain his presence and in person behold his heavenly attributes. His vast quantity of writings include: *Dalá'ilu'l-'Irfán*; *Istidláliyyih Gílán*, which is most eloquently composed; a response to *Mírzá Abú-Turáb Badkúbi'í*; an autobiography; a biography of *Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl*; *History of Bahá'í martyrdom in Yazd*; *Risálih Leon*³⁰¹; and many more. All of these are potent proofs of the power of the divine teachings and the influence of the sanctified Covenant, which recreates people, renews their spirits, edifies the wayward, causing them to shine everlastingly like brilliant stars in the heaven of the Faith. The weak is transformed into might, near-ones and inheritor of the Eternal Kingdom. Indeed, the very verse, "Most blessed is God, the best of creators"³⁰² is actualized. Indeed, this is naught save of the bounties of the Exalted One [the Báb] and of the special character of the manifestation of the Glorious One [Bahá'u'lláh]. In each age, the eternal robe is placed on shoulders of certain dejected ones, who are adorned with the everlasting crown of glory. A fisherman is made the mighty Peter, Abú-Dharr becomes a great minister, 'Ammar ibn Yásir turned into a eminent commander, Abú'l-Fadl Gulpáygání converted into the celestial Abú'l-Fadl, and this illustrious personage [i.e. Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí] is elevated to the height of spirituality and faithfulness. "And this is naught save divine favor in this Day, decreed by God, the Generous, the Mighty".

The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí was more than eighty-five years old³⁰³, but his bright visage, happy disposition, heavenly smiles, delightful humor and integrity of life suggested he was a youth in the celestial Kingdom. Moreover, he captivated and profoundly attracted all who met him. Since my purpose, however, is to describe the incident of his illness, I will now proceed to describe that occurrence.

³⁰¹ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

³⁰² Qur'án 23:14

³⁰³ Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí was born in 1832.

On 15 February 1915, because of the humidity and the cold, Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí contracted severe fever and unrelenting cough. When one of the friends suggested to him that a doctor should visit, he refused. Instead, he indicated his desire to be examined by me. On the 17th of February, the honored Afnán informed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and instructions were issued for me to leave for Haifa, which I did on the following day, the eighteenth.

[18 February 1915]

Upon my arrival at the pilgrim house, a number of the friends were gathered around the Hájí’s bed. As soon as I entered, one of the friends said to him, “Our own doctor is here!” As the Hájí had no news of the Master for a few days, he began to cry profusely out of excitement. Tears poured out from his eyes as he held my hand in his feverish hand, saying, “You are most welcome, welcome! ‘If the physician has drunk of the wine of faith, beholding him is the cure.’³⁰⁴” He cried with such intensity that all around him wept with a great weeping. After he had calmed down, I examined him and noted he had pneumonia and a weakened heart. I began treatment and, for the next six days, remained in Carmel’s Rahmání pilgrim house attending him. The first night he had a very high fever and was unconscious; but by the second evening it was reduced and he was able to speak.

I informed him, “Mírzá Núrí’d-Dín [Zayn] is writing a rebuttal in response to the polemics of the expelled [Muhammad-]Javád Qazvíní. Since the violators of the Covenant have given up on misleading the tested believers in the East, now they are concentrating on sowing seeds of doubts among the western Bahá’ís. Their intention is to thoroughly uproot these newly planted trees, and their evil essence has no other concern except

³⁰⁴ “Merely attaining the presence of the physician who has drunk of the Wine of My Love confers healing and his mere breath brings mercy and hope.” Bahá’u’lláh, *Lawh-i-Tibb*, Verse VII, line 2, translated by Stephen Lambden.

demoralizing these friends. With satanic character, they seek to destroy. Even though at the time of the appearance of the sun of the Covenant, the learned in the Cause and the steadfast friends responded with brilliance, eloquence and convincing proofs to each one of these charges, yet divine wisdom dictates that whenever an illness occurs we must respond to the extent necessary. That is, one must cleanse an impurity with robbing alcohol and replace a foul odor with the fragrance of musk. <175> Therefore, during the evenings we gather and, to the extent of our own understanding, attempt to write responses so that the American friends are informed.”

Hájí said, “On my behalf, tell Mírzá Núri’d-Dín that each son must be better than his father. Therefore he should exert efforts to bring gladness to the spirit of the honored Zayn[u’l-Muqarrabín] in the Abhá Kingdom. In my London treatise, I have written that the Blessed Beauty stated, ‘If it was possible, We would forbid the friends of God from entering the cities where even a single Azalí dwelled, since their very breath is a deadly venom.’ Now consider that the violation of the Báb’s Covenant resulted in such a grievous statement by the Blessed Beauty. Therefore how dejected and shameful must be the violators of Bahá’u’lláh’s own Covenant, particularly in the presence of such irrefutable statements [revealed] in the Kitáb-i ‘Ahd[i]. Is it not true that in many Tablets Bahá’u’lláh spoke most condemnatory words of those who violate His Covenant, stating, ‘Accursed be they in both this world and the next’? Ponder then how vulgar and indecent are such attacks on the Covenant!”

[21 February 1915]

By 21 February, Hájí had become well enough that he was able to bathe. All day he related many sweet and virtuous stories of which here are three:

First story: Once a king asked his vizier to explain to him, on the following day, how God is occupied, what He wears and what He does. Sad and downcast, the vizier came home perplexed as to how he would be able to answer the king’s questions. Seeing his condition, his servant said, “Master, tell me your problem, perchance I can be of some assistance.” The vizier explained the questions posed by the monarch. The servant replied, “I will tell you two of the answers now and the third on the day when the robe of honor is offered. The first answer is that God is occupied with worrying about His creation. The second is that God wears a sin-covering robe for His servants.” Armed with these two responses, the vizier sought the king and presented the answers to the first two questions. The monarch was absolutely astonished. He said, “These answers are brilliant and could not have been worked out by you.” The vizier told him what had happened, so the king immediately summoned the servant and made him and the vizier switch ranks. As the robe of honor was being placed on the new vizier, he turned to his old master and said, “And the answer to the final question as to what God does: well, He takes from one and bestows it upon another!”

Second story: There was a king who showed great affection and consideration to his vizier. The vizier consequently felt very close to him and would show less formality and respect. One time, however, his servant shared this poem with the vizier and won a handsome prize:

Though the king may show immense favors,
The minister must know his own place.

Third story: Mírzá Badí’u’lláh gave a promissory note of twelve hundred lira to Yahyá Bey, the Damascene, known as Tábur Áqási, for him to arrange the exile of the Master to Fizan [Fezzan in Tripolitania].³⁰⁵ However, after their plans fell apart through the

³⁰⁵ In a Turkish poem (*Ma’idih Asimání*, v. 9, pp. 74-76), ‘Abdu’l-Bahá states, “Your nest is once Iraq, then Rumelia and at another time the fortresses; But the lovers

Almighty's intervention, Yahyá Bey enforced the payment of the note. Mírzá Badí'u'lláh was compelled to sell two pieces of land for six hundred lira and to sell the ownership of one-third of the Mansion of Bahjí [to Tábur Áqási] for the remainder of the debt.³⁰⁶ In contra-distinction [to the plotters' plans], shortly thereafter, with the utmost majesty, 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to Europe and America to demonstrate that "God is the best of plotters".³⁰⁷

22 February 1915, Pilgrim House of Haifa

Because of the coldness of the air and his general weakness, once again the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí was not feeling well and even had difficulty turning on his side. As he laid in bed, he was gently moaning, "Yá 'Abdu'l-Bahá, yá 'Abdu'l-Bahá, yá 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" Without ever complaining or showing sorrow or pain, expressions of gratitude and prayers, intermixed with "Yá 'Abdu'l-Bahá, yá 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" streamed from his lips. At times, he spoke of the grandeur of the Cause and told of his own shame for not having served the Faith in ways more deserving. Tenderly he would recite the following verses which profoundly effected me, and it seemed as if a powerful current had passed through my being, electrifying my entire soul. I leave it to the esteemed reader to imagine the efficacy of these lines by Sa'dí as recited by Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí from memory:

A man began to carp at the emperor of Ghazna:
'Ayáz, for a wonder, wants for any beauty:

journey is but from 'Akká to Fízán." It may be that this poem was written in 1905 when Sultan Abdulhamid was about to decree His exile to Fizan, after the investigations of the Commission of Inquiry in the same year.

³⁰⁶ The Guardian purchased one-sixth of the Mansion from the descendents of Tábur Áqási and it is presently in the possession of the Cause. (HM)

³⁰⁷ Qur'án 8:29. The full verse is: "And call to mind when the unbelievers plotted against thee, that they might detain thee, or slay thee, or expel thee. Yea, they plotted; but God plotted likewise. And God is the best of plotters."

Yet when a rose wants color and also scent,
 Strange is the nightingale’s melancholy for it!
 This tale was told by someone to Mahmúd,
 Who much did writhe in his concern:
 ‘My love, good master, is for his nature only,
 Not for his height and goodly stature!’
 I’ve heard that in a defile once a camel
 Fell and smashed a chest of pearls,
 The king cast wide his sleeves that all might share,
 And then drove hence his mount in haste.
 The riders went off after pearls and coral both,
 Scattering from the ruler in search of spoil:
 Of all those neck-lifting henchmen there stayed
 Not one at the king’s nape but Ayáz.
 Mahmúd then looked at him and said: “Heart
 taker, devious one!

What did you get of spoils?’ He answered:
 ‘Nothing!

I was all the while in a gallop at your nape,
 Not neglecting service for the sake of enrichment!
 If yours be proximity in the hall of audience,
 Ignore not the emperor for robes of honor’s sake
 Such procedure violates the Way, for saints
 Do naught desire of God but God;
 If to your friend’s beneficence you have an eye,
 and not to him,

To self you are in bondage, not bound by the
 friend.

So long as your mouth stands open for greed,
 No secret will reach your heart’s ear from the
 World Unknown

Truth is a mansion, all decked out
 Fancy and appetite are but the dust arising
 See you not that where dust rises

The sight sees not although a man be sighted?³⁰⁸

23 February 1915

Today, the honored Hájí [Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí] summoned me and said, “On my behalf go and attain the presence of the Master and say, ‘I was suppose to die twenty years ago, but You kept me alive. Now the angel of death is circling my bed and awaits Your permission. I too am resigned to go and the rest is in Your hands. We shall do as bidden.’”

I left him and together with Áqá Mírzá Jalíl and Áqá Mírzá Husayn Yazdí went to ‘Akká and came into the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. An Egyptian youth had come from Switzerland and was with the Master, discussing the World War. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

In the loudest voice, I cried in all the synagogues, and churches: O people! The world of humanity is in peril and Europe is like a barrel of gunpowder waiting for a single spark for it to explode. You must endeavor to prevent this occurrence. You must protect humanity. For six thousand years people have been afflicted with ills and prejudices in religious, temporal, national and political realms. Have you not discerned that it has come to naught? Come, embrace divine politics, that is, the politics of love. This is an easy matter. Is it not better for us to embrace divine teachings over human conceptions? If God was indeed heedless of man, then He would not have created him in the first place, provided nourishment for him or educated him. Therefore God loves man.

Similarly, I announce: Religion must be the promoter of science and civilization. Otherwise, its

³⁰⁸ Translation by G.M. Wickens, *Morals Pointed and Tales Adorned*, E.J. Brill, Leiden 1974, pp. 111-112.

absence is preferable. Why do we have inequality of sexes? We all are children of the same father and the same mother.

Presently, different groups of people in the world have made claims to various portions of the earth and have drawn lines around it, considering it to be solely theirs. They say, “This is my nation and that is yours!” On this side of one line is a friend, on the other they see an enemy. We behave like dogs, considering a corner of a street to be ours, and, as soon as another dog approaches our territory, we attack. The only earth that belongs to man is the one that will ultimately be poured over him. Is it not a waste for so much bloodshed for this unworthy soil?

When they asked me about the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh, I would tell them:

At a time when the East was immersed in diverse forms of bigotry, when blood flew readily in the streets and the world of humanity was surrounded by the thickest clouds, at such a time, His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, like the morning star, shone over the horizon of Iran. In His dazzling brilliance, all manners of intolerance and prejudice disappeared to the point that diverse people from the East, West, North, South, Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Zoroastrian, all embraced each other with the utmost spirituality and fraternity, considering each other as members of the same family. They dealt with each other with the utmost equity, to the point that when someone enters their gathering, they see no difference whatsoever among all assembled.

Also, among the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh are the unity of the world of humanity and the establishment of universal and eternal peace.

28 February 1915

Today ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ennobled the earth of Abu Sinan by His arrival. In His company were a number of military officers, such as Kúmándán [commander], Nazmí Bey and Jawdat Bey. In the other carriage rode Dr. Finkelstein, who was a German and the principal of the German Polytechnic in Haifa, his sister and three other Germans.³⁰⁹ <180> As soon as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s carriage came into view over the horizon, [the Druze] took four horses for the guests to ride. However, out of deference to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and with His permission, Kúmándán preferred to walk. However, he insisted that the Master should ride since it was uphill and difficult for Him. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá mounted a donkey and slowly came from behind, ordering all others to accompany Kúmándán.



³⁰⁹ This school was a German language secondary school in Haifa, and Dr. Finkelstein was most likely a German Jew. For more details on the school see, Jacob M. Landau, “Culture, religion and language in Middle Eastern universities”, *Judaism*, Issue No. 178, Volume 45, Number 2, Spring 1996.

262 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

That night, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke in the gathering [of the villagers] and I served as the translator. Some of that discussion is briefly as follows:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “How are you? Hopefully the journey from Haifa did not cause you too much fatigue.”

Dr. Finkelstein: “We are exceedingly happy and joyous that we have won the bounty of being in the Master’s presence, which is the ultimate desire of so many people. I too have always longed for a day such as this and for beholding an assemblage like this.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Such gatherings are only possible through the divine bounties and favors. Otherwise, how could the two of us ever hope to meet? A gathering such as this, in such a location, at a time when no one draws a breath of comfort, is not possible unless decreed through God’s benevolence.”



Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Throughout all of Europe, a meeting similar to this, with such depth of love and spirituality, is never seen. Even among the same family members, such affection is not experienced. We have much to learn from the East, especially, culture, humanity and spirituality. In its place, we can offer science, technology and industry.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Yes, indeed. The relationship between the East and the West must be like that, otherwise it is of no benefit.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Before this War, the Germans were busy among themselves and for this reason did not send explorers and seekers to the various parts of the orient to obtain new perspectives and to bring them back to our country. However, we hope to do so after the War and to learn and emulate Your teachings.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “After this War, the minds and understandings [of people] will have expanded. Peace-lovers and peace-makers will grow throughout all corners of the globe.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Everyone knows of the evil of war. But peace-makers are few.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Everything has its own time and has a prescribed period. That is, its occurrence is ordained beforehand. Until the pre-ordained time has arrived, nothing can be achieved. Yesterday I received a letter from Philadelphia stating that they have increased the number of Bahá’ís and have assembled and published My talks. During these days, the promises of the bygone Prophets are being fulfilled and Isaiah’s prophecy stands manifest.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “This War is the harbinger of universal peace.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “It is the greatest instrument of universal peace, its greatest catalyst. In the course of My journey in the western countries, in all the synagogues and churches, I cried out that Europe was in grievous danger. It was like a barrel of gunpowder that with the least spark would explode and scorch everything in its grasp. I said to them, ‘People, exert your efforts to protect humanity from this peril. You have tried all manner of politics, now come try divine politics. If it does not have desirable results, you can quickly

abandon it and return to your former ways.’ Has anyone seen harm in affection? What evil is there when the people of the world learn to love and care for one another as this assemblage does?”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “This gathering is indeed a brilliant example of the mighty institutions and momentous movement of ‘Abbás Effendi which in the future will unite the world. I sincerely hope that all would embrace these lofty goals.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Bravo, bravo! This is an effulgence of that imminent movement which hopefully will soon take place.”

The Master then spoke in Turkish with Kúmándán for some minutes.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Where did you journey today and what did you observe?”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Some of the ancient ruins and old synagogues and cemeteries. If one were to scientifically study the cemeteries, he would learn a great deal about history, with beneficial results.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “I own some properties in Ghúr³¹⁰ and ‘Adasíyyih which contain many ancient artifacts. Insha’lláh, whenever I go to [Lake] Tiberias³¹¹, I will take you as well.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Very well.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Germans were very kind to us. I am well-pleased with Germans. The spiritual future of Germany is very glorious. The word German in Persian means, ‘Our kinsmen!’ I was happier in Germany than anywhere else.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Presently the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany is very strong.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Muslims cherish Germans during such times.”

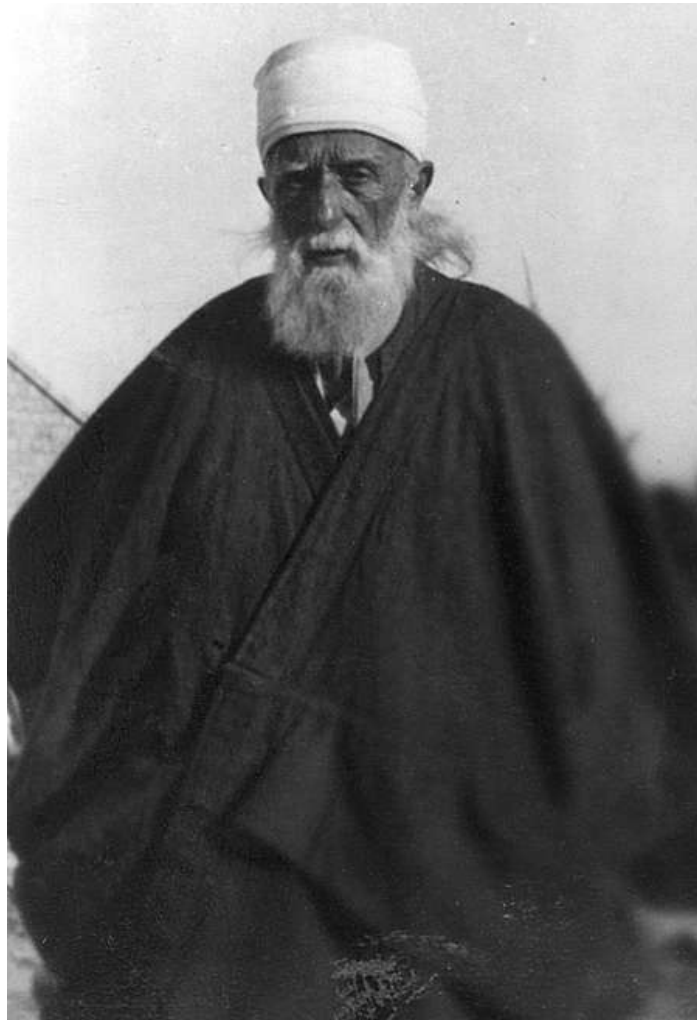
Dr. [Finkelstein]: “I hope that the relationship between Iran and Germany will also grow and become stronger. At the time when our ancestors in Europe were like beasts of burden, were naked and covered themselves with sheepskin, Iran enjoyed a tremendous civilization. It has only been in the past few centuries, that Europe has experienced such rapid progress. I pray that Germany will bring

³¹⁰ Better known as Samrah.

³¹¹ Sea of Galilee

Iran material progress, and Iran will teach us culture, humanity and spiritual civilization.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “You and Iranians are from the same root, of Aryan³¹² descent. Germans and some other European tribes lived on the shores of the River Ganges. When their number had grown considerably, they came to Iran. They continued to grow, hence some went to Caucasia and from there to Europe. However you and Iranians are from the same branch, and many of your German words are the same in Persian: for instance, mother, father, daughter, and some others.”



³¹² The word Iran means, “the people of Arya.”

Dr. [Finkelstein]: “Yes, indeed, we are of the same branch [of evolution] and when we want to study many of the German words, we consider their Sanskrit root.”

At night, the German visitors stayed in Abu Sinan and, on the following day, had lunch with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. After receiving their leave, they returned to Haifa. At the time of his departure, Dr. Finkelstein said to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “These two days in Your august presence were the sweetest time of my life.” The Master responded, “I hope you will never forget them and that we have opportunities for many more conversations. Fí ámánu’lláh.”³¹³

³¹³ Since the issue of Bahá’í interactions with German residences of Haifa may be subject of further research, the following references are cited to facilitate such studies. Translator is grateful to Peter Terry for this information:

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Chapter 9

Abu Sinan: March 1915

1 March 1915, Abu Sinan

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instruction was for me to travel in His carriage to Haifa and visit Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, and then to return the following day. At dusk, I was summoned into His presence for a meeting, which lasted for about a quarter of an hour. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke about Dr. Finkelstein and other guests, remarking, “Consider what immense love and devotion governs our relationship and how devotedly we cherish them. They have no prejudice; they eat everything, unlike the Jews in this land. The Jews in America have similar traits and listen attentively.” He then added, “All of our troubles rest with Áqá Mírzá Habíb. Is it possible that you sustain everyone’s burden, but not ours? God wanted your efforts of the past few years not to go to waste; therefore, He provided you this opportunity of serve. Prepare some [ethyl-carbonate of] quinine for me. My nerves are tired. My fever is because of My nerves and not some illness. In Europe they examined Me. It is nothing and only due to the sustained waves of troubles and tribulations. My nerves are tired. But out of the grace and bounties of the Blessed Beauty, My spirit is in the utmost joy and happiness.”

That night in the home of Shaykh Sálíh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

Piety is the mother of all goodly characters, and its absence is the mother of all evil. In ‘Akká, there was a certain man by the name of Tawfíq. He had taken so much money from people that, when he was departing [for Constantinople], his son was unable to lift his luggage. He went to Constantinople and after awhile wrote Me, saying, “I have a parcel of land in Haifa that I

bought for a thousand qurush. I give You the power of attorney to do with it as necessary. But now I need one hundred lira and, if this fund reaches me [in time], I will be appointed the trustee of the grounds of Mecca. Through whatever means possible, kindly ensure that I receive the required funds.” I sent him one hundred lira and after a while auctioned the land, which earned three hundred and twenty lira. I took the one hundred lira owed to Me and told Mírzá Muhsin to send the rest, plus extra ten liras, to Tawfíq in care of a certain believer. It was not long thereafter that he received his commission in Mecca and, en route, came here and expressed his gratitude. For a while we had no news of him. I asked Nusúhí Bey if he had heard of him. Six months later I received a letter from Nusúhí Bey saying that such a person was not in Constantinople. Sometime later, I had a second letter from him saying, “Recently I was on a vessel and it so happened that mention of Tawfíq was made. The old man that was the spiritual leader of our neighborhood said, ‘In fact, such a person lives in our area and is blind in both eyes. Each day, his daughter brings him to the coffeehouse, where he begs, and then takes him home.’³¹⁴ Because of Your instructions, I went and saw him.” I sent him forty lira and some olive oil (which I bought from you, Shaykh Sálíh). It was not long after that Tawfíq perished in a fire in that section of Constantinople.

History records that during the time of ‘Abdu’l-Málik³¹⁵, son of Marwán, there was a lewd person that freely gave in to his carnal desires. His son always admonished him, but it was of no use. Eventually he

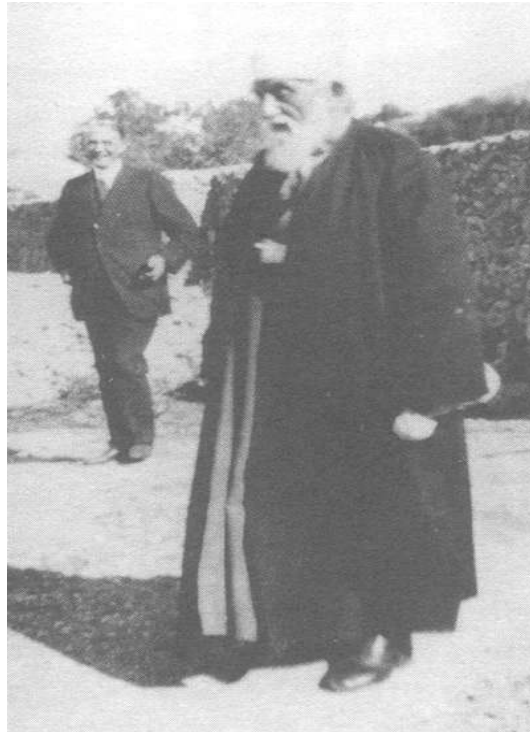
³¹⁴ For an informative discussion of the role of coffeehouse in the Middle East society see, Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouse: The Origin of a Social Beverage in the medieval Near East*; Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985.

³¹⁵ A powerful ruler of the Umayyad dynasty in the late seventh century.

died of the effects of his doings, but was survived by his son who was renowned in piety. Soon the blaze of war raged and a brave soldier, who owned much and who, out of wisdom and farsightedness, knew that a day would come when his children would need his estate, went to this pious man. He said, “I am going to the battlefield and may not return. Therefore, I entrust you with this sum of ten thousand dinárs which is the trust of God. If I return safely, then retribute it to me less one-tenth. And if I perish, then give it to my children when they are in need, keeping one-tenth for yourself.” He went to war and was killed. Soon his children were in great need, even deprived of daily bread. The eldest came to the pious man and said, “We are in such deprivation that we do not even have paper to send an appeal to the Caliph. I ask for your help.” <185> The pious man, as requested, gave him a little money. The son sent the appeal to the Caliph, but his response was, “Were we to honor such solicitations, soon the treasury would be empty.” This rejection further depressed the children. When they were in great want, the pious man said to them, “Your father has left a trust with me. If you give me one-tenth, that is fine. Otherwise, it is well too.” The youth said, “Take two-tenths,” but he took only one-tenth and gave the children the money. Soon news of this incident reached the Caliph. Mention was also made of the bravery and services of the fallen soldier. He said, “Since previously his son asked for help, it is well if we favor him with a gift of money.” His viziers responded, “He is now rich and is no longer in need.” The Caliph asked for the details and then summoned both the youth and the pious man. He asked for both to tell him the story, and then instantly gave the key of the treasury to the pious man, rejecting his many appeals to be excused from this, saying, “I can find none

better than you for this trust.” Thereby he was made the treasurer of the realm.

One time in ‘Akká, fifty Christians were imprisoned. Their [Muslim] jailer beat and tortured them, considering this a meritorious deed before God. Through various injuries, he would also exact money from the prisoners and, when they did not pay, beat them even more severely, claiming, “This is jihad!” Eventually one of them came to me. I complained to the governor, “Though the prisoners are Christians, such treatment is unwarranted. If any Muslim wishes to wage jihad, let him go to the battlefield and fight against the Russians. Otherwise, what is the point in beating defenseless prisoners?!” The governor summoned the jailer and ordered him to receive fifty beatings by stick. Eventually the situation of the jailer deteriorated so that he came to Me, asking for alms for his needy wife and children. He became a beggar.



‘Abdu’l-Babá in Haifa

2 March 1915

I was summoned early in the morning into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence and had tea with Him. He said, “When you go to Haifa [today], give My greetings to that Egyptian youth and tell him that his letter was received. However, for his protection, I will not reply, since they closely search all the papers. Through divine bounties, without need for paper and pen, our spiritual communion will be everlasting.” He added: “I use hyssop. Is it used in modern medicine?” I responded: “I do not know its chemical composition.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

It has a diuretic effect, and therefore it is beneficial. Also it is very useful for curing shortage of breath. It has an indirect influence. The root of corn³¹⁶ and the bark of cherry are also diuretic. But all healing resides with God. These are all instruments.

For healing, two causes are necessary: physical and spiritual. For a material remedy, physicians and medicine are needed. For the spiritual cure, confirmations and divine healing are required.

Similarly for commerce, two causes have been decreed. The material cause is possessing capital and expertise, and the spiritual cause requires divine confirmation. If the material means are not ready, then all efforts are squandered. Should divine confirmations accompany a deed, however, then its benefits will be immense and universal. If both are present, then there will be light upon light. Otherwise, efforts will be wasted.

Confirmation and divine affirmation must surround all undertakings – this is true even in war. Consider the Russo-Japanese war. A country as powerful as Russia must at least be able to win a small victory, [yet

³¹⁶ The original term is *zurrat*, which may not necessarily be corn, or maize, as we know it at the present; or it may refer to corn silk.

they were completely denied.] They had mined the sea expecting to sink Japanese warships, but instead the same mines sank the largest Russian ship, carrying her highest-ranking Captains and military officers. Notice that their plans were not in congruence with the predestined decree and, no matter how well plans are drawn, preordained destiny is supreme. In one of the newspapers in America they printed a funny caricature of a huge, tall Russian standing by a petite, weakly Japanese. The Japanese tries to beat the Russian, but is unsuccessful. So she climbs over his shoulders and hits him in the head.

Go to Haifa and on My behalf greet Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí. Stay for one night and return tomorrow with some good news. Fí amánu’lláh. Remain safe and protected. Ask of the condition of Áqá ‘Abdu’r-Rahím as well.

I went to Haifa. Praised be God, Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí was well and busy telling parables. As a memory of him, I record one of them in these pages:³¹⁷

Ayáz was deeply enamored by the character and attitude of [Sultán] Mahmúd and was always vigilant and conscious not to be overcome with neglect [of his ethical duties] and ego, lest riches and rank would conquer him and cause him to forget his true self. Therefore, he had placed his old, coarse clothes in a satchel and each morning and eve would look at them to remind himself of his background and roots. In so doing, he continually taught himself the lesson of awareness [of the Sultán’s generosity.]

³¹⁷ An alternative translation of this story appears in G.S. Davie, *Garden of Fragrance*, 1882, or A.H. Edwards, 1911, translation by the same title.

The jealous court staffers, who were constantly envious of him, considered this affair propitious and accused him before the Sultán of embezzlement, suggesting that despite the monarch’s unbounded kindness to him, he was dealing traitorously with the treasury. The king ordered the matter investigated. Upon a thorough search, his satchel of old clothing was found. When Ayáz was asked the purpose of it, he said, “I have kept these so I will never forget my beginning.”

If thou gain renown in the court,
By this honor don’t become neglectful of the king.

3 March 1915

The carriage was ready and I went with it from Haifa to ‘Akká. Badí‘ Effendi and Sháhriyár came as well. We went first to ‘Akká, then to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh and then to Abu Sinan. The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí had sent a missive to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that was presented to Him. It read:

251³¹⁸

May my life be a sacrifice unto the dust of the feet
of the friends of Your sacred threshold.

An old lamb is not worthy of sacrifice. Praise and salutations be unto Your favors that, out of benevolence, He accepted my sacrifice and out of sheer munificence, testified to my martyrdom.³¹⁹ Though thoroughly unworthy of any purpose, out of Your bounties, I have been preserved until now. We are all utterly incapable of understanding Your manifold favors and profound

³¹⁸ 251 correspond to the letters B, H and A, which represents the word Bahá.

³¹⁹ A reference to a Tablet of the Blessed Beauty [addressed to Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí] that states, “*All atoms testify to thy martyrdom.*” (HM)

wisdom, not even able to number them befittingly, much less to give adequate thanks and gratitude.

Áqá Muhammad-Hasan says that I must organize a feast because of the benefaction of becoming well. Áqá Rahmatu'lláh and others of Your servants have similarly advised me. I said to them that one of them was like a kind mother, staying with me throughout the evenings, and the other was like an affectionate brother who looked after me. Áqá 'Abbás-Qulí also showed great consideration and love. Therefore it is incumbent upon them to give two feasts: One for not having to bear my illness any longer and the other in anticipation of my passing to the next world as a believer, having sustained myriad of trials.

The servant of the servants of Your threshold, Haydar-'Alí.

That night when we attained the blessed presence [of 'Abdu'l-Bahá], He asked about the Hájí's health. I reported that, out of divine bounty, he was well and earlier today was able to leave the bed. He replied, "Glad tidings that God is merciful! The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-'Alí is among those who have sacrificed all possessions in the path of God's Cause. Even one hour of his life is precious. When he first came here twenty years ago, he was very ill. But God preserved him." I said, "News has been received that the son of Hájí Mírzá Yahyá Dawlatábádí³²⁰ has died." The Master remarked:

"There is no censure in death." His father caused much mischief. Wherever I went and won people to the

³²⁰ Yahyá Dawlatábádí was a son of Hájí Hádí Dawlatábádí and after the passing of Mírzá Yahyá Azal, successively, both father and son laid claim to leadership of the Azalí community in Iran. Yahyá Dawlatábádí became politically influential and his three-volume autobiography details much of the political intrigues of modern Iran. His daughters financed publications of many of the Writings of the Báb.

Cause, he would go and sow seeds of doubts. He had even gone to Miss Sanderson, hoping to cause trouble. Sanctified be God! Such people show enmity, but to One like the Blessed Beauty!

Mírzá Yahyá [Azal] was hiding in a thousand holes causing the Faith of God to be completely lost. Two Mílání youth came to Baghdad and asked about the Blessed Beauty. I was a child and went and opened the door and said, “The Blessed Beauty is not here.” The two youth cried profusely: Their expression was beyond description. They left and it was never known what became of them. The point is that no trace of the Cause [of God] had remained. In Baghdad, Mírzá Yahyá was busy selling silk in the Bazaar of the Shuyúkh. He wore a turban larger than Mount Abú-Qabys and changed his name to Hájí ‘Alí Lás-furúsh [mortar seller]. Is it not so Áqá Husayn? (Áqá Husayn bowed in affirmation.) They asked him, “Why do you change your name and your outfit every day?” He replied, “So that people would not recognize me.” With such timidity and feeble-mindedness they wanted to confront the Blessed Beauty.

One day when Bahá’u’lláh had returned from Sulaymáníyyih, He was walking in the street with the late Áqá Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí. A kabob-maker had whispered, “Once more the Bábís have come into the open.” The Blessed Beauty told Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí, “Rebuke him appropriately!” Mírzá Muhammad-Qulí grabbed his beard and punished him. The Kabobí took a complaint to the constable, but was thrown in jail and told, “Obviously you must have grievously insulted them for the Bábís to have punished you in such manner!”³²¹

³²¹ Shaykh Salmán wished to meet Azal. The latter had replied, “Come to the hilltop for a meeting.” When he had come, Azal asked, “How far apart are the telegraph posts?” At first Shaykh Salmán had thought that by this question Azal was intending to test him, but then after being with him for a few days he realized that all his talks

<190> My point is when the Blessed Beauty returned [to Baghdad] a new life was breathed into the Faith of God. He began to meet with the 'ulamá, the notables and the learned and the situation changed completely.

How incredible that now these people wish to oppose the Blessed Beauty. Several times in Isfahán, Hádí Dawlatábádí had recanted his faith, but [afterwards] every time he would claim affiliation.³²² In Switzerland, [his son] Hájí Mírzá Yahyá, had an illicit relation with the wife of his landlord, which resulted in his expulsion from his residence. Mr. Dreyfus had asked him, "Why did you do this?" His response was, "It was the call of nature!"

Shaykh Yúsuf and Mírzá Tarázu'lláh, son of Mírzá Mahmúd Káshí, reported, "The governor is preparing for defensive measures and predicts that warships will bombard the city." [Abdu'l-Bahá] remarked:

In these days, it is time for calm and dignity; it is time for confidence and assurance. We must rely upon God. Be most vigilant so that you do not grow perturbed and perplexed. They say that when Napoleon was writing a letter, an enemy's artillery exploded near his tent and dirt fell over his letter. He was not perturbed in the least, and paused for a minute to say, "I am thankful to our foes for helping me in my work. I was

were childish and that he was incapable of even sustaining a normal conversation. He therefore left him. (HM)

³²² Hádí Dawlatábádí visited Baghdad, most likely during Bahá'u'lláh's sojourn to Sulaymáníyyih. Bahá'u'lláh writes of him in *Tarázát (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 43): "O Hádí! Thou hast not been in Our company, thou art therefore ignorant of the Cause. ... Thou has been there (Cyprus) and hast seen him (Mírzá Yahyá). Now speak forth with fairness. Do not misrepresent the matter, neither to thyself nor to the people. Thou art both ignorant and uninformed."

going to pour some dust over this letter to dry the ink, but now our enemy has helped so that I can finish this task and issue the command for attack.” With that, he ordered his men into the field with trumpet blasts. It so happened that they were victorious.

May God provide the means for our succor. Presently the situation is very troublesome. Some things can be tolerated, but others cannot. For instance, when we arrived in ‘Akká, the situation was very difficult. We were imprisoned, and two of our friends passed away. Funds for their burial were not available. There was a small carpet which we sold for a few qurush, which we gave to the Imám-Jum‘ih, who placed these two in a ditch and poured a little dirt over them. We had to feed one hundred and fifty people.

Thinking about troubles is more difficult than the actual experience. How wonderful it would be if man were like the birds of the heavens, which are carefree and never save for their next meal. I hope that soon God will fling open the gate of His mercy before His servants. It has been very difficult for people. Before My journey to America, I knew two or three hundred of the poor. But now, save a handful, the rest have perished.

4 March 1915

In the evening, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to the home of Shaykh Sálíh and shared the story of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá:

It was in the middle of the night when they informed Me that a local Arab wished to see Me for the delivery of a message. When he came in, I recognized him as the servant of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá. He said, “Páshá is gravely ill and wishes to see You.” I left immediately that night and saw that indeed Páshá was in a bad

situation. With an excuse, he sent his servant out of the room and said [to Me], “I have a nephew and a daughter. My nephew is an entrenched enemy of mine. My daughter lives in Qamran in Yemen, in the midst of the tribes of Arabia. I have eighteen hundred Majídí coins which I want to bequeath her.” I gave some excuse that I had no way of reaching the deserts of Arabia, but he said, “I implore You to accept this mission before my servant returns. Take this money as I have no means other than You.” I took the money and that very night ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá passed away.

The following day I said to the Qádí that the estate of ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá must be sold and spent towards his funeral expenses. That very day the Qarághúl³²³ came and sold everything and raised a thousand and some qurush. There was a certain Ibráhím Effendi who wanted to buy the fur coat of the deceased, but I did not let him. Later I paid for the coat and gave it to him. Repeatedly he said, “O Effendi! We were waiting for his day,” but I heeded him not. I then said to the city’s treasurer that ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá’s stipend had not been paid for several months and asked if it was possible to collect it and spend it for his funeral and other of his expenses. He replied negatively. I told him to check with his accountant who said, “Yes,” and therefore we used the back salary of the previous several months for the funeral.

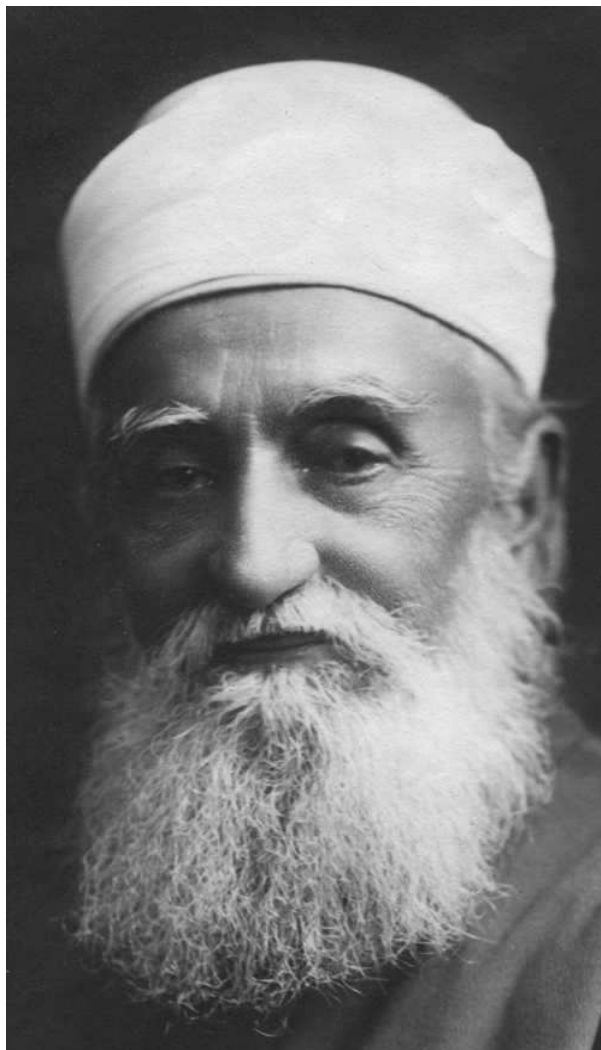
Subsequently I sent the eighteen hundred Majídís with which I had been entrusted to Yemen with Darvish Muhammad-‘Alí. I also sent ‘Abdu’lláh Páshá’s servant with him saying that his expenses would be covered, but did not tell him of the purpose of journey. I sent a letter with Darvish Muhammad-‘Alí for Muhammad Bey in

³²³ Police Station. (HM) [Perhaps a better definition is “road police”. The Turkish spelling is Karakol.]

280 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Yemen to aid in this mission. He helped by appointing two porters to direct the Darvish to Qamran where the money was given to the orphaned daughter.

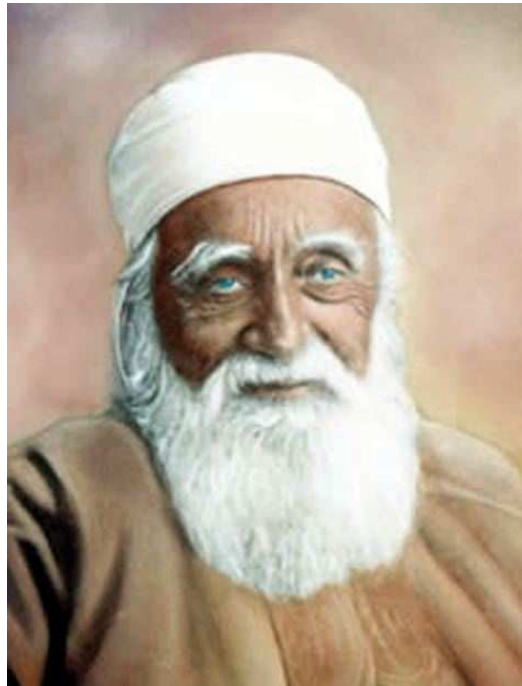
At a later date, when ‘Akká’s authorities learned of these details, they were annoyed with Me, complaining that I had not engaged them in this affair.



5 March 1915

The news of the passing of Áqá ‘Abdu’r-Rahím was received today, and, for this purpose, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá left for ‘Akká. He said to me, “Today I was not feeling well and everyone in the household asked me not to leave. It is also rainy and very cold, but I want to go to

‘Akká and from there to the resting-place of Áqá ‘Abdu’r-Rahím and then to Haifa. What do you think?” I said, “Whatever is Your august will.” He replied, “Confident of the bounties and favors of the Blessed Beauty, I will go and will complete this journey in good health. Áqá Mírzá Habíb, you do not know how pleased I am with you! I am very happy with all your hard labor. Fí amánu’lláh.” He then left, and with His departure, life seemed to have left me too.



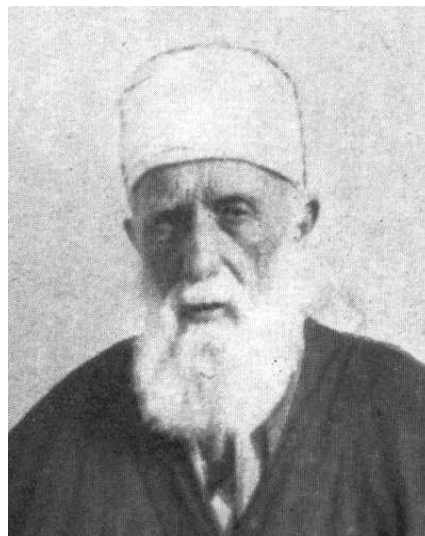
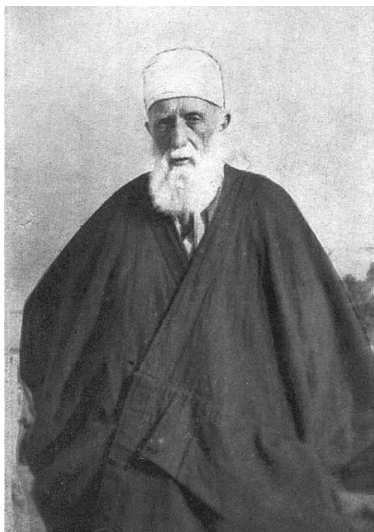
20 March 1915, corresponding to 5 Jamádiyu’l-Avval 1333 [A.H.]

Praised be God that this year we were able to complete the fast, particularly since all of our meals were prepared by the blessed hand of the Greatest Holy Leaf – may my spirit be a sacrifice unto her favors! And this is due to naught save the grace of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, otherwise we are and will ever be thoroughly unworthy of mention.

O God, my God! Fasting and praying, and indeed all goodly deeds and charities are conditioned upon Thy acceptance or rejection. If the deed of an unlearned sinner is accepted before Thy

282 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Threshold in the Kingdom and the Concourse, it stands supreme over the doings of a thousand pious men and martyrs. And if conversely, Thou wert to reject the deeds of a worshipper, its effect can never be told. “Thy acceptance is the greatest of all bounties.” Therefore, graciously accept this humble deed of Thy servant. Thou art the Merciful, the Clement, the Bestower.



Today marked the anniversary of the [Báb’s] Declaration and the Birth of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which took place in 1260 AH, [corresponding to] 1844 AD.³²⁴ What immense influence will this year [1844] have on the future of the world and the edification of humanity! What marvelous discoveries, breathtaking developments and revolutionizing events are associated with it! What stupendous prophecies have the Prophets of old uttered about the appearance of this mighty Day! How many men have, in anticipation of this Manifestation, worn the white garb of sacrifice, secluded themselves in mountains or caves, praying fervently and fasting unceasingly for the early appearance of “the Lord of Hosts”! How many young and old have sacrificed their all since that year [1844] testifying to its truth and ascendancy!

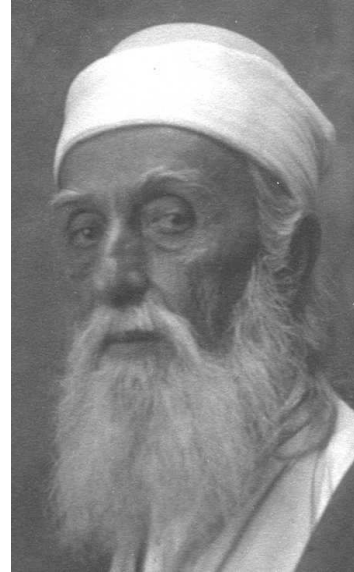
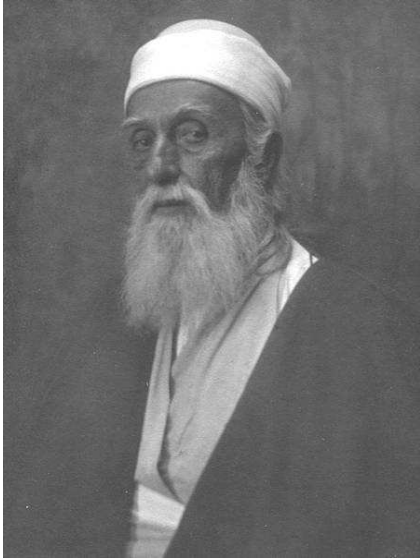
³²⁴ In the East, the celebration of the Declaration of the Báb and some other Holy Days are observed in accordance with the lunar reckoning.

Prior to noon we left for 'Akká so that on this blessed Day, this Holy Day, we would have the bounty of visiting the sanctified presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Praise be unto God that with the utmost joy and felicity we received this divine grace and, after paying homage, returned to Abu Sinan. We had tea with the blessed person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He inquired about the condition of the ill left in my care as well as my own health. Then He spoke of the trenches dug on the shores:

With these trenches, the Ottoman government thinks they can stop armored warships! During the reign of [Sultán] 'Abdu'l-Hamíd [II], when the irregulars decided to fight Russia, each soldier was given a gun and two hundred bullets. There was a certain Shakír Páshá who used to relate, "A number of the 'ulamá were enlisted among the men assigned to my troop. As we left Constantinople, they began to fire on every bird, vulture or fox that they came upon. No matter how I pleaded with them to save their ammunition for the real battle, they would not listen and shot everything in sight – actually never hitting anything at all! In fact by the time we reached the battlefield by the border, all of our bullets and powder were consumed. Our mission was to ascend a hill on that border location and establish our fortifications. But the illustrious 'ulamá said that they would stay down below and refused to climb. Soon Russians conquered the hill, established their positions and from the higher elevations began to bombard us. I said to my men, 'Let us proceed from the right side and gain positions overlooking the Russians.' But they refused, saying, 'We will stay here.' Eventually, the regular army advanced, defeated and captured the Russians. When we returned to Constantinople, the command was issued to throw out the incompetent irregulars by the butt of our guns! <195> No matter

how they pleaded, it had no effect, and we threw them out disgracefully.”

And now, with these ditches, they hope to fend off huge warships!



Praise be to God that the gates of mercy and favors were flung wide open, particularly as I was the recipient of the following Tablet which was the greatest gift of that day. It made my spirit ecstatic and I take refuge with it whenever I have a difficult medical case. Through it I supplicate for remedy and healing:

Abu Sinan. The honored Doctor Áqá Mírzá Habíb, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O God, my God! I have turned to Thee, supplicating bounties from the ocean of Thy healing. O God, enable me to serve Thy servants and assist in their healing. Confirm that my medicine may be a remedy for every sickness and ailment, infirmity and cold, and every other affliction. If Thou wert to refuse confirmation, then in no wise would my medication be a remedy for illness.

O God, my God! Aid and assist me through Thy healing grace. Thou art the Healer, the Self-Sufficient, the Remover of

every adversity and illness. And Thou art, verily, supreme over all things.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.

21 March 1915, Naw-Rúz

Today was a historic and wonderful day. All the believers in Abu Sinan, 'Akká, Haifa, the Gardens³²⁵ and Bahjí were present, and they numbered about seventy men and undoubtedly the same number of women.³²⁶ What a magnificent day and delightful morning! All heavenly bounties were arrayed: The grace of beholding the visage of the Beloved; the visit to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh; meeting the friends; the colorful and vivifying flowers; the luscious fruits; the sweetmeats and confections; the tea; and two cooked lambs which were purchased on the Master's instructions. Early in the morning 'Abdu'l-Bahá came from 'Akká to Bahjí and in the kitchen prepared food for the friends. Consider how He teaches humility, service and sacrifice to His sinful servants who have not inhaled the perfume of detachment and how the clouds of His bounties shower down the rain of grace, though naught save motes and specks grow in the soil of our hearts!

³²⁵ Ridván and Firdaws Gardens. (HM)

³²⁶ In conformity with the exigencies of the time, the Bahá'í gatherings in the Holy Land were conducted separately for men and women until the ministry of Shoghi Effendi.



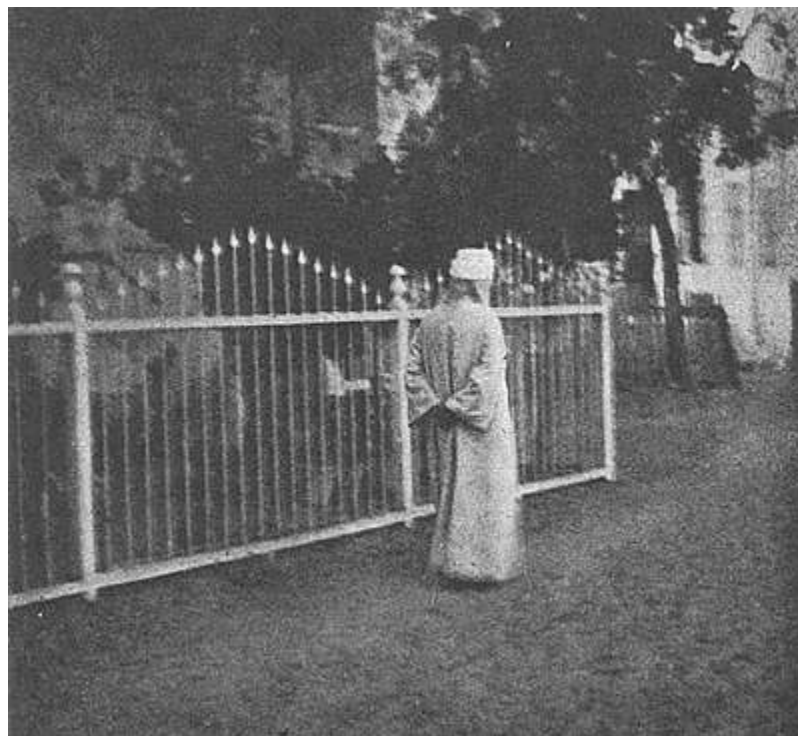
After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had seen to all the work [and supervised the preparation of food], He joined the gathering of the friends and instructed that appropriate prayers, Tablets and poems be chanted. Afterwards, for the occasion of this great festival, these remarks streamed forth from the Tongue of Grandeur [‘Abdu’l-Bahá]:

Each year the sun has two points of equipoise. One commences the season of spring when the year enters the zodiac sign of Aries, and its beginning is marked by Naw-Rúz. The second brings about the season of fall, and the year enters the sign of Libra, known as Mihrigán³²⁷. During these two times, the sun appears in equal portions, dividing the earth into two equal hemispheres. The whole of creation, such as meadows, orchards, greens and fields are revived and renewed in this season, and whatever was dead or withering is regenerated and refreshed. What refinement, what sweetness, what brilliance and what spirituality are attained!

³²⁷ Or Mihrján. (HM)

In truth, they observed Naw-Rúz properly in Iran, and it is evident that the celebration was not just in name and form. When I was in that land, they would hold immense festivities, particularly in the villages where all manners of celebration and joy would be displayed. Even though presently they have reduced the festivities somewhat, it is still observed befittingly.

From ancient times, this festival [Naw-Rúz] has been a source of celebration. After Zakhák's reign, Jamshíd came to the Throne on Naw-Rúz. To mark the joyous occasion, they inaugurated a great [Zoroastrian] temple and therein raised the sacred fire. Subsequent monarchs continued with this tradition until it was fully embraced as the national and state festival. It so happened that all the means of joy and celebration would come together on such a day. For instance, if they were in war, they would be victorious on this day. Every important undertaking was initiated on the day of Naw-Rúz. His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb], may My spirit be sacrificed unto Him, renewed this festival, and the Blessed Beauty, may my soul be a ransom unto His friends, established and confirmed it in the *Kitáb-i Aqdas*.



‘Abdu’l-Bahá at Bahjí

Friday, 26 March 1915

The land of Abu Sinan was once more blessed by the footsteps of the Moon of the Covenant [‘Abdu’l-Bahá], and one of His talks is recorded below:

Through the power of the Kingdom, man is saved from the grasp of nature by the sanctified Manifestations of God and is illumined by the light of divinity. That is, he is released from the clutches of the animal world and guided to the highest pinnacle of humanity. The state of man’s nature is injustice, butchery, tyranny, treachery, lechery, achievement of selfish motives, neglect of God and fulfillment of carnal desires. The sanctified Manifestations of God rescue humanity from this black pit and guide them to the highest stations of spirituality. Thereupon, man gains faith, attraction to the divine fragrance, the ability to discover mysteries, divine

recognition, knowledge of hidden secrets, trustworthiness, fidelity, charity, nobility and spirituality.

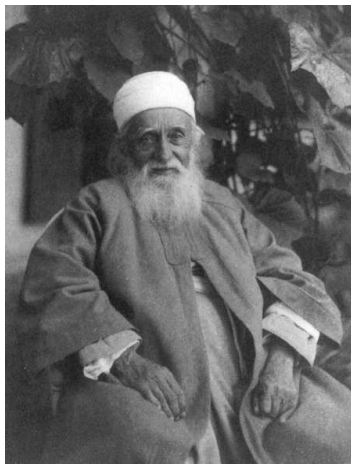
However, after the passage of time, once more man returns to his base nature and is seized in the grasp of darkness and unfaithfulness. His original condition is reinstated, the bright day is darkened, the world of humanity becomes the animal world, splendor is transmuted to obscurity, and heavenly attraction turns into fulfillment of carnal desires. Indeed, if we were to closely consider this, we would see that older societies are completely unaware of religion and are captives of nature. No sign of divine bounties is discerned, nor is any heavenly fragrance inhaled from them. They are governed by certain traditions and customs and follow the ways of their forefathers.

Thus, day is followed by night and the night-season overtaken by day. After a period of time, a new Dispensation of Reality dawns and divine effulgence shine forth from the horizon of truth. Spring then becomes summer and then fall and eventually winter. After winter, once more, the spiritual spring is born. This is how divine bounties are propagated forevermore.

Some negligent men think that the spring season has concluded and nothing but winter remains. They are immersed in their own vain imaginings.

27 March 1915

To our regret, today the friends did not attain the presence of the Beloved. Only when He was departing He passed by our room and said, "I must go. Do not trouble yourself. Be under God's care." And with that, He left.



28-30 March 1915

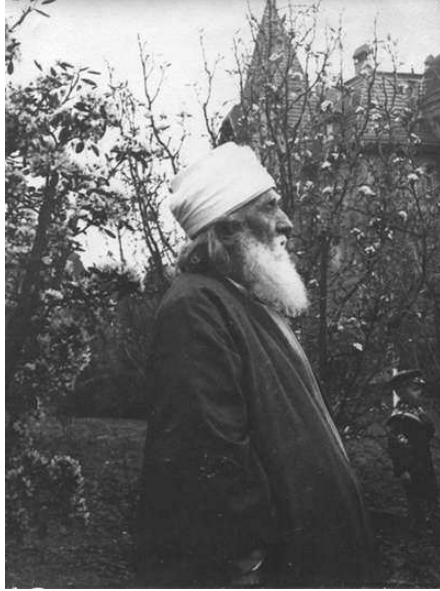
An amazing locust attack took place during this period. Like a thick cloud, they came, blocked the rays of the sun, and when they landed, were several layers on top of each other. In no time, even the finest farms were reduced to desolate barren land. No one had ever seen or heard of similar swarms of locusts in the past.

31 March 1915

Today Abu Sinan was blessed by the footsteps of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Each day until the fifth of April³²⁸, the friends attained His august presence. Most of His talks were about locusts: “Each being has the right to sustenance. *‘Are they then the distributors of the Lord’s Mercy? It is we who distribute their subsistence among them in this world’s life.’*³²⁹ They are our new guests who have tasted breakfast and now have come for lunch and dinner. The Arabs in the Arabian Peninsula and Yemen greatly enjoy the coming of locusts [and capture] and save them for the future. They say locusts are celestial sustenance, descended from the heavens above, and they eat and relish them.”

³²⁸ As later diary entries indicate, it seems that this stay of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Abu Sinan lasted until 17 April 1915. However, the diary entries of Badí‘ Bushrú’í suggest that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá may have visited ‘Akká and Haifa for a portion of this period.

³²⁹ Qur’án 43:32.



Chapter 10

Abu Sinan: April 1915

The Evening of 6 April 1915

Some of the friends and non-Bahá’ís were gathered in the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálih, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá adorned the assemblage with His presence. Shaykh Salmán remarked, “Soon Italy will enter the War.” The Master replied:

So far it is only a rumor. Italy wants to support the victor and, whichever direction the wind blows, so will Italy’s support. Consider how foolish people are: They discard God Who is supreme over all things and follow the dictates of subservient mankind. <200> Now they say America wants to mediate peace, because in truth their Foreign Minister, Mr. Bryan³³⁰, does not even want the word “war” to be mentioned in his presence. People have left God and are attacking one another. They are puny and have clung to even weaker beings, whereas they should follow God, and be on the side of God! They should cling to: “Hand of God is over their hands.”³³¹

Presently in Europe there is a great deal of rain and mud, but by the end of Niysán [spring] and the beginning of Ayár³³², the great convulsion will begin. All of these tribulations are because they have separated themselves from the shadow of the Lord’s All-

³³⁰ William Jennings Bryan (1860-1925) was a supporter of President Wilson and was appointed Secretary of State in 1914. He resigned his post in 1915 over Wilson’s pro-Allied policies.

³³¹ Qur’an 48:10.

³³² The end of the second month of spring and the beginning of the third; means circa May 21.

Conquering Canopy of Will. Italy is waiting to see which side is triumphant so she will support them.

Anticipation is in the essence of man. Man is always waiting for the future, thinking perchance it might be better than today. All the world's religions are also waiting and expectant for a Peacemaker to come and repair all affairs.



Shaykh Sálìh suggested, “Except for the materialists.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Even the naturalists [are expectant]. However, their expectation is not like the religionists who claim, ‘He will come from some unknown city, accompanied with many men and arms.’ Instead they maintain that at times nature breaks with its pattern and a courageous, powerful, peace-loving Man appears Who is a prodigy with exceptional foresight and abilities above and beyond the normal human beings, and He is able to win primacy over others. They maintain that [when appeared], He would effectively establish universal peace.

The Shi‘ites who follow the Imamate of ‘Alí ibn Abú-Tálib have certain other convictions. They consider

‘Alí sinless and an inspired Imam Who after the Prophet, had the highest station and [after Whom] leadership resided with His sons and descendents. They claim that the twelfth Imam disappeared and now resides in the twin cities of Jabulqa and Jabulsa, one in the East and the other in the West. Each city has twelve thousand gates and the expected Imam spends six months [of the year] in each city. He will reappear in the Latter Days, when the earth is filled with injustice, wrong, tumult and chaos, and will illumine the world with the light of His justice and bounties. He will come accompanied by unnumbered hosts, will conquer the earth, and enlist all the people under His own banner. With His breath, He will slay the infidels.

There is another faction, known as Kaysaniyya, that awaits the reappearance of Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, presently living in the Mount Ridva, similar to Mount Ridván, who will come in the Latter Day in the company of a great army and will remedy the world.³³³

The Sunnis believe that at the end of time and from an unknown place, the Mihdí will appear in Mecca with a large number of men and hosts and, with His sword, will conquer the world and establish His sovereignty.

The Zoroastrians hold the exact same belief in that the Promised One will appear from an undisclosed place. They only have changed His name and call Him Kaykhusraw. In truth, the story is the same even though they consider His abode to be an unknown location, calling it Mount Unknown³³⁴.

³³³ This faction commenced after the martyrdom of Imam Husayn by a certain Mukhtar ibn Abu ‘Ubayd ath-Thaqafi, claiming to represent Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyya, son of Imam ‘Alí by a Hanafi woman; see Moojan Momen, *Introduction to Shi‘i Islam*, pp. 47-49.

³³⁴ Mount Shazand. (HM)

The Christians also maintain that His Holiness Christ will appear accompanied by a large host of angels and for now lives in the heavens, the vast space above. Similarly the Jews believe that the promised Messiah must be a descendent of Moses and offspring of Karshun, and presently resides in the city of Sabbath³³⁵, surrounded by moving sands, preventing entrance or exit from the city. On Saturdays this river of sand stops its circulation, but all the gates are locked. They maintain that at the End of Time, the Promised One will appear with a large army, filling the world with justice and equity, such that wolf will lie with the sheep, the tiger with the lamb, and the cobra with the infant.

When a person closely considers these stories it is clear that all these expectations are one and the same, only differ in the names and locations – but the essence is the same.



Shaykh Salmán inquired, “Do the differences stem from the Founders of Dispensations, or are they attributed to the religious leaders?” The Master replied:

³³⁵ Or the City of Ben Mushih. (HM)

The Founders of religions have not said anything that causes differences, but people have vain imaginings and follow their own dictates, considering them to be the truth. For instance, His Holiness Moses has declared, “After Me, will appear another like Me.”³³⁶ His Holiness Christ proclaimed, “The Separator of truth from error will appear.”³³⁷ However, the followers of diverse religions create confusions, propagate their own imaginings and cling tightly to these misconceptions.

The entire creation is undergoing change and revolution, and this change is an essential attribute of creation. Similarly, man is constantly changing and evolving, and centuries and ages cannot be compared against one another. For instance, in a particular age, a Prophet sent by God appears for the edification of man and establishes the foundations of the happiness and well-being of the people. But then through the appearance of the next Prophet, changes are manifested in accordance with the age’s requirements – and these changes are due to the Second Teacher. This is necessary because after the sun has dawned and given light to the world, then the darkness of night is spread. If the sun does not dawn again on the following day, the whole world is laid to waste and destruction. Therefore it is essential for the sun to appear once again. If a wise and complete philosopher has established a foundation that is ruined over time, then it is required for another one to come and reconstitute this foundation. Is it possible for

³³⁶ Deuteronomy 18:15 states, “The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken.”

³³⁷ 1 John 4:6 states, “We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.” Fariq [separator] is closely related to Faraqilit, which is the Arabicised of Paraclete (Comforter); see John 15:26.

any structure not to be destroyed or for any building not to experience decay? When a building is ruined, then a new builder will come and will either build one like it or a better one in accord with the time's exigencies.

When a discerning man considers the evolution of humanity and studies pages of the book of creation, it is evident that the world is not limited to six thousand years.³³⁸ The divine truth is an everlasting cause. The life of divinity is infinite. Is it possible for His eternity to come to an end? Sovereignty requires subjects, attendants, armies, courts, soldiers and people. Is it meaningful to claim that one is a king without having an army? Light and warmth are the essential attributes of the sun. Therefore, is it possible to say that at one time sun did not have light or energy, or perhaps it does not have these qualities now? Nay, it is impossible. Such a thing is not the sun. It is evident error. Consequently, one cannot claim that God existed at one time but had no eyes or ears. If it were so, then it was not God, but rather a blind and deaf creature. Therefore for as long as God has existed, so has man. Thus, the world cannot be limited to six thousand years. If a person considers attentively, it is clear that this world is older than six thousand years for the divine names and attributes may not be suspended without creation. *Astaghfuru'lláh!* A creator requires a creation. There is no suspension in divine bounties. Man's thought must be expansive and evolving, not frozen in time. Is it possible to constrain this infinite creation to a limited number of days?

If through his vain imaginings man limits the scope of divinity and gives it a beginning and an end, then it is no longer divinity. "Whatever is created perfect is by God; all else is not of Him." Could we seize God

³³⁸ Most fundamentalist Christians believe in literal reading of the Book of Genesis, which seems to suggest that the world was created in approximately 4000 BC.

under chains and fetters and limit Him by our boundaries, laws and limitations? Astaghfuru’lláh! He is sanctified above every description and condition. If we look at the world, we behold it to be the Preserved Book and Resplendent Text, which must be read and studied. Man must close his self-seeing eye and open his God-seeing vision. Everything in this Book is hidden and mysterious.

These topics can readily be spoken of in Europe since they have no prejudice. For instance, if you ask someone, “What is heaven?” He will respond, “A never-ending space with each star traversing its own trajectory and through the effect of gravity maintaining equilibrium in the cosmos.” However such discussions cannot take place in this realm.

His Holiness Christ says, “No one came from heaven, except the Son of Man who is in heaven.”³³⁹ Notice that Christ came from the womb of His mother, and while He was of earth considered Himself heavenly. Therefore by heaven is not meant this never-ending space, but the immense station and spirituality of Christ.

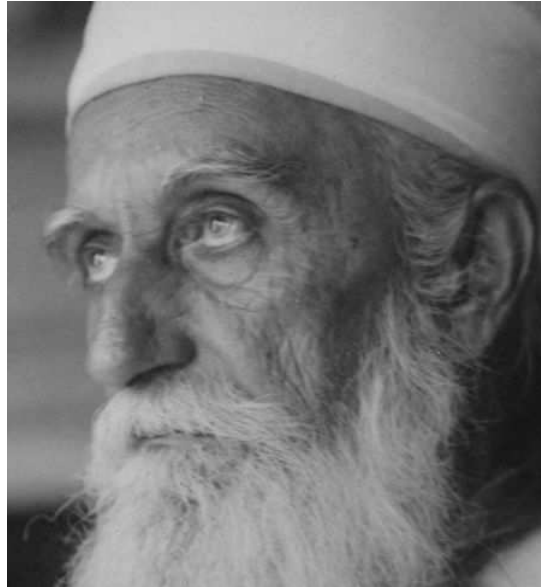
6 April 1915

‘Abdu’l-Bahá arrived at the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálíh where a number of non-Bahá’ís were present. The entire conversation surrounded everyday topics and was in accordance with the aptitude and interest of the nonbelievers, who had the pleasure of attending. Regarding people’s fear of the locust attacks, the Master said:

It is amazing that people are afraid of physical plagues, but have no worries of spiritual calamities. They

³³⁹ John 3:13 states, “And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, [even] the Son of man which is in heaven.”

are heedless of being inflicted with a myriad of spiritual catastrophes, but do not desire the least harm to come to this transient body or be exposed to any jeopardy. They say whatever may happen to our soul, let it happen; but nothing less than utmost comfort for our body!



7 April 1915

It was a rainy day. I returned from Bahjí and twice attained ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence in Abu Sinan. The Master stated:

Consider man’s infidelity. With a thousand worries, troubles and tears he raises a child. Then, he readily puts thousands upon thousands of them to the sword’s blade. It takes twenty years for a person to grow to maturity and full strength, but in an instant, these people massacre tens of thousands of men and allow them to perish. How many cities are thoroughly destroyed, how many villages are reduced to heaps of dust, how much blood reddens the soil and how immense are the properties that are plundered and wrecked! And yet, there is no benefit in any of this! Their purpose is to be victorious. At one time, France was triumphant over

Germany, and, at another time, the converse stood true. None of these victories are lasting and no good will come of them, much as they did not benefit them in the past.

Now, if they were to set aside these acts of carnage and butchery, and to deal with one another in accord with the divine will, showing love and affection to each other, tell me Áqá Mírzá Habíb, is it not better? Consider how much trouble it is to cure a single patient, and yet these governments slaughter millions and millions. <205> Is it not true that you exert great efforts to heal just one sick person? Indeed, we save one by one, and they annihilate ranks upon ranks.

8 April 1915, Abu Sinan

It was a cold and rainy day, and until about dusk the friends did not have the bounty of coming into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence. Early evening, the Master summoned me and asked of the condition of the honored Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím.³⁴⁰ Then He also called forth to His presence his brother, ‘Abdu’l-Ghaffar, and said:

Know that the Blessed Beauty has explicitly commanded consultation with physicians. A person must even ask every minute detail from his physician. Let me illustrate this point by an example. If we want to make a window, we must ask a carpenter, as he is more experienced in this field. In like fashion, if we want to raise a building, we must consult a builder, as he knows the requirements better than others. In fact in each respective field of industry and enterprise, the experts

³⁴⁰ Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím, [son of] ‘Abdu’l-Fattah, was of the Bahá’ís of ‘Akká and inflicted with pneumonia. His kinsmen would prescribe various remedies and would not follow my prescriptions. A large number of them would come and visit him and cause further complications. (HM)

know more about it than others. Therefore you must follow all details in accord with the instructions of Áqá Mírzá Habíb [Mú'ayyad] and allow the sick to be cured through his remedy. And if the ill desires a particular thing, such as an orange, he must first consult his doctor. Furthermore, do not allow too many people to frequent his bedside, and let only a single person remain in the room to nurse the ill. Let the ill rest. The very air of tranquility will affect a cure. That is, once calm, serenity and peace have surrounded the ailing, they will greatly benefit his condition. Conversely, if many come, each visitor speaking his opinion, tarrying for a while, engaging the ill in conversation, then, obviously, he will be fatigued. There is nothing better than calm and quite. Moreover, such excessiveness is not conducive for them either. Consider the gatherings of the Arabs. Rank upon rank of them come to visit the ill, sit, tell tales, smoke pipes and other tobacco, to the point that the atmosphere of the room becomes foul.

Europeans act properly. As soon as one of them is ill, he is taken to the hospital where visiting is essentially forbidden. Once every so often the family goes and inquires about the condition of the loved one from a receptionist or attendant.

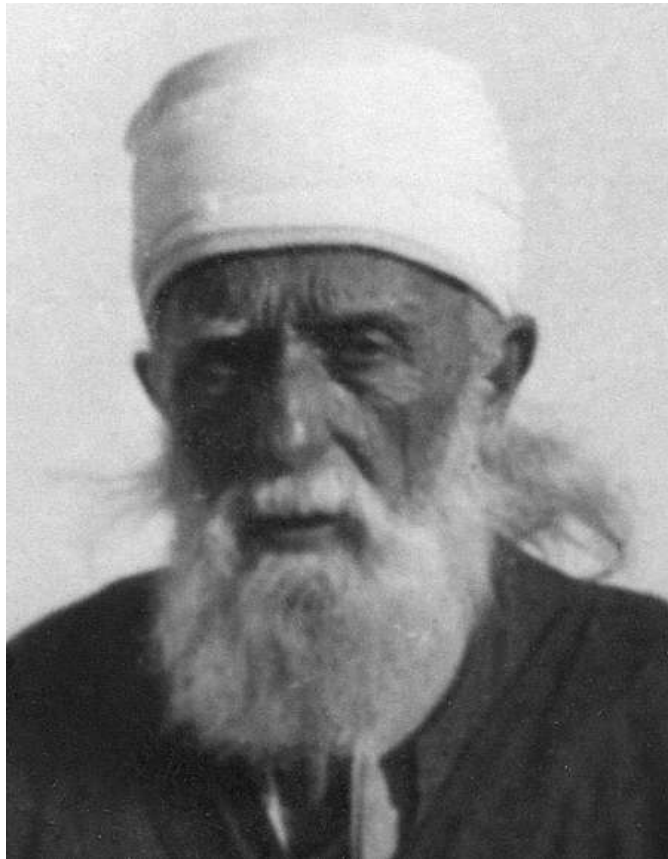
In London, one of the Bahá'ís was ill and, in tears, some of the other friends came to Me saying that the ailing person wished to meet with Me. I went to his hospital but was prevented from visiting. With a great difficulty, the friends convinced the hospital authorities that My meeting with him would result in his cure. Therefore, they allowed Me to enter his room, and God cured him.

My point is that excessively visiting the ailing has no benefit. Ensure that others understand this.

302 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

I inquired from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá of His health and general condition, and He stated:

I am well. There is no illness. Only My nerves are shattered, and this is because, after Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension, I was surrounded with a depression and grief that words cannot describe. Now, when I work hard or speak extensively, My health is effected. The burdens of the recent journey [to Europe and America] ruined My health and melted My bones. My feeble temple was not able to withstand such difficulties.



I said, “A few days ago when we went to Yirka, it was a most pleasant and invigorating location. It would seem to be most suitable for Your well-being if You would go there and rest under its trees.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “Of what use is good health to Me! I want to wholly sacrifice Myself in the path of the Blessed Beauty and give

no thought to commerce, farming, or possessions. Only through absolute sacrifice and detachment can one be faithful to the love of the Ancient Beauty. There should be no other thoughts besides service to His Threshold. I hope that you will attain unto this station. The Cause of God is immensely stupendous!”

Áqá Mírzá Tarázu'lláh Káshí said that the violators of the Covenant had given a feast for Mutasarrif of 'Akká who was here on Sunday. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded:

I wish the end of My life to be musk-laden. That is, I wish to drink from the chalice of martyrdom in the path of the Blessed Beauty. I cherish no other desire than this. It would make no difference for Me, for I have no comfort to miss or happiness to grieve over. I have no joy, so I will not be saddened by its absence, and I have no delight to lament over its loss. Whatever happens is of no difference to Me. However, these people (the Covenant-breakers) exert efforts night and day, to cause tumult in 'Akká. And if there is turmoil in that city and it results in My capture, imprisonment and death, it is of no consequence!

Insha'lláh, they will crucify Me! Or pierce My chest with a thousand bullets!

However, if there is commotion in 'Akká, both the steadfast believers and they [i.e. the Covenant-breakers] will suffer. And that is why in hiding and in secret they carry out mischief. Now they have given the tent of the Blessed Beauty to this man (Jamal Pasha) when I had not allowed a single soul to use it. They gave the rugs of the Ancient Beauty to Hasan Effendi, where every night wanton women dance on them. In this manner, they deal with the relics of their Lord!

They [i.e. the Covenant-breakers] sent Mírzá Majdí’d-Dín³⁴¹ to Jamál Pasha claiming that I am against [the Committee for] Union and Progress.³⁴² They advanced many calumnies, including: “Whenever there has been a problem or disturbance, we have become entangled with it. Therefore, now, in order to protect our lives and possessions, we are presenting a deposition that it was He [i.e. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] Who committed these deeds. So, if a difficulty occurs, we are not to blame.”

Yahya Bey in Damascus exerted great efforts to turn Jamal Pasha against us. (The previous matters have been testified in great detail by Mírzá Badí‘u’lláh in his treatise.³⁴³) They think that once I am eliminated, things will be better for them. I pray that in the path of the Blessed Beauty, My breast will be the target of a hundred thousand bullets. When the Pashas were here [in 1907], I said to Vakíl, “My Murshid³⁴⁴ [the Báb] sustained a thousand bullets on the gallows of Adharbayjan. What greater bounty is there to follow the example of My Murshid! Martyrdom is my ultimate desire.”

³⁴¹ A son of Mírzá Musa Kalím and a determined enemy of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

³⁴² The governing body of the Ottoman Empire at that time. The Young Turk “Committee of Union and Progress” (Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti) or CUP, was established in 1889 by four young students of the Military Medical Academy in Istanbul as a secret non-political society against Sultan ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd II. The initial aim of educating Muslims with Western liberal ideas and culture changed after 1902 when a political program appeared and the radicals took over, who initiated the 1908-1909 Revolution, and the CUP ruled and brought about the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire between 1908 and 1918. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá highly praised the CUP. It can be said that He was stating his appreciation for His liberation in 1908 and before it was clear that the military wing of the CUP had taken over or what that would mean. It seems that His ties were to the civilian, parliamentary wing. Perhaps some of the officials posted to Palestine were Young Turks, with whom he made contact. (Dr. Necati Alkan, 2004, private communications.)

³⁴³ See Mírzá Badí‘u’lláh, *An Epistle to the Bahá’í World*, translated by Dr. Ameen Ullah Fareed, Chicago, 1907.

³⁴⁴ Murshid is a term used by mystic to designate their guide and spiritual leader.

When a person has an heirloom of his father, it is difficult for him to part with it. This tent belonged to the Blessed Beauty. Wherever He went, this tent was pitched, and the friends would come attain His august presence within it. The mention of this tent has been made in the Holy Scriptures. It is written, “The Tabernacle of the Lord will be pitched on Mount Carmel.”³⁴⁵ They give away this tent so that their written declaration will find a ready ear.

My trust unto you is this: Never forget the bounties and favors of the Blessed Perfection. Never forget His admonishments and exhortations. Not for a moment should you neglect your fidelity to Him. You and I must ceaselessly be thinking of His ordinances, inattentive to any other thought or consideration. We must consecrate all our thoughts on His affection. Know that, by God, besides Whom there is no other God, all existence is not worth the skin of a peanut. It will give no benefit or reward. The only thing that remains is service to His Cause, exaltation of His Faith and diffusion of divine fragrance. *Fi amanu'lláh.*

9 April 1915

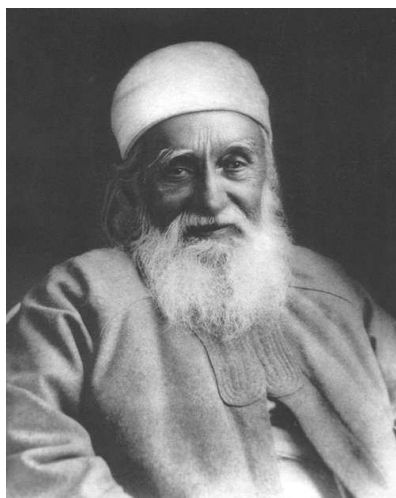
Regarding [Lake] Tiberius, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

His Holiness Christ spent most of His time on the shores of Lake Tiberius, but, alas, none of His sacred fragrances have remained. Sanctified is God! Near the lake’s mineral waters, I saw the European pilgrims had prostrated themselves over the shore’s pebbles and were kissing them, some weeping profusely. I inquired, “Why

³⁴⁵ The present translator has been unable to find a Biblical reference for this statement.

this lamentation and crying?” They said, “At one time Christ walked over these shores and with His Apostles may have sat on these rocks. It is in His memory that we kiss and savor this ground, and circumambulate these rocks.”

Consider how they prostrate themselves on the sands that at one time may have been honored by the footsteps of Christ and His Apostles, but are now heedless of the Lord of Hosts! Amazing, amazing, amazing!



10 April 1915

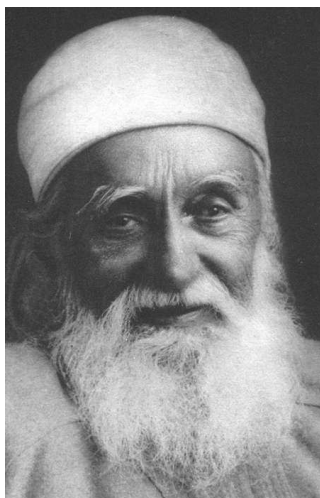
Today ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to visit the honored Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím who was ill in bed. The latter said:

How agreeable if I die,
 You come by my grave.
I raise my head from eternal bed,
 Crying, “Welcome, O my Beloved!”

In accordance with the Master’s instructions, I began examining the ill [i.e. Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím] and subsequently reported the results to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Together we then went to the [Bahá'í] school where the students immediately arose and bowed down. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "It thrills Me immensely every time I think that in such a village we have established a school. Please do sit. May God reward your effort."

That afternoon we went to Bahjí and, in the evening, attended a gathering in the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálíh. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse covered ordinary topics in response to various questions put to Him by the Shaykhs.



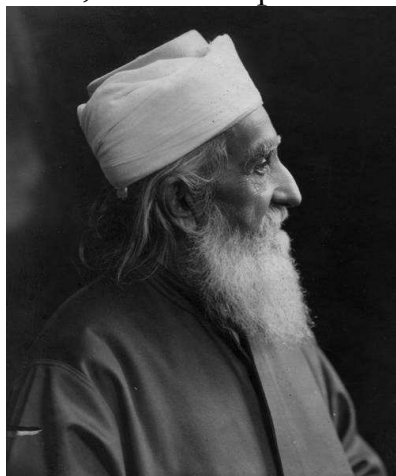
11 April 1915, Abu Sinan³⁴⁶

Until about the evening hour we were deprived of the bounty of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence. At nighttime He came to the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálíh and since Ahmad Sohrab had arrived, the Master inquired: "Áqá Mírzá Ahmad, how long has it been since we left America?" He responded, "Two and a half years." <210> 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued:

Truly this period has not been productive. At least when we were in the America, we were busy and constantly met with people and corresponded with the

³⁴⁶ *Bushru'i*, pp. 62-3, states that the Master was in Haifa on this evening and gives a summary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's talk which differs considerably from Dr. Mú'ayyad's diary.

friends. But now, time goes by unprofitably: no meetings; no communication; no travels; no service. It would have been better if we had gone directly to India. But what can we do? Such are God’s decrees. He has not created us for comfort. My weakness and illness is because I am not occupied. What a wonderful time we had in America, all spent in the service of the Cause and every minute of it filled with delight and high spirits. How much better it would have been if we had not returned here, had stayed there serving the Faith of God and day and night raising the cry of the divine Kingdom. Here we are wasting our lives. I am very sad that the means of service to the Cause are not presently available. My happiness resides in serving the spiritual friends and elevating the Word of God. All of these are presently absent and, therefore, we are deprived of all bounties.

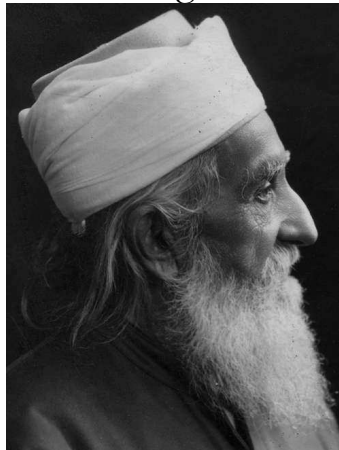


[Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab] responded, “Insha’lláh after the War,” and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

Indeed at that time [in America] every means of felicity and blissfulness were prepared. Joy and happiness are the cause of cures, and no joy can ever hope to rival service to the Cause of God. When a person is truly sacrificial, then he thoroughly forgets himself, dedicates his all in the path of the Blessed Beauty and arises in

servitude in His love. No exultation and delight can ever be greater than this.

A person serving the Cause is like a lamp, which has no joy and happiness greater than being kindled. The ultimate satisfaction of the lamp is to be lit, to give illumination and to brighten the whole of the surrounding field. Similarly our ultimate joy is in servitude to the sacred Threshold. And that servitude requires that with a brightened face, unsullied heart, illumined spirit and sanctified presence, we arise and teach His Cause. The Blessed Beauty did not create and educate us for the comfort, the joy and the cares of this world. He endured all these trials and tribulations so that we would be edified and enlighten the world.



At this point a number of non-Bahá'ís arrived and the utterances of 'Abdu'l-Bahá changed from spiritual to conventional themes. For instance, someone asked when gunpowder was invented and He responded, "In the Seventh century." He spoke of the ways of war in the modern times and praised Arabs for bravery: "The present war is not a war, it is a deceit. It is bloodshed using deception and trickery, because all the battles are fought with equipment and machinery. If battles were still fought with sabers, then Islam would be victorious over the world. The bravery of Muslims is legendary. But now man does not fight; all the bloodshed is through various devices and machines. In the American-Spanish War not one American was killed. In fact, they warred, and were

310 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

even victorious, even though not one of them was injured.” Afterwards He related the story of Zenubia³⁴⁷, the queen of [the oasis city] Palymra [Tadmor], as a prime example of bravery.³⁴⁸

The Evening of 12 April 1915, Abu Sinan³⁴⁹

One of the friends said, “From the bounties of the Master’s teachings, the Iranians in Beirut are submissive.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded:

People do not become submissive because of virtuous dictums; but rather, when they observe righteous deeds, they grow submissive. By God besides Whom there is no God, if the friends were to follow the teachings and exhortations of the Blessed Beauty, then the necks of the kings of the earth would be humbled.

³⁴⁷ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá tells of her story on other occasions; see, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London*, pp. 103-104; and *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 135-136.

³⁴⁸ She was the wife of Odanatus [Odeinats], the governor of Athens. Some forty years before Christ, Romans had conquered this region and it was under the rule of the Romans, when Odanatus passed away in the year 266 AD. Since Zenubia was known for her wisdom, abilities and statesmanship, the Roman parliament appointed her the governor of the region. Soon she decided to win her independence and planned on conquering Egypt, Syria and some other parts of Asia. She raised a fort in Palymra. The ruins are evident to this day. It was sustained by 69 pillars. She defended her nation for two years from within this castle. With long hair flowing over her shoulders, wearing the crown of sovereignty and a purple dress, several times she fought the Romans and was victorious. Eventually Orlian came to the battle and assumed the command of the Roman armies. After two years, food ran out in the fort and their farming was insufficient. They ate all the animals but, after some time, were forced to surrender. Orlian offered to marry her but she refused, as he had been an adversary at one time. Orlian was angered over this rejection and decided to belittle her by having circus animals leading the parade bringing her to Rome, bound by a gold chain. This occurred in 273 CE. Orlian did not kill her and she spent the rest of her days in a palace with her children. (HM)

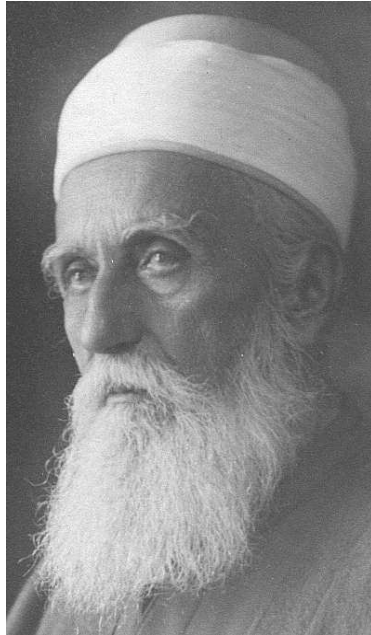
³⁴⁹ *Bushru’i*, p. 63, indicates that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was in Haifa on this occasion and gives a synopsis of His talk which considerably augments Dr. Mú’ayyad’s diary.

Consider the difference between one who speaks of generosity and the one who is generous; between the one who claims justice and equity, and the one who is just and equitable. Or how significant is the contrast between the one who speaks of light, and the one who is illumined. If we were to follow the teachings and dictums of the Blessed Beauty, even stones and plants would be affected.

The Blessed Beauty sustained all these trials and tribulations so that we would succeed in our deeds, not so that we would only make mention of our intentions. The sun dawns so that people are able to perform their duties, not merely speak of them. It is revealed, “Adorn thyself by deeds, if thou art of the righteous” and not “Adorn thyself by words, if thou art of the righteous.”

How many people exist who constantly state their readiness for self-sacrifice. Several thousand times they state: “May my life be a sacrifice unto you!” Forfeiting possessions, rank and name in the path of Love is the first station.³⁵⁰ They express their desire for sacrifice, and perhaps it is based on truth. But how different it is to say such a thing and to actually be sacrificed on the field of martyrdom! That is why deeds have an effect.

³⁵⁰ Bahá'u'lláh has revealed (*Seven Valleys*, pp. 8-9): “In this station the lover hath no thought save the Beloved, and seeketh no refuge save the Friend. At every moment he offereth a hundred lives in the path of the Loved One, at every step he throweth a thousand heads at the feet of the Beloved.”



Shaykh Salmán said, “Today the [Newspaper] Azhans Telegraph reported that in the fort of Berzmesil, which the Russians had conquered from the Austrians, they only found one cannon.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

Why do they feel compelled to spread false rumors? If they do not possess accurate news, there is no need to print anything. When they report inaccurately, then no one will believe them when they are actually reporting the truth.

It is said that Nadir Shah once advanced a claim to Baghdad, and, since the Válí of Baghdad did not have sufficient men and arms, he promised to surrender the city on a specified day. While Nadir Shah was proceeding towards Baghdad, eight thousand cavalymen under the command of ‘Uthmán Pasha came from Istanbul to the aid of the Válí of Baghdad, and Nadir was defeated decisively and took refuge into the mountains. He said to his secretary, “Write that we have been defeated, give the number of injured, the dead, and the men lost as prisoners, and request the arrival of fresh troops to come to our aid.” The secretary wrote [instead], “Out of divine

bounties and favors, we thoroughly reduced the Arab army, killed several thousand of their men, injured many more, and seized many prisoners, completely uprooting their positions. Since we have decided to expand our victories to other places, we need soldiers and provisions.”

When Nadir saw the text of this royal command he was angered and said, “Draft the command as I dictated it to you. Inform them that because of the fewness of our numbers, the enormity of the enemy’s army and the addition of eight thousand mounted men that came to their aid, we failed to conquer the city [of Baghdad]. Tell them that, in fact, we have lost the battle and then give the number of the dead, injured and otherwise lost men. Forthrightly admit that we are presently hiding in the mountains and, after the passing of winter, during the beginning of spring, we plan to attack for a second time. However we need additional provisions, battle arms and many soldiers so that, God willing, we will succeed in this goal.” It so happened that the matter came to pass as Nadir had anticipated; namely, they were victorious that spring. Thereupon he said to the same scribe, “If I had hidden the truth at that time and had not informed accurately, then no one would believe me now when I announce this victory.”

Shaykh Salmán remarked, “It is said, “Truth is the deliverance!”³⁵¹” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:

Yes, indeed. His Holiness (Imam ‘Alí, son of Abí-Tálib) was surrounded by enemies and wished to take refuge elsewhere. He said to one of His companions (Salmán, the Persian), “Place me in this basket and carry

³⁵¹ John 8:32 states, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

it over your head, escaping through this trench. If they asked, ‘Where is ‘Alí?’ respond, ‘He is in this basket.’” Salmán did as bidden and when he was asked of ‘Alí’s whereabouts he would say, “In this basket over my head!” In this manner, His Holiness was rescued.

It is said that at the time of Amín and Ma‘mún, sons of Hárún ar-Rashíd of the ‘Abbasid Caliphate, there was a certain righteous man by the name of ‘Alí who had advanced considerably. Ma‘mún and his great army came towards Baghdad, and Amín decided to send ‘Alí to the opposing camp as a spy. When the two camps came within a farsang of each other and while inspecting his troops, Táhír, the general of Ma‘mún’s army, noticed that a man was coming towards them in great haste riding a camel. When he came near, Táhír asked, “What is your name?”

“‘Alí,” was the response.

“Why have you come here?”

‘Alí responded, “For spying.”

“Who sent you?”

“‘Isá, the commander of Amín’s army,” said ‘Alí.

“What is your mission?”

“To completely survey your camp and report back to my commander.”

Táhír allowed him into the general camp, assigned a guide and instructed that he was permitted to inspect without hindrance any part of the camp and talk to anyone he wished. When ‘Alí returned from his survey, Táhír asked, “What did you see?”

“I completely inspected the whole camp. I learned the number of your soldiers, the attitude of your captains, studied their strategy and training, estimated the magnitude of your ammunition and provisions, determined the psychological state of the men, and in

short, learned everything about your camp. And now I will happily return to my own army.”

Táhir was deeply astonished at this man’s veracity and amazed at his candor. He gave a feast in his honor and invited him to rest for the night. After the feast they retired for the evening. Táhir noticed that ‘Alí repeatedly brought his head out of the blanket and was restless. So he inquired, “Why are you sleepless?” ‘Alí responded, “I am waiting for you to sleep so I can escape.” Táhir said, “I will now sleep and you may go. Fí amanu’lláh.” He put his head under the blanket, closed his eyes and ‘Alí left quickly.

<215> It so happened that in the battle Ma‘mun was completely victorious. After conquering Baghdad, Táhir inquired of ‘Alí’s whereabouts. They said he was in hiding. They searched and eventually found him and he was appointed the vizier of the treasury. Táhir said to him then, “If you were not righteous, I would have killed you when I first saw you. But since you were truthful and firm in your convictions, you are therefore worthy to be in charge of the treasury.”

13 April 1915, Abu Sinan

The following Tablet was revealed today [by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] in honor of Dr. Bercot³⁵²:

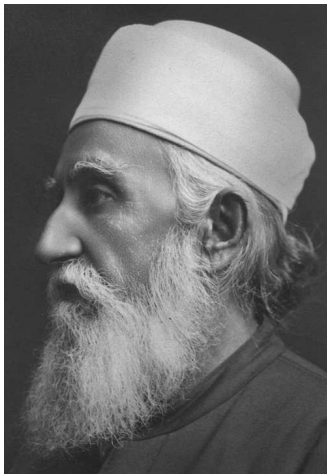
He is God!

O thou who art suppliant towards the Presence of the All-Merciful, who has humbled herself before His divine Might. I too supplicate to the Lord of the Kingdom, He Who possesses all might and dominion, that He may make of thee and of thy dear consort to become as two signs of concord and unity and that He may bless you both in this union to all eternity, and that He may further

³⁵² The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

keep you safe in the sanctuary of His protection, and that He may cast the glances of His loving kindness and providence upon you. Thus may your hearts be gladdened with His hidden bounties, and your eyes be solaced with His divine gifts, that His glorious rewards, and heavenly blessings ever abide with you both. Upon you both greetings and praise.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás



That night we attained the presence of the Master. His remarked included, “Greed and avarice are ingrained in human nature. However divine teachings will change these attributes. The Prophets and chosen ones have not appeared so that people will worship them and shower them with praise and laudation. They have sustained all their trials so that they may guide and educate people.”

14 April 1915, Abu Sinan

Today ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came by the bedside of Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím. Because of his illness, he was not able to talk, but when he opened his eyes and saw the countenance of the Master, he said, “How sweet to expire in the arms of the Beloved!”

Soon afterwards he sent Áqá Muhammad-Mihdí to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and asked permission to leave this nether world. The Master spoke many expressions of bounties and affection for Áqá

Muhammad-Ibráhím. When the messenger returned to his bedside, Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím said, “May I be a ransom for the Master.” Then thrice he uttered, “Master, Master, Master” and passed on.

Thus after twenty-one days of illness and confinement in bed, the honored Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím Mashhadí Fattah left the world of dust for the celestial abode.³⁵³ All during his period of ailment, this illustrious person spoke prayers and would say constantly, “O Beloved of the World, O the Great Mystery of God, O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás!”

15 April 1915, Abu Sinan

There was an amazing scene today. Two warships of the French armored naval division came into the bay, one towards Haifa and the other to ‘Akká. At the same time a locust attack, like a dark, thick cloud descended.³⁵⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “No one has seen or heard of so many locusts, nor does history record anything like it. They are the army of God!” He even took the binoculars from me and surveyed each direction. As we were standing there in deep thought over locusts, and watching “the army of God”, we suddenly heard the roar of the cannons of the warships. They succeeded in destroying the steel bridge between Haifa and ‘Akká.³⁵⁵ In all, twenty-six shells were fired, of which one of them fell in the Garden of Firdaws, but did not explode. The people of ‘Akká were greatly perturbed and worried. Women and children were permitted to leave [the city], but the men were barred. After an hour, the warships left and disappeared in the haze of dark smoke.

At that time, the carriage arrived from ‘Akká to take back the coffin of the honored Áqá Muhammad-Ibráhím to its eternal burial

³⁵³ See *Memorials of the Faithful* 140-1 for a eulogy given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

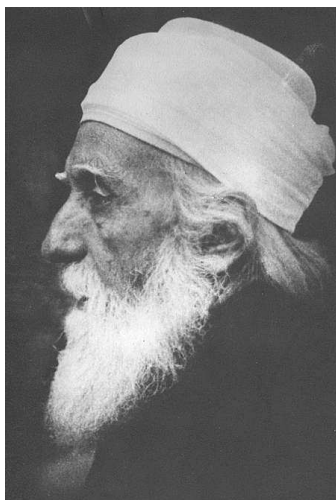
³⁵⁴ Today completed the eighteenth day of locust attack. Earth and air was so densely filled that no one ever recalled a similar incident. (HM)

³⁵⁵ Known as the Bridge of Na‘min. Mírzá Nuri’d-Din Zayn would recall: One day humorously ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “On the day of creation when God said, ‘Am I not thy Lord?’ this bridge replied, ‘Yea, yea!’” (HM)

318 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

site. The entire village, rank upon rank of Christians, Muslims, Druze and Bahá’ís gathered, waiting for the arrival of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Like a luminous moon, He appeared and came forth, bending to lift a corner of the coffin. A number of the friends rushed forth and lifted the coffin in His place.

After returning from the funeral procession, many gathered in the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálíh, and the chiefs of the Christians and Druze gave eloquent talks, praying for the Master’s long life and the prosperity of the friends.



16 April 1915, Abu Sinan

We were in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for sometime before noon. Afterwards, He walked around the village of Abu Sinan and since there was so much talk of locusts and their raid, humorously said to Shaykh Salih, “Do you not honor the guest? These are your guests. Imam ‘Alí was fond of three things: ‘fasting in the summer, the blow of the sword and generosity to one’s guest.’”

At noontime, Kumandan and some others attained the presence of the Master. In the evening, a number of non-Bahá’ís and believers were with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the guest-hall of Shaykh Sálíh, and the beautiful countenance of Covenant and Testament spoke for two hours. Regarding the Egyptian Pyramids He said:

Harum ar-Rashid wanted to excavate [the Pyramids] but was unsuccessful. [His son] Ma'mun then decided to carry out the same task and, after much effort and many searches, they found a tablet in the hieroglyphs script. There was someone in Europe who could read hieroglyphs. Upon the tablet was written the identity of the king-builder and the fact that it was so strongly built that no one could open it until the end of time. With this, Ma'mun discarded his plans.

The Pharaohs raised the Pyramids. Rameses [I] built one, the construction of which lasted ten years, each day using ten thousand workers. He raised a city of six sides, divided into two halves.³⁵⁶ The Palaces of the king and the homes of the government chiefs and the prominent merchants and some of the poor were on the eastern flank with their resting-place on the western side. Similarly the [homes of the] chief religious figures and places of worship were situated on the western side as well. Every king or notable that raised a palace or a home would also build a grave [for himself], for they believed that the soul would last for as long as the body endures. Therefore they discovered a chemical agent that allowed preservation of bodies.³⁵⁷

Hindus, on the other hand, believe in the exact opposite and say that the sooner the body is destroyed, the greater the glory of the soul. Consequently, they burn their dead.

³⁵⁶ For a reference to this store city see Exodus 1:11.

³⁵⁷ One technique was to mummify. However presently the detailed chemical process of this technique is lost and can be numbered among the forfeited sciences. When the [Egyptians] mummified, the remains would last for many centuries, never decaying. Examples of these presently can be seen in various museums. (HM)



Shaykh Yúsuf asked, “How was Heliopolis built?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered:

In those days, they had good cranes and therefore were able to place large stones above others. And now in New York they have built a hanging bridge. (He then proceeded to expand considerably about the roads built on this bridge and the many vehicles that pass over it. Then He told of a certain person that had said, “We do not know how to deal with easterners. We have built large ships that traverse oceans carrying much products and goods, trains that journeys enormous distance, planes that fly like a bird, and many other things, and yet they continued to call us, ‘goatee.’³⁵⁸”)

One thing that has enabled the Europeans to advance so considerably is their aptitude to accept the truth. After investigation and research, even if it is against their previously held notions, they do not reject the truth and testify to its veracity.

I gave a talk for the professors at the renowned Oxford University, which ranks foremost in the world.³⁵⁹ They published My talk at the university’s newspaper

³⁵⁸ A racial slur used against the Europeans.

³⁵⁹ Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 168, gives reference to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá having met Professor TK Cheyne at Oxford University.

and in the Christian Commonwealth. Many things were spoken in this talk. For instance, I told them about the fact that all things are captive in the hand of nature. With all its majesty, our sun is governed by certain universal laws, which it cannot deviate by a hair's breath. However man has seized the sword from nature and with it is beating nature back. For example, the natural law is for man to remain on earth. Yet, he swims in the sea like a fish or flies in the air like a bird. Or the law of nature is for electricity to flow freely. But we see that man has captured this power in the confines of a bulb. The nature of man is to see for a proscribed distance and to hear only over a limited space. However, man has devised means to observe the heavens above and to communicate with every corner of the globe. Nature is tyrannical; uninformed of the past or the future. But man is not like that. Therefore, is it proper for man to continue thinking of himself as captive in the grasp of nature?

<220> 'Abdu'l-Bahá then told of the story of Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh and how he had met Him in Beirut and wished to journey with Him to 'Akká.³⁶⁰ 'Abduh had made all his preparations but 'Abdu'l-Bahá had prevented him by saying, "It is not wise for you to come with Me. Moreover it is not sensible for you." Then because of his excommunication, the Shaykh had to return to Egypt from Beirut. [The reason for this expulsion was] they asked him, "Is it permissible to marry a Christian?" He had

³⁶⁰ Hasan Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 38, notes: "In Beirut, 'Abdu'l-Bahá met, apart from Midhat Pasha, many of the notables of the Arab world, among them the celebrated Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh, future Grand Mufti of Egypt. This learned and noble Shaykh had been an associate of Siyyid Jamalu'd-Din al-Afghani, the standard-bearer of pan-Islamism and an inveterate opponent of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. Yet so fervent was his admiration for 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he intended to go to 'Akká in His company. 'Abdu'l-Bahá dissuaded him because such action would have harmed him and his standing."

322 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

answered positively. They also asked him, “Is it sanctioned to wear European hats?” and he said, “Yes, in warm places.”

17 April 1915

Today the honored Mírzá Husayn Yazdí came from Haifa and attained the presence [of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]. After inquiring about certain matters, the Master decided to leave for Haifa. At the time of bidding the friends farewell, the topics of the war, the onslaught of the locust, famine and various illnesses were discussed, and He said, “These tribulations matter not and will pass by. The true calamity is being far and removed from the divine fragrance.”



‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa in 1913

Chapter 11

Haifa: May 1915

5 May 1915, Abu Sinan

The days of our stay in Abu Sinan had come to an end, an astonishing experience that had passed like a vision. Believers had now started to return to their homes. Thank God that during these days of upheavals, storms, trials, tumults, and the associated vicissitudes of the World War, the friends of God remained safe and guarded under the canopy of divine favors. They partook of the evident and heavenly feast of His bounties and remained secure through His exhortations and guidance. Now that a relative calm and tranquility had settled in again, the Bahá'ís of 'Akká and Haifa were [permitted] to return to their home. Badí' Effendi and I too closed our dispensary and school and proceeded to Haifa. Today, the two of us carried the box containing the pictures of the Blessed Perfection and the Primal Point – may my spirit be a sacrifice unto Them both – to Haifa, the blessed house [of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,] and conveyed them safely to the Greatest Holy Leaf.³⁶¹

Were I to give life for this bounty,
it would be fitting.

In the afternoon, we left 'Akká for Haifa. There, we were summoned into the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá a few minutes after our arrival and the Tongue of Grandeur spoke thusly:

³⁶¹ Bahiyih Khánúm, surnamed the Greatest Holy Leaf, was the custodian of the Holy Relics throughout 'Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry.

I wish for you consecrated service to the Cause of God. I wish for you to manifest radiant attributes under all conditions and to raise the Word of God.

All that you have seen or experienced, all that exists in the world of humanity, [is transitory and fleeting,] much like a picture reflected on water. Consider how many men are engaged most devotedly in the present War; how they sacrifice and give their lives and possessions; how great is the number of soldiers among them. They are commanded by men who have dedicated their lives to the study of the science of war. They are all ready to sacrifice themselves in an instant. And yet their sacrifice has no benefit. [It is transient,] like a picture reflected on water. The most they can hope for is to have the names of the most prominent among them recorded in history, remembered for loving their nation and sacrificing their lives and possessions for its sake.

However, for those that sacrifice in the path of the divine Cause and exert every effort to raise the Word of God, their glory is everlasting. It will not change nor be forgotten over the passage of time, and their effulgence will remain ever-resplendent.

A person must exert his very best in every undertaking and in all fields of endeavor and must employ the means and techniques of that field; otherwise, there will be no benefit. For instance, a person who arises to diffuse the divine fragrance in the path of the Blessed Beauty must be completely detached. He must be attracted, sanctified, righteous, itinerant and consecrated. Otherwise, the desired results will not be wholly achieved. In fact, great efforts may be lost through the slightest negligence.

I will pray for you and fervently supplicate the Abhá Kingdom to perfect you in every way.

6 May 1915 – Abu Sinan³⁶²

Like a merchant vessel, a large British warship came into the harbor of Haifa and anchored a mile or two from the shore. She sent an airplane to survey the nearby military installations, which returned to the carrier a few minutes later.



We met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by the orchard of His house. He inquired from Hájí Muhammad Shushtarí³⁶³, “Have you invited the honored gentlemen³⁶⁴?” “Yes, I have.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked, “With

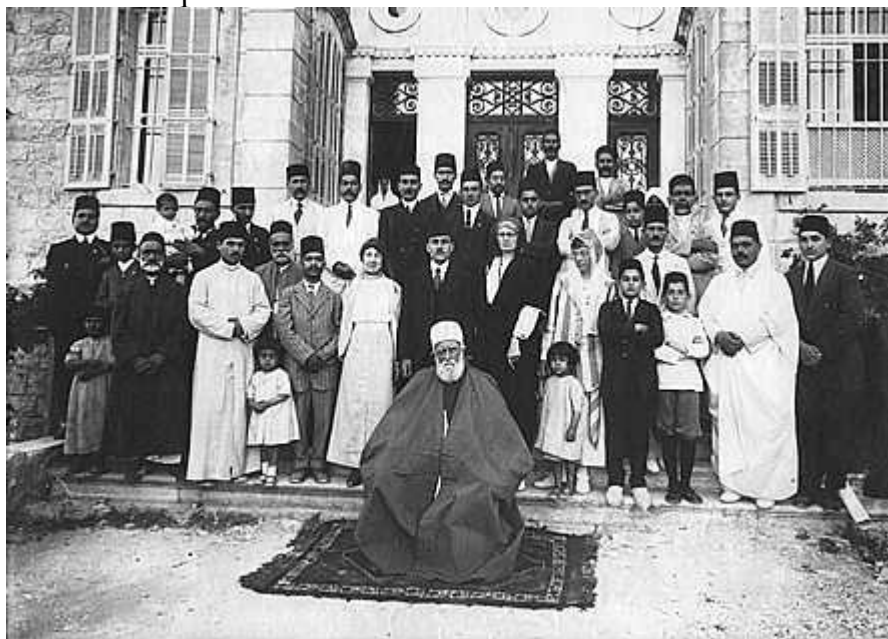
³⁶² *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 1, p. 310 (222), titled this section “Abu Sinan” but most likely it is a typist error as the described events occurred in Haifa.

³⁶³ Hájí Muhammad Shúshtarí was a most sincere, devoted and attracted believer who was engaged as a patcher. On the occasions that he gained the presence of the Master, he was singularly and most fondly focused on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, never deviating his gaze in any other direction. However, he always murmured something. Once ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired, “Hájí, what do you whisper?” He replied, “I pray and give thanks and gratitude for this august bounty.” The Master said, “When you wish to pray, do so at home.” He responded, “My Master, I do not know why when I see You, my lips begin to move and pray. I cannot help it. I loose all consciousness.” (HM)

³⁶⁴ Mírzá Badí‘ Bushrú’í and myself. (HM)

326 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

what did you serve them?” “With oranges,” was the reply. The Master said, “A feast to the love of God is worthy, otherwise there is no benefit in these everyday invitations and parties. They may have a temporary effect, but not a lasting one. Oranges are good to serve and are inexpensive.”



In the afternoon, in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s company and in His carriage, we went to [the Cave of] Elijah by way of the German Colony. Since the wind was blowing from the eastern direction, the Master remarked, “For a few days I wanted to come visit the countryside but refrained due to the weather. The wind is northerly and would cause illness. How was the weather in Beirut?”

I replied, “The breeze from the North brought cold fronts, but the eastern wind impaired health.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “If wind blows over delicate places, such as seas or orchards, then it is vivifying. But it becomes polluted if it blows over cities and populated places and may cause illness. The western wind of Haifa is very pleasant as it comes over the water; the northern air of Istanbul was agreeable as well.” He then looked at me and inquired, “You were busy in Abu Sinan. But what do you do presently?”

“I am not engaged with anything now and await Your direction,” I replied.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “You can practice medicine here as well. All the physicians have been taken away and few are left.”

“The ones that have remained are Damascus educated and are not surgeons.”

The Master inquired, “Is the College³⁶⁵ the same as before or has it changed?”

“It is the same curriculum as before with no change.”

“They have, however, closed the Jesuit school.”

I replied, “Yes, there were many British- and French-sponsored schools, but they have been shut. Only the American schools and the institutions associated with the [American] College are left functioning.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “It would be very good if the friends of God would exert efforts to establish a College of Divinity in the proximity of the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh or on Mount Carmel. This facility can then teach both secular sciences and spiritual topics.”

“Perhaps the American friends could undertake this effort.”

“The aspiration of the Eastern friends is greater. A tree that has deep roots and is firmly established can better withstand the tests of various winds than those newly-planted ones. The Americans will become very good, but it will take more time.”

“We do not have teachers,” I said.

“There is no harm in having non-Bahá’í teachers. Eventually the [Bahá’í] students will develop and will take their place.”

I said, “The theologians are raising certain issues that are against rational thought and science.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

Spiritual teachings are completely consistent with rational thought and science, but it is a question of how they are presented. An interpreter is needed. The same issue can be presented in multiple ways. For instance, in

³⁶⁵ The American College [in Beirut], which later was named the American University. (HM)

Europe and America, I never said, “People, the Promised One of all ages has appeared. Come and speak His praise!” If I had done that, from the very beginning they would distance themselves and not listen. Instead, in all the gatherings, I cried forth, “At a time when the East was immersed in absolute darkness, the fire of bigotry was causing rivers of innocent blood to flow and ignorance had reached its lowest ebb, at such a time, His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh, like a morning star, dawned over the horizon of Iran. He brought forth many spiritual teachings. For instance, His first counsel is that God is a loving Shepherd to all. If He were not a compassionate Guide, then He would not have created man or given him sustenance and education; [whereas we see that He provides for man.] Is it then better to follow His guidance or to adhere to human-made conceptions? Another teaching of Bahá’u’lláh is the unity of the world of humanity.” And likewise, I would speak of many other teachings.³⁶⁶

³⁶⁶ Shoghi Effendi has echoed a similar teaching method in a number of his writings, including the following (*Guidance for Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 232-233):

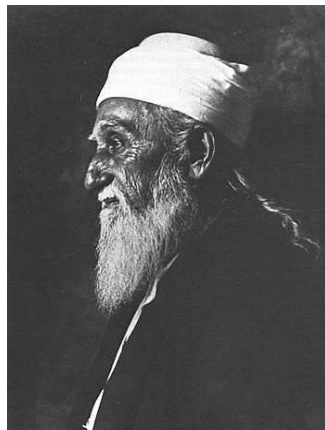
They must be neither provocative nor supine, neither fanatical nor excessively liberal, in their exposition of the fundamental and distinguishing features of their Faith. They must be either wary or bold, they must act swiftly or mark time, they must use the direct or indirect method, they must be challenging or conciliatory, in strict accordance with the spiritual receptivity of the soul with whom they come in contact, whether he be a nobleman or a commoner, a northerner or southerner, a layman or a priest, a capitalist or a socialist, a statesman or a prince, an artisan or a beggar. In their presentation of the Message of Bahá’u’lláh they must neither hesitate nor falter. They must be neither contemptuous of the poor nor timid before the great. In their exposition of its verities they must neither over stress nor whittle down the truth which they champion, whether their hearer belong to royalty, or be a prince of the church, or a politician, or a tradesman, or a man in the street. To all alike, high or low, rich or poor, they must proffer, with open hands, with a radiant

Similarly, [I would explain other themes. For example,] I would say, “Divine Sovereignty is not limited to six thousand years, and this world was not created only six millennia ago. Sovereignty needs an army and a realm. One cannot maintain that God was there but had no creation. This is human limitation and not divine.” <225> Furthermore, I never would tell them that these honored men [i.e. Bahá’ís] have left their own religion and have become Bahá’ís. Instead, I would say, “In a single gathering, Jews, Christians, Muslims and Zoroastrians are assembled in utmost fraternity and compassion, like the members of one loving family.”

It is all in how one says something. They say that Hárún ar-Rashid had a dream that all his teeth had fallen out. He called forth an interpreter who said, “The meaning of this dream is that all your children, descendents and kinsmen will die, and then you will die.” Hárún ar-Rashid was most disturbed by this comment and ordered the interpreter imprisoned. He summoned another dream interpreter and shared the vision with him. The new interpreter said, “The meaning of this dream is that Your Majesty will live longer than all others.” Hearing this, the Caliph was most pleased and gave him a handsome reward.

You see both interpretations were the same, but presented differently. Similarly, if spiritual teachings are also offered in an agreeable way, then they will not cause setbacks and retribution, nay, they will indeed guide large multitudes.

heart, with an eloquent tongue, with infinite patience, with uncompromising loyalty, with great wisdom, with unshakable courage, the Cup of Salvation at so critical an hour, to the confused, the hungry, the distraught and fear-stricken multitudes, in the north, in the west, in the south and in the heart, of that sorely tried continent.



We went a bit further and saw that about two or three hundred desolate and poor people had congregated, waiting for the arrival of the Master. He said:

Once divine teachings are diffused, even outwardly there will not be any poor or needy left [in the world]. Presently there are groups organized in America and Europe called Socialists. They say, “Why are there so many people in need of daily bread when there are certain other men with such immense fortunes that they cannot even count them? The sweat of the brow of our working class has brought about this wealth. This is product of the labor of the wretched workers. Why should we allow someone to use a business scheme and accumulate an enormous estate as a result of the suffering of so many destitute workers? All must be equal.”

It is impossible for all to be equal. If there is no worker and proprietor, and all possess wealth, then the world will fall into complete chaos. Then no one will work as builder, carpenter or butcher. There is a story told by Muslims. They say that once His Holiness Moses was praying, “O Lord, why hast Thou not bestowed riches and wealth on everyone? I supplicate Thee to grant affluence and abundance to all.” His prayer was

immediately fulfilled. That night, Moses needed some repairs on His home. He sent after a builder, but the builder refused to come and said, "I no longer need to work." The carpenter and the bricklayer replied similarly. His Holiness Moses was perplexed about what to do. A revelation descended, "Moses, divine wisdom decreed that there be differences in people's rank; otherwise, the world's equilibrium would be perturbed."

Society is like an army: It requires generals; commanders; a cavalry; soldiers; captains; privates; and many other levels. It cannot function when all are equal and the same. The best arrangement allows but a scant few to remain poor and needy, as each person must live comfortably within his rank, without allowing all fortunes to be accumulated in the hands of only a few. For instance, let every village establish a commonwealth and a council composed of a number of trustworthy men of the village for its administration. Divide the incoming wealth into seven parts and, similarly, the expenses into seven:

Incoming:

1. One-tenth of the farming [income];
2. Zakát³⁶⁷ from livestock and cattle;
3. Mines;
4. [Buried] treasures;
5. [Unclaimed] inheritance;
6. Donations;
7. Unexpected income, such as objects discovered.

Expenditures:

1. One-tenth of income to the central authorities;
2. Zakát [to the central government];

³⁶⁷ Islamic religious tax, also known as obligatory alms. *Kitáb Aqdas*, K146, calls for eventual administration of this tax in the Bahá'í community.

3. Expenses for the disabled;
4. Orphanages;
5. Welfare for those whose income is less than their expenses and who have suffered a loss in their possessions;
6. Schools;
7. Public health service and general expenses, with the residuals being deposited into the public treasury.³⁶⁸

Some steps further, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s carriage reached a thriving, verdant farm that was most productive and green. The wheat plants waved in the breeze, creating an enchanting scene. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was jubilant, smiling broadly and radiating joy. He said, “Consider how delighted the farmer must be to see his efforts have not been in vain and his seeds have grown into such luscious crop, with full harvest and free of disease. In like manner, when the divine teachings are sowed in the field of pure hearts, they bring forth fruits, flowers and blossoms. They bring an indescribable sweetness to taste.”

³⁶⁸ On 14 August 1912 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave a talk in Dublin, New Hampshire, which concerned economics. Subsequently He revealed a Tablet for His hostess, Mrs. Agnes Parsons, which outlined His previous talk. In this Tablet He revealed, “*In every village a council of wise men of the village should be established, and the whole village should be placed under its jurisdiction. In addition, a public treasury should be established with its own administrators. At harvest time, a specific quantity of the general produce of the village should be appropriated for the treasury. This treasury will have seven sources of income, namely: tithes; taxes on livestock; unclaimed inheritance; property that has been found but that has no owner; buried treasures (if found, one third of it should be paid to the council); mines (one third of the natural resources taken should be levied by the council) and donations. Likewise, there are to be seven categories of expenditures: first, moderate public expenditures such as the expenses of the council and maintenance of public health; second, payment of government taxes; third, payment of taxes on livestock to the government; fourth, care of orphans; fifth, providing for the disabled; sixth, management of schools; and seventh, providing the necessary means of livelihood for the poor.*” (Cited in *Mahmud’s Diary*, pp. 206-207). The same Tablet goes on to provide a detailed exposition of tithes and administration of orphanage and other welfare systems.



'Abdu'l-Bahá in His Residence in Haifa

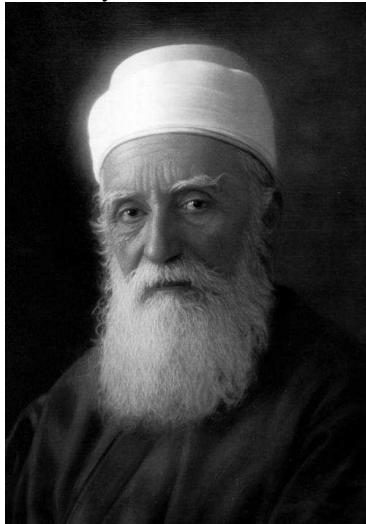
7 May 1915

Today we attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá by the gardens of His house. He said:

Now that I am waiting and expectant, I bear no blossoms, leaves, fruits or benefits. I wonder for what purpose the Ancient Farmer planted me! If the means were available for Me to be engaged [in some service], it would have been much better. I would teach and go from village to village, hamlet to hamlet, to all the places that I have never gone before. That would be truly wonderful.

When a person is engaged in the mention of divine teachings and propagation of the Faith, great spirituality and attraction develop. Conversely, when one is speaking

of worldly affairs, depression and sorrow result. Talking about temporal concerns consumes the life. The vernal breeze wafts over nature to give it life and energy; but the autumnal wind causes nature to pale and wither. I do not have the same joy and rapture that was experienced during the [American and European] journey. Even though it was a very difficult period, each day being spent in a different place, it was filled with ecstasy and happiness, spirituality and confirmation.



That night a copy of the *Star of the West* was read at the Master’s house and the program of a Bahá’í gathering in San Francisco was mentioned before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. He said:

Every instrument that has its own source of power will propel itself forward. Though I am here and all doors and paths are closed to Me, yet the Cause of God in the East and the West is progressing unceasingly, with the friends propagating the Word of God and raising the banner of the divine Faith. Rumí has versed:

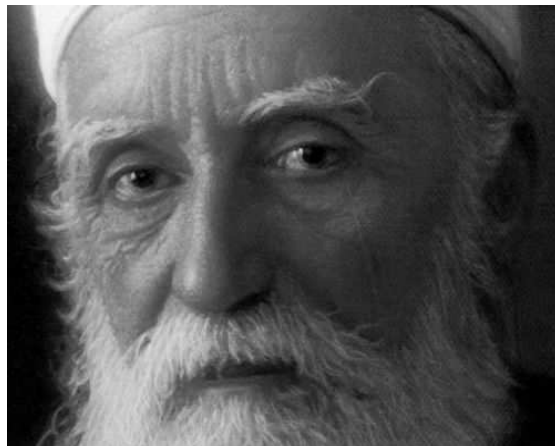
The hand is invisible and yet,
Behold the pen that scribes
The dust is evident and yet,

The mount is indiscernible.

Indeed the hand is not evident, but the pen continues to flow. In similar fashion, the standard of the Faith is now hoisted across the globe though no standard-bearer is manifest; the Call of the Kingdom is raised without the crier; and the divine lamp is lit in absence of the niche. This is the power of the Cause and the reason why the Blessed Beauty, through the renowned Mírzá Safa, sent word to Mírzá Husayn Khan Mushíru'd-Dawlih, the [Iranian] Ambassador to Istanbul: "What is your purpose? If your intent is Me, I am in your hands, and you can perpetrate whatever harm and injuries you wish. But if your objective is to destroy the Faith of God, you will never succeed. You shall never be able to extinguish the lamp of the Cause, even should you combine with one another. This fire will communicate itself to all the horizons of the world, and therefore I have no worries!"

Preparation for Return to Iran

The period of our stay at Abu Sinan had now concluded. It was about six months that we resided there under the shadow of our Beloved. During this time we had no concern, sorrow or worry. Every two or three days we would attain 'Abdu'l-Bahá's august presence, drink our fill from the billowing ocean of His utterances and be intoxicated by the wine of the joy of His nearness.



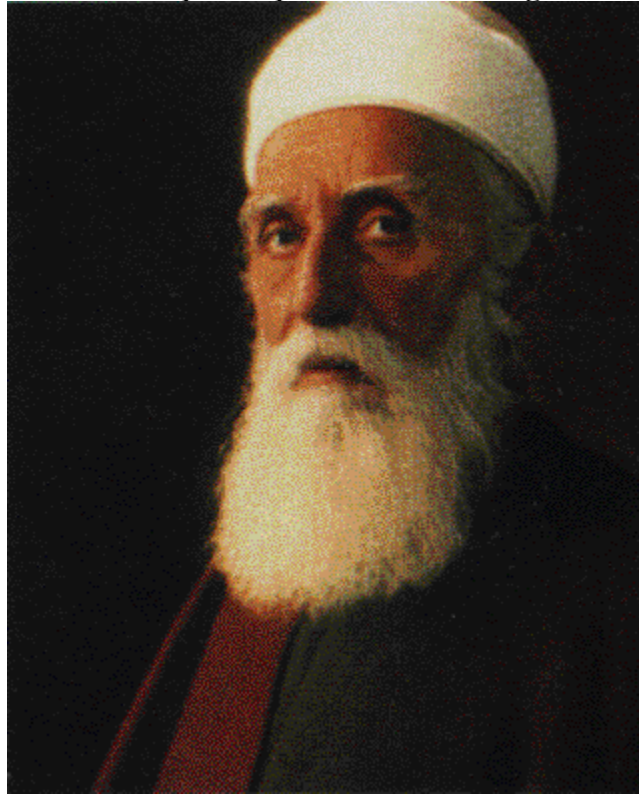
Since the situation had returned to a relatively normal state and the commotion and tumult of the early days of the War had subsided, the Master instructed all the believers to return home. Naturally, we³⁶⁹ were also no longer needed in Abu Sinan and, consequently, closed the [Bahá’í] school and dispensary and returned to Haifa.

Each of the few days that we were in Haifa, in a special way, we received ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s bounties and favors. Because [the Master] would say, “In Abu Sinan you practiced medicine and must engage in that same service here,” I was under the impression that I would remain in that city for some time. At other times, I was told, “Extract statements from the letters of the Apostle Paul regarding the prohibition to associate with the munáfiqin, and make a compilation of them.”³⁷⁰ At other instances I would hear the rumor that Áqá Ahmad Yazdí was instructed to purchase a ticket for me to leave for America on a ship. In short, there were many ideas, but eventually the divine plan and decree, and the heavenly will became evident. “Whatever a person does not wish, is placed on him; much like the wind pushing the sailboat in whatever direction it decrees.”

³⁶⁹ A reference to Badí‘ Bushrú’í and Dr. Habíb Mú’ayyad.

³⁷⁰ Some of the statements in Paul’s epistles dealing with avoidance of those promoting heresies and those with bad qualities can be found in: I Timothy 1:18-20; II Timothy 2:14-21; Romans 16:16-18; I Corinthians 5:9-13; and II Thessalonians 3:6-15. Of interest may also be: Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, III.28.6.

God will direct the boat where He wants,
Even if the captain protest most vigorously.



One day I was summoned into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence where I received His abundant blessings and favors. This was an indication that the day of my departure was fast approaching. He said:

I had wished for you to practice [medicine] in Haifa so that you would gain further expertise. However, I see that your work has concluded and your father is old and bent. He has suffered terribly, particularly after the martyrdom of your brother. From seeing you, he will gain new vigor and spirituality.

<230> Similarly He spoke of my future success in Iran. He gave instructions pertaining to my residence in Kirmánsháh and the necessity of observing great wisdom in all undertakings. He also gave instructions for stay in Tihiran and said, “Do as is appropriate.”

338 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The following day He again spoke in a manner that confirmed I would soon be leaving. For example, He said, “The best course is to leave since your father is expecting you. Be assured of divine bounties. Celestial confirmations will surround you. But you must follow My instructions and do not allow yourself to become well-known.”



‘Abdu’l-Bahá by the Shrine of the Báb

8 May 1915

‘Abdu’l-Bahá summoned me and spoke the following exalted words as we walked the streets and alleys:

You truly worked hard in Abu Sinan this year. You had no other purpose save the good-pleasure of God. Planting such seeds will assuredly give results. I hope that your efforts in Beirut and the Holy Land will not fall

by the wayside. If they do not bear fruit today, then they will tomorrow; and if not tomorrow, then definitely the next day. It is not possible for someone to sow pure seeds and then harvest weeds. Insha'lláh, great benefits will appear from your work in Beirut. Always rely on God. Ceaselessly His divine confirmations will pour forth. Your services in Beirut and here will have great results. It was very necessary to organize the gatherings of the [Bahá'í] students in Beirut and see to their needs. Insha'lláh it will have great gains.

I wanted you to stay here and practice medicine since all the doctors have been taken away and a vast field for practice is available. I once asked a British physician, "Why do you not practice medicine in your own country?" He responded, "I do not have the same opportunities for practice. Several doctors must gather and consult for every surgery. Then they closely scrutinize to see if the primary physician has committed an error or not. There are also many other obstructions. But here I perform twenty surgeries every day [without any interventions]." Therefore, I wanted you to practice here for your own development and advancement.

However, on the other hand, I see that your work here is completed for some time and your father is old and bent. He especially suffered after the martyrdom of your brother. From seeing you, he will gain new spirituality and vitality.

Also, consider that Iran is an important field. There is much work to be done there. Many wondrous men will appear. They desperately need physicians, especially like you, who are a spiritual healer and attracted to the divine fragrance. Your life-giving breath will bring healing.

I desire for you to raise the standard of guidance and meet with prominent men. Since you are a physician,

all doors will be open to you, but your focus must be solely the prominent figures. If you are well-known [as a Bahá’í], then you will be unable to render service. When you are remedying certain prominent citizens and discern in them a hearing ear, share the Word of God. However, all your teaching must be through deeds. [Teaching] a prominent person is equivalent to a thousand others. If two or three of the notables of Kirmánsháh embrace the Cause, great results will appear. When men like them accept the Faith, keep it secret and do not introduce them to the believers, as the foolish will be the cause of trouble.

My point is to ensure you do not become well-known [as a Bahá’í]. Teach by deeds only. Praise be unto God that your intentions are sanctified and that you desire naught save service to the Cause of the Almighty. This will indeed attract divine confirmations.

I said, “My Master, tyranny [in Iran] has reached a state that is well beyond endurance.” He responded, “Since it occurs in the path of God, then it has a sweetness of its own. Truly your brother was raised and developed well, but the ungodly were jealous and martyred him. Now, it is best for you to go for your father is expecting you.”

Once more that afternoon in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s company we went strolling. He remarked:

Your journey is indeed a blessed one because, for many years, you were in Holy Land and its vicinity, able to visit the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb, and engaged in service. Even though you were acquiring education, truly you and other students devoted your time to the service of the Cause of God. Your behavior in school was a service to the Faith and a source of its exaltation. Now you are departing. Insha’lláh you will be

enabled to guide sanctified souls so that the fire of God's love will engulf that region. However, you must be careful that once notables embrace the Faith, their affiliation does not become public knowledge since others will then cause difficulties for them.

The Prime Minister Mírzá 'Alí-Asghar Khan had embraced the Faith, but when it became public, he withdrew. The reason is: when the friends see that someone prominent has become a Bahá'í, they spread the news, which causes complications for the new convert and results in the authorities, the 'ulamá and the people arising against him. You must explain to the community not to announce the names of such men. This problem has prevented the diffusion of the Cause of God.

The friends of God must teach by deeds and conduct so that all will testify that verily their behavior and manner is a reflection of the heaven above. At worst, it may be said of them, "Alas, they are Bahá'ís!" Although under all conditions, with utmost earnestness, it would be testified on their behalf that they are manifestations of sanctity, purity, piety, and sagacity. Friends should regularly recite the Persian and Arabic Hidden Words and behave in accordance with them. If we live for only one day in conformity with those divine edicts, it will have a profound effect in all corners of the earth. Once a lamp is lit, it will instantly give brilliance to all its surroundings.

Consider these nuns. ('Abdu'l-Bahá pointed to several nuns that were passing by.) They are not aware of the teachings of Christ, nor of His ordinances, and indeed are ignorant of everything. But in following their own vain imaginings are in fact performing these sacrificial deeds. They withdraw from society and normal life and live in these convents. Some perform useful

342 Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

services, such as nursing of the injured and sick or educating children. Now, we must ask ourselves, we who stand as believers in the Blessed Beauty, who have understood the reality of His revelation and have borne witness to His days, what behaviors are incumbent upon us?



‘Abdu’l-Bahá then came to pace by the flower gardens of His house when a number of impoverished people and nuns rushed forward asking alms. The Blessed Tongue uttered these exalted words:

From every direction destitution has surrounded man. Our affairs are presently such that we cannot offer substantial help. “God will not burden any soul beyond

its power.”³⁷¹ Charity to the poor and needy is the best of all deeds. Similarly, providing welfare to the elderly, the disabled and orphans is the greatest service in the world of humanity. Its effect is like giving water to the thirsty soil, or bestowing life and spirit on the dead or granting the perfect healing medicine to the ill. The poor are the trust of God. Although they appear destitute before men, they are glorified in the Kingdom. And that is why the Blessed Beauty adopted the title Darvish, meaning, the poor:

Darvish, world is consumed by God’s blazing
flame,

It’s time to breathe life through Thy Hidden
Melody.

Or

Darvish, do not utter too many words,
Since of a word came forth this world.

His Holiness Christ lived in destitution, which is why He revealed, “Blessed are the poor.”³⁷² However the wealthy person who is not held back by his riches, provides charity to the needy and spends generously in the path of God, he is preferred to the patient poor. That is because such a wealth is the manifestation of divine benevolence and the wellspring of good to the whole of humanity.

We have been by this orchard for a while. Let us go for a walk.

³⁷¹ Qur’an 2:286.

³⁷² This appears to echo Luke 6:20, “And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God.”

344 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

Together we went to the house used by the Ancient Beauty and, from there, to the house employed after His ascension and then to a well in the German Colony. The Master said:

They have capped this well so that others would not benefit from its drinking water. Sanctified is God! What gain or profit do they expect by showing such iniquity towards others? Some people are unable to hide the secrets of their hearts and inner thoughts, and they are incapable of not perpetrating harm. In this regard, the Iranians are better. In Tíhrán we had a neighbor by the name of Hájí Muhammad-‘Alí who was extremely frugal. Each day he would only give a piece of bread and a coin to his wife and children. After he died, however, he left behind one hundred thousand tumáns³⁷³ and willed that an aqueduct be constructed in his name. Accordingly, a quarter of his estate was spent on this charity, and now that aqueduct is known by his name.



‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa circa 1915

9 May 1915, Haifa

³⁷³ A considerable fortune at that time.

This afternoon once more I was summoned into ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence. From His comments it was clear that I would soon be leaving and that what lied ahead for me was the fire of separation and the yearning to behold His countenance once again. But what can one do except readily embrace His will! The Master said:

It is best for you to leave as your father expects your return. Be assured of divine bounties. His celestial confirmations will pour forth, and they are conditioned only on following My instructions. The confirmations of the friends reside solely in teaching the Cause. To the extent of his own abilities, each person must exert efforts in the field of teaching. Naturally, all major undertakings have their share of troubles and difficulties, but you must not be discouraged, perturbed, dismayed, wearied, or fatigued. I am certain that you will be able to render great victories. Be assured!

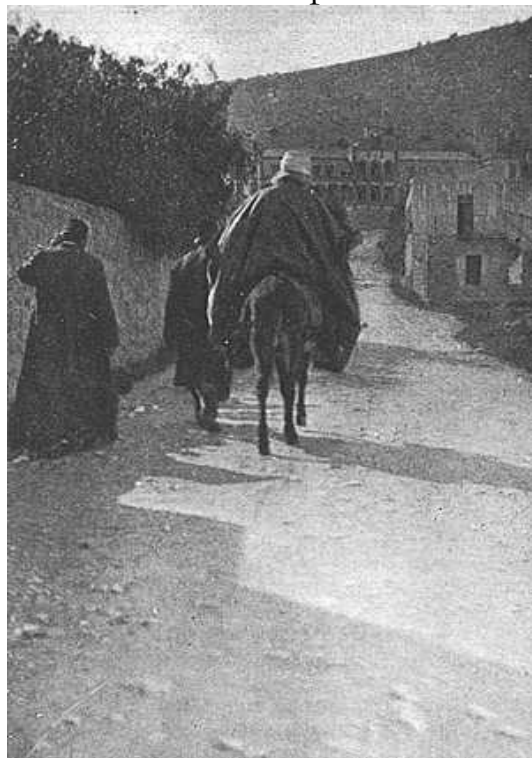
10 May 1915, Haifa

Today I attained the presence of the Master by the flower gardens of His house, where He inquired, “Áqá Mírzá Habíb, are you ready to leave? We are in suspense and waiting [for further events], but you can leave. Perchance through the attraction of the divine fragrance, illumination of heavenly tidings and profusion of sacred scents, you will be able to sow pure seeds.”



‘Abdu’l-Bahá at His Residence on Haparsim Street in Haifa

He then left for the Shrine of the Báb, and this ephemeral servant was summoned to enter His presence.



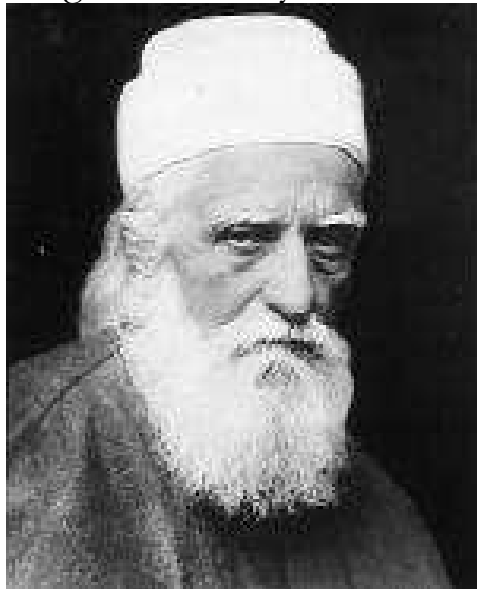
‘Abdu’l-Bahá on His way to the Shrine of the Báb

<235> For a while He sat in front of the pilgrim house; afterwards, He proceeded to the Shrine of the Báb to pay homage. He chanted the Tablet of Visitation in a manner very different from all previous occasions. His tone echoed a longing and inner yearning that could melt the sturdiest stones and cause every sinful heart to ascend unto the summit of glory. It profoundly touched all the listeners.

11 May 1915, Haifa

Today, two or three times, either with others or alone, I attained 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence, but He did not say very much and was silent, reflective and melancholy most of the time.

What immense loss for the ear,
and what regret for the eye!



12 May 1915, Haifa

This morning, in the company of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we went strolling through the street by the foot of the Mount Carmel. It was a clear and brilliant morning. A vivifying breeze was gently blowing, and the rhythmic sound of the waves of the azure sea was echoing in the

background. Birds were singing their carols of thanksgiving to the Beloved and flying from one branch to the next. Besides these, no other being or sound could be heard or seen in any direction. Absolute serenity had filled the air, and except for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and I, no one else was around. Over the far away horizon, farmers could be seen spreading seeds and attending to their fields. Ah, what a magnificent morning!

O thou, lover of the flowing locks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Imagine yourself, with a heart overflowing with longing and yearning, single and alone, with Him; no noise, no commotion, no worries, no interruptions, on a brilliant morning, in the midst of vast and green fields. Then you can conceive the effect of that scene on my soul! ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

You are the evident book. The Commander of the Faithful³⁷⁴ has said, “You are the perspicuous Book, through whose words will appear that which is hidden.” A journey by you to Tíhrán to interject a new vigor in the friends of God would be very good. You must meet with the believers in Hamadán and Kirmánsháh in private, but in Tíhrán, do as is prudent.

I asked, “My Master, might I once again attain Your august presence in this world?” He replied:

Insha’lláh, but mortal bodies may remain separated from one another. If we do not meet again in this world, then assuredly we will meet in the Abhá Kingdom, surrounded by the bounties of God, where we will partake of the feast of union and togetherness. So long as hearts are pulsating with the love of God, they are connected. That connection and meeting is everlasting.

³⁷⁴ A title of Imam ‘Alí.

Convey to your esteemed father my greetings and say, “Do not be saddened because of the martyrdom of your son.³⁷⁵ Do not be sorrowful. Your son did not perish. All the worlds of God belong to you. Like a brilliant star, he is shining in the Abhá Kingdom. To whom has this world shown fidelity, that you expect any? God be praised that He has given you a son like Mírzá Habíb who is foremost in service to the Cause and foremost in service to the world of humanity. Praise unto God that you have such blessed family. Do not despair.”

God is with you. You are under the shadow of the bounties of the Blessed Beauty. Do not be sorrowful. These people who are unaware should be sad. (He pointed to an Arab woman who was carrying a heavy

³⁷⁵ When my brother, Mírzá Múrád, was martyred, my father went [to the authorities] and intervened for the release of his murderer. A long Tablet of Visitation was revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for my brother:

O God, my God! Thou seest Thy devoted servants athirst of the cup of mighty martyrdom in Thy path, hastening to the field of sacrifice. They are enamored by Thy Beauty and longing to behold Thee. Of these sacrificial, one is named Mírád and the other is called Bába Jan and verily they have sought martyrdom in Thy path. They sipped from the chalice of sacrifice in Thy way and hastened unto Thee and offered up their soul as a ransom for nearness to Thy Court. O Lord, accept from them this great gift and make these two deliverance for those lost in the wasteland of waywardness, aid them reach the dawning-place of Thy effulgent, enter them into the celestial paradise of Thy union in all the worlds of light and abide them in Thy resplendent Kingdom. O Lord, verily, these two were evident signs of Thy love and conspicuous words on the Tablets of Thy Oneness. They were two sanctified souls amongst Thy friends, two radiant stars on horizon of faithfulness and certitude of the heaven of Thy servitude. O Lord, bestow upon them through Thy generosity and grace all that Thou has decreed in the Kingdom of Thy Light and grant patience upon those related to them.

Verily Thou art the Clement, the Glorified, and the Munificent, and Thou art the Benevolent, the Merciful and the Compassionate.

‘A ‘A.

The late Bába Jan Gawhar was one of the Bahá’ís of Jewish descent of Kirmánsháh that was martyred by the Kurds, who robbed him of his possessions as well. (HM)

backpack and whose donkey was loaded with brushwood.)

13 May 1915, Haifa

This morning, I was summoned by myself into the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and together we went to the street of the German [Templars]. He remarked:

Leave tomorrow assured of the bounties and the favors of the Blessed Beauty. Insha’lláh with the breath of the Holy Spirit, illumined by the divine teachings and renewed by the celestial fragrance, you will encourage the friends to be steadfast, firm, engaged in service and detached.

I have wanted to share a secret with you but was unable to do so [earlier] at My home and, therefore, I disclose it now: These days, I am in the utmost danger. Perhaps I will be martyred. Tell the friends not to be saddened or perturbed. I eagerly desire to quaff from this chalice of sacrifice in the path of the Blessed Beauty and thereby attain unto my highest aspiration. That would allow My end to be perfumed like musk. What bounty is greater than hastening to the immortal abode through crucifixion? Being permitted to drink from this sweet cup and to surrender life on a cross is the greatest divine favor that can be bestowed upon Me. How much more glorified to die at the hands of the executioner and in the path of God, than to die of various ailments in one’s bed! I pray that, insha’lláh, I may attain unto this most beneficent bounty.

Presently Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí is associating with our most inveterate enemies in ‘Akká and is exerting to cause a great commotion in the Holy Land. He has arrayed several others against us and has also leagued

with the 'ulamá of Jerusalem.³⁷⁶ They have sent certain letters to Jamal Pasha claiming that I have uprooted faith and convictions and have established a new religion. Even prior to his campaign against Egypt³⁷⁷, they gave him documents filled with slanders [against Me]. In the gatherings of the 'ulamá, he [i.e. Jamal Pasha] had promised that, on his return from the conquest of Egypt, he would slay Me; but God protected Me, and he was not victorious in that campaign.³⁷⁸

However, in these days, they have devised new schemes and connived with the 'ulamá of Jerusalem. Mírzá Muhammad-'Alí has given to this man [Jamal Pasha] a large tent belonging to the Blessed Beauty [as a ransom] to slay us. This tent was meant to be the canopy of the universal peace and is repeatedly mentioned in the Sacred Books which foretell the raising of the tabernacle of God on Mount Carmel and the gathering of the representatives of the Great Peace beneath it. My point is that this person [Jamal Pasha] is a cruel, boisterous, impetuous and barbarous man beyond any description. They constantly provoke him against us, never leaving him alone, ceaselessly sowing seeds of doubt.

My purpose is for the friends of God not to be perturbed should something happen [to Me]. With

³⁷⁶ See the interesting account by Lady Blomfield in Hasan Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá - The Centre of the Covenant*, p. 413.

³⁷⁷ Meaning the Ottoman attack for the capture of the Suez Canal. (HM)

³⁷⁸ With the encouragement and provocation of the Germans, for over six months, the Ottomans prepared for the Egyptian campaign and the conquest of the Suez Canal, which was serving as the artery of the British forces in the region. Whatever the people of the nation possessed was seized forcibly for this campaign. Nearly sixty thousand camels were arrayed for carrying weapons and other provisions, particularly water. They attacked from the direction of Bathru'l-Sab'. When they came close, they were confronted with the opposing army who, in only 24 hours, decisively defeated them. Jamal Pasha retreated to Damascus in the hopes of preparing for yet a second campaign. (HM)

utmost firmness and resolve, they should arise in the service of the Cause. Eventually at some point I must bid them farewell, but I hope to do so on the field of martyrdom, quaffing from the overflowing cup of self-renunciation, allowing the end of my earthly life to be musk-laden. This is My highest aspiration! I said to the Mutasarrif of ‘Akká, “Tell Khalil Pasha, the Váí of Beirut, that God has not decreed abasement for Me. The Váí thinks that if I was compelled into manual labor, beaten in the head, made the target of various sufferings, imprisoned or killed, that would be My humiliation. Astaghfuru’lláh! That would be My greatest glory! I pray to God to hasten such a blessed day! In Adhirbayjan, the blessed breast of My Murshid was made the target of a thousand bullets. Therefore, how can I, Who follow in His footsteps, be perturbed by the threat of injury, captivity or death?”

The friends of God should not be disturbed by the occurrences in the Holy Land. They must continue with their work and propagation of the Cause of God. The Tree of Faith is watered by the blood of martyrs. I cherish the hope of winning this prize in the path of the Blessed Beauty. The Imams in Islam were twelve in number; but since He drank from the chalice of sacrifice, it is the Prince of the Martyrs³⁷⁹ Who shines like a brilliant sun in the Abhá Kingdom. I pray that out of the bounties and favors of the Blessed Beauty, this sweet cup be bestowed upon Me as well.

Since you are consecrated and devout, your words will have an effect. The teacher must be constant and dedicated for his words to have an influence on his listeners, otherwise if he is not constant, it will bear no results.

³⁷⁹ A reference to third Imam, Husayn son of ‘Alí.

Afterwards I was permitted to take my leave, and He left to visit Zeki Bey.³⁸⁰ A number of dignitaries were with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at lunchtime, and these included: the Qá’im-maqám of Haifa; Kumandan of the military; Zeki Bey, the previous Kumandan; and the city’s physician. After lunch, the party retired to the flower garden. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was exceedingly happy and told several stories of the convictions and deeds of Bektáshis³⁸¹.

In the evening’s public meeting, a long Tablet was revealed in honor of the soldiers in Nazareth. <240> Further, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá arranged for the release of an old man by the name of ‘Alí, who had fallen on hard times and had previously appealed to the Master.

His especial favors are the garment of my being
for all to say: He is my God!

13 May 1915, Haifa

I was scheduled to leave today, but since one of the friends had given a feast in my name, my departure was postponed to the following day. In ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s company, we went to the German Colony. He first showered His immense bounties on this ephemeral servant by saying:

You gave us the education you had acquired and in turn we gave it to the poor. Now they think it will be continued!

Your journey is of great importance, much like the journeys of Isaiah. The Prophet Isaiah traveled

³⁸⁰ The following telegraph was sent to Jerusalem three days earlier: “*Jerusalem. The previous Kumandan, Zeki Bey. On your visit to Haifa, I wish to give a feast in your honor. ‘Abbás.*” (HM)

³⁸¹ A Sufi Order that traces its origin to Hájí Bektash Valí of the Islamic eighth century. Initially of Khurásán, he settled in Istanbul, where he propagated his teachings which are a mixture of Christianity, Shi‘ism, Sufism and the Sunni sect. They deeply revere the Twelve Imams, particularly the Sixth Imam, Ja‘far Sádiq.

throughout the length and breadth of the Holy Land and bestowed a new vitality to the Israelites. I cherish the hope that you too will revive the friends through the breath of the Holy Spirit. When a person is consecrated and devout, his influence will even penetrate stones and hard rocks, causing great miracles. Consider what immense effect resulted from the nightingale of love going to Sheba, and by nightingale is meant a spiritual person. Whenever I go to the Cave of Elijah, a new vivacity is wafted over Me. This is because the life-generating spirit of Elijah envelops that Cave, though outwardly it is a ruin in comparison to this place (the German Colony). That is, notwithstanding the fact that it has no scenery, streets, trees or buildings, it has a spirit that is absent here. A person who is surrounded with divine confirmations is also able to render deeds that otherwise seem supernatural.



The Carmelite Monastery, on Mount Carmel, 1877

At lunchtime we went to the home of our host, where a spiritual feast was magnificently spread. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took His place at the seat of honor and in His presence were such guests as: the former Kumandan; ‘Abdu’l-Fattah Effendi, the Sa’dí Mab’uth [the

parliamentarian] and his son; and Muhsin Bey Kurdí. In the afternoon we had tea in the presence of the Master and subsequently went to the Cave of Elijah in His carriage, accompanied by the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí and Mírzá ‘Inayatu’lláh Isfahání. Upon our departure from His residence, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:

Today I had some yogurt. Since I am fond of Áqá Mírzá Habíb, I listen to whatever he prescribes. Normally I do not eat yogurt, as I dislike it. There are many things that a person may not like, and this very dislike may be a sign that the particular item is harmful to the person. For instance, while in Edirne, at a time when Mírzá Áqá Jan had raised the standard of rebellion and enmity and had spoken most presumptuously in Bahá’u’lláh’s presence, I rebuked him one day. I did not wish to rebuke him; but he had greatly exceeded his bounds, and My reprimand was necessary. Afterwards, I ate a pear, and immediately My body began to severely ache. All My nerves were in pain and I grew very ill. Moreover, a considerable inner turmoil and convulsion overcame Me. I sensed that I desired some salt, so I had some. It helped. I had another piece, and then another, and soon I were well. My point is that whatever a person dislikes is probably not good for him. ...³⁸²

God forbid if a person is overtaken with pride. During His last days, the Blessed Beauty was greatly annoyed [with Mírzá Áqá Jan] to the point that I wanted to punish him physically. When a person becomes prideful, first he becomes self-centered. That is, he believes all his doings are correct and the best way. Secondly he causes dissension. His inner thoughts are then in conflict with his behavior, and this results in his quick demise. Mírzá Áqá Jan did not have a good end.

³⁸² Left blank in *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 1, p. 337 (241).

There is a story that someone went to a psychiatric ward and noticed that a man was sitting there with great dignity. He asked him, “What do you do here and why were you brought to this place?”

He replied, “I had many enemies. Since I was an expert masseur and the Caliph was fond of me, my enemies became jealous and accused me of mental disturbance. They spoke of this matter so much that it reached the Caliph, and eventually they conspired together and sent me here.”

The questioner decided to test him, so he asked, “How do you shave heads?”

The inmate replied, “I place a towel around the client’s neck, sharpen my blade, wet and shampoo his hair, and then I shave him.”

“Very well. How do you perform phlebotomy³⁸³?”

“I tie a knot around the veins, then massage the vein for it to be ready and then with my sharpened knife stab him in the stomach!” As he raised his hand to demonstrate, the questioner said, “Never mind, I understand. You almost had me convinced, but at the end you ruined it!”

They say that when the scribes excel in their craft, they begin to forge money, as they consider this the height of their skills.

Yesterday, you were such that none was like you,
Today, you have become such that none
should be like you!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá then turned to me and said:

Áqá Mírzá Habíb now you are leaving and will
surely give a breath of joy to the friends. Move forward

³⁸³ As part of their service, if requested, the masseurs working in the public baths would draw blood from the clients for medicinal purposes.

with celestial fragrance, heavenly attraction, divine undertakings, reliance on the Almighty, and assured of confirmations from on high. Although you will pour water on barren land, know of a certainty that affirmations of the Abhá Kingdom will surround your deeds. Be assured that, until a person has not concentrated all his energies on a particular effort, it will not bear results. “And even make my supplications, my prayers, my entreaties, and my remembrance as one.”

The honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí said, “Teaching through deeds is far more effective than through words.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “If both words and deeds were congruent, then it would be much better. It would be light upon light.”

Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí remarked, “Áqá Siyyid Asadu’lláh Baqiroff wrote a letter and supplicated prayers. I responded, ‘Praying will have no effect, even the prayers of the Chosen Ones, until a person begins to carry out the intended deed. Notice that the Blessed Beauty prayed that the Arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] be confirmed in “that which is of nobility”, yet we saw that it was not fulfilled. The confirmations attracted by deeds are far greater than prayers offered in this regard.’ His response was, ‘One must have lived a worthy life to win an eternal reward.’ I replied, ‘This world is school for acquiring spiritual qualities and attributes. Therefore, sow worthy seeds so that you harvest accordingly.’

‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “People are like trees and plants. Similar to shrubs, the ones that seek worldly attainments will grow and will have an attraction, but it will last only a few days. Whereas sanctified souls are like these trees which are always flourishing, lively, blossomed and fruitful. Consider this tree (He pointed to a large and old olive tree): It has been here for at least two thousand years, withstanding many assaults, and yet it continues to blossom and be productive. It is astounding: People that are godly typically

become prosperous as well. But people that go after worldly attainments lose both this world and the next.”

In His residence that evening, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá briefly remarked: “The Blessed Beauty sent word to Mushíru’d-Dawlih, ‘What do you hope to achieve with your enmity? If your target is Me, I am in your hands. You can harm Me, imprison Me, bury Me in the depth of the ocean, or crucify Me! But if your purpose is the Cause of God, then know that you will assuredly fail in harming it in the least. All by itself and without anyone’s help, the Faith of God will envelop the horizons of the world. ‘To the regret of all enemies!’”

The gathering concluded with a prayer.

14 May 1915, Haifa

The plan was for me to leave today, but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instruction was to remain one more day as He wished me to convey a Tablet to my father. In the afternoon, without my request and solely out of His benevolence, He bestowed the following perspicuous Tablet:

Kirmánsháhan. The honored father of Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God!

O servant of Abbá! It has been some time since I wrote you a letter and this delay was due to myriad trials; otherwise, the shrill of the pen and the melody of the dove has been unceasing. As presently the Lord’s bestowal³⁸⁴, Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh, is returning, therefore, it was incumbent upon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to write and to send you a letter.

Praise unto God that with utmost spirit and vitality, faith and fidelity and with absolute firmness in the Covenant, Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh was able to complete his education and learn sciences, and indeed excelled above all the other students at his

³⁸⁴ “Lord’s bestowal” is a play on the name of the Tablet’s recipient, Khudá-Bakhsh.

school. While at the university, ceaselessly he served the sacred Threshold and embraced the students and the friends with love and affection. He received his certificate for the completion of his studies and afterward spent some time serving these dispersed ones [in the Holy Land]. He is presently leaving for your direction. Of a certainty, on beholding his countenance and seeing the excellence of his character, you will be filled with joy and bliss. Therefore, render thanks unto God for having such a remarkable son who is bright with the love of God and engaged in service to the world of humanity.

Convey my warmest greetings to all the divine friends. Do not be saddened or grieved over the martyrdom of thy young and auspicious son. Though outwardly that bright candle left the trials of this world, he is shining brilliantly in the Kingdom; and though that morning bird departed from his mortal earth, he soared heaven-wards to the orchard of the Merciful. Know that Áqá Mírzá Habíbu'lláh is like a hundred sons unto you.

*Upon thee rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.
‘Abdu’l-Babá ‘Abbás.*

[Departure from the Holy Land]

With tearful eyes and broken heart, on 15 May 1915 I bade the friends farewell and left for ‘Akká. I spent the 16th in Sur and the 17th in Sayda, and since I was traveling with a leased horse, I had to change the mode of transportation. I arrived in Beirut on 18 May and for a day or two visited with the friends and students in that city and said my goodbyes. <245> I left Beirut on 20 May and, by way of Baghdad, proceeded to Iran.

The details of the journey and the rest of my life’s story are recorded in other volumes of my memoirs.³⁸⁵

³⁸⁵ As noted earlier, the present translator has been unable to obtain information on whereabouts of the diary notebooks.

Chapter 12

Notes on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Utterances

In the name of the Almighty!

Several selections from the public or private utterances of the Master that were on various scattered papers, post cards, or elsewhere, and I feared may otherwise be lost, I now record in this notebook, which is more secure. It should be noted: (1) I have collected the personal Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a separate, ornamented volume and hope that my descendants would preserve them like sweet life itself and consider this collection a source of blessings and honor for the Mú'ayyad family; (2) the majority of the following notes are extracted from my pilgrimage notebooks, recorded mostly at a time when I was in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence. I have also augmented these with several extracts from the notebooks of Dr. Zia Baghdadi and others and have deposited them in this treasure house.

Extract 1:³⁸⁶ ['Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:]

In truth, the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíbu'lláh [Mú'ayyad] is a bright candle of the Cause of God. I love him from the depth of My heart, and I have always wanted to render him service. Not only did he never cause troubles, in fact, he was the source of My comfort and great joy. My ultimate desire is to render a befitting service to the devoted believers of the Blessed Beauty, to prepare food for them with My own hands and to circle them

³⁸⁶ Author unknown.

butterfly-like in adoration. I wish to give My life in the path of our spiritual friends.

Praise be unto God that Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh has been able to serve the Cause and the divine friends until now, and I am certain that in the future he will exert even more and will ascend to greater heights in this regard, thereby attracting divine confirmations and celestial blessings.

Additionally, the Master summoned me in the morning into His presence and stated:

Write to Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh [Mú’ayyad] to readily prepare for his journey so that he would meet with his father, gladden his heart and that of other kinsmen.³⁸⁷ However, the honored Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís³⁸⁸ will not go to Baghdad directly as he wishes to proceed from here to Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Constantinople, and once more return to Aleppo and then to Baghdad. Hence, Áqá Mírzá Habíb should go directly by way of Baghdad. In the next two or three days, we too will go to Abu Sinan and will, therefore, see him there.

Extract 2: Copied from a card-postal of Mírzá Badí‘ Bushrú’í, dated 17 Muharram 1334 A.H. [25 November 1915]:

³⁸⁷ After my return from the mission to Europe, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had wished for me to go to America and had given complete instructions in this regard. However, suddenly He dismissed me [from the Holy Land] and sent me instead to Iran. I suspect that the martyrdom of my brother, Múrád, and the resultant sorrow, anguish and wailing of my parents had prevented me from this service and had changed the course of my life. “God knows best!” (HM)

³⁸⁸ I traveled with the honored Prince Shaykhu’r-Ra’ís when he was at Bahjí, and his devotion, humility, faith and consecration to the Cause are a source of deep joy and will never be forgotten. “Blessed is he and good was his end.” (HM)

Last week, the following was revealed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the original text will be sent at the first opportune moment as soon as my mind is at ease. The original Tablet is in the hand of Áqá Mírzá Ahmad [Sohrab]:

Kirmánsbáhan. The honored and distinguished Dr. Mírzá Habíbu’lláh.

He is God!

O faithful friend! Your two letters were received, both overflowing chalices of the wine of fidelity; and therefore, they caused great joy and exultation. I pray that divine confirmations and blessings will surround all the friends and will also render you triumphant and victorious. However, prudence must be observed in all undertakings, as the unwise are watchful.

Convey my warmest greetings and affections to the true friends. During these days, love, fidelity and utmost constancy will protect, save and safeguard all. Peace.

9 Mubarram 1334³⁸⁹. ‘A ‘A.

Extract 3: Copied from the notebook of the honored Áqá Mírzá Habíbu’lláh Ahmadoff.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances in a feast organized by the honored Hájí Khudábakhsh, father of Mírzá Habíbu’lláh³⁹⁰, by the Shrine of the Báb:

I said to Myself that today is the feast of the friends, especially given by the honored Abú-Habíb, and therefore I must attend. In truth, the honored Mírzá Habíbu’lláh has greatly pleased Me by taking care of the [Bahá’í] students in Beirut by spiritual means; and this is

³⁸⁹ 17 November 1915.

³⁹⁰ After the martyrdom of my brother, Mírzá Múrád, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] never again referred to my father as Khudábakhsh, but instead he was called Abú-Habíb. (HM)

because he is focused and devout. In Paris I saw some students who desired naught but self-pleasure and decadence. And, in reality, Paris provides the means for all manner of such carnal indulgences, unless a person is deeply pious and refrains from partaking in such matters. Once a certain person came to ‘Akká [on pilgrimage] and then went to Paris. For a while he sent letters, but then he stopped corresponding and became corrupt.

Extract 4:³⁹¹ 4 Sha‘bán 1332 A.H. [28 June 1914]:

O my beloved and my friend! Mention of the [Bahá’í] students of Beirut was made in His resplendent presence and He showered them all with His outpouring affection, and said:

In truth, under all conditions, Mírzá Habíbu’lláh [Mú’ayyad] vivifies the students in Beirut much like fresh and verdant flowers; through the love of the Cause of God, he makes them thriving like luscious gardens and greens, and with utmost detachment and piety, he is engaged in increasing love and fellowship. The fragrance of Beirut perfumes My nostrils.³⁹²

Extract 5: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk on 1 Muharram 1332 A.H. [30 November 1913]:

It is good that we are all assembled in the Shrine of the Báb under the canopy of the Blessed Beauty’s bounties. Never did anyone think that such a gathering and meeting could be held in such a location, but praise be unto God that, out of the beneficence of the Blessed

³⁹¹ Author unknown.

³⁹² See *Arohani* 98.

Perfection, it has been made possible.³⁹³ If for the rest of our lives we were to give thanks for this mighty favor and stupendous generosity, it would not be enough and we would not be able to render it befittingly. This is because such gatherings are organized solely out of His grace; if we were to desire to render adequate appreciation of the Blessed Beauty, we would assuredly fail. However, to the extent of our abilities we must be grateful. “The whole of it cannot be comprehended, nor be dissolved.” Under all conditions and at all times offer thanks and servitude unto His sacred Threshold. We must recognize that no attainment, no glory and no earthly sovereignty can ever hope to surpass the summit of servitude unto His bounteous Threshold – a true servitude that is unconditioned.

Servitude unto the Threshold means propagating the Words of God, diffusing the divine fragrance and teaching the Cause of the Almighty. It means not resting for a moment and not remaining still for an instant. With our words, conduct and deeds we must exert efforts to spread and teach the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the greatest bounty; this is the mightiest favor. I pray that all may succeed in this attainment.

Consider how the enemies have surrounded the temple of the Cause from every direction: Muslims from one direction, Christians from another, Azalís³⁹⁴ from yet another and the infidels from all points. They all have circled the Faith of God and, with utmost determination, are working to eradicate this blessed Tree and totally obliterate its name. Therefore, it is evident how sacrificial we must be, with what detachment we must proceed,

³⁹³ In the East, the Holy Day celebration of the Birth of the Báb is observed on 1 Muharram.

³⁹⁴ The original word used by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is Yahyá’ís, but a more common appellation, “Azalí,” is employed in translation.

and what sincerity must propel our deeds. We must try to exert our utmost to ensure that, in the face of the onslaughts of these resolute enemies, the impenetrable fortress of the Cause of God remains safe and secure.

Consider how persistently they are striving. The Christians are unceasingly publishing their polemics in newspapers and presenting arguments. Even though in a Jewish Synagogue I proved that Christ was the Logos of God and that Muhammad was God’s Messenger, nevertheless these unfaithful priests in America have spread the claim that Bahá’ís are the enemies of Christ. This is despite the fact that, until now, no one had been able to prove that Jesus was God’s Logos and Spirit in a Jewish Synagogue. Consider how unfair they are. Our lives, our spirits, our souls are all fleeting before the station of Christ or that of Muhammad, and we long to sacrifice ourselves in Their path. Yet these people who, with the slightest injury would repudiate all and who, if made to sustain the least harm would deny their faith, have the temerity to proclaim that Bahá’ís are the enemies of Christ and have arisen to destroy the foundation He laid and obliterate the religion of God!

I hope that, inshá’lláh, with absolute evanescence and humility, with utmost fervor and enthusiasm, with meekness and submissiveness, we will all serve the sacred Threshold and with such spiritual efficacy will remain fast and firm in His Cause until our very last breath. This is our ultimate aspiration.

<250> **Extract 6:** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk at a feast organized by the honored Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Nakhjavaní on 5 Sha‘bán 1332 A.H. [29 June 1914]:³⁹⁵

³⁹⁵ Dr. Zia Baghdadi provides a slight variation of this talk; see *Star of the West*, 27

During the days of Bahá'u'lláh, I always longed for the day that, inshá'lláh, I could travel in some direction and, to the degree of my abilities, render service in the path of God's Cause, however insignificant. But, as we were prisoners, those days passed in regret. The fruits of life are the spiritual benefits that appear from a person. Therefore, he must not remain immobile but should be itinerant; not motionless but soaring heavenwards. In the entire creation, stillness is the cause of death, and movement is the source of life. The difference remains in the form of movement, which includes such movements as: essence, being, qualitative, quantitative, physical, spiritual and divine.³⁹⁶ In short, movement causes life, and stillness results in death. During that period [of imprisonment], I was deeply grieved and depressed because I could see that I was not confirmed and successful in serving the Threshold. However, when I considered the impediment, that my obstacle was imprisonment in the path of God, then I would be comforted and not be sorrowful.

After the ascension [of Bahá'u'lláh], the depth of my anguish and sadness was so profound that it can never be described. I was thoroughly overwhelmed with sorrow and distress to the point that no thought, emotion or will was left to Me. For a while I remained thunderstruck with this bereavement. Afterwards, as you all know, the flame of infidelity blazed all around Me, and this became another barrier. Then I saw that the Cause of God was in great peril, so I decided to travel. But the government prevented Me. All the enemies of the Blessed Beauty attacked from every direction. They considered the ascension of the Ancient Beauty as an

September and 16 October 1918 issues.

³⁹⁶ The original terms are: jawharí, wujúdí, kayfí, kammí, 'aynín, rúhání, and illáhí.

opportunity to assail [Me] with utmost might and efficacy. From every corner, our foes, fully armed and united, rose in opposition and enmity. In particular, after Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension, the followers of [Mírzá] Yahyá, who were always hiding in various holes and previously had no name, fame, or notice, grew hopeful that they might penetrate and cause division and disunity in the blessed Faith. They therefore began to exert great efforts. Moreover, news was received that, from one direction, the ‘ulamá and divines had taken advantage of the situation and had launched further assaults while, from another direction, the government had commenced persecution and caused enormous difficulties, such as the incident at Yazd³⁹⁷, which in truth melted my bones. Though I did not complain, for days and nights, I was consumed with sorrow and grief. It is well evident what befell Me during this period.

All of these impediments prevented Me from journeying, until our freedom was proclaimed and the shackles of imprisonment were broken. Upon gaining this liberty, I decided that it was time to travel, despite the consequences. Though I was ill, of a sudden, without anyone being told, I boarded ship and, relying upon God, left this region. The illustrious kinsmen-turned-strangers [i.e. the violators of the Covenant] in ‘Akká claimed that, fearing the Committee of Union and Progress, I had fled and – I take refuge to God! – I had perpetrated treason, which required my flight.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁷ Presumably a reference to the Bahá’í pogrom in Yazd which took place in the summer of 1903 at the instigation of the governor of that city and resulted in the loss of over 100 Bahá’ís.

³⁹⁸ The Arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí] had spread the rumor – I take refuge with God – that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had escaped. He insisted that ‘Akká’s Matrán send his agents in Jaffa and Alexandria to investigate the matter and they telegraphed, “The renowned Gentleman is on the ship.” (HM)

During the reign of [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, the enemies of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá constantly circulated written accusations that I was scheming with the freedom fighters³⁹⁹ and that I regularly communicated with them against the government. When [national] liberty was proclaimed, they completely changed the content of their slanders and disseminated written imputations that in my letters I referred to [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd and to the Shah of Iran as wronged and meek, and had urged the Bahá’ís to take refuge with the Russians. Sanctified be God! For twenty-five years ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd imprisoned the Blessed Beauty and Me. Bahá’u’lláh explicitly wrote of his tyranny: “*O Spot that art situated on the shores of two seas! The throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee.*”⁴⁰⁰

There are many cities situated by the sea, such as Gibraltar or Báb al-Mandab⁴⁰¹, and many others. However since it is decreed that the Faith must be proclaimed through the hand of its enemies, in order to provoke ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd and some others, Mírzá Mihdi Hikmat, known as Za’ím⁴⁰², wrote of this verse in his newspaper. He has given an exposition of the above verse of the *Aqdas*, stating that by it is meant Constantinople, and has further claimed that the Committee of Union and Progress arranged for My release.⁴⁰³ Therefore, with this, how am I to call him [i.e. Sultán ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd] wronged and meek?

Many such difficulties surrounded us, but since my

³⁹⁹ Young Turks is intended.

⁴⁰⁰ *Kitáb-i Aqdas*, K89.

⁴⁰¹ Located at the southern tip of the Red Sea.

⁴⁰² Starting in 1893, Mírzá Mihdí of Tabríz, entitled Za’ímu’d-Dawlih and Ra’ísu’l-Hukamá, edited the newspaper *Hikmat* in Cairo. In Arabic, he also wrote a history and refutation of the Bábís and Bahá’ís entitled *Miftáhu Bábí’l-Abwáb* [the Key of the Gate of Gates].

⁴⁰³ See also *Ma’idih Asmání*, vol. 5, pp. 129-130.

intent was that, God willing, I would be able to render some service to the sacred Threshold, I never heeded these attacks. Therefore I went to Europe and America, journeyed its length and breadth, and out of the bounty and favor of the Blessed Beauty, was able to raise the call of the Kingdom in every city and hamlet, widely proclaiming its purpose in all churches, synagogues, universities and societies. Although I was extremely ill and frail, there was not a spot left unvisited. Divine confirmations unceasingly came to our aid. Though I would be weak at home, when I arrived at an assemblage or synagogue and had fixed my attention on the Abhá Kingdom, confirmations of the Blessed Beauty would immediately descend, and for one or two hours I would be able to speak unceasingly.

Although we are but specks of dust, the effulgence of the bounties of the Blessed Beauty are like the rays of the sun, and every speck in the path of such rays will shine with brilliance. Therefore our splendor is like the radiance of a speck under the luster of the sun. That is, the grace and bounties of the Blessed Beauty are so immense that they can never be described. How well it is written:

O Love, who sellest me this wine,
 O Love, for whom I burn and bleed,
 Love, for whom I cry and pine—
 Thou the Piper, and I the reed.
 If Thou wishest me to live,
 Through me blow Thy holy breath.
 The touch of Jesus Thou wilt give
 To me, who’ve lain an age in death.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁴ Translation of poem from *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 30-31.

My “holy breath” was the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty that were influencing and giving tranquility to hearts and were gladdening people with the divine tidings. I was but a humble instrument. Praised be God that, in the soil of hearts, goodly seeds were sown that will grow forever. Blessed souls were inflamed, consecrated and arose to serve the Cause. Afterwards, with utmost joy and happiness, I returned to the sacred Threshold.

Praise the Lord that the friends of God came from all directions to offer homage at the Sanctified Shrines. Meeting and associating with them and through the brilliance of their faces, my heart was gladdened and assurance was gained that they were sacrificial in the path of the Blessed Beauty. They had no purpose other than His good-pleasure and no thought other than the diffusion of divine fragrance. With consummate devotion they circumambulated the point of adoration of the Supreme Concourse and prostrated themselves at the sacred Threshold and the Exalted Shrine of the Báb. Then they returned to their homes. I remain hopeful that great achievements and resplendent effects will result from their return. Similarly, now you return and must likewise journey by the divine splendor, heavenly tidings and celestial attraction.

While I was not here, the friends-turned-strangers [i.e. the Covenant-breakers] exerted efforts and established, either outwardly or in private, relationships with some of the friends. Upon My return, they congregated and, once more, similar to the time of [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, wrote certain documents and issued slanders. They presently have sent these to Constantinople, thinking that they would persuade the government to arise against Me, and to imprison, banish or slay Me.

However, the friends of God must not fix their gaze on Me. This Cause is immensely great. It is the Cause of the Blessed Beauty. Thousands like Me will come and go, or never leave a trace. Our existence or absence is not important; what matters is the blessed Faith. The friends of God must remain firm, steadfast and constant. It is evident that I have always been in danger and will continue to remain in harm's way; moreover, I will not be in this world forever, as a day will come when I desire to gain my eternal abode of the Merciful. The friends of God must remain absolutely loyal and not be perturbed in the least. Nay, day-by-day they must grow in certitude, firmness, and constancy.

Consider how one by one the Disciples of Christ left this world because they fell martyred. Others, greater than they, arose in service to the Faith and manifested mightier efficacy, until the light of guidance illumined the horizons of the world. You must do likewise and be assured that the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty will pour forth. By God besides Whom there is no other God, if on this day the least of men was to arise in service to the Cause, divine confirmations and affirmations would surround him from every direction.

May you always remain protected under the shadow of the Blessed Beauty. May you remain confirmed and successful, and may each of you become a heavenly standard in His path. May you be illumined and attracted, revived by His hallowed breath.

Do not consider whether I am with you or not, whether I exist or not. Busy yourself with service to the Cause and fix your gaze on the Blessed Beauty. He will enable you to succeed without anyone's aid. Seek assistance solely from Him. Remain firm in His Cause. Be a servant unto Him. Protect His Threshold and serve it well. Be suppliant of His favors. Be illumined by His

bounties and radiant by His light. Be safe and secure under His care and protection. Remain assured. “*Verily, We behold you from Our realm of glory, and shall aid whosoever will arise for the triumph of Our Cause with the hosts of the Concourse on high and a company of Our favored angels.*”⁴⁰⁵ Such is true happiness.

For instance, consider Áqá Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl.⁴⁰⁶ How many victories he won! How in every situation, under all conditions, he was confirmed. By God besides Whom there is no God, <255> if one attains sovereignty over the East and the West, it would not profit him in the least. In the end, it is naught but immense regret. Where is Násiri'd-Dín Shah? Where is Muhammad Shah? Where is 'Abdu'l-Hamíd? Where is 'Abdu'l-'Azíz? Where is 'Abdu'l-Majíd? Where is Napoleon? Where is Guillaume⁴⁰⁷? No trace or sign of them has remained. Though they were monarchs and reigned in utmost splendor, their end was naught but eternal regret. We see this all around us.

Therefore, arise to remain constant in service to the sacred Threshold. This is the everlasting glory. This is the eternal bounty. This is the cause of the illumination of our souls in the Abhá Kingdom. This is the cause of our growth in the boundless realms of God.

Upon you rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

To explain: 'Akká's Matrán, who was one of the enemies of

⁴⁰⁵ *Kitab-i Aqdas* K53.

⁴⁰⁶ A poem in memory of Mírzá Abú'l-Fadl was recited in this gathering of the friends in the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa. As a eulogy for the illustrious Abú'l-Fadl, this poem was composed by Hájí Fasihu'l-Mulk Shirazi, known as Shuridih, and sent by Mírzá Muhammad-Baqir Khan Dihqan. (HM) [The two opening lines of the poem are quoted by the diarist.]

⁴⁰⁷ French reference to Kaiser Wilhelm.

the Cause and an associate of the Arch-Covenant-breaker [Mírzá Muhammad-‘Alí], telegraphed one of his colleagues in Jaffa, asking him to go and investigate – and I take refuge with God! – if ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had fled onboard a ship. That Christian went onboard the boat and inquired, “Are you ‘Abbás Effendi?” “Yes, I am”, responded ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. “I have heard of Your fame”, stated the man, “and I have come to attain Your presence.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered, “I know you.” When someone had followed the man, they had noticed that he had gone directly to the post office, telegraphing, “The renowned Gentleman is on the ship.”

Extract 7: The original of the following Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is scribed by the Guardian of the Cause of God and is presently in my possession, bearing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s signature. Since it contains important details about the defection of Dr. Faríd, I will record its text in this notebook:

*Paris. The illustrious Mr. and Mrs. Dreyfus[-Barney],
upon them rest the Glory of God.*

Telegraph regarding your arrival in New York was received and we were immensely gladdened that, praised be God, you arrived in good health. We hope that by now you have returned to Paris safe and secure and that you remain safeguarded and protected there as well.

In these days your presence in Paris is especially necessary since the violators of the Covenant in London have succeeded in precipitating the fall of certain believers and have arisen in utmost enmity and rancor. Dr. Faríd has sent Mrs. Chevalier as his emissary to journey throughout America to undermine the firmness in the Divine Covenant of those she meets. Because of my trust and confidence in you, while in Paris, I briefly shared an account of Dr. Faríd and further details are enclosed. You will see for yourself how patient I have been and how indefatigably I have endured this

iniquitous man. With utmost love and care, I raised him for twenty years and bestowed every favor upon him and his parents, so that he would mature and serve the Cause of God. But now he is the arch-antagonist.

However, such incidents have been many. All those who arose in opposition to the Covenant have been reduced and destroyed. No power can subvert the efficacy of the Covenant. As experience has proven, all violators will ultimately be shattered and wrecked.

Áqá Jamal Burujirdí was the foremost Bahá'í and like Judas Iscariot was the chief of the Apostles. However, because of his break with the Covenant, he was destroyed and annihilated. Similarly, there were others, all of whom sank into the depths of regret. These new violators will have the same fate as the earlier transgressors, each of whom were more prominent, renowned and esteemed than Dr. Faríd and his associates, but all fell into the pit of remorse and regret.

The power of Covenant is like the brilliant sun, and its violation like dark clouds. Eventually, however, the warmth of the sun will dissipate the black clouds and will shine forth resplendently.

I am confident about Paris and know that he will not be able to cause any sedition in that city because you are there. Of a certainty, your firmness will prevent violators of the Covenant from causing mischief.

Today the world pulsates by the power of the Covenant. Experience has proven that the firmer a person, the more his radiance, his confirmation and his success.

Inasmuch as Miss Knobloch⁴⁰⁸ was firm in the Covenant,

⁴⁰⁸ Miss [Alma] Knobloch was German-born and residing in Canada. She embraced the Faith when the standard of the Cause was raised in the United States and this prompted her return to Germany for the purpose of teaching the Faith. Though she was 60 or 70 years old, she was very petite, and was often lifted and placed on a table to deliver talks at the Bahá'í gatherings. However, once she commenced talking, like a billowing ocean, profound thoughts poured out, and the audience was

she became exceedingly successful in Germany, and yet Ibráhím Khayru’lláh, despite his great fame, was obliterated. Faríd and his supporters will be like him as well. This is an unerring balance.

In Paris, exert yourselves so that [Faríd’s] satanic whisperings will have no effect. Engage all the friends of God in propagating the Faith since, after this War, Paris will develop great receptivity towards the Cause. Take advantage of this opportunity.

*Upon you rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.*

Extract 8: [An extract from a diary:]

Today the honored gentlemen⁴⁰⁹ left with the Austrian liner. Also the devoted maidservant of God, Mrs. Emogene Hoagg, who is among the inflamed American believers who for nine months had resided with the Holy Family, left with them for London. With the same vessel, Mírzá Mahmúd Zarqání departed for India. Each of these friends were summoned by themselves into the presence [of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá] and encouraged and reminded: “You are the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom and must guide people through illumined discourse. You are the recipients of the rays of the Sun of Reality and must bear luscious fruits and sweeten all tastes. You are the life-giving water of the rivers of eternal paradise and

deeply affected by her expositions. Repeatedly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would comment in humor, “Germany has made the world tremble and has gained immense victories. However, through a small woman we have conquered Germany!” (HM) [Alma and her sister Fannie from Washington, D.C., not Canada. Their third sister was Pauline Hannen, whose husband Joseph was a disciple of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Alma was born in Germany, but her two sisters were born in the United States.]

⁴⁰⁹ A reference to Dr. Faríd’s father, Mírzá Asadu’lláh Isfahání, and Hájí Siyyid Yahyá.

must quench the need of the thirsty. You are the heavenly sustenance of the concourse above and must feed the hungry. You are the guides of the celestial highway and must lead the wayward to the essence of truth.”

Similarly, the Master said to Áqá Mírzá Habíbu'lláh [Mú'ayyad]:

“Through divine bounties and favors, you must perform miracles on this journey. Your discourse must be the essence of spirituality. Say to them: ‘The Blessed Beauty has established this Covenant so that everyone’s focus is on a singular point. If He had not done so, by now a thousand different sects would have been established among the Bahá’ís. We have no concern with anyone. Our purpose is to safeguard the fortified fortress of the Cause of God. Consider how many different denominations and divisions were formed after the ascension of Christ. Now the Blessed Beauty has established a single point so that no division would occur among people.’ ...⁴¹⁰

Give talks in public meetings. Speak of the love of God, the influence of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh and the penetration of the Word of God. Encourage and excite people. Ignite their hearts and inspire and awaken their minds. Night and day I will pray for you so that in every way you will be confirmed and successful.”

Elsewhere it is recorded that ‘Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:⁴¹¹

These issues (violations of the Covenant) are like the

⁴¹⁰ Apparently a portion is left out from the diary notes.

⁴¹¹ From the information in Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 402, it can be surmised that this talk was given during the closing days of 1913 while the Master resided in Egypt.

froth of the sea – they come and then disappear. You must remain assured of divine confirmations. When the friends of God have firmly and steadfastly stood by the Covenant, then heavenly outpourings will surround them. A day will come when no mention of them [i.e. Covenant-breakers] will remain. Do not be saddened. Do not grieve. Arise with utmost vigor. These people are like jackals and the servants of the Blessed Beauty are like unto conquering lions. Soon this will become evident and manifest.

A certain person protested why I had expelled Tamaddunu’l-Mulk⁴¹² when we must love and cherish all the inhabitants of the world. However, this friend did not consider that His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh Himself had expelled certain individuals and that in the Hidden Words, He emphatically warned against association with the munáfiqín⁴¹³. We must in truth have utmost affection for all the kindred of earth, but in no wise is it permissible to associate and fraternize with the munáfiqín because it will injure the Cause and will enable them to penetrate the community and to completely uproot the Faith from within. Associating with the munáfiqín is the same as a person nurturing a snake in his shirt or giving home to a scorpion in his sleeve.

All the Disciples of Christ severed their relationship with Judas Iscariot. Consider attentively what has been written in the Letters of Paul regarding prohibition against association with the munáfiqín. When a person has venomous breath, is it better to

⁴¹² He was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s translator and traveled with Him. Eventually because of the troubles he caused in Iran, he was expelled from the Faith. For further reference to him see, Ahang Rabbani, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá Meeting with Two Prominent Iranians”, Fall 1998, World Order magazine.

⁴¹³ As noted earlier, munáfiqín referred to the hypocrites in Islam; in the Bahá’í Writings it may be understood as a reference to the violators of the Covenant.

associate with him, or to protect people from fellowship with such a man?

We must embrace all the kindred of earth with utmost love and affection. That is, the people who do not show enmity, but not the munáfiqín, as the latter will cause great mischief and irreparable division, resulting in complete chaos in the Cause.

We have no quarrel with anyone. Tamaddunu'l-Mulk caused mischief among the friends of God and perpetrated such disunity that the foundation of the divine Faith was nearly destroyed. He repented on numerous occasions, and yet after every repentance, he would cause further mischief. Eventually I telegraphed that Tamaddun was expelled and association with him not permissible. Had I not done so, the foundation of the Faith in Tíhnan would have been thoroughly ruined. The purpose of the Covenant is naught but the good of the whole of humanity. However when a snake like Tamaddunu'l-Mulk attacks the Faith, then of necessity, I must awaken the friends of God, because if I do not, then I stand responsible before God and His creation. However, if someone harms My own person and not the Cause, even should he cut off a part of My body, I will instantly forgive him and will embrace him with utmost love and affection. That is, I consider all My enemies as <260> My kind friends. But if a person harms the Cause of God, then I will no longer consider him a friend and will not count him as such. And should he persist in injuring the Faith of God, of a certainty, I will not conceal it.

Extract 9: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] remarked:

The honored Áqá Mírzá Habíb is indeed confirmed.⁴¹⁴ He will become very renowned. He is verily a devoted servant of the Blessed Beauty. He is sacrificial, devout, has deep conviction in the Faith and does all he can for the friends of God. He diligently served the believers that passed through Beirut, out of his love for God and in His path and not to gain favor or friendship. He showed them kindness because he is devoted to the Blessed Beauty.

Kindness is of two types: a kindness that is offered because of the recipient and one that is independent of the recipient. For instance, there is much love and affection among the people, but this is of the first type. It is because of some worldly consideration or is associated with some expectation that comes with rendering this kindness. Such affections will eventually come to an end. But there is a love that is offered for the sake of God. For example, you may love someone because he is a believer and has faith in God, and not because you want to use him for some purpose or receive some gain. This affection is lasting and is of God and unto Him it returns. If one manifests the first type of kindness, this is attachment and not affection. When the Seven Martyrs were being executed, each would implore to be martyred first. He would say, ‘Slay me first so that I would not witness the martyrdom of others.’ This is true affection. This affection is light. This affection is life.

Extract 10: Addressing the Bahá’í students of Beirut [vacationing in Haifa], ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke the following words in a gathering in

⁴¹⁴ As noted earlier, Dr. Mú’ayyad adopted this surname, “confirmed”, because of the oft-repeated appellation by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

the Shrine of the Báb on 11 July 1914:

When I was in America, the maidservant of God, Mrs. [Agnes] Parsons, invited Me to her vacation home in Dublin, New Hampshire. While there, a school headmaster came for a visit and invited Me to his school in the countryside.

When I went to this place, I saw the school had been established in the woods, with vivifying and refreshing air. It was located on top of a green and luscious hill, surrounded with beautiful trees. They had pitched tents by the lake and every several students had a tent of their own. Their teacher had prescribed a schedule that called for certain hours devoted to studies and some others for athletic practices. They wore thin clothing and slept in the open air.

During the hours of the day, they ran, practiced swimming in the sea and were fed generously. A humble building was raised for their gatherings, studies and for meals. Individually they studied diverse sciences by repetition. They were physically very strong and could withstand any manner of hardship. Their affairs were arranged so that no time was wasted during their three-month stay that was devoted to studying and acquiring physical endurance. Being robust, bare headed and bare footed and wearing flimsy garments, they would run in the woods, learning to cope with nature, in the event they ever needed to solely depend on her. Indeed, they treated the outdoors as if they were at home, and lived like all other creatures of the field. They were one with nature, like gazelles, mountain goats or birds, and truly it was an amazing scene. They had cut branches from trees and with them had made natural beds.

I spoke with them at length about material and spiritual education. Their headmaster was a good man

and was exceedingly kind and generous to us.⁴¹⁵

Are the teachers in Beirut satisfied with your

⁴¹⁵ A slight variation on the same talk of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is noted in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, issue 20 August 1918) and is quoted below for ease of reference:

When I was in Dublin, the professor of the out-door school invited me to visit the pupils. The school is in the mountains of New Hampshire, built among the woods. All around there are green valleys, verdant palms and blue lakes. They have a large cabin and have pitched several tents. Their supreme object is to promote the art of beauty and gracefulness and the science of strength. For this reason they practice calisthenics and athletics and exercise bodily training. They are thinly clad and often sleep in the open air. They go bathing and during certain hours they study. Fresh air, outdoor exercise, wholesome food, clean sports, uplifting ideals and regular training of body, mind and spirit build up their constitutions and give them strong muscles, sterling characters and robust manhood. They have a school room and dinning-room and except the hours of study and meals they spend their time entirely out in the open air, learning many excellent lessons from the book of nature. I saw there a very young lad who, I was told by the teacher, was very thin and emaciated when he was brought to the camp, but during his four weeks’ stay he was completely changed, having gained flesh, health and color, so that he could take part in the vigorous exercises. The professor of this twentieth century school was one of the most refined and cultured men that it was my pleasure to meet in America, and he showed me much love, hospitality and affection. The boys were most polite and decorous and although some of them were very young yet they stayed through the talk and listened most attentively. I was very pleased with all of them. Resourcefulness and self-control are the two lessons taught to these boys through words and deeds – so that if in the course of their lives through an accident of checkered fortune they should be thrown on an uninhabited island in the midst of the sea, they would master the situation calmly, control themselves and provide through their own ingenuity and inventiveness the essential means of livelihood. After all, this is the greatest lesson that any highly-evolved civilization can teach us. They are so taught that when the proper time arrives, they will shun the dangers and risks of life; that like unto the birds of the fields and the animals of the woods they may be able to procure their sustenance and protect themselves from the encroachments of the enemy.

progress? (The students responded positively.) “It is best when others testify [to one’s virtues].” Indeed, the Bahá’ís, and especially the youth, must conduct themselves in such wise that everyone would testify to the excellence of their character and qualities. There is a great joy in this. Every time I see you, I am filled with delight. Praised be God that it is so.

A person must live in a way that can win the praise of God, His chosen ones and the society. If he is able to achieve this, utmost happiness is his. One’s heart is filled with joy when one has won the good-pleasure of the sacred Threshold. It is then that the heart overflows with happiness. And no matter what may befall a person then, no matter what trials and tribulations beset him, his heart will remain joyful. He will then be like a sea that while experiencing storms and thunders on the surface, yet remains calm and serene at its depth. Otherwise, man cannot become happy with anything else, and if he does, it is transient and passes in a day or two.

For instance, if a person discovers a treasure, his happiness is temporary, but his troubles are endless. Should he win the good-pleasure of God, the praise of the chosen ones and the approval of people, this is a treasure that has joy upon joy. No loss or regret will come from this, and he will always remain energized, happy, joyful and thankful.

In this world there is no bounty greater than spiritual joy. Such a joy is the supreme favor bestowed upon man. For instance, when a person solves a scientific problem, an immense joy comes to him. Or similarly when he is able to do a humanitarian act or achieve a great undertaking, his heart is filled with elation and satisfaction.

It is written that Khawjih Násiru’d-Dín Túsí was a skilled mathematician. He would spend his nights on the

roof of his house observing the movement of stars and making astronomical discoveries. Every time he solved a difficult problem in astronomy, he would be so thrilled that he would begin dancing, saying, “Where are the kings to see what true joy consists of, and where are the monarchs of the earth to comprehend the meaning of true bliss!”

It is because of this fact that in the divine Tablets of the Blessed Beauty so much praise has been bestowed on the arts and crafts. Everyone is urged and counseled to acquire them since they are the sources of eternal happiness.

Praise be unto God that you have come in good health and in safety, and I was able to meet with you. And now you are under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb. The air here is most vivifying. This place is the heavenly orchard, the hallowed ground, the sanctified Threshold and the fount of divine bounty.

Extract 11: 13 July 1914 - After Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Rafsanjání chanted a prayer in a gathering of the friends in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house in Haifa, the Master recounted the following:⁴¹⁶

His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him – stated that one word or one verse of “Him Whom God shall make manifest” is sufficient proof unto the whole of the earth. Now consider how immense are the verses, commentaries, homilies, scientific treatises and prayers that have streamed forth from [Bahá’u’lláh’s] blessed lips. Is there any room left for denying? Despite this, certain people

⁴¹⁶ Two excerpts from the diary of Ahmad Sohrab pertaining to the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoken on this day appear in *Star of the West*, issues 19 January and 21 March 1918.

want to equate [Mírzá Yahyá] Azal with the Blessed Beauty. Everyone will testify that Azal was bereft of any qualities whatsoever. His writings, which are now assembled in London⁴¹⁷, are so coarse and devoid of meaning that even schoolchildren would refuse to have any of it ascribed to them. That is, from the beginning of time until this very day, writings so indecent have not been seen. After the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb], Mírzá Sa'íd Khán⁴¹⁸ wrote a letter, stating, "This movement has ended and none are left except the Blessed Beauty." He wrote this when Mírzá Yayhá was around.

The Blessed Beauty exalted the Cause in Baghdad. Manifestly and boldly, He stood before the whole of mankind and peoples, and subsequent to those bewildering occurrences and upon the arrival of the royal decree, Bahá'u'lláh departed from Baghdad with utmost majesty and splendor.

However, after the martyrdom of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb], what did Azal accomplish? He did not edify or teach a single soul, nor did he render the slightest service [to the Cause]. The only thing he did was to increase the number of his wives and spend all his time with them. He even grew so shameless as to take the wife of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] as his own – an act that was specifically forbidden in the Bayán.⁴¹⁹ He lived in Cyprus for forty years, and yet he failed to teach a single person. Now, someone so inept

⁴¹⁷ A number of the Bábí, Azalí and Bahá'í manuscripts are deposited with the archives of the British Museum of London and at E.G. Browne's collection at the Cambridge University.

⁴¹⁸ The Foreign Minister of Iran during 1850's. In later years, he became a believer in Khurasán.

⁴¹⁹ A reference to the short marriage of Mírzá Yahyá Azal with Fátimih Khánum, the second wife of the Báb from the Isfahán period. By the Bayán, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is referring to the general exhortations of the Báb and not His book of laws.

desires to advance such a claim! It is like a dust-particle claiming to be the brilliant sun. How incredibly presumptuous! Contrast the martyrdom of the Exalted One with these flagrant and shameless acts! How astounding is the difference!

After His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb], while in chains, the Blessed Beauty edified men, and under the sword of the enemy, sang verses of guidance. All the while, Azal remained hidden in a thousand holes, fearfully seeking to preserve himself.

Elsewhere ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated (regarding Azal):

Praised be God that you have now understood the reality of Azal. You must assuredly strive to propagate this truth so that dark clouds of ignorance are removed from all eyes and the sun of truth is permitted to shine forth. The incident of Azal was unimportant and was an ordinary occurrence, therefore, I did not desire to spend our time discussing such an insignificant issue. I wished to speak of important matters with you, which were the foundation of teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.

Azal had no name or fame. At all times, because of his cowardice, he remained in hiding. No one had any news of him. He did not teach the Cause to anyone in his entire life. Despite forty years of support from the British government in Cyprus, he did not edify a single soul in that region to the religion of the Báb. His days and nights were consumed with those women who mothered those unworthy children that you saw in Cyprus. He even took the wife of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] and saw no shame in that act, though the explicit text of the Bayán forbids this very act. He committed this heinous act at the time when the Blessed Beauty was absent [from Baghdad]. After a few

days, he gave this woman to another⁴²⁰. The service that he rendered the Báb was: After the breast of His Holiness the Exalted One was made the target of a thousand bullets, instead of spending his days grieving, wailing and crying over this terrible loss, he multiplied the number of his wives! Of the ones known, altogether he had eleven⁴²¹ wives: Hájíyyih; sister of Hájí; Rúqíyyih; daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Fattáh [Núrí]; Rúqíyyih [daughter of] A‘rij [Isfahání]; daughter of [Mírzá] Haydar-Qulí [Núrí]; mother⁴²² of [Mírzá] Ahmad; Badrí-Ján [Tafarrují]; Nísá Ján⁴²³ in Tihrán; Qanitih [Núrí]; An Arab girl; the wife of [Mullá Muhammad Núrí, known as] Mu‘allim; and the wife of the Primal Point⁴²⁴.

Notice that this man spent his entire life chasing after women and brought forth these unfit and dull-witted children, which you met. Has he rendered any other service to the Báb? <265> Has he converted anyone, or spoken at an assemblage?

In contrast, under all circumstances, the Blessed Beauty, evincing absolute might and majesty, stood gallantly and manifestly before all the enemies. Everyone testifies to His courage and nobility, even the entrenched foes. While in chains and fetters, He proclaimed the Word of God and, in the Prison of ‘Akká, addressed the kings and monarchs of the globe.

Extract 12: 11 November 1914 – [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] sat under the rays of the sun and said, “The warmth of the sun is pleasant.” He was

⁴²⁰ A reference to Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání.

⁴²¹ The diarist gives the name of 13 wives and the family tree at the conclusion of Muhammad-‘Alí Malik-Khusraví, *Iqlím-i Núr*, gives a total of 14.

⁴²² Her name was Málíkih Khánúm Shirázi.

⁴²³ She was known as Nísá Khánúm Tihrání.

⁴²⁴ Her name was Fátimih Khánúm Isfahání.

asked about ‘Ád⁴²⁵ and Thamúd⁴²⁶. The Master responded:

There were [certain tribes] prior to the time of Moses who numbered among the Arab clans that are no more, that is, no sign of them has remained. Mention is made of them in the history of Islam, but they are not referenced in the Torah. They came from the city of Ahqáf and certain evidences, such as, wells, caves, and other things, were present at the time of the Prophet Muhammad. In the ancient times, on the ancient route to the hajj, they had excavated many caves, which were used as their dwelling. Europeans have written about them; some of their marks and writings have survived. They disappeared as a result of floods, storms and earthquakes.

By the Náqih [She-camel⁴²⁷] is intended the Prophet Sálìh⁴²⁸. They injured Him and decided to slay Him. However those who planned to destroy the Faith of God, were themselves destroyed by God. “So their Lord destroyed them for their crime, and visited all alike: Nor feared he the issue.”⁴²⁹

We came before His house in ‘Akká where an unkempt Arab beggar with filthy clothes and dirty, uncombed hair came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. With utmost affection the Master caressed his face and beard and spoke many words of encouragement and humor to him: “May God grant you bounties. May God gladden your heart. What a wonderful chin! How is your health?” After the Arab beggar left, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said:

⁴²⁵ Qur’án 11:62, 26:123, 41:14, 54:18 and 69:6.

⁴²⁶ Qur’an 11:98 26:141, 41:16, 54:23, 69:54 and 91:11.

⁴²⁷ Qur’an 7:73.

⁴²⁸ Qur’an 7:73, 7:75, 7:77, 7:79, 11:66 and 54:27.

⁴²⁹ Qur’an 91:14-5.

When it is revealed, “Consort with all the religions,”⁴³⁰ the intention is association with such people. Although there is no connection between us, I have served him for twenty years. [The intention of Bahá'u'lláh's exhortation] is not to associate with a Covenant-breaker or those who curse the Blessed Beauty, or the likes of Hájí Muhammad-Karím Khán who wrote in refutation of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb].

The intention is to consort with such people that are not antagonistic, or two-faced, or conniving, or hypocritical⁴³¹. Such people [as this poor Arab] are not believers, and there is no harm in that; let him believe in his own convictions. It is exhorted that if we disfavor someone, it should not be over his religion. For instance, we should not avoid a Christian because of his beliefs. However, we should eschew people with abhorrent behavior, such as a thief, or philanderer, or a murderer. “Consort with all the religions” does not apply to such people. That is, if you know that someone sows the seeds of rebellion and enmity against the Blessed Beauty, then you should not associate with him. We have no relation with these people and leave them to their own devices.

A large, beautiful rooster was walking under the sun and picking seeds, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “If roosters were rare, people would go from city to city to see and admire them. However, their abundance has prevented an increase in their value.”

We strolled to the seashore in His blessed presence. When we first reached the shore, portions of the seawall looked in utter disrepair. The Master said, “This world is the plane of combination and dissolution. The process never stops: On one side it creates new

⁴³⁰ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 95.

⁴³¹ The original is “munáfiq” which may be understood in this context to refer to those who rebel against the Covenant.

people, and on the other it destroys what she has created. The world will not grow tired. How numerous are the days witnessed by the world! They had buildings along this section [of the walls] and in front of them they had built a bathhouse. With these rocks they had made a natural pool and therein would wash their cloths.”

When we reached a fork in the road, the Master asked, “Which way should we go?” Ustad Muhammad-‘Alí Banná [master-builder], who at times chanted prayers in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, suggested, “Going right is better.” The Master remarked, “Indeed, right is more desirable and left is not. Even the right hand is stronger than the left and it does all the work: It writes and performs various tasks. But when the right-hand is tired, engaged, injured or paralyzed, then the left hand does its work. In Arabic, right [yamín] is pleasant. It has two meanings: right and oath.”

We came near a young boy selling oranges. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired, “Do you like oranges?” We responded that we did, and He purchased ten oranges. Meanwhile two Arab girls approached and as they were looking at us, the Master said to them, “You each take five oranges as well.” One of them responded, “But we have no money.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “No problem. I shall pay for them.” When the little girls took the oranges to their mothers, they realized that the fruit-seller had taken more money than he should have. So, they ran after him to take more oranges, as he fled while being chased. It was an entertaining scene as the Arab women pursued the young orange merchant!

Afterwards, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá instructed this ephemeral servant to report about my visit to Germany. He said, “German means ‘Our kinsmen.’⁴³²”

I asked, “Would it be possible for the Master to once more bless the western world with His footsteps?”

He replied, “Europe is far. I wish to go to Jerusalem and Medina

⁴³² In Persian, German can be read as “Ál-i man” meaning, our clan, our family. Interesting enough, *german* seems to have the same meaning, “of the same parents or grandparents,” c.1300, from *germanus* “of brothers and sisters,” related to *germen* (gen. germinis) “sprout, bud.”

since these cities are near.”

I said, “Herr Galtsiner⁴³³ would cry and say, ‘Tell ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that I want to sacrifice myself for Him!’ as he was being taken to the battlefield.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “Yes, Monsieur Bernard was also taken to the battlefield, but if there was a single person in the world who was against war, it was he. He detested it most intensely and was so utterly against it that I am unable to describe it for you. However, he was forced into joining the combat. For those who have sacrificed themselves in the path of God, it is difficult to sacrifice instead for mere soil, which is the least worthy [reason for sacrifice] in all creation.”

I said, “In Germany, nationalistic slogans and patriotic military marches are heard from one direction, and from another, talks given in the Bahá’í gatherings and the voices of prayer and supplication to God are heard. Indeed it seems that the believers have no cares about these ominous affairs, and are solely occupied with the mention of God and spiritual matters.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “Verily, it is most astounding to raise the divine call in the midst of such commotion and chaos. In truth, during our seven or eight days in Stuttgart, the light of God’s love was so brilliantly aglow that the friends were exceedingly joyful and happy. Good seeds were planted.”

I said, “These friends are indeed righteous and their Bahá’í teachers must, of a certainty, have been devoted and firm in the Covenant and Testament, and had been pious and righteous, which is why the Cause of God is progressing so remarkably.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “Yes, from the very beginning, good seeds were planted.”

I related, “Miss Schwarz⁴³⁴ brought two books to her mother, one by [Leo] Tolstoy and the other by Victor Hugo. She asked, ‘My teacher gave these to me to read. Are they appropriate readings for

⁴³³ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

⁴³⁴ Presumably the daughter of Consul and Alice Schwarz – the most eminent of the Stuttgart Bahá’ís.

me?’ Her mother replied, ‘My darling, they have no benefit to you insofar as the Faith is concerned and may even dampen your devotion. Whatever reduces your love for the Cause is harmful to you. Therefore take these back.’ She immediately returned them to the original owner.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “Marhabá [welcome]! Well said. Yes, it is indeed so. While in Europe, I always proclaimed, ‘The Cause of Bahá’u’lláh embraces all the past Dispensations and manifests all their benefits to human society. It is like a tree that has many strong branches. The Faith of Bahá’u’lláh contains all the teachings beneficial to the world of humanity and will profit every segment of society. For instance, the New Testament speaks of compassion, kindness, forgiveness and clemency. These same teachings exist in the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh. The Qur’an speaks of justice and punishment, and these same concepts are preserved in the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. In short, whatever good and productive precepts exist among the diverse groups of humanity are all present in the Cause of God. In addition, the Faith offers certain principles which others lack. For instance, [the principle of] the oneness of humanity; religion must be cause of love and fellowship; religion must be in accord with reason and science; proclamation of universal peace; equality of men and women; promotion of learning and spirituality; and many others.”

I shared a few short anecdotes related to the Bahá’ís of Stuttgart and made loving mention of Herr Grunsuik⁴³⁵, who had composed many poems about the Faith. I also related the story of a [German] soldier who treated the French prisoners of war as brothers. Moreover, I noted, “Recently Professor [Heinrich] Jaeger, his wife and daughters embraced the Faith, and, every time we spoke of the Cause or mentioned the martyrs of Iran and the sufferings endured by the believers in that land, this old and spiritual man would cry profusely with tears flowing over his white beard.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá warmly encouraged me to say more, remarking,

⁴³⁵ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

“Tell more of the faith and the faithful,
as it brings joy to the world and heart.

Your words are indeed pleasing! You speak of the friends of God!” I related, “Each day we would talk of such things and remind ourselves: ‘Who would have thought from the period that the Blessed Perfection was taken barefoot and bareheaded from Niyávarán to Tíhrán until the time that the Commission of Inquiry planned to send the Master to Fízan, such remarkable victories could be won? Who would have predicted such a majestic day as today?’”

We continued walking in the company of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the cemetery where a number of the early believers were buried. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood by the graves and, with hands raised heavenwards, whispered prayers and supplicated divine mercy for those resting in their eternal abode. The experience was so profound that we all yearned to have been buried there and with our hearts proclaimed:

Shouldst thou pass by my grave even in a hundred years,
I will tear open the shroud and start life anew.

When we left the cemetery, we continued strolling to the train station where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sat in the terminal and said to this ephemeral servant, “Now that you have become a physician, come and take my pulse.” As soon as I checked His blessed pulse, I was shocked and reported, “Your pulse is very slow, but regular. The arteries seem to have the proper flow.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “From the age of thirty, I have had a slow pulse. All others have a pulse rate of about 75 to 80 [per minute] and therefore greatly wonder about my pulse rate. What rate did you measure?” I said, “I did not count the rate, but suspect that it is about forty [per minute].” He responded, “No, it is 45 to 46. Count for yourself.” I closely counted with my watch and it was 45. So I reported the result. He stated, “If I have a fever, it goes up to 50.”

<270> **Side notes:** It is natural for everyone to wonder and have this curiosity to ask: In what way is the human temple of the chosen ones different from us mortals? This question was particularly pertinent for someone [like me] who was a trained physician and who, for some time, had been in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence and had observed His ways, talks, manners, qualities, attributes and majesty – characteristics that completely distinguished Him from all others. Whatever effulgence radiated from His sacred self was truly unique and peerless. None reflected such light or manifested these qualities. And if curiosity prompted certain observations, these conclusions were limited to the understanding of the observer and not reflective of His mighty station, as no other is permitted into that hallowed realm. This is because the lower creation is not permitted unto the higher and is defined by its own limitation. And if this ephemeral servant commits certain recollections to paper, it only stems from my own limited perspective and is not reflective of His lofty station.

There was a particular wish that was always present in my thoughts, but I would not be presumptuous enough to speak of it. I always wanted to perform a physical examination of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and know the details of His condition. I wanted to closely examine His internal organs, to determine the state of each of the principal bodily systems at His age, and establish which one, if any, was not functioning properly and if He suffered from any ailment. In short, this was my long cherished desire and this thought never left me. Indeed, day-by-day, it grew stronger and had enveloped my thoughts. However, every time I thought of actually suggesting this idea to the Master, a great turmoil would overwhelm me: my heart would beat loudly, I would gasp for breath, my throat would dry and my whole being would shake. Therefore, I would remain silent and not speak of this idea. It was like this for a while, but this wish never left me.

One day without any prior discussion, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “Mírzá Habíb, God wanted your labor not to go to waste and therefore enabled you to serve the divine friends and now you

remedy their ills. Come remedy Me as well. I want you to give Me a thorough physical examination. You cannot just cure all others except Me!” I realized that in that instant my long cherished hope had materialized and my prayers had been answered. I was so thrilled that I was shaking, my heart was palpitating, and my tongue was tied. Nevertheless, I began the examination.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá removed His clothes and shirt and, with the utmost care, I examined every organ and vital part from the tip of His head to His toes. His hair was thick and flowing. His eyebrows were thick and all His fingernails were white, bright and shiny. All His teeth were in perfect condition, with no sign of cavity or disorder. His eyes and auxiliary organs were in their natural state, but the eye-lens was showing evidence of advanced age.⁴³⁶ No signs in His throat, ears or nose indicated a pathological condition. I checked His nose and tonsils and found no inflammation or polyp. Though ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often suffered from a cold, I did not see anything out of the ordinary in His nose.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá only complained of insomnia and an occasional “fever of nerves”, which were due to depression, sorrow and anguish. His beard was thick and His hair full, soft and strong. (I have kept some of His hair strands as a memento, and they are like white silk threads.) His cardiac rhythm was regular, but very slow. His arteries were well flowing, pulsating and full, and showed no sign of blockage. His blood pressure was normal and the blood vessels manifested no evidence of arching. All the internal organs seemed healthy with no pain or discomfort in the liver, spleen, kidneys, appendix, intestines or the bladder. His reflexes were normal.

In short, I found nothing abnormal in my examination and reported the results to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, saying, “I did not note anything that could be a cause of illness.” He replied, “When the doctors in Europe examined Me, they too did not find anything wrong.”⁴³⁷ My

⁴³⁶ Sometimes, but not always, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would use corrective glasses for reading and writing. However, He often read and wrote without the aid of glasses. (HM)

⁴³⁷ Since my examination was taking place during World War I, I did not have access

fever is a fever of the nerves. It is not related to any bodily organs. My nerves are tired, since waves of tribulations do not cease to waft over Me. However, through the bounties and favors of the Blessed Beauty, My spirit is refreshed and cheered. Bring Me some [ethyl carbonate of] quinine⁴³⁸. My nerves are tired. Now all our troubles rest with you, Mírzá Habíb. Is it possible for you to shoulder everyone else’s burden and not ours? God did not wish your years of study to go to waste and, therefore, provided you with this service.”

In my medical books I have not located a reference to the “fever of nerves” which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá mentioned, but it is clear that whenever He was beset by sadness, or by the news of disunity among the friends, or differences and discord among the believers, or by the receipt of letters which contained grievances regarding certain dealings or transactions, or when the Covenant-breakers and the munáfiqín had injured the Faith of God and caused certain believers to grow doubtful, then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s temperature would instantly rise and He would develop several degrees of fever. Conversely, whenever joyous news were received indicating that the Faith had taken yet another step forward, or one of the believers had performed a humanitarian deed, or a philanthropic institution was established at a particular place, evidence of joy and happiness would instantly appear on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visage, and His fever would subside. Because of this, the Greatest Holy Leaf and the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí often tried to convey glad tidings to the Master, thereby causing pleasure and delight in His person.

In the Streets of ‘Akká.⁴³⁹ We were strolling in the company of the

to a laboratory to perform various tests in addition to clinical examination. It so happened that none were needed anyway since in Paris and London, through the insistence of certain Bahá’ís, laboratory tests had been performed and everything was found to be in the normal range. (HM)

⁴³⁸ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 1, p. 380 (272), gives the chemical name also as sulphate which may be a short for Quinine Sulphate.

⁴³⁹ This section seems to be a continuation of the 11 November 1914 diary entry.

Master in the streets of 'Akká. When we reached the gate by the Qaraghul-Khanih,⁴⁴⁰ 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked, "First they wanted to imprison us here, but we refused."⁴⁴¹ Consequently, they took us to the citadel." Along the way, wherever the people of 'Akká were congregated or were sitting, at the sight of the Master they would rise in full height and greet Him affectionately. Soldiers, notables, divines, pilgrims, shopkeepers, mendicants and in short, whoever we passed by, would instantly bend low with hands reaching the soil and then bring it over their head, thereby offering the customary expressions of submissiveness, reverence and humility before 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Children playing in the streets would quit their play and run up to the Master and kiss His hands, and then return to their games. Sanctified is God! What manner of Prisoner is this Whose might and sovereignty has humbled all who see Him! What influence is this that has so deeply penetrated and enveloped both friends and foes! Is He a captive and a prisoner, or is He the most powerful and supreme monarch of the time?!

En route someone came and implored 'Abdu'l-Bahá to temporarily lease the rooms of the Mansion [of Bahjí] so that, during the disturbances in 'Akká, he and his family could take refuge there. The Master responded, "For the sake of your grandfather I will permit you. I can never forget your grandfather. Yes, I will let you, but it is for his sake." When he left, 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked, "This person was a grandson of Mahmúd Effendi Safadi⁴⁴². The late Mahmúd Effendi was a believer and a wonderful man. But after his passing, because of the gossip mongering of the Covenant-breakers against us and the doubts that they instilled in them, his family completely severed their ties with us. <275> This man was a friend

⁴⁴⁰ A Turkish word, meaning police station. When the exiles Arrived in 'Akká in 1868, they were taken to this building which is still there in the middle of 'Akká and were told that this is where they would be kept. But Bahá'u'lláh refused to accept this as it was far too small. So they were taken to the citadel.

⁴⁴¹ Presumably a reference to the arrival of Bahá'u'lláh and His entourage in late August 1868.

⁴⁴² For a brief description of the conversion of Shaykh Mahmúd 'Arrabí, the Mufti of 'Akká, see Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh the King of Glory*, pp. 337-8.

of Faríq⁴⁴³ and truly adored him, and the Covenant-breakers were constantly provoking him to harm us and cause mischief at an opportune time.”

Mírzá Núri’d-Din Zayn related that the late Mahmúd Effendi, the Mufti, was a courageous man from ‘Arrabí, one of the villages of ‘Akká, and the people of the region greatly respected him. After he became a believer, he would go into the countryside at nights to see if a [Bahá’í] pilgrim had arrived. He would carry a lantern with him and, when he had encountered a pilgrim and had ensured that indeed he was a Bahá’í, he would give him the lantern to carry in front of him. People seeing Shaykh Mahmúd coming from behind would think that it was his servant who carried the lantern for him and in this way the pilgrim would gain admittance into the city. After the pilgrim had attained the presence [of Bahá’u’lláh], he would, in the same fashion, be conducted outside the city [of ‘Akká], and told by the Shaykh, “God is most sovereign!” Thus, the Shaykh was instrumental in bringing the pilgrims into the sacred presence.⁴⁴⁴ Upon him rest the mercy of God!

Extract 13: For some time the citizens of the coastal region did not have a moment of rest and were constantly worried and agitated by the authorities. Everyone was expecting the worst and predicted imminent bombardment of the port cities by [foreign] warships. In fact, one day a warship bombarded the steel bridges between Haifa and ‘Akká, and an artillery shell landed in the Ridván Garden, but it did not explode and caused no harm. The Ottoman soldiers had dug

⁴⁴³ Faríq was a member of the Commission of Inquiry who had come with ‘Árif Bey and Miralay Adham Bey, the Damascene, for the purpose of investigating and persecuting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Faríq died of typhoid. Three bullets of a sentry in Constantinople killed ‘Árif Bey. And Adham Bey fled to Egypt, went to Hájí Siyyid Yahyá begging for money, and eventually perished. (HM)

⁴⁴⁴ The same story is told in Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahá’u’lláh the King of Glory*, p. 338, where it is attributed to a memoir of Mírzá Núri’d-Dín Zayn – a document which the present translator has been unable to locate.

trenches and therein had readied defenses. It was stormy for a few days, but soon it became sunny again.

30 November 1914 was a clear, bright day with a calm sea and no waves disturbing the water, nor could any tide be discerned. From afar, the Zeeb underwater rifts, which were typically covered by the waves, were now seen, and the people of 'Akká mistook them for armored warships. Therefore the entire city of 'Akká fled in fear, leaving behind only a few handicapped, such as the blind or crippled. People commandeered whatever mule, horse, donkey or camel they could find and with them hastened their families' flight to the outskirts. The entire city was evacuated. Doors and windows were left open and, if anyone had come to rob the whole city, there would not have been a soul left capable of preventing him. Under such conditions, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed in 'Akká with Áqá Asadu'lláh Káshí⁴⁴⁵ in His service, and none other. The Mutasarrif of 'Akká had cabled Beirut that four enemy warships were fast approaching the city, and this news had further perturbed the citizens of 'Akká.

I was in Abu Sinan when all this was occurring, and the handmaiden of God, Mrs. Sanderson, came with Isfandiyár's carriage and informed me that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had summoned me.⁴⁴⁶ I immediately went to 'Akká. Even though I arrived at a time when people had begun to return to the city, it was evident that a major commotion was still stirring. Like a scene from the Day of Resurrection, the whole population of the city was in exodus into the fields and the surrounding regions. With indescribable fear they had taken flight, convinced that life and possessions were lost for

⁴⁴⁵ In fact there were two Asadu'lláh's [God's lion] residing in the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the believers humorously called one of them the "He-lion" and he was Áqá Siyyid Asadu'llah Qumí and the other, Áqá Asadu'llah Káshí, was called the "She-lion." The latter was short in stature and most humble and remained with the Holy Family to the end of his life. About him 'Abdu'l-Bahá would say, "Despite his small stature, Áqá Asadu'lláh would wear a large dagger and accompany the Blessed Beauty in Baghdad, and the enemies of the Cause would not dare be presumptuous." (HM)

⁴⁴⁶ *Bushrú'í*, p. 58, indicates this occurred on the following day, 1 December 1914.

certain.

In the evening, when I attained the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at His residence, a number of the believers were present as well. Because of the day’s occurrences, the Master spoke the following words on the night of 1 December 1914 in the house of ‘Abbúd:

Today a number of people came to Me and asked, “Why do You not leave the city?” They protested our decision to stay in ‘Akká amidst so much commotion and confusion! I said to them that I had seen days which made these insignificant in comparison. I have seen a storm like the incident of the assassination [attempt] on the [Násiri’d-Dín] Sháh. Truly it was a storm that can never be described. Whatever is said about it will surely fail [to convey the depth of its terror]. I have seen days like that.

There was a certain ‘Abbás who was an attendant of Mírzá Sulaymán Khán, and he knew all the believers. Together with gunners and farrashes, he roamed the city in search of the friends of God and found them wherever they had taken refuge. Seven hundred mounted soldiers were out in search of the believers. On all roads, the Ákhunds would raise the cry, “O people, if ye desire God’s pleasure, kill the Bábís! If ye love the Prophet, kill the Bábís! If ye support the Shah, kill the Bábís! If ye want faith and religion, kill the Bábís! If ye want to protect your lives, possessions and families, kill the Bábís! If ye want to preserve your wife and children, kill the Bábís!” In such wise they cried out everywhere. As soon as the injured Sháh suspected that someone was a Bábí, he would be arrested. Suddenly, we would hear a bugle-blast, and upon inquiry would learn that one of the friends had been captured.

Sulaymán Khán and Mírzá Fathu’lláh were candle-

pierced⁴⁴⁷, that is, they were pierced with bayonets and burning candles inserted in their wounds. Soldiers were arrayed on both sides in front of them with dancing bears and monkeys, as the sound of tambourines, kettledrums and trumpets filled the air. In such wise they were paraded in the streets of the city until the nightfall. As they walked, they were compelled to dance by the force of sickles and hooks, but (in saying “but” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá raised His voice so resonantly that all in His presence trembled), but Sulaymán Khán, may the spirit of the world be a sacrifice unto him, was in utmost rapture and ecstasy! The night before, he had said to the executioner, “Mír Ghazab, bring me a cup of tea, as tonight I am your guest and tomorrow I will be God’s!”

In the morning when he was brought out from the prison he looked around and, witnessing the excitement and commotion in the streets, which was filled with soldiers, music, bands, bears, monkeys and throngs of onlookers, he said, “Our killing did not require so much ceremony!” Then he added, “It is well. This will be my wedding feast, my wedding feast!”⁴⁴⁸

And with that, he commenced his journey. He was paraded in the streets of the city. At the end, both of them were cleft in half and each half was suspended from one of the four city gates.

Each group and strata of society was given one of the believers to martyr. For instance, the gunners were

⁴⁴⁷ An extremely barbarous manner of execution in which lighted candles are inserted into incisions made in the victim’s body, who slowly burns and bleeds to death.

⁴⁴⁸ Certain prominent Bábí martyrs have likened their scene of martyrdom to a nuptial feast. For instance, it is reported that when Quddús’ stepmother insisted that he marry, he promised that in a few years she would witness his glorious wedding feast, to be held on the city’s main square. It was on that exact spot that, after a trial by forty of the leading ‘ulamá, Quddús suffered a most horrible martyrdom, witnessed by the whole city.

given one; the Zanburak-chiha⁴⁴⁹ were given another to kill; the ‘ulamá were given one to kill; the Mustawfis were given yet another; carpenters had their believer to kill; grocers were given one; butchers were given one; and to a thousand horsemen one was given. In fact, after these thousand soldiers had attacked the Bábí [victim] with unsheathed sabers, Mír Ghazab cried out, “Gentlemen, you have cut him into so many pieces! How am I to bury him?” Despite this appeal, they continued to shred the victim when a cook came forth and said, “I will collect him.” Then he collected the pieces of the body and took them to his shop where he burned them.

It is indeed impossible to recount what took place in those days. However, the friends of God were very joyful and firm, and remained devoted and enkindled with God’s love, constantly praying and meditating. But those that were not firm and steadfast decided to flee, and it was a flight that still continues. Those that were constant in the Cause of God, however, remained immovable as a mountain.

There was a Mírzá Sulaymán who was the Shátir-báshí’s⁴⁵⁰ brother. The Shátir-báshí had deflected the hand of the would-be assassin causing the bullet to miss the monarch. He was therefore greatly esteemed by the Sháh and the viziers. Indeed, had Shátir-báshí failed in that attempt, the Sháh would have surely been killed. Because of this great service, the king said, “Due to his brother’s service, I hereby pardon Mírzá Sulaymán.” However, Shátir-báshí appealed to the Sháh, “O pivot of the universe! If you permit, I will slay Mírzá Sulaymán

⁴⁴⁹ Zanburak (also zumbooruk, zamburak, zenbourek) was a light cannon used during the Safavid and Qájár periods and typically was carried on the back of camels.

⁴⁵⁰ During the Qájár era, the Shátir was a special attendant of the Sháh who walked before the royal party.

with my own hands.” And he stood there as his brother was martyred. He proclaimed, “I will not allow the Sháh’s enemy to remain alive!” When Mírzá Sulaymán was seized, he was placed on top of a mule with sixty or seventy soldiers on either side of him. He cried out this verse:

If swords rains blows in the path of that Moon⁴⁵¹.
I will present my neck as commanded by
God!

In short, he was taken away and martyred. The Blessed Beauty was in prison, under chains, and no hope whatsoever remained for His release. Indeed it was miraculous that He was freed. The friends of God imprisoned in the Siyáh-Chál were enjoined by Him to sit in two rows, occupied with the mention of God. The two rows faced each another. One group would chant, “God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing!” while the second row would intone in response, “In Him let the trusting trust!”⁴⁵²

How blessed were those days! How illumined! How filled with joy and happiness! These friends of God walked on earth, but traversed the Supreme Concourse. All of them were martyred, except a few who had taken refuge and would not associate with other believers, though secretly and from a distance professing their belief. For instance, there was Siyyid Muhammad Isfahání who did not associate with the friends and never attended any of their gatherings. He was in the home of the Imám Jum’ih and remained under his care and protection. Similarly Mírzá Husayn Kirmání was instructed to remain in the Madrisih Sadr, and therefore

⁴⁵¹ A reference to the Báb.

⁴⁵² Translation of verses from Nabíl Zarandí, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 632.

he survived as well. <280> One or two others also survived, but all the rest were martyred.

The point is that I told these people of ‘Akká what days we had witnessed, and that the threat of warships in comparison is like the sweetness of halvah. Indeed one cannot even call them threats.

The following excerpt, from an article in *Tihrán Musavvir* journal, no. 339, dated 14 Bahmán 1328 Sh [3 February 1950], and written by the enemies of the Cause regarding the incident of the assassination attempt on the Sháh, is related to the talk of the Master recorded above:⁴⁵³

When Násiri’d-Din Sháh came to the throne, Amír Kabír was placed in charge of all affairs. The Siyyid-i Báb was brought from Chihríq and Máh-Kú to Tabríz and executed by firing squad. Mullá Shaykh ‘Alí Turshizí (the illustrious ‘Azím) devised a plan that on a certain Friday, he would first kill Mírzá Abu’l-Qásim, Tihrán’s Imám Jum‘ih, then together with his followers he would attack the worshippers and subsequently with drawn swords and raising the cry of “Yá Sáhibu’z-Zamán⁴⁵⁴!” assault the royal palace. ...⁴⁵⁵

Amír Kabír’s spies reported the matter to him and he quickly summoned to the Prime Minister’s office the I’tidádu’s-Saltanih, son of Fath-‘Alí Sháh, who was the education minister. The I’tidádu’s-Saltanih has recorded the conversation that took place between him and the Prime Minister in his book, *Rijál-i Fakhri*, which is inscribed with exquisite Naskh handwriting and is

⁴⁵³ Clearly this newspaper clipping was added to the diary notes at a later time, perhaps when Shoghi Effendi requested them or when they were readied for publication.

⁴⁵⁴ Lit. O Lord of the Age, the standard formula for the battle cry of the Bábís.

⁴⁵⁵ Left blank in the original.

presently housed at the Kitábkhanih Millí [Iranian National Library]. Therein he reports that Amír Kabír had ordered, “I want you to search and find these people
 ...⁴⁵⁶”

He had become afraid and had written to all the officials and the darughihs [magistrates], demanding that they search and locate all the Bábís. By the royal command of the Sháh and the Prime Minister, several criminals and some others were executed on the Maydán-i Ark. Subsequently, Amír Kabír was banished to Káshán where he was killed in his bathhouse in Fín.⁴⁵⁷

On 18 Shavvál 1268 [5 August 1952] the monarch had gone hunting in Niyávarán when three Bábís assaulted him with pellet pistols. At this time Mírzá Áqá Khán Núri was the Prime Minister. Since in Iran customarily during grievous times personal animosities surfaced, this incident was also attributed to certain individuals who were then deprived of support from the upper echelon of the state. For a while the Prime Minister was out of the Sháh’s favor.

Meanwhile, Mahmúd Khán, the Kalantár, and his policemen commenced a systematic search of the neighborhood and twelve days later, that is, on 30 Shavvál [17 August 1952], Hájí ‘Alí Khán, the Hájibu’d-Dawlih, learned that the home of Hájí Sulaymán Khán was the gathering site of the Bábís. Mírzá Áqá Khán Núri, the Prime Minister, issued instructions for that house to be surrounded on a certain night and for the Bábís to be seized and brought to him in chains to Niyávarán.

When the Prime Minister saw him [Hájí Sulaymán Khán], he protested most vigorously, saying, “All your

⁴⁵⁶ Left blank in original.

⁴⁵⁷ For comprehensive discussions of these events see, Abbas Amanat, *The Pivot of the Universe*.

bounties are because of the Sháh. Instead of avenging the blood of Farúkh Khán by killing the Bábís, why have you made your home the sanctuary of the Bábís and the site of their congregations?” Afterwards he was ordered to be imprisoned, tortured and interrogated.

Hájí ‘Alí Khán, the Hájibu’d-Dawlih, succeeded in arresting ‘Azím in Ivín. In the presence of the Prime Minister and using his pocket knife, he cut off Mullá Shaykh ‘Alí’s [‘Azím’s] ears, saying, “You sent those foolish people to be slaughtered, promising them a new life! Therefore I have cut off your ears! If what you claim is true and you can perform miracles, grow new ears!” Subsequently, ‘Azím was chained and imprisoned in one of the palace chambers.

Since Mírzá Husayn-‘Alí [Bahá’u’lláh] was apparently uninvolved in this incident, or His connection was not proven, He was imprisoned while the rest were killed most brutally. The ‘ulamá concluded that it was imperative to put Mullá Shaykh ‘Alí [‘Azím], who considered himself the successor of the Báb, to death. This order was subsequently carried out.

With their swords, guns, knives and daggers, princes killed Siyyid Husayn Khurasání. At the very outset, because of religious prejudice and the protection of the government, the Muqarrabu’l-Khaqán, the Mustawfiu’l-Mamálík, killed Zaynu’l-‘Abidín Yazdí with his pistol. Afterwards the Mustawfís and secretaries of armies, collectively attacked his remains and with their guns, knives, daggers and sabers shred it into pieces. Áqá Hasan, the deputy of Farash-khánih, took Hájí Sulaymán Khán⁴⁵⁸ and Hájí Qásim Nayrízí, inserted burning

⁴⁵⁸ Regarding the late Mírzá Sulaymán Khán, some historians have written that when he saw the approaching crowd, accompanied by bands and music, he began dancing and recited these lines:

With one hand I hold the wine cup,

candles into cuts in their bodies and, in this manner, paraded them in the streets and bazaar, accompanied by the sound of kettledrum and horns and merrymaking. Outside the Sháh 'Abdu'l-'Azím Gate they were torn into four pieces by the farráshes who hung them on the four city gates. The I'tidádu's-Saltanih writes in Rijál-i Fakhrí that, while dancing, Sulaymán Khán recited this verse:

I pray veils be sundered from Thy Visage⁴⁵⁹,
So all would behold Thy beauty.⁴⁶⁰

Áqá Mihdí Málíku't-Tawjar and some other merchants killed Hájí Mírzá Jání [Kashi]. Mírzá Nabí Damavándí was given to teachers and instructors of the Dáru'l-Funún, who killed him by swords, bayonets and knives. In short, each of the Bábís were given to a different group of citizens to be killed in whatever manner that people preferred.

Extract 14: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's address to the students of Beirut university given in the Shrine of the Báb on 30 August 1914:⁴⁶¹

This is a delightful gathering. It is very spiritual and is well-organized and orderly. Many gatherings are held in the world, but they do not have order and design and

With another the lover's hair,
So all would hold this Visage! (HM)

⁴⁵⁹ A reference to the Báb.

⁴⁶⁰ The renowned historian of the Faith Hájí Mu'ínu's-Saltanih reports the same in his unpublished history of the Bábí movement.

⁴⁶¹ Since Dr. Mu'ayyad was in Germany on that date, this talk must have been transcribed from the diary of someone else, possibly notes kept by Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab.

suffer from disunity of thought. Praised be God that the hearts of those assembled here are united and everyone’s purpose is one and the same, with no trace of disunity in thought. I cherish the hope that day by day this gathering will grow and develop considerably, and will excel in every walk of life. May it mature in its attraction to God, in attainment of spiritual qualities, in acquisition of sciences and other fields of learning. May it never suffer from divergence of opinions or convictions.

All problems are rooted in differing views, selfishness and egotism. Indeed, selfishness and egotism are the cause of all problems. No other plague in the contingent world has the same harm as selfishness, which is for a person to be unsatisfied with another and prefer himself. Selfishness causes ego, vanity, conceit and remoteness. If you closely consider every calamity in the contingent world, you will note that it is firmly rooted in selfishness. We must not prefer ourselves, but rather, regard others better than our own selves, even those that are not believers [in Bahá’u’lláh]. This is because our end is not disclosed. So many who are not believers at the present may one day grow in certitude and render great services. And many who presently rank among the believers may at the end of life repudiate the Truth. Therefore we must prefer all others to ourselves and consider them perfect and flawless in comparison to our own selves.

At the instant that we perceive ourselves superior to others, we lose our path to salvation and deliverance. This happens because we promote our base self, which shows everyone’s faults but our own, thereby allowing us to descend into the bottomless pit of remorse. It presents our tyranny as justice, our utter abasement as the height of glory and a great calamity as never-ending bliss. When we closely consider man’s affairs, we see that

selfishness is man's pit of darkness. This is because a selfish person does not regard the deeds, behaviors and sayings of other people, but rather approves of his own self.

God forbid that any of us become selfish. God forbid! God forbid! God forbid! When we look at our own selves, we must see ourselves as coarser, humbler, lower than any other. And when we look at others, we must see in them the essence of perfection, attainments and knowledge. That is, we must look at others through the eye of God. We must see them as distinguished and our own selves as inferior. Whatever faults we see in others, we must see them also in our selves, because if we were not faulty, then we would not see that fault. A person must always see himself as deficient and others as perfection.

There is a story – though it did not occur in actuality – that I share as a means of furthering our contrition. They say that one day His Holiness Christ – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him – and His Apostle passed by a dog that had died and was decaying. One of the Apostles said, “How odorous!” Another remarked, “How he has decomposed!” The third said, “How offensive!” But Christ said, “What shiny, bright teeth he possesses!” Notice that His Holiness Christ did not see any of his faults. He looked closely until He found the white teeth to comment on and disregarded all else.

Know that a heart that is brightened by the effulgence of the Blessed Beauty would never utter the word “I.” It is this word “I” that proves selfishness: I did this, or I did that; I did well and the other did poorly. This word “I” is a darkness that extinguishes the light of faith. This one word will cause complete remoteness from God!

Extract 15: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

A person grows tired of unfruitful and frivolous talk. Often what these people⁴⁶² that visit talk about is trivial and unimportant. They cause weariness, but there is no choice other than associating with them. A person came today and spoke for about an hour, without saying anything of significance.

Man’s speech is a mirror of his heart. He speaks from whatever plane his heart is. Therefore, from one’s conversation it can be discerned in what plane he dwells, whether his concern is with the world below or the realm above, and whether he is heedless or aware, awakened or in slumber. The Imam ‘Alí stated, “Man is hidden, but his tongue reveals him.” That is, one speaks of whatever he finds important.

There are people who rejuvenate the spirit when one associates and converses with them. <285> If one was previously depressed, he becomes refreshed; if dead, new life is breathed into him; if sad, great joy is gained; if lifeless, a new fire is blazed; if immersed in doubts, certitude is renewed; if attached to this contingent world, he becomes celestial; and if submerged in wrongdoing, then he is embraced with goodly qualities. In contrast to the above, there are people whose breath will extinguish the fire of devotion, who will turn steadfastness into waywardness and beguile those focused on the Abhá Kingdom, which is why it is revealed, “Do not associate with stonehearted.”

Most people behave thusly. When a person in a bazaar reaches the attar [perfume essence], he inhales fragrant scents. Similarly, there are people who are the

⁴⁶² Presumably a reference to the non-Bahá’í locals.

essence of spirit and cause the enlightenment of the heart, manifesting most excellent heavenly tidings. That is why it is revealed, "Their visage radiates the resplendence of paradise, their countenance manifests signs of prostration and their gaze is fixed upon the all-seeing God."

When one walks in a rose garden, he inhales the scent of perfume, and in a morgue, naught but the odor of death. Therefore, when you see a person illumined by celestial virtues, attracted to the sanctified breath, detached from all besides God, making mention of the Lord, heedless of this nether world, his thoughts heavenly, his talk spiritual, and his speech sweetened by divine exhortations, then know that this person is a manifestation of the Merciful and a teacher unto the nations. This is the station of man and the cause of people's happiness.⁴⁶³

⁴⁶³ Diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab records a slight variation of the same talk, given on 25 July 1914 (*Star of the West*, 9 April 1917) and for ease of reference is noted below:

Profitless discussions fatigue and weary a person. People who call on me almost every day carry on a stream of profitless, unspiritual talk and I must listen to them with patience. We are commanded to associate with all the people. Today three persons called and they talked for one hour without any definite result.

Man's speech is the revealer of his heart. In whatever world the heart travels, man's conversation will revolve around that center. From his words you can understand in what world he is traveling, whether he is looking upward toward the realm of light or downward to the nether world, whether he is awake or asleep, whether he is alive or dead. For this reason, his holiness Ali says, "Man is hidden behind his tongue. Out of the abundance of his heart does man speak."

There are persons with whom you associate and converse whose utterances are life-imparting, joy-giving. The withered and faded are refreshed, the joyless become happy, the extinct become enkindled and the lifeless are quickened with the breaths of the Holy Spirit. The one drowned in the sea of hesitation and doubt is saved by the life-boat of certainty and assurance; the one attached to this

Extract 16A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired of the condition of the honored Hájí Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí and then remarked:

He is at an advanced age and possesses utmost spirituality. He has spent all his energy in the path of God. How blessed is he who devotes his life to the Cause instead of spending his days in satisfying his carnal desires, which produce no results, end in absolute nothingness and in utter loss! If a life is consecrated to God, then it is all benefit.

Observe the ones who are devoted to the Cause, dedicated to the sacred Threshold, with no other purpose save servitude to the Blessed Beauty: How spiritual and illumined they are! How resplendent, detached and faithful they remain! In contrast, imagine a person who is appointed the monarch of a realm. At the end of his life, it will be of no profit to him, as if he never came into this world and gained nothing from his life. Like other animals, he ate, slept and walked and

material world becomes severed and the one steeped in blameworthy deeds is adorned with praiseworthy attributes. On the other hand there are some persons whose very respiration extinguishes the light of faith; whose conversation weakens firmness and steadfastness in the Cause of God; whose company diverts one’s attention from the kingdom of Abha.

The souls who are rejoiced with the glad tidings of God, attracted to the fragrances of holiness, severed from aught else save God, who are commemorating the name of God are withdrawn from the world of darkness their thought permeated through and through with spiritual vibrations and their messages consisting of divine advises [sic.] and exhortations; such souls are the manifestors of God’s mercy, the educators of nations and the vivifiers of the world of humanity. They are guardian angels, the cause of human progress and the spiritual guides of the wandering children of men. Glory be unto them!

bore no fruits from the tree of his life.

When one considers the life of sanctified souls, this issue becomes indubitably clear. For example, Christ and the Prince of Martyrs – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Them – spent all Their days in service to God and at the end quaffed from the chalice of martyrdom. Now, were Their lives more beneficial, or the rule of Yazíd and Mu'áwiya, who acquired naught but eternal damnation, everlasting rebuke, and deprivation from the grace of God? Outwardly They were immersed in great afflictions and surrounded with tribulations, while sovereignty, glamour, comfort, joy and ease embraced [Yazíd and Mu'áwiya]. However the truth is the opposite of what is outwardly manifest.

These sanctified Beings gave illumination to the nations, bestowed spirituality on the world of humanity, revived the hearts, conferred divine tidings upon people, advanced human qualities, manifested heavenly bounties and dispensed celestial favors. What immense benefits became apparent from Them and how great the fruits left by Them! And these are only what are evident in this world, so you can imagine how much greater are the effects in the Kingdom.

For instance, was it better if His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him – had spent His days busy with transitory worldly concerns or that He dedicated His life to God and spent His days in suffering, tribulation and affliction, at the end drinking from the cup of self-renunciation? Sanctified souls and divine Prophets sustained immense suffering, but it was only for a period. For example, Yahyá ibn Zakariya languished for a few days. Christ's suffering was for three years: days of trials and tribulations, followed with the exalted station of martyrdom. Most resplendent of all was the feast of

suffering spread before the Prince of the Martyrs [Imám Husayn]. Indeed it was a feast filled with every kind of bounty: from one direction, exiled from home; from another plundered and pillaged; from yet another, his family and all kin held captive after His martyrdom; and from another direction, the martyrdom of some prisoners. In short, it was a feast in which every manner of delicacy and goodly food was available. Then they seized the blessed widow of the Imám and raised the severed heads of the martyrs above lances, leading this procession from city to city. All the suffering of the Imám was from morning to noon, though no greater sacrifice can be conceived than His. That is, no example can be offered greater than His sacrifice and self-renunciation on the field of martyrdom.

Nevertheless, from the dawn of His Manifestation, His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] was always imprisoned, and until His martyrdom seven years later, He was banished from one prison to the next, each day enduring a fresh wave of afflictions and hardship. Similarly, the sufferings of the Blessed Beauty lasted fifty years, during which he endured multitudes of adversities, difficulties, insults of enemies, injuries from foes, pillage and plunder, imprisonment and captivity, beating and abuse. Then He was crowned with banishment to foreign lands, first to Iraq, then to Constantinople, to Adrianople, and eventually to the Prison City of ‘Akká where criminals and murderers were confined. For fifty years, each day had a new trial. ...⁴⁶⁴

Now that the sanctified Manifestations of God have sacrificed in such wise, if we indeed hold a particle of fidelity, how great should be our sacrifice by this sacred Threshold! How immense should be our

⁴⁶⁴ Left blank in original text.

renouncement of worldly attachment! How readily we must abandon comfort and ease! How cheerfully we must offer life in this path! How immediately we must arise in service to these Sanctified Beings!

Therefore we must be constantly exerting efforts, never remain still until we have drunk at least a drop from the ocean of servitude unto the Manifestations. If we are deprived of the ocean, we must not remain deprived of the drop, since servitude unto these Sacred Manifestations is like a sun and we are but a speck. The speck only appears in the presence of the light of the sun. Similarly, we become visible only in servitude unto the Threshold. Were it not for the ray of sun, the speck would remain invisible.

Extract 16B: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

Together with Áqá Mírzá Haydar-‘Alí, we went for a stroll. We saw a large multitude going up the mountain, as the next evening was a festivity in honor of Saint⁴⁶⁵ Elijah. Rank upon rank of people ascended the mountain. That whole night, men, women and children did not sleep, drank wine and danced until the morning. It is astounding that people are so inclined to lewd and indecent behavior. They even try to change worship into this mold. If they are mystics, they play tambourine and dance and call this worship and supplication unto God.

When we were in Adrianople, I went to Takyih Qádirí⁴⁶⁶ and saw many Shaykhs, wearing massive turbans, engaged in conversation, and I listened to them. One of them asked, “What is the meaning of the word,

⁴⁶⁵ Translator is grateful to Khazeh Fananapazir for pointing out that the original “mar” in Syriac means Saint.

⁴⁶⁶ Takyih is a place of worship for the mystic orders, such as, Qádirí Sufis.

‘Musáfir⁴⁶⁷’?” Another responded that in Turkish it meant a guest. Yet a third replied, “This is evident, and there is no need to ask. Musáfir is a derivative of Isráf⁴⁶⁸. That is, when a musáfir comes, then one’s expenses will increase.”⁴⁶⁹

I went into the other room and saw them busy with dancing and playing music. One of them was playing reed-flute. I asked him what it was, and he said, “It is the noble flute!” Another was playing the tambourine and called it, “the noble tambourine!” And yet the third was playing the drum and called it, “the noble drum!”

The point is that people have such great inclination to indecent behaviors and even change worship into the garb of such obscenities.

With utmost detachment, His Holiness Elijah rescued the Israelites from idol worship and immersed them in the ocean of divine effulgence. He renewed the religion of God and established its foundation on firm ground. And when He had organized their affairs and edified the people, He withdrew into solitude, which is why it is revealed in the Qur’án, “*And we uplifted Him to a place on high.*”⁴⁷⁰

Extract 17: On the occasion of someone meeting with one of the Covenant-breakers, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] remarked:

Through the tongue of His Manifestation, God has

⁴⁶⁷ Lit. traveler, wayfarer.

⁴⁶⁸ Lit. lavishness and prodigality.

⁴⁶⁹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s point is to show the absurdity of discourse among these so-called seekers of truth.

⁴⁷⁰ Qur’án 19:58. This verse of the Qur’án is revealed in honor of Enoch and appears in several prayers of Bahá’u’lláh (e.g. *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p. 25).

revealed: “O Son of Spirit! The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice; turn not away therefrom if thou desirest Me, and neglect it not that I may confide in thee. By its aid thou shalt see with thine own eyes and not through the eyes of others, and shalt know of thine own knowledge and not through the knowledge of thy neighbor.”⁴⁷¹

Therefore a person must see things through his own eyes and not through the eyes of others and investigate the truth of all matters by himself and not rely on the words of others. Every group has its own claim, and each nation has its own proclivities. If people would consider matters with equity and investigate the veracity of things by themselves, then no discord would remain, and all would embrace one another in unity and oneness.

For instance, how did it come to pass that certain of the Prophet’s disciples, His travel companions, and of the Ansár, rose with such fierce indignation to slay the Prince of the Martyrs [Imám Husayn] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him? It was all based on false and ill-intended stories and rumors. For instance, it was voiced among people that this Person [i.e. Imám Husayn] “had made lawful that which was forbidden by God and made prohibited that which God had allowed, and that He had abandoned fasting, obligatory prayers, jihad, and had discarded the religion of His Grandfather.” And it is for these reasons that in His Tablet of Visitation, [Bahá’u’lláh] reveals, “I testify that Thou didst observe obligatory prayers and *zakat*.”⁴⁷²

In short, seven hundred notables fixed their seal on a document testifying that [Imám Husayn] had repudiated the Faith of His Grandfather and, therefore,

⁴⁷¹ Arabic *Hidden Words*, no. 2.

⁴⁷² Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Visitation for Imám Husayn is found in ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd Ishráq-Khávarí. *Dur-i La’áli-i Hidáyat*, vol. 3, pp. 422-427.

in the eye of Islam, was deserving of death. Notice how they had succeeded in spreading falsities! Had He, and I take refuge unto God, discarded the Faith of His Grandfather, or was He dedicated to the propagation of the religion of His Grandfather and willing to sacrifice His life in the path of God? It is always such rumors that cause dissension, especially when they are bereft of any reason or proof. Upon repeated hearing of these calumnies, people naturally believe them. <290> For instance, consider [the role of] ‘Umar⁴⁷³ ibn Sa‘d ibn Waqqás. He was the son of Sa‘d [ibn] Waqqás who conquered the whole of Iran with his sword. Or the transmitter of hadíth (stories of the Prophet) Anas ibn Málik who ranked among the closest companions of the Prophet. How grievously they erred by listening to hearsay.

However, people that investigate claims for themselves learn the fundamental truth. We walk in a path that has no interest in other people’s affairs.

Extract 18: Regarding war, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] remarked:

These are God-sent calamities for man so that people will grow repentant and contrite. However, these people are like children in the cradle -- the more you rock them, the sleepier they get. The affairs of men have been thrown in confusion in both the East and the West. We must wait and see what God has decreed. Pray for the means of comfort and the bestowal of happiness upon people. Many are presently in great difficulty. From all directions, trials and afflictions have surrounded them.

⁴⁷³ He was the commander of the army of 4,000 strong that surrounded and martyred the Imám Husayn and His party.

Perchance, God willing, they will become repentant and remorseful, be rescued from negligence, abdicate tyranny and oppression, and embrace one another in justice and equity. Our hope is that they be delivered from the clutches of their carnal desires and emancipated from the bondage of self and passion. Our desire is for them to grow focused on God, for hearts to shine with radiance, for thoughts to be expanded, for them to become informed of heavenly realms, for greed and avidity to be erased, for reliance on God to be universal, and for people to be satisfied with their status and not invade other people's possessions.

God willing, whatever has caused these maladies and afflictions will be completely eradicated. Presently, people deserve these trials that have appeared and these tribulations that have surrounded them. Comfort and happiness must be removed, and tumult and gloom must take its place. People must grow in perturbation. That is what people deserve. No benefit is seen when God bestows His infinite bounty and grace upon them, and indeed they become more heedless. That is the time when calamities surround them, that perchance they may become repentant. That is the last remedy. They say that the last cure is to burn the malady, as there is no other remedy. This is because the greater the profusion of divine compassion, the deeper are people's neglects; the more protective the grace of God, the more determined is people's rebellion and denial.

Pray for these people, perchance they may become repentant, spiritual, turn to God and be rescued from the passion of self and desire.⁴⁷⁴

⁴⁷⁴ The following version of the same talk is recorded in the diary of Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab (*Star of the West*, 16 October 1914) and attributed to the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoken on 8 August 1914:

These dreadful events are as warnings on the part of God, so

Extract 19A: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk on 3 August 1914:⁴⁷⁵

A great tumult is ensuing. The whole world is in cataclysm. They are determined to cause universal upheaval. I spoke of these matters in various gatherings,

that they may quicken the people and make them mindful. But the majority of mankind are like unto the children, who are being rocked in a cradle. The harder they are rocked to be awakened, the deeper they fall into sleep. East and West the affairs of the people are in utter confusion and the markets of the world are afflicted with lethargy. The wheels of international transactions are at a standstill. We shall wait and see what God has decreed to be the outcome of this universal upheaval. As for you, pray meanwhile in behalf of the people, so that the forces of Peace may gain ascendancy over the powers of war. They are now in great distress. From all sides they are surrounded with difficulties and hardships. Perchance, God willing, they may become mindful and aware, be released from negligence, abandon tyranny and oppression, treat each other with justice and fairness, and give up the dictates of selfishness and personal interest. Our hope is that they may be freed from the cruelty of passion and egoism: that these wicked powers may not overmaster them; that they may turn their faces toward God; that their hearts may become illumined; that the sphere of minds be extended; that avarice and covetousness may not remain; that truth in God and self-reliance may take possession of their beings that they may be satisfied with their own rights and that they may not rise in aggression to trample under their feet the rights of others. May all of the causes of war and conflict, hardships and sufferings, be entirely removed! ...

In short, pray and supplicate at the Threshold of the Almighty on behalf of the heedless souls; for they know not what they are doing! May they be imbued with the qualities of the heavenly angels! May they give up ferocity and be characterized with the attributes of the Merciful. May they ever live in accord with the good-pleasure of the Lord of mankind! May they become the guardians of the rights of the oppressed and downtrodden! May they be the real servants in the Palace of Universal Brotherhood!

⁴⁷⁵ Dr. Mú’ayyad was in Germany on this date and therefore he must have copied this talk from someone else’s diary.

churches and assemblies in America and Europe, telling them, "The present situation is most dangerous. Europe is like a powder keg, short of a spark. While there is time, come, aid and extinguish this fire, that perchance War may be prevented." But they heeded not My counsel. Now this is the result; whereas, they should know that war is the destroyer of the human foundation. It ruins the world and has no benefit whatsoever. Both the victor and the vanquished suffer. It is like two ships colliding. If one sinks the other, the one remaining will suffer perilously as well.

The most that can be expected is that one government will temporarily prevail over another. But this victory is transient. A few days later, the vanquished will become the victor. How many times has it been that France has overcome Germany, only for Germany to come back and overcome France!

How amazing the effect of vain imaginings when truth has no influence! How truly amazing! For instance, the belief in the difference of races is pure imagination, and yet it exerts great sway. Though all are human, nevertheless, some have named themselves Slavonic, others German, Chinese, French or British. But this difference of races is pure fantasy. Yet how powerful is its effect and sway! In reality though we are all one and the same! It is clearly evident that the whole of humanity is one, but this truth has no currency, whereas racial difference, which is fiction and illusory, has great predominance.

So many wars have been fought, so much blood has been shed, so many homes have been ruined, so many cities have been destroyed, and yet, they are not tired of war. Hearts are still hard like stone. People have not grown repentant. They have not awakened. This enmity and rancor is the obliterator of the human

foundation, and love and fellowship, the cause of people’s ease and happiness.

How people are agitated! How many fathers will spend this very night in lament and sorrow! How many mothers will spend it in sobbing and wailing, to a point that is indescribable! What has motivated governments to behave thusly? The instigators of war are in their homes enjoying utmost comfort while these wretched men are fighting one another, forced to tear into each other on the battlefield. How utterly unfair! The authors of this ordeal are unwilling to suffer the least loss, but they are ready to sacrifice thousand of others on the field of battle. Of what use is this?

Presently, there are difficulties between Austria and Serbia. They should submit these issues to a supreme tribunal⁴⁷⁶, which would investigate the details. Should it find that the fault lies with Austria, then it will rule accordingly; and if with the other side, then likewise. There is no need for war. The supreme tribunal will solve such difficulties. When differences appear among people, they turn to courts for resolution of these differences. Similarly, a supreme tribunal must be formed to resolve international differences among the nations. What can be better than this? What harm is in it! The governments and the nations will be at great ease and will know the utmost happiness.

Since the time when history was first recorded until the present, truly no instance is known where love, fellowship, affection and peace have caused injury. Indeed, they have brought widespread joy and comfort.

⁴⁷⁶ Original term is “mahkamih kubrá”. According to the text of this talk, apparently ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke both “mahkamih ummumí” and “mahkamih kubrá”. The present translator is not familiar with the use of “mahkamih kubrá” in the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. However, “mahkamih ummumí” appears in His Will and Testament and has been translated as “Supreme Tribunal” by Shoghi Effendi.

On the other hand, war has brought great harm to everyone. Despite this, humanity is deep in the ways of war and strife and constantly pursues this path. It is a wonder that these people think the foundation of divine Faith is based on waging war.

How neglectful! How foolish! It seems as if there is no trace of good-will left in hearts. It is the human who is the savage yet lays this at the door of animals. The beast of burden may attack another for food, but only one, and not of his own kind. For instance, they call wolfs savage. The poor wolf attacks only a single sheep for his food; and if he does not do so, he will die of hunger, since he is carnivorous. But a single person can cause the death of a million others. Yet they call animals savage! How can a person cause the death of so many and then claim to be victorious, triumphant, brave and courageous? Is there pride in these killings? It is amazing that they call the wolf and the bear beasts!

Extract 19B: [A talk by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:]

Today I was pondering the deeds of certain people. The heavenly Farmer comes and clears the earth of deadwood and debris. The divine Cultivator withstands every grievous trial and tribulation that the world may be cleansed and sanctified. Then He ploughs the land and sows pure seeds that gradually begin to grow and flourish. His purpose is to raise harvests, rank upon rank, through divine favors; therefore, He plants young trees, the spring breeze wafts over them, clouds of bounties rain upon them and the warmth of the sun gives them life. He selects certain people and asks them to serve these plants with all their heart and soul so that they grow and flourish and produce good harvests. He

instructs them how to water the farm and how to ensure the cultivation of the crops until they come to fruition.

Now, some people wish to harvest this plantation [pre-maturely]. You ask them, “Why do you harvest now, when it is the Divine Cultivator Who is raising these plants to give goodly results and luscious fruits?” They say, “I am in haste and have no interest in such matters. I want wood to burn for my immediate desire.” And no matter how one pleads with them, “Friend, there is much wood in the jungles; go cut those and leave these newly-planted shrubs alone,” their response is, “I do not understand such things.” ...⁴⁷⁷

While the Divine Educator has illumined many lamps, these others extinguish them, one by one. When one inquires about the purpose of their doings, they respond, “I desire darkness in order to steal; darkness is necessary for a robbery.” Consider how unfair, how oppressive, how reckless, how cruel it must be for a person to completely uproot these verdant young trees planted by the Divine Cultivator!

My point is that His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] – may My soul be a sacrifice unto Him – and the Blessed Beauty – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto His friends – sustained all these trials and tribulations, imprisonment and banishment, insults and slanders, in order to prepare this earth, plough its soil, sow goodly seeds and, with a myriad difficulties and injuries, water the plants. Therefore, we too must exert every effort to safeguard this plantation from thieves, and to water and serve these newly rooted shrubs so that great results and benefits will come from this harvest. Those that are detached from all else save God, believe in divine signs, and are firm in their convictions, will exert themselves

⁴⁷⁷ Left blank by the diarist.

day and night for the development of this heavenly harvest and celestial orchard. And when they see that their sacrificial efforts have brought about wonderful results, they will be filled with joy and delight.

<295> **Extract 20:** In Abu Sinan, on the occasion of the martyrdom of the honored Shaykh 'Alí-Akbar Quchání [in Khurásán], 'Abdu'l-Bahá commented on 9 April 1915:

These wretched soldiers die for the sake of some soil, which is the lowest form of creation, and do not know why they are slain. Consider how some are refined and how some abase themselves. In the world of humanity, some sanctified souls appear in human temple that are revered by the whole of creation, while some others appear that worship soil and give their life in the path of dirt and rock. The latter are the abased! And yet there are some others who readily give their all – their lives, possessions, comfort and position – in the path of the Blessed Beauty. How vast is the difference between those who sacrifice in the path of the soil and those that sacrifice in the path of the Blessed Beauty! The former is inferior to soil, while the latter has won the eternal crown of glory. The former will gain naught but grievous loss, but the latter will give life to the world by their sacrifice.

Similarly to the honored Shaykh 'Alí-Akbar, many have quaffed from the chalice of martyrdom at the time when they were raising the call of the Abhá Kingdom, guiding others to the religion of God, giving existence to others, sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, a voice to the mute and life to the dead. In such a state, in utmost detachment, they drank from the cup of renunciation.

Thousands upon thousands of people are presently being killed on the battlefield, though their deaths will bear no fruit or benefit whatsoever. But one sanctified soul is martyred in the path of God and thousands of others are given life. They water the tree of God with their own blood. Though they close an eye to this mortal life, they open another to everlasting existence. They will shine resplendently like a morning star in all the worlds of God and, even on earth, their fame shall be exalted, their mention magnificent and their fortune vast. The spiritual fragrance wafted from their direction will be a sweet perfume. Consider how vast is the difference, which is why it has been revealed, “*And repute not those slain on God’s path to be dead. Nay, alive with their Lord, are they richly sustained.*”⁴⁷⁸

This sanctified soul, the honored Áqá Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar, embraced the Faith some time ago and attained certitude. He was instrumental in guiding others as well. He traveled frequently to Iran, Caucasus and India and, in most instances, left behind radiant evidences and enrolled others under the banner of the Cause. The end of his life was musk-laden. With the utmost sanctity, purity and attraction to God, thrilled by divine promises and enflamed by the love of God, he drank from the mighty chalice of martyrdom in the path of the Beloved. What a hallowed personage he was! Blessed were he and his end. His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] has revealed, “*Those that seek martyrdom in God’s path do so by the grace of God. He bestoweth upon whosoever He willeth and is the possessor of great bounties.*”

Out of divine bounty and favor, I implore that we too partake of this overflowing cup and this life-giving chalice so that, with the utmost joy and spirit, and

⁴⁷⁸ Qur’an 3:169.

enthralled by the breeze of the Merciful, we too would hasten to the field of martyrdom of love and sacrifice this drooping life in the path of the Almighty God.

How cruel are the Iranians! They have not eased their oppression. So many calamities and adversities have befallen them and yet they continue with their former persecutions. But they must pay someday. It is revealed, “God gives them time and does not give them time.”⁴⁷⁹

‘Abdu’l-Bahá telegraphed the following cable: “*Mashhad. Mírzá Ahmad Qa’iní. May My life be a sacrifice unto ‘Alí-Akbar. I am well and in good health. ‘Abbás.*”⁴⁸⁰

I remember that some years earlier the late Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar had come from India to ‘Akká and had brought an Indian traveler with him. One day in Bahjí, with His own hands, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prepared Quzi-pulau for lunch and served each one of the friends in attendance, including this Indian traveler. He quickly ate some of the meat, but it was not long thereafter that he had to leave the room and vomit his lunch. It then became clear that after his conversion to the Faith, he had broken with two of his past practices: sea journey and eating meat. Apparently his stomach was not used to meat, which forced his vomiting. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “If someone is not used to eating meat and not accustomed to it, and passes by a butcher shop, then the foul odor of the meat will harm him and he will become ill. But those that regularly eat meat do not sense this odor. In consideration of the fact that people have developed the habit of eating meat and by now are used to it, the Blessed Beauty did not prohibit meat eating, but man is not created carnivorous.”

Similarly in another instance it was noted:⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁹ This verse is an allusion to the Qur’án 86:17, “*Deal calmly therefore with the infidels; give them awhile alone.*”

⁴⁸⁰ A picture of Áqá Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar Quchání is on the page opposite the first page of the *Star of the West*, 13 July 1915.

⁴⁸¹ *Khátirát Habíb*, vol. 1, p. 414 (297) offers an Arabic paragraph, presumably

Regarding the eating of animal flesh and abstinence therefrom, know thou of a certainty that, in the beginning of creation, God determined the food of every living being, and to eat contrary to that determination is not approved. For instance, beasts of prey, such as the wolf, lion and leopard, are endowed with ferocious, tearing instruments, such as hooked talons and claws. From this it is evident that the food of such beasts is meat. If they were to attempt to graze, their teeth would not cut the grass, neither could they chew the cud, for they do not have molars. Likewise, God hath given to the four-footed grazing animals such teeth as reap the grass like a sickle, and from this we understand that the food of these species of animal is vegetable. They cannot chase and hunt down other animals. The falcon hath a hooked beak and sharp talons; the hooked beak prevents him from grazing, therefore his food also is meat.

But now coming to man, we see he hath neither hooked teeth or sharp nails or claws, or teeth like iron sickles. From this it becomes evident and manifest that the food of man is cereals and fruit. Some of the teeth of man are like millstones to grind the grain, and some are sharp to cut the fruit. Therefore he is not in need of meat, nor is he obliged to eat it. Even without eating meat he would live with the utmost vigor and energy. For example, the community of the Brahmins in India does not eat meat; notwithstanding this they are not inferior to other nations in strength, power, vigor, outward senses or intellectual virtues. Truly, the killing of animals and the eating of their meat is somewhat contrary to pity and compassion, and if one can content oneself with cereals, fruit, oil and nuts, such as pistachios, almonds and so on, it would undoubtedly be better and more pleasing.

representing ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words. However, it appears to be a summary of an unidentified Persian Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that appears in *The Compilation of Compilations* 1:1028. Therefore, the Arabic paragraph has been replaced with a translation of this previously published Tablet.

Extract 21: On Monday, 6 Muharram 1333 AH [24 November 1914], Áqá Mírzá Núri'd-Dín Zayn came from 'Akká to Abu Sinan. I asked him, "Since you just returned from the Master's presence, what news do you have? What did He talk about?" He replied, "Today 'Abdu'l-Bahá told amazing stories regarding the World War and the proclamation of jihád by the Muslims, and He remarked, 'If the Covenant-breakers had not frustrated My efforts, I would have assembled some of the Muslim and Christian chiefs and exhorted them to disallow internal conflict [in the nation]. However, the violators of the Covenant resisted and blocked Me.' He also related, 'Once at a wedding in 'Akká, when the bridal party reached the residence of the groom, as is customary, the Arabs played fencing games as they chanted songs in praise of the Blessed Beauty. They sang:

O Bahá'u'lláh, Thou art the sovereign of the land and sea,
Thou art the ruler of the Arabs and Persians
Thou art the king of Damascus,
Sovereignty is deserving of Thee.

As they sang, a number of soldiers were sitting next to Me, who did not dare protest and only spoke in affirmation of the songs. Consider the influence [of Bahá'u'lláh]! What troubles we endured during the reign of [Sultán] 'Abdu'l-Hamíd, but they passed. The present way is agreeable as well. Alas, the Covenant-breakers did not allow it and ruined [the opportunity].' And this is the exact story [as told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá]:

There was a certain Mustafá Effendi in charge of the newspaper, who persistently caused us difficulties and incited people against us, including the Mutasarrif Kurdihi who had risen with the utmost determination to destroy us. The more kindness we showed the Mutasarrif, the more he grew in his animosity. One day

he gathered in his house all the notables, the Qádí [judge] and the Muftí of ‘Akká and anyone else who was hostile towards us, planning to create great mischief on that day and to slay and plunder us.

One of the friends of the Mutasarrif, a certain Sa‘du’d-Dín Ramadán, who was the chief of the merchants, left the gathering in its midst and came to our residence. First, he knocked on the door very loudly, but I instructed that it should not be opened. He persisted in knocking and insisted on entering, saying he was carrying an important message and that he only wished to say a few words and then leave quickly.

Eventually, he was allowed in. Once inside, he began to insult and curse the Mutasarrif, while I kept silent and did not utter a word. After he had said all he wished, he commented, ‘Effendi, it is best if You mitigate the tension and make peace with the Mutasarrif.’ I replied, ‘Peace? That is an excellent and most wonderful idea, but how?’ He said, ‘The Mutasarrif’s purpose is money. That is what he wants. It is best if You do not deny him and give him some money.’ I remarked, ‘Very well, that is easy. Wait till I go get some.’ Sa‘du’d-Dín Ramadán was thrilled, thinking that I was about to go fetch a bag of gold coins.

Instead, I went inside, performed My ablutions and stood for prayer. With the utmost concentration and reverence, I offered two repetitions of the obligatory prayer, and afterwards recited a long prayer. Meanwhile, Sa‘du’d-Dín Ramadán was becoming impatient and I could hear him say, ‘Hurry, Effendi! Hurry, Effendi!’ He was in a great hurry, growing impatient, as he had promised his friends he would return quickly, which is why he was insisting that I should hurry and give him the money. However, with great deliberation, I was engaged in prayer. He kept pleading for Me to make

haste, saying, 'Hurry, Effendi, it is best not to delay this matter!' I asked, 'Which matter?' He replied, 'The issue of the money!' 'The money was sent a while ago. Why are you here?' I told him. 'How was it sent? By whom was it sent?' he inquired. I said, 'By now it has reached the Mutasarrif. Go quickly!'

He rose and began to put on his shoes; and, when he turned back towards Me, I slapped him hard and was about to slap him again, but he fled and went to the Mutasarrif who had inquired, 'Why did it take you so long? Where is the money?' He replied, 'By God, I went to them, but all I received was a hard beating. Look, my face is still quite red! These people are very tough!'

This incident further deepened the enmity, rancor, animosity and hatred of the Mutasarrif who arose with the utmost determination and haste to cause us injury. Instead, he received a telegram dismissing him and his entire administration – both religious and secular – from office. Until then, it was unheard of that a whole municipal administration should be dismissed at once and without exception.

The Mutasarrif discovered the source of his troubles, so he sent the Muftí with a thousand liras to Beirut, charging him to present the gift to the Valí with a request for a new post. The Muftí proceeded to Beirut; but, when the Valí learned that he was carrying a gift of a thousand liras for him, he became very angry and did not allow the Muftí to sit in his presence, and instead had him stripped of the thousand liras and thrown into prison.

From Beirut, the Muftí wrote Me. <300> He appealed in the Name of the Blessed Beauty, so I would intercede on his behalf: He had written, "By His Threshold." When I saw the misery and wretchedness that had befallen him, I agreed to release him. In utter

despair and gloom, he returned to ‘Akká, but everyone abandoned him. Eventually he came to Me, fell at My feet and expressed his regret and remorse. I lifted him up and forgave him. I then wrote to the Valí, who was Nusvahíy Bey, recommended him, and said that he had not perpetrated any harm or injury against us. In short, this Muftí, whose name was Shaykh ‘Alí Mírí, embraced the Faith.⁴⁸²

Soon thereafter, the Mutasarrif also came to Me, threw himself on the ground and pleaded for forgiveness. He implored, ‘This evil man, Mustafá Effendi, the newspaper editor, was the perpetrator of all the mischief and machinations!’⁴⁸³ After him came Mustafá Effendi asking for forgiveness and expressing his regret. He claimed it was the Mutasarrif who had caused the conflict and that, ‘It was he, this greedy man, who brought about these events. I was a mere servant.’⁴⁸⁴

Not long thereafter, orders were issued for the Mutasarrif to be exiled to Damascus. I paid all his expenses in that city as well as for his family in ‘Akká. After three months, I sent his family to him in Damascus and paid for their journey.

In short, Mustafá Effendi was the one who caused and provoked the Mutasarrif into enmity towards us and continued to oppose us to the point that he wanted to forcibly seize the residence of the Blessed Beauty in ‘Akká because of its refreshing climate and pleasant view. He continued with his harassment and wrote a complaint to Constantinople, claiming: ‘‘The Blessed

⁴⁸² It was because of the pleading of this Muftí that Bahá’u’lláh agreed to leave the city of ‘Akká for the Mansion of Mazra‘ih; see Hasan Balyuzi, *Bahá’u’lláh, the King of Glory*, pp. 358-359, 361 and Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 40-1.

⁴⁸³ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quotes him in Arabic.

⁴⁸⁴ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quotes him in Arabic.

Beauty and his followers are mischief-makers. They interfere in matters of politics, have gained immense influence, and, therefore, I wish to seize the center of this sedition (meaning the house of Bahá'u'lláh).”⁴⁸⁵

They sent investigators to ‘Akká, including the secretary of Beirut’s Valí. It so happened that prior to their arrival, I met the secretary [of the Valí of Beirut] in a gathering, and, in the course of conversation, he asked, “What is the difference between ‘In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful’ and ‘In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.’” I explained the station of divinity and prophethood in detail. He was absolutely astounded and enchanted with these expositions and explanations. Afterwards in Turkish I wrote a short letter to the Valí of Beirut, Nusvahíy Bey, alerting him to more closely mind the situation of ‘Akká. The Valí issued immediate instructions for an investigation, in the course of which, much corruption in the administration of ‘Akká was discovered.⁴⁸⁶

And this was the account of Mutasarrif Kurdi, Mustafá Effendi and their collaborators.

Extract 22: In 1927, when I attained the presence of the Guardian of the Cause of God – may my spirit be a sacrifice unto him – mention of Iran was made. He stated, “There is a Text in the blessed handwriting of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but it is not known for whom it was revealed. I give you a photocopy to take to Iran so that the friends of God will behold it and become aware of the future of Iran.” That Text is as follows:

A thousand years must pass ere Iran can by the aid of

⁴⁸⁵ Ottoman law prohibited political dissent and agitation for civil liberties.

⁴⁸⁶ Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pp. 115-116 suggests this incident occurred during the time of Bahá'u'lláh.

material means gain parity with the peoples and the governments of Europe. Bahá'u'lláh, however, has illumined Iran and will raise her high in the eyes of the entire world. That country shall so advance as to excite the envy and admiration of the East and the West.

The land of Hijáz, though deserted and sterile in its soil and its tribes in the depth of ignorance, savagery and perversion, yet the power of the Cause of God transformed it to become the Qiblih of the world and the focal-center of the planet's devotion.

The people of the East are presently unaware that they have incarcerated for well-nigh fifty years the like of that glorious Personage! But for His chains and prison, Bahá'u'lláh by this time would have gained ascendancy over the thoughts of the peoples of Europe, would have made of Iran the garden of Paradise, would have made Iran distinguished before all of mankind, nay He would have made her such that all peoples and governments would seek enlightenment from that land.

Consider the results of my few days' stay in London and the profound effect it has had there and in the surrounding regions. Ponder then, what the coming of Bahá'u'lláh would have achieved. Had He appeared in Europe, its people would have seized their opportunity, and His Cause, by virtue of the freedom of thought, would by this time have compassed the earth. But alas! This Cause, though it first appeared in Iran, yet eventually it shall be seen how the peoples of Europe have wrested it from the hand of Iran and Iranians. Take note of this and remember it in the future. Ultimately you shall see how it has come to pass. And yet behold! how the Bahá'ís are still slain by the people of Iran!⁴⁸⁷

Extract 23: [A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, likely revealed in the fourth quarter of 1914:]

⁴⁸⁷ A slight modification of a translation in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. 3, p. 75.

London. The honored Mírzá Lutfu'lláh [Hakím], upon him rest the Glory of God.

He is God!

O thou firm in the Covenant! Thy long letter was perused. Some people's remarks are excessive and unworthy of response. The honored Áqá Siyyid Yahyá⁴⁸⁸ has reached Egypt. You must take firm and determined steps in the Cause. These transient black clouds will soon dissipate and the sun of reality will shine forth in utmost resplendence.

Write the handmaiden of God General Jack⁴⁸⁹ not to return to Europe but to proceed to Toronto, Canada, and also St. John's for the purpose of the propagation of the Cause of God. From Germany, the honored Mr. Remy and Mr. Latimer, accompanied by Áqá Mírzá Habíb, have arrived in the Holy Land and, after a most delightful and reinvigorating period of stay, have now returned to America.

Convey 'Abdu'l-Bahá's warmest greetings to all the firm believers and upon you rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás.

Extract 24: On Thursday, 4 December 1914, at the beginning of my stay in the village of Abu Sinan, I was summoned to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence alone in 'Akká and He spoke the following words. He also gave me a mission that required going to Beirut by way of Damascus. The Master remarked:

Áqá Mírzá Habíb, we have already given you many burdens and now another task must be entrusted to you. What can we do! Proceed to Beirut by way of Damascus and bring back a check. (The check was sent by Áqá

⁴⁸⁸ A brother-in-law of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

⁴⁸⁹ Originally of Canada, she was a stalwart pioneer to the end and passed away in Bulgaria, March 1954.

Siyid Nasru’lláh Báqiroff, and apparently the funds were for his children.)

However, regarding your own situation: The believers [of this region] greatly need you. I have sent them to Abu Sinan. You can stay there and spend some time in utmost happiness and spirituality, or do you prefer to leave? It may be several months, but it would be a great bounty for the friends if you were to stay. I am greatly burdening you. I hope that these burdens will become a source of your everlasting honor and merit in both worlds. To those I love, I entrust work. It is not to everyone that I give work.

Extract 25: In response to a letter from one of the American friends who had complained of loneliness, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote:

O believer in God! Thy letter arrived, and therein thou had complained of lonesomeness. Do not be sad. You are not alone; God is your companion and your friend. Lonely is the one who is distant from God. But if one is aware of God, though he be in the midmost-heart of a vast and desolate desert, he is not alone: God is with him.

This world of soil always has a dark sky, filled with black clouds. Each instance brings thunder, lightning, snow, storms, or raging floods from high grounds. Therefore, do not think that it is solely you who are surrounded by trials and agonies. In truth, all of creation is enveloped in these miseries so that man will not grow attached to this world but instead will discover ease and comfort in the heavenly realm and the celestial kingdom.

Therefore thou must be joyous and glad because of the divine promises. Upon thee rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Extract 26: In a Tablet addressed to one of the believers in Bádkúbih, it is revealed [by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá]:

O flower of the orchard of His Holiness Christ! When Christ – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him – appeared heavenly with a brilliant Visage and a beauteous Countenance amidst the Jews, the Israelites believed that, out of divine beneficence, their land had become a flower garden. However it became clear and manifest that it was still naught but a barren wasteland, save for a few that, out of the favors of the Holy Spirit, emerged verdant and fresh like blossoms. Indeed they were the flowers and fruits of His Holiness Moses.

Now, in the orchard of Christ, you too are a lovely and enchanting flower, and by the grace of Spring, shine with the utmost refinement and beauty. Render thanks unto God that you have witnessed the effulgence of the Kingdom of Mystery. I cherish the hope that you will diffuse these must-laden mysteries throughout the world. Praise be to God that, rank upon rank, the bounties of the Kingdom of Light have shone forth and the [true] spirit and being have been rescued from all veils and vain imaginings. If you desire illumined eyes, fragrant nostrils and a heart made resplendent by the bounties of the Holy Spirit, then know the merits of this mighty beneficence and gracious favor, and by heavenly strength, celestial tokens and divine confirmations, proceed to guide others.

Extract 27: In one of His Tablets, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá speaks of believing and non-believing women:

Since they failed to recognize the Truth, the ladies of the world were reduced to maidservants, and the handmaidens of the Blessed Beauty, through the bounties of the Ancient Beauty, became the foremost ladies of the world. The proof of this is Shírín, the queen of Iran, or Sudabeh, the Zoroastrian, another of her queens, or similarly the Queen Victoria, the Great, or Isabella, the

queen of Spain, through whose efforts America was discovered and conquered, or Empress Fran Eugenie⁴⁹⁰, who became one with the soil. They were exalted, but became maidservants; renowned, but were reduced to the black earth. However, Ásiyyih, Sarah, Mary, Fátimih and Tábirih, though outwardly poor, won the everlasting throne of glory.

Consequently, it is evident that the great ladies of the world were reduced to handmaids, while the maidservants of the Blessed Beauty gained exaltation and glory. Therefore render thanks that, praise unto God, you are associated with this sacred Threshold and rank among the divine handmaidens.

<305> **Extract 28:** In a Tablet to the friends in Tiflis, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] revealed:

You had expressed joy over ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s return to Haifa and ‘Akká. Indeed, for some time, because of the burden of the journey to the West and the weight of sorrowful trials, My being was in peril. However, praise God, recently, out of the bounty and favor of the Blessed Beauty – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto His friends – My health and comfort have been quickly restored. Night passed in the utmost frailty, but morning brought complete ease, well-being and soundness. And this is naught save divine charity

⁴⁹⁰ Maria Eugenia Ignacia Augustina de Guzman y Palafox was born on 5 May 1826 in Grenada, Spain, but spent much of her life in Farnborough, Hampshire. In 1849 she met Napoleon III, the Emperor of France, and in 1853 they were married. Three years later they had a son named Napoleon Eugene Louis Jean Joseph - Prince Imperial and heir to the Napoleon Empire. In 1870 France declared war on Prussia and Louis went to war with his father. At the battle of Sedan Napoleon III was captured but Louis was helped to escape. Following the war, there was a revolt in Paris and Eugenie was forced to flee. The Emperor was eventually released and joined his family at Camden Place in Kent where he died in 1873. Two years later, his son, Louis, passed away. In 1881, Empress Eugenie bought the mansion at Farnborough Hill and greatly expanded it. She died in 1920 and is laid to rest alongside her husband and son in the Imperial Crypt of the Abbey Church.

and swift healing. In the morning, when I arose, I began to write and correspond. No one had thought such speedy recovery would occur, with no medicine, no remedy, and no vivifying air. One night in Haifa I turned to the Abbá Kingdom and then went to bed. When I awoke at dawn, I noticed that a new vigor and strength had been gained and that my will power had exerted such influence that all parts of my body and nerves were in the utmost state of relaxation and serenity.

Extract 29: On 28 July 1914 a Tablet was revealed in honor of Reverend [J. W.] Van Kirk, the American priest who had twice circled the globe and presented a seven-color standard, signifying the Most Great Peace, to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:⁴⁹¹

O thou respected truth seeker!

Thy letter was received. It reflected the sentiment of the oneness of the world of humanity. The flag that thou hast forwarded was in reality the foreshadowing symbol of Universal Peace. Today all the nations of the world are filling their military storehouses, inventing infernal machines and perfecting their man-killing engines, so that their martial powers may destroy each other; especially the Continent of Europe has become an arsenal of combustible materials. It needs only one tiny spark to set that hell into a worldwide explosion. It will be then such a titanic conflagration that its lurid flames shall blazon all the horizons. Hence the ‘Anthem of Universal Peace’⁴⁹² has still no charm in their ears. Their universally-accepted political axioms are that the greatness and prosperity of a nation depends on her military and naval powers. The more elaborate these preparations, the better protected and secured the well-being and happiness of that government and nation. The kings and rulers of the world are not

⁴⁹¹ For the text of the letter to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, see *Star of the West*, 16 October 1914, pp. 182-3.

⁴⁹² For the text of this Anthem see *Star of the West*, 16 October 1914, p. 182.

yet ready to acknowledge that Universal Peace is conducive to the life of the world of humanity. In a similar strain the nobles, the demagogues and those in authority find their glory and reputation in naval and military preparedness.

Consequently it is impossible that ‘economic contentment’ be realized by the people of the world save through the transforming Power of Faith. For Faith is the solver of every problem. Therefore you must strive to strengthen the foundation of Religion of God. Through the Power of the Religion of God every difficulty will be disentangled. The Power of the Religion of God will humble the kings and set at naught the crooked motives of those who are in supreme authority. Then endeavor ye that the Power of True Religion which breathes the Spirit of Life into the dead body of the world of humanity, may be promulgated. This is the antidote for the poisoned body of the world and a quick-healing remedy for the rancorous disease of man. For this reason, diffuse thou as much as thou art able the sweet Fragrance of the Holy Spirit, teach the people the Divine advice and exhortations and spread far and wide the heavenly teachings.⁴⁹³

I have great affection towards you and was delighted with our meeting; cherishing the hope that we will meet again.

Extract 30: After a journey to Beirut in fulfillment of a mission which included meeting with the students and the friends, I returned to ‘Akká. I was summoned forthwith to the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who remarked: “Marhabá, you are welcomed, marhabá! Truly you carried a great burden. God has created us for service to others, but if a person is detached and devoted, then for him, comfort is pain and service like great ease.” He inquired of the students and I said, “Through Your favors and grace they are well. In one of their gatherings it was suggested that a missive be submitted expressing their praise and gratitude for Your manifold bounties, but the majority thought that this very act would express vanity and ego and

⁴⁹³ Translation by Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab; Star of the West, 16 October 1914.

therefore decided against it.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá smiled. I said, “One of the friends has asked in a letter, ‘Where is the Master presently?’” He responded, “In front of a cannon, in front of a cannon!”

I reported on the Iranian students in Beirut and Professor Chirdagh⁴⁹⁴, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired, “Are there many [non-Bahá’í] Iranians in Beirut?” I replied, “Most have gone, and only a few remain.” He remarked, “It is good that they leave as they are the cause of much embarrassment!”

I said, “Mr. Zimmer, one of the believers of Stuttgart, has been killed on the battlefield.” The Master replied, “Indeed, the harm of this World War has reached us too. One of the French Bahá’ís, Monsieur Bernard, was killed as well. If there was one person in the world who despised war, it was he.”

In the midst of this conversation, an Arab entered and said, “Áqá Mihdí’s cow has died, and I implore You to intervene with Áqá Mihdí so he will not charge me for the cost.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “I am poor like you. If you have to win bread for two people, I have to shoulder the expenses of at least fifty people! I am neither a landlord, nor a merchant, nor a financier, nor do I have an income. All roads are closed, and none have been left open to us. I am but a stranger. Each year I would give away to the needy two or three hundred sets of clothing, but this year affairs have been so perturbed that I have not succeeded in giving even one. Nevertheless, take this money and buy food, sweets and other necessities for your family. I will do my best as well.”

Extract 31: 31 December 1914: Before the noon hour, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was pacing in the garden and this ephemeral servant was in attendance.

“To what should I devote my time in Abu Sinan?” I asked.

“I wish for you to go to Iran,” the Master replied. “Presently, however, remain in Abu Sinan and for the good-pleasure of God

⁴⁹⁴ The present translator is uncertain of the correct spelling of this name.

cure the ailing. Also read from the proof treatise as well as *Ishráqát*, *Kalimát* [Firdawsíyyih] and *Tarázát*, and memorize them.”

“Should I also tend to the non-Bahá’ís?” I asked.

“Yes, indeed,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “We too are devoted to the poor. By all means, attend to all, particularly the needy.”

I remarked, “Áqá Shaykh Badrú’-d-Dín has said, ‘Shaykhu’l-Islám wants to proclaim jihád!’”

The Master replied, “Shaykhu’l-Islám is a simple, common man with no religious convictions. He is utterly ignorant of the religion of God. Jihád had an effect at a time when people were devoted to God’s Faith, but now that spirit is completely gone. They themselves do not believe what they say. They claim this issue is a global war and jihád must be a matter of national concern. If in truth these people believed in religion, by now the world would have become the Abhá paradise. If you offer them a bribe, they would say the exact opposite of what they ruled earlier. No trace of spirit, sincerity, faith, certitude or firmness has remained in Islam. Only mere words have survived.”

At lunchtime in the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, He remarked: “I have always created work for Myself and this long journey has greatly dissipated My vitality and tired My nerves. Now the bounty of rest has been forced upon Me. Although during these days I continue to remain active, but it is not like before. God has brought about these events so that I may rest a little and be at ease. Now My health is good and I shall sleep well.”⁴⁹⁵

Extract 32: Text of a Tablet revealed for one of the handmaidens of the Merciful:

O maidservant of God! Thy letter was received and therein was a question that others have previously asked and that hath been

⁴⁹⁵ *Busbrú’í*, pp. 59-62 offers several entries for December 1914 which augment the information given by Dr. Mú’ayyad.

replied in great detail. This response will be brief. The multiple marriages of Bahá'u'lláh occurred prior to the revelation of the Kitáb-i Aqdas. At the time of Abraham, Moses, David and Solomon, multiplicity of wives was permitted. Therefore, in consideration of the past Dispensation and in view of many other factors, Bahá'u'lláh, prior to the revelation of the Kitáb-i Aqdas, acquired two wives. Jacob had four, Abraham had several and David had ninety-nine wives. Bahá'u'lláh, however, in accordance with the laws of the previous Dispensation, acquired two wives and, when one passed away, another marriage occurred. However, after the revelation of the Kitáb-i Aqdas, this matter was concluded, and no other marriages took place. And the multiplicity of His marriages was in accord with certain wisdom. But everyone must now turn to the Kitáb-i Aqdas and do as bidden therein.

Convey my heartfelt greetings to all the friends. Upon you rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Extract 33: [A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:]⁴⁹⁶

New York. To the noble personage, his excellency, Mr. Andrew Carnegie, May God assist him!

He is God!

O thou illustrious soul! O thou great pillar of the palace of universal peace!

It is some time since I intended to correspond with thee, but there was no intermediary between us. Now that his excellency, Mr. Topakyan, has made this possible through his kind suggestion, I write thee this epistle; for truly I say thou art a lover of humanity and one of the founders of universal peace.

Today the most great service to the kingdom of God is the

⁴⁹⁶ The 12 November 1912 entry in *Mahmud's Diary* indicates that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá met Andrew Carnegie in New York.

promotion of the principle of the unification of mankind and the establishment of universal peace. A number of souls who were doctrinaire and unpractical thinkers have worked for the cause of international arbitration and general conciliation through deeds, words, self-sacrifice and the generous donation of wealth and property. Rest thou assured that through the confirmations of the Holy Spirit thou wilt become confirmed and assisted in the accomplishment of this most resplendent service, that in this mortal world thou shalt lay the foundation of an immortal, everlasting edifice, and that, in the end, thou wilt sit upon the throne of incorruptible glory in the kingdom of God.

All the leaders and statesmen of Europe are thinking on the plane of war and the annihilation of the mansion of humanity, but thou art thinking on the plane of peace and love and the strengthening and reinforcement of the basis of the superstructure of the human world. They are the heralds of death, thou art the harbinger of life. The foundations of their palaces are unstable and wavering and the turrets of their mansions are tottering and crumbling; but the basis of thy structure is firm and unmovable.

While I was journeying throughout America and Europe, I cried before all the meetings, conventions, and churches: “O ye noble friends! The world of humanity is facing in the future a most portentous danger and supreme calamity. <310> The continent of Europe has become like unto arsenals, under which are hidden combustible materials of the most inflammatory nature. Its combustion will be dependent upon the sudden and unexpected enkindlement of one tiny spark which shall envelop the whole earth with a world-wide conflagration, causing the total collapse of European civilization through the furious, wild, raging, fiery tongues of war. Therefore, O ye well-wishers of the world of humanity, endeavor by day and by night so that these flammable materials may not come in touch with the burning fires of racial antipathy and hatred!”

Today the life of mankind and its attainment to everlasting

glory depend on its display of effort and exertion in accordance with the principles of his holiness Bahá'u'lláh; for His first and foremost teaching consists of the oneness of the world of humanity. He says: "We are all the sheep of God. His Highness, the Almighty, is the real Shepherd and is kind to all the sheep. Why then should we be unkind toward each other?" Another of his most great principles deals with the subject of universal peace, the establishment of which would be conducive to the well-being, progress and tranquility of the world of man.

Other precepts of Bahá'u'lláh address the identity of the underlying foundations of the religions of God, the original oneness of the nations, the adoption and general practice of a universal auxiliary language and the inculcation of the ideal of cosmopolitanism and world-patriotism among the children of men; consequently, in the future, His teachings will act as a deterrent and prevention from the occurrence of the most great danger, i.e., universal war.

Today the most important object of the Kingdom of God is the promulgation of the cause of universal peace and the principle of the oneness of the world of humanity. Upon whomsoever arises in the accomplishment of this pre-eminent service will descend the confirmations of the Holy Spirit.

Now, all that has been predicted has come to pass, and the lurid flames of this war have emblazoned the horizon of the East and the West, causing a reverberating social earthquake throughout the foundations of the earth. After this war, the workers for this cause of universal peace will increase day by day; the pacific party, with a better advantage, will array its forces, displaying great activity; and in the end, it will gain a permanent triumph and eternal victory over all other parties. The realization of this matter is incontestable and irrefutable.

Therefore, ere long, a vast and unlimited field will be opened before your view for the display of your powers and energies. You must promote this glorious intention with heavenly power and the confirmations of the Holy Spirit. I am praying on thy behalf that

*thou mayest erect a pavilion and unfurl a flag in the world of peace,
love and eternal life.*

*I beg you to accept the consideration of my highest and
deepest respect.*

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.⁴⁹⁷

Extract 34: [A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Dr. Howard Bliss, the President of the American University of Beirut:]

*Beirut, the honored Dr. Bliss, the President of the American
school.*

*O esteemed and loved friend! Thy letter arrived, and since its
essence testified to thy affection, fidelity and constancy in our
spiritual connection, it sweetened my taste like heavenly honey and
brought immense joy. I cherish the hope that this friendship may
remain firm forever.*

*Shoghi Effendi and other Iranian students are greatly
pleased with all of you and even have spoken your praise to all the
visitors traveling from Iran to Haifa, who in turn have taken this
news back to Iran. They have widely spread that the illustrious
President is exceedingly compassionate and exerts great efforts
towards the advancement of students.*

*I pray that you excel in service to the world of humanity and
become peerless in the training and education of youth.*

Upon you rest praise and salutations.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Extract 35: Together with all the pilgrims and some of the resident believers, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to visit the Shrine of the Báb. Afterwards, He spoke of the hardships suffered during the early days of the Dispensation and the afflictions perpetrated upon the

⁴⁹⁷ A modification of the translation on 1 May 1915 by Mírzá Ahmad Sohrab, printed in *Star of the West*, vol 6, no. 11, pp 82-3.

Blessed Beauty. As He spoke, tears, like spring showers, began to pour forth from His eyes. From His condition, all the listeners were profoundly moved and affected. He said, “During the entire time that His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Him – was confined in Mah-Kú, He did not have any light and spent His nights in total darkness.”

After the friends had taken their seat, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá continued remarking:

Praised be God that under the shadow of the bounties of the Ancient Beauty such heavenly gatherings are now held. Presently the benefits of these assemblages are not evident. If a person is endowed with the least equity or discernment, he would understand how immense and prevailing is the might of the Blessed Beauty. Outwardly, His sovereignty is manifest.

At the beginning of our arrival at ‘Akká, we had gatherings, but very secretly. None of the pilgrims were permitted entrance into the city. They would be discovered by the gate and would be made the subject of contempt, and then banished away. The honored Nabíl came by the city’s gate and fell into trouble. They would place such pilgrims in prison and then exile them. With utmost difficulty, the honored Mullá ‘Alí Qá’íní came, but was seized and banished to Nazareth. The honored Muhammad-‘Alí Dahájí came and no matter how he tried to gain entrance into the city, he could not succeed. Therefore, from a distance he stood in the fields and fixed his gaze on the prison cell of Bahá’u’lláh, beat himself on the head, cried profusely and then left. Similar experiences transpired for many other friends of God.

Through planning and giving gifts to the officers, I was able to win the entrance of some of the believers and bring them into Bahá’u’lláh’s presence. With great

kindness I dealt with a certain Bayk-báshí⁴⁹⁸ – may God’s bounties surround his departed soul – and also won the affection of some other officers. At nights they would go and secretly bring in the friends. For instance, there was Ustád Ismá’íl Mi’már⁴⁹⁹ [the builder-master] who was eighty years old and had walked from Mosul to ‘Akká. With much effort, I was able to arrange for his entrance. He stayed here for several days; but then I saw that the munáfiqín⁵⁰⁰ had commenced their activities and, through Muhammad Isfahání, had secretly reported the matter to Áqá Ján Káj-kuláh [skew-cap]. I was forced to send Ustád Ismá’íl to Haifa where he lived in a cave.

During such times, divine Tablets were revealed that emphatically promised, “*Do not be grieved. The doors of union will be flung open. Despite the efforts of monarchs, I will come forth from this Citadel.*”

In short, these are the sufferings that must be sustained in the path of the Beloved. The point is that God is not impotent. He is perfectly able and sovereign. He is able to remove all barriers; capable of answering any supplications; supreme over all creation. However, great wisdom is concealed in these sufferings that naught but the pure-hearted will discern. ...⁵⁰¹

Praise be unto God that presently the situation has come to a point where we gather with spirituality and love, under the shadow of the Blessed Beauty, on Mount Carmel and in the Shrine of the Báb, with utmost fellowship and affection, engaged in singing the praise of God, with no fear, no danger, no difficulty, no harassment, no opposition, no persecution. This is the power of God. All the monarchs and the nations of the

⁴⁹⁸ Prison-warden or army commander. (HM)

⁴⁹⁹ For a eulogy see *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 29-32.

⁵⁰⁰ In this context it refers to Azalís.

⁵⁰¹ Left blank in original text.

world were our enemies, but now with utmost spirituality and radiance, we are assembled beneath the bounties of Bahá'u'lláh.

Extract 36: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

Mecca is situated in midst of a hot, sterile, mountainous desert, yet it is sought after with great joy and bliss. Praised be God that this realm is perfect in every respect: Mount Carmel with its view of the sea, the green fields and the verdant, luscious trees are assembled together. No other spot can hope to rival the beauty, the majesty and the splendor of this mountain.

We have built the Shrine of the Báb in such a way that it consists of sections; thereby visitors may come directly from the bay and proceed to the Shrine. Walkways and flower gardens, filled with luscious trees, will surround it. The German Colony will also be the flower garden of the Shrine of the Báb.

This Shrine was built despite the efforts of [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, his viziers and ministers! Where is Násiri’d-Dín Sháh to raise his head from the grave and see what we have done! He wanted to destroy the Cause with his sword. He had told [Hájí Muhammad-]Karím Khán [Kirmání], “Your book is a waste. My sword will uproot the Bábís and not your book.”

There is a story told by Hájí Amín⁵⁰² that the farmers in Yazd each had access to the main waterline one or two or three hours [a day], depending on [the size of] their spread, to feed their orchards and gardens. One night one of the Zoroastrians took all the water to himself and saturated his farm. In the morning people complained to the governor, who then ordered the

⁵⁰² Hájí Abu’l-Hasan Ardikání, known as Hájí Amín. (HM)

farmer’s feet beaten by bastinado. As he was receiving the beating, he cried out, “O Governor, I watered my farm and it’s done! My gardens are watered and it’s done! My orchard is watered and it’s done!” Now we have built the Shrine of the Báb, interred His sacred dust, and it’s done! Whatever happens, happens. Praise God that we remained alive and were able to raise this Shrine. And now with the utmost joy and spirit and under the shadow of the Blessed Beauty’s bounties we are able to visit this sanctified Site.

Extract 37: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá related:

With the utmost enmity, Haifa’s Qá’im-maqám arose to prevent the construction of the Shrine of the Báb. The official in charge of the Land Registry received instructions that this building on Mount Carmel and in the south of the city was “unapproved,” “against military objectives” and, since it was outside the city limits, required the Sultán’s sanction. This official wrote a notice that certain political considerations were involved [and therefore a construction permit could not be issued.

I appealed the matter to] ‘Akká’s Mutasarrif who appointed Sálíh Effendi, the city’s architect and who was related to us⁵⁰³, along with another official in the city counsel of Haifa to come and investigate the issue and report their findings.

They came, collected information and then prepared a report that stated that no harm was involved [in building the Shrine]. They said, “This is only a six-room building, and there are other structures on Mount Carmel, including a large monastery on the shoulder of

⁵⁰³ Presumably meaning he was a Bahá’í.

the mountain and some other buildings raised by the Germans. No political threat is involved.” They sent this report to Mutasarrif, who in turn forwarded it to the Qá’im-maqám. However, the latter rejected it and insisted that the issue be investigated directly from Constantinople. [Upon their approval], he said, he would issue the permit.

<315> They wrote to Constantinople and stated, “Abdu’l-Bahá is planning to built a Shrine for the Báb.” Soon the issue became enormously important since [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd was our determined enemy and was constantly vigilant for an opportunity [to cause harm].

I decided that in whatever way possible I should win the approval of the Qá’im-maqám. I tried very hard. He said, “I have no enmity and only fear accepting a responsibility that might bring me difficulty.” I asked, “What difficulty?” He said, “Difficulties that I am aware of.” I pressed, “What harm is in this undertaking?” He replied, “Harms that I am aware of.” Together we left his office and he said that we should walk to his residence, perchance he would reconsider and I would attain our purpose. We reached his house, and I noticed that his mind had remained the same. We entered the building and, as he began to walk up the stairs, by the time he reached the third stair, he collapsed and died. I called out, “O Qá’im-maqám, O Qá’im-maqám, O Qá’im-maqám!” but it was of no use since he was dead. “There is no rejoicing in another’s death.”

Thereupon I began the construction work. There was no access road to the Shrine of the Báb, and as the existing pathway was dreadful, I decided on building an access road. However, the owner [of the strip of land], provoked by the enemies of the Cause, would not give consent. Eventually, after two months of striving, he

agreed, but the Qurdachi who was working for the Germans went to him and incited him to change his mind, saying, “Repudiate your agreement because Bahá’ís will pay handsomely for the building of this structure.” Greed overtook him, and this caused another delay of two or three months. It was very difficult. Eventually he agreed, but once more our foes managed to cause this man to change his mind and advance new claims. This time he wanted the trees on the land. I immediately responded, “Fine, you can have the trees!” Then he said, “You must partition the land with a barbed wire fence so that the rest of my property is not encroached.” I replied, “If you want, I am prepared to build a wall for you, but I must have your agreement.” Once more he withdrew and said, “I will not consent until you bring a reliable surety. For instance, I will consent if Sádiq Páshá⁵⁰⁴ serves as Your guarantor. I will give my consent then and will no longer withhold permission.”

We agreed to meet at the home of Sádiq Páshá. At the appointed time, I went to his home, but the landowner never came. We waited for some time, but there was no sign of him. Though it was cloudy and rainy, Sádiq Páshá went out to fetch him. He returned, dripping wet and muddy, and reported that the landowner’s household had told him that he was not home and had gone out after some business. Sádiq Páshá was very angry.

I returned home extremely depressed. That night I did not sleep. I neither drank tea nor did I touch food. I met with no one. I sat in my dark room and softly recited a prayer of His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb]. I did not sleep the whole night until the hour of

⁵⁰⁴ According to Hasan Balyuzi, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 128, “a highly-respected magnate.”

dawn. Eventually I fell sleep and arose before noon; I was told by Ustád Muhammad-‘Alí⁵⁰⁵, “From early morning until now the dragoman of the German Consulate and the nephew of the Consul have been waiting to see You.” The Consul’s nephew said, “There is a piece of property belonging to a German woman. Whatever of this land that is needed for Your purpose, You may have.” As deeply as I was grieved before, I was now elated!

Together we went to the Land Registry, and there I saw the authorization letter signed and sealed by the [German] Consul. The property’s title, without the least hint of any conditions or hindrance, was ready for transference to Me. I said to them, “I must pay you for this land.” They replied, “We have come to be of service to You and not for profit or greed. Our intention is to alleviate Your difficulties, not for gains or dividends. We had heard that Your work had encountered certain obstacles, therefore we came to help!” In short, the transaction was concluded.

I told the workers, “Raise a wall and open an access road. Whatever is the cost, I will bear it.” The pathway was built and despite ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd’s enmity, the Shrine of the Báb was raised. From Bombay arrived the marble sarcophagus on which the Greatest Name was engraved in gold letters. When it arrived, I did not wish for the container to be opened in the Customs Office, and it was not.

Then the Commission of Inquiry came and made the accusation that a new Ka‘bah and Mecca were raised.

...⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁵ Ustád Muhammad-‘Alí was a builder from Yazd and, for many years, lived in the Holy Land. With his melodious voice, he often chanted prayers or Bahá’u’lláh’s Mathnaví in the presence of the Master. (HM)

⁵⁰⁶ Portions left unrecorded in the original text.

Where is Násiri’d-Dín Sháh to come and see that, because of his animosity, for fifty years, the blessed remains of the Báb were not allowed a bed of rest?!

Regarding the Shrine of the Báb, on another occasion the Master remarked:

We are now under the shadow of the Shrine of the Báb. It is worthy that we fully appreciate the enormity of this bounty and loosen our tongue in gratitude and praise because of it. During Their days, the station of the Blessed Beauty and His Holiness the Exalted One [the Báb] – may My spirit be a sacrifice unto Both – was not evident, but in the future it will become apparent.

In the future, on foot and holding bouquets of flowers above their heads and carrying wreaths, the monarchs of the earth will come on pilgrimage to the Sacred Shrines. “And will raise to the Supreme Concourse the voice of their fervent supplications and will lift to the Abhá Kingdom the tone of their prayers that, ‘They endured banishment, imprisonment and martyrdom for the comfort of the friends! In the past, with the utmost difficulty and trial, the believers came from the far corners of the earth to circumambulate the Shrine, which with ease and happily we circle. Therefore, verily, this is worthy of our unceasing gratitude and thanksgiving.’”⁵⁰⁷

His Holiness Moses had a stammering speech⁵⁰⁸ and asked [God], ‘I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. Grant me [the aid of] Aaron, my brother.’ And His wish was granted. However, Pharaoh spoke mockingly to Him, ‘You are a murderer and claim to be a Prophet?!’ Behold now that in America, after 3000

⁵⁰⁷ This section is in Arabic.

⁵⁰⁸ *Exodus* 4:10.

years, they raise temples in the name of Moses. Upon the cross, Christ could see the establishment of divine sovereignty. Where is Pharaoh now to behold the majesty of Moses?

With the utmost eloquence, glory and resplendence, the Blessed Beauty testifies – and even His enemies testify to the truth of this saying – that soon the monarchs of earth will come, walking on foot and with the greatest reverence, carrying bouquets and flowers over their heads.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá then added, “I know that which will soon be.”⁵⁰⁹

Extract 38: Jamál Páshá was one of the bloodthirsty and reckless military generals of the Ottoman realm. For nearly a year, he worked to assemble the necessary provisions to attack the Suez Canal and conquer the region of Nile [Egypt]. As a consequence, almost half of the population of the Ottoman Empire suffered bitterly and lost all their possessions and livelihood. Forcibly, he confiscated all the belongings of the helpless under the pretext of “war expenditures.” His most notable trademark was that when he entered a city, he would raise gallows, execute anyone that offered the least resistance to his tyranny and thereby advance his heinous and ignominious goals. Constantly the Covenant-breakers would provoke him and sow the seeds of doubt in him, to the point that, at public gatherings, Jamál Páshá had promised to eradicate and expunge the Cause and sunder ‘Abdu’l-Bahá into two pieces. However, God protected His Cause, and this savage man failed in his campaign in the Suez Canal. He was eventually killed in the Caucasus by Armenian revolutionaries.

The following two historical extracts appear in my diaries and

⁵⁰⁹ Most of the above two paragraphs are in Arabic and it is likely that they reflect entries in Dr. Zia Baghdadi’s memoirs.

456 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

are recorded herewith. “Take notice, O men of understanding.”

Jamál Páshá – First Extract: Wherever the ruthless and irresponsible Jamál Páshá went, he would, before all else, raise the gallows and execute anyone he desired. He would then perpetrate whatever else he wished. He was not afraid to plunder, destroy, bombard and kill. Because he had often heard ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s blessed name and saw many reports about Him, when he arrived in ‘Akká, he summoned the Master. Riding His donkey, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to his military tent. Jamál Páshá greeted Him, came close and invited the Master to come sit near him. Then he immediately roared, “You are a religious mischief-maker and, for this reason, the government has exiled You.” Later, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would relate, “I realized that he was drunk and prideful to such a point that if a chain or a piece of metal was handed to him, he would tear it apart. Therefore, I thought that since he was a Turk, it was best for me to reply in such a way that would make him laugh and would also, of necessity, quiet him. I replied to him, “There are two kinds of troublemakers: Political and religious. (Then before the audience I pointed to him and continued:) Praised be God that so far no harm has come from the political mischief-makers. (During the reign of [Sultán] ‘Abdu’l-Hamíd, Jamál Páshá was known as a political troublemaker.) Inshá’lláh, no harm will come from this religious mischief-maker.’ With that, Jamál Páshá burst into loud laughter and joyfully said, ‘By God, You are right!’”

He then asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “Who has built the German Colony?” The Master replied, “The grandfather of the present German Consul was living in Haifa, and he inaugurated a religion that prophesizes the near-return of Christ. They built this colony so that when Christ reappeared, they would succeed in attaining His presence.” With utmost anger and fury, Jamál Páshá responded, “A new religion? If he was alive I would instantly order his death.” For a few minutes everyone was silent. Then Jamál Páshá asked, “What is the cause of the Ottoman Empire’s weakness?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “The existence of diverse religions.” He asked, “What is

the remedy?” The Master replied, “That the leaders of all religions and denominations existing within the Ottoman Empire and Islamic lands gather in Constantinople and, after consultations, agree on a single and unifying religion.” Once more, Jamál Páshá said, “By God, You are right!”

[Thus through the Master’s logical conclusion,] the Páshá’s anger and enmity subsided, and he expressed a desire for a second meeting. <320> He said, “I am now proceeding to Egypt to conquer that region and to drive the enemy into the sea and the Suez Canal. After my return, I will take You to Constantinople. There I will gather the religious leaders and force them into unity and agreement in one religion. Here Your station is not evident!”

...⁵¹⁰

[Jamál Páshá – Second Extract:] Of the pride and vanity of Jamál Páshá, prior to his arrival in Haifa, without disclosing the number of men accompanying him, he merely telegraphed the Mutasarrif, “Tonight, I am arriving in Haifa.” The Mutasarrif ordered dinner preparations for forty to fifty people, but, when Jamál Páshá arrived, he had four hundred men with him. Angrily, he protested to the Mutasarrif, “Do you expect my soldiers to go to bed with no dinner?” With great difficulty and haste, the Mutasarrif and his attendants prepared dinner for the soldiers, which was subsequently served by midnight.

When Jamál Páshá arrived in Jerusalem, through the repeated provocations of the Covenant-breakers and the enmity of a certain Yásín, the investigator, he was thoroughly agitated [against the Faith], promising, “If I conquer Egypt soon, on my return I will crucify ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.” Mockingly, he added, “I will obey the wish of ‘Abbás Effendi: death by hanging or death by firing squad. Whichever He selects, I will carry out.” The German Consul had come before the Master saying, “I am deeply saddened. I am very frightened and worried. Jamál Páshá has promised that on the way

⁵¹⁰ Left blank in original text.

back he will crucify You and he has sent instructions for me to keep an eye on You until his return.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “This issue is not a cause of sorrow or worry. Very well, I have no problem with his plan. However, he has conditioned his action by the word ‘if.’ That is, he had said, ‘if’ he returns victorious, if he is triumphant in the Egyptian campaign, and if he forces the British into the Suez Canal. If he is successful, then I too am ready and willing to give My life.”

Two days later the German Consul came into the Master’s presence in great haste and once more expressed his concerns and anxieties. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá inquired of the cause of his apprehensions, and the German replied, “Yesterday, the army of Jamál Páshá was fighting hand to hand with the British near the Suez Canal. But today, his telegraph came from Ba’ru’s-Sab‘. The fact that he is so far away from the battlefield is greatly confusing and agitating for me.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responded, “This is a very simple matter, and you should not be distressed. I will explain it to you. When the Páshá confronted the British forces, he must have found them able adversaries. Therefore, he fled the scene and with great haste reached Ba’ru’s-Sab‘.” The German Consul pondered this comment for a minute and then said, “Yes, I believe You must be correct. There can be no other explanation.”⁵¹¹

Afterwards, Jamál Páshá perished and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked, “The wise perceive the ends of deeds, but foolish see only the present. Verily, I did not heed Jamál Páshá, as I was aware of his end.”

Extract 39: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá remarked:]

Murshid was close to the notables and the prominent figures of Tíhrán. He embraced the Faith and became one of companions at the fort [Tabarsí]. On the day that

⁵¹¹ This remark is given in Arabic.

the enemies sealed the Qur'an with their promise of safety and the companions left the fort, Murshid came out as well. He was taken to [the camp of] Mihdí-Qulí Mírzá⁵¹² and one of the chief officers, Sulaymán Khán, recognized him. Greatly surprised, he came forth and inquired loudly, "Is it you Murshid? What are you doing here?" Murshid responded, "Such turns the wheel of time!" Sulaymán Khán said to him, "Go thank God that He sent me here to rescue you; otherwise you would be drinking from the goblet of death."

With a voice penetrating every heart and soul, Murshid responded, "O my friend, O Sulaymán Khán! If you want to express your long friendship to me, then I beg of you not to intercede on my behalf. Through your intercession, I will be deprived of the bounty of martyrdom, will fall behind my companions, and remain in the clutches of this ephemeral world. I have seen the good and the bad, the rich and the poor, the warmth and the cold of this world, and no longer do I have an attachment to it. Our group that you have captured is a band of intoxicated lovers who have come together, have embraced each other in devotion to our Beloved, and now desire to go hand in hand to our eternal abode."

Soon he was martyred.

Extract 40:⁵¹³ 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke in Arabic; the following is the essence of His remarks:

Consider the foolishness of the governments of Iran and the Ottoman Empire in how they banished His Holiness

⁵¹² He was the general in charge of the Shah's armies against Quddús and other Bábí besiegers.

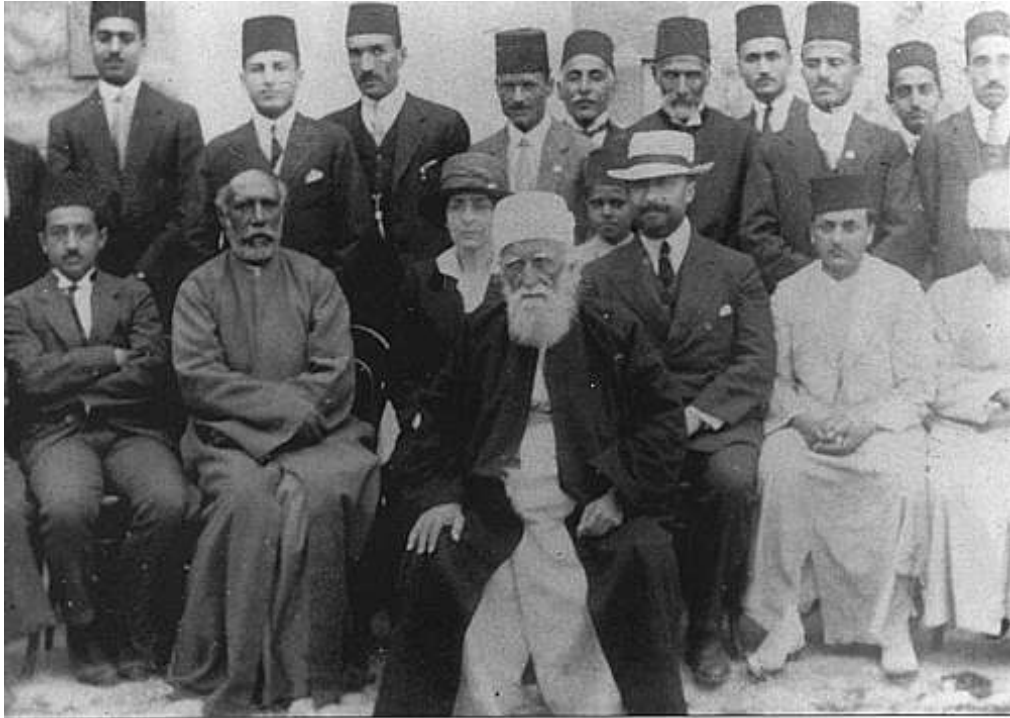
⁵¹³ See a similar entry in Chapter 2, under "Shrine of the Báb."

Bahá’u’lláh from Iran to Baghdad and then to Constantinople, Rumelia, and ‘Akká. Their purpose was to obliterate the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh; yet, they performed the greatest service to His Faith by surrendering the Holy Land to Him, without recognizing it. It is the destiny of the Jewish people to embrace the Cause – a fact of which there is no doubt.

The future of [Mount] Carmel is exceedingly glorious. I can see now that the entire Mount Carmel is filled with light and a thousand ships are anchored in the Port of Haifa. I can see the kings of the earth, carrying wreaths of flowers, prayerfully, with great humility, and with utmost consecration, walking on foot to the Shrines of Bahá’u’lláh and the Báb.

At the time that they placed the crown of thorns on His blessed head, Christ, with His discerning eyes, could see the [eventual] submission of the kings of the earth. But no other person could see what His Holiness saw. Now, in addition to the myriad powerful lamps that will floodlight this mountain brightly, I can see that Mashriqu’l-Adhkárs, hospitals, schools, homes for the handicapped, orphanages, and all other humanitarian enterprises will be erected on Mount Carmel.⁵¹⁴

⁵¹⁴ A similar translation of this extract has previously appeared in Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 226.



A gathering in 1919 (Shoghi Effendi is seated, 2nd from R)

Extract 41: [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s remarks about] the Holy Land:⁵¹⁵

The temperature in the Holy Land does not exceed 33 degrees [Celsius] and in the coldest season, it is approximately four degrees above zero. In Constantinople I remember temperatures as low as 20 degrees below zero and in the summer as high as 38.

When a person journeys through Syria and the Holy Land, it is like journeying throughout the entire world. For instance, there are vast plains in the world; and similarly from Huran to Baghdad is entirely flat as well. There are many mountains in the world, and the mountain above Tripoli, in Mizab, has an elevation of 2,800 meters. There are many seas in the world, and for Palestine, the Holy Land and Syria there are two seas, one in the north, the Mediterranean, and one in the

⁵¹⁵ Since the text of this talk is in Arabic, it is likely that Dr. Mu’ayyad copied it from the diary of Dr. Zia Baghdadi.

south, the Red Sea. In this part of the world there are saltwater and freshwater lakes, such as the sweet-water lake of Tiberius, and the Dead Sea, which is salty. Such trees that grow in cooler climates, like walnuts, exist here as well. Also, the ones that are indigenous to a tropical climate, like palm trees, pomegranates, bananas, grow here in the mild atmosphere of the western part.

The distance between the hottest point, which is the edge of Lake Tiberius and has air like the Hijaz and Sudan, to the coldest point, which is Mount Shaykh, is 18 hours. In a single day and night, a person could travel from the hottest to the coldest point.

This land is preferred over the rest of the world, since it is the geographic center of the globe: it is located at the end of Asia, at the beginning of Africa and is close to Europe. It is sovereign over the whole earth. Since ancient times, when the Persians conquered this land, as well as its conquest by the Romans, Greeks and Arabs, they discovered that there was no land like or equal to it.

When Abraham was exiled from His home, God spoke to Him, “Do not be sad. I will give You the choicest land in the entire world.” And if there were a land better than here, God would have given it to Abraham.

The Holy Land is the center of light and the dawning place of revelation and the birthplace of Christ, where Moses, Muhammad and Bahá’u’lláh came.

Her hills are covered with flowers, vast sections coated with roses, irises, sweet basil and Narcissuses. Christ spread His bed on this land. There are rivers in this part of the world, like the River Jordan and the ‘Ásí (Orontes). Alexander was in the Holy Land for eight years.

Extract 42: [Not translated in the present edition.]

<325> **Extract 43:** [Portions not translated in the present edition.]
'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:

The Covenant-breakers seized the flower gardens adjoining the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh from us, but some of the friends and I would carry soil and water on our shoulders for that garden and tend to its beauty. I said, 'It matters not. The important thing is for the gardens to be maintained.' However, soon these people realized that much expense and work was required for this, so they discarded their claim to the gardens.

Extract 44: [Not translated in the present edition.]

Extract 45: In New York, Denur, the manager of one of the hotels, had become attracted [to the Cause] and, having attaining the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, implored the Master to stay at his hotel, even without payment. Because of his insistence and invitation, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went. While there, a Catholic priest entered the premises and spoke in such way that caused the manager to have a change of heart. Thereupon the Master left the hotel and departed for Washington. [While there,] the Master spoke in churches and Jewish synagogues on the validity of Christ and Muhammad. This fueled the enmity of the priests. They published certain polemics, calling 'Abdu'l-Bahá "the false prophet and antichrist." One cardinal even followed the Master to Denur. The cardinal traveled under the pretext of inaugurating a new church; in reality, his intention was to assail the Cause, for he spoke against it. The Master remarked:

I heard that here they have had a great religious procession with much pomp and ceremony: a procession the likes of which has not been seen before. This ceremony of the honored cardinal is like that of Christ’s in Jerusalem. However, there is a slight difference. In Christ’s divine ceremony, He had a crown, but it was made of thorns, while this cardinal wears a crown adorned with lustrous jewels. Christ had garments, but they were torn, while in this ceremony, the cardinal’s robe is made of the finest brocade. In that ceremony, those that followed Christ were objects of [people’s] contempt and abuse, while those that were with cardinal walked in great honor, pomp and glory. Christ was the target of people’s insults and harm. In this procession, people showered the cardinal with their praise, salutation and support. Christ’s procession was the manifestation of humility, reverence, hardship, spirituality and divine attraction, while the cardinal’s is the display of might, wealth and power. Christ’s throne was upon a cross, while this cardinal’s place is upon a much adorned pulpit. So, there are some differences!

Consider how ignorant and neglectful people are. They say what a wonderful procession this was. Christ spent His days in sorrow, sustaining every manner of trial, tribulation, hardship and affliction. Day and night, single and alone, He roamed in the deserts, His food being no more than weeds and thorns of the field. His night’s lamps were the stars of heaven, and in daytime He walked in solitude. Now, these honored gentlemen, in utmost majesty and grandeur, live in the most splendid mansions, enjoying their comfort and claiming to be the Disciples of Christ. A disciple must follow the example of his master so that all his deeds and ways reflect that of the master. But these men have immense estates, with immense endowments and properties. They

spend their days and nights in lust, deprived of the slightest breath of detachment manifested by Christ.⁵¹⁶

The aforementioned cardinal stopped his opposition and remained silent.

Extract 46: On 9 May 1915, I was alone in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence and most of His discourse was about the many qualities and services of the German believers. I thought it propitious, out of my fidelity to them, to ask the Master, “For some time now, the German Bahá’ís have had no news of Your blessed well-being, nor are they informed of the occurrences in the Holy Land. In the past, they have always benefited from Your sanctified confirmations and presently the postal services are functioning. Therefore, if it is Your august will and should a Tablet may be revealed for them, it can readily be forwarded to uplift their spirits and gladden their hearts.” Immediately the following Tablet was revealed and sent for them:

German Bahá’ís, may their lives be filled with gladness.

He is God!

O true friends! Although for a while no letters have been sent in your direction, be assured that you are always in my thoughts. I supplicate the confirmations of the Kingdom of God for you and entreat the life-giving breath of the Holy Spirit. Divine bounties are boundless; they have no beginning and no end. The gates of the Kingdom are flung wide open; the melodies of the Lord of Hosts enthrall the spirit.

The glad news of the German friends are received, and praised be God that you manifest the utmost firmness and fidelity, and remain attracted to the Kingdom of the Lord. I cherish the hope that the efficacy of the Holy Spirit will transform that realm

⁵¹⁶ A different version of this talk is given in *Mahmud’s Diary*, pp. 356-357.

into a resplendent heaven, the effulgence of the Sun of Reality will brighten that nation and enable it to develop spiritually in every way. May the light of guidance shine brightly upon you, may the breeze of the divine paradise gently waft over you and may the cloud of bounties generously pour over that realm, causing that region to be revived and refreshed.

Convey my utmost affection to each one of the friends. Upon you rest praise and salutations.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.

Extract 47: While in the Holy Land, the gardener of the Ridván Garden, the honored Abú’l-Qásim Yazdí, bestowed on me the gift of a pocket notebook containing many Tablets addressed to him and his family. For many years this believer served in the Ridván Garden, tending to the flowers and orchards, and striving to bring about the enjoyment and comfort of visitors and pilgrims.

One of his innovations was the way he prevented entrance of Arabs to the blessed Ridván Garden. Whenever he had gone to attain the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or purchase provisions in ‘Akká, he would lock the entrance gate and would not let anyone open it until he returned. [On his return], if no one was by the gate and it seemed safe, he use the code phrase: “Shukkru’lláh”, meaning, “Thank God that an unwanted person is not by the entrance”, and they would immediately open the gate and let him in. However, if there were any undesirable individuals, instead he would yell, “Hasan, hasan”, signaling for the gate not to be opened, and the unwanted people would think that he had called on his attendant, Hasan, who had failed to open the door. In this instance, the word “hasan”, meant, “They are here,” and would indicate [to those inside the Garden] that he was accompanied by undesirable elements, who would wait a while, and when they realized that the gate was not being opened, leave. By this method, the late Abú’l-Qásim protected fruits and flowers from the aggression of Arabs.

This illustrious man was tall and well-built, and in one of His

Tablets to Abú'l-Qasim's brother, 'Abdu'l-Bahá humorously and in jest stated, "If you do not testify to his might, consider his mane and mace and then you would know of certainty that he is either Rustam Tahamtan⁵¹⁷ or Gudarz Lashkár-shikán⁵¹⁸."

In short, in this notebook several important Tablets were recorded, including the one that named the doors of the Shrine of the Báb in honor of certain distinguished believers. That Tablet is as follows:

He is God!

A copy of this Tablet should be bestowed upon each of the mentioned personages and the original must be kept in the Hádiratu'l-Quds⁵¹⁹.

He is God!

O God and my Beloved! Praise be upon Thee for Thy greatness and thanks be unto Thee for Thy generosity. Thou grantest what Thou dost wish, Thou willest what Thou desirest, and enablest whosoever Thou inclinest in whatsoever Thou ordainest. All things are in Thy grasp and destiny resides in Thy hand. Thou bestowest honor on whomsoever Thou wishest, endowest sustenance on anyone Thou desirest and deniest it to whom Thou willest. All goods are in Thy hand and Thy station is benevolence. Thou art the All-Bountiful, the All-Giving, the

⁵¹⁷ Lit. powerful, robust, strong; title of the legendary Rustam of Firdawsi's *Sháhnámih*.

⁵¹⁸ Lit. Destroyer of armies; title of mythological Iranian Gudarz Sháh.

⁵¹⁹ Lit. paradise, it has a numerical value of 1327, which is the year that the remains of the Báb were interred in His permanent Shrine. The term Hádiratu'l-Quds is translated in *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, p.7, as the habitations of holiness. Fadil Mazandarani (*Asráru'l-Áthár*, vol. 3, pp. 116-117) notes that this phrase was used in the writings of Bahá'u'lláh to refer to the innermost Sanctuary of Paradise, and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the Tablet of Visitation of the Vakílu'd-Dawlih used this expression as a reference to the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. This term has been employed by the Prince Shaykhu'r-Ra'ís in a poem marking the occasion of the Naw-Rúz 1909 interment of the Báb.

Compassionate, and the Merciful.

A number rose in service of the Hádiratu’l-Quds and with utmost devotion and spirit exerted much effort. Some others had spiritual attachment and profoundly desired to aid in the labor and work of that sacred Shrine. Therefore the water-cistern is named after the illustrious Afnán of the sacred Lote-Tree, the honored Mírzá Báqir. The first entrance on the eastern side is named the Báb-i-Bálá, and the second door on the east named the Báb-i-Karím, named after Ustád ‘Abdu’l-Karím. The northern door is the Báb-i-Ashraf; and the first door on the western side is to be known as the Báb-i-Fadl, while the second on the same side will be the Báb-i-Amín. By these names are meant: Áqá ‘Alí Ashraf, Áqá Ustád ‘Abdu’l-Karím, Áqá Bálá, the illustrious Abú’l-Fadl and the honored Amín. These designations must endure forever.

Thus the Almighty inspired Me by the earth of the point of adoration of the Supreme Concourse.

‘A ‘A.⁵²⁰

Extract 48: From Germany, I brought a large quantity of missives from the friends in that realm for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, all testifying to their readiness for sacrifice, their humility, devotion to the Faith and their firmness and steadfastness in the divine Covenant and Testament, and I submitted these to His sacred presence. Although because of the War all these letters had gone through the censor and had their postal stamp, nevertheless, several of them were confiscated at the German border, and a few more were stolen at the Customs in Alexandria, Egypt. Notwithstanding, I presented the rest to the Master Who spoke most glowingly in praise and approval of the German believers, unceasingly showering His admiration and affection on them, and speaking of the brilliant future of the friends

⁵²⁰ After the completion of Shrine of the Báb by Shoghi Effendi, he named the remaining doors and a complete description is provided in, Ugo Giachery, *Shoghi Effendi’s Recollections*, pp. 214-216, Appendix IX.

in Germany. About that time, a Tablet was revealed in honor of Mírzá 'Azízu'lláh Khán Varqá – upon him rest the Glory of God – which I record below in this notebook:

He is God!

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Thy letter of 2 Ramadán 1332 [A.H.]⁵²¹ was received, testifying to thy humility and reverence before the Abhá Kingdom. Its essence spoke of thy faith and fidelity in the Cause of God. Praised be God that the son of the martyr is sacrificial in this path like unto his illustrious father⁵²² and, with modesty and meekness, devotion and attraction, serves this mighty Cause. Thy example is worthy of a station similar to thy father's in the Abhá Kingdom!

Thou had written about your meetings with prominent and esteemed personages in Iran, and this is most agreeable. These people are not presently aware of the great influence of the Faith and know not how it has inflamed the horizon of the world. A few days ago many letters were received from Germany. It would be good if the well-wishers of Iran would see these missives. God willing, they will be sent by a trusted emissary. Thou wilt then note that, at this time, when the entirety of Germany – men, women and even children – spend night and day consumed by the thought of war and tumult and, with great commotion, the shrill voice of killing is raised, at such a time the nightingale of the orchard of oneness sings melodies of spirituality in that garden and meadow. How brilliant glows the flame of the love of God and how resonantly is raised the cry of “Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá”, reaching the highest pavilions of the Supreme Concourse! Each day a number embrace the Divine Lote-Tree, and the Sun of Reality shines forth brilliantly.

At any rate, be constantly attentive and mindful that some of the 'ulamá' and prominent citizens may awaken to the Cause.

⁵²¹ 25 July 1914.

⁵²² Varqá's father and brother, Ruhu'lláh, were martyred.

Tell the distinguished person, “Those two lions are the north and south neighbors, and it was Iran that they were carrying in their mouths. I cherish the hope that it will be thy lot” As I stated explicitly in Paris, even though Iran is filled with turmoil, the future of other nations is perilous as well. Perchance he remembers this remark.

My point is that no other salvation and safety is possible today save adhering to the divine teachings and exhortations. It is these heavenly pronouncements that will revive Iran, but they must be faithfully embraced.

Consider that presently Iran is a small country and its diverse creeds deal with one another with the utmost enmity and rancor. Merchants are without trade, industries are in ruin, agriculture is destroyed, and the only things that are plentiful are the mischief-makers who attempt, through various connivances, to destroy the foundation of Iran. In this light, what hope is there for salvation and liberation? Her sole remedy is to succeed in a cause that would bring her distinction in the world, and indeed make other countries humble before her. Without this, this withered nation would not be renewed and revived, and the realm of Iran would not be developed and advanced.

In Germany, many assemblies have been organized. On one side the flag of Germany is hoisted and on another side the blessed ensign of Iran, and attendees truly adore the latter standard and show it utmost respect and veneration.

*Upon thou rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás*

Extract 49: On 14 May 1915, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá graciously gave me this Tablet to take to Iran, to make copies and disseminate among the friends.⁵²³ A copy is recorded in this notebook to give a good end to the chapter:

⁵²³ The original Text also appears in *Makátib ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 4, pp. 114-118.

The Divine Friends, upon them rest the greetings of their Lord, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

He is God!

O ye the beloved of my heart and soul!

The world of being is encompassed by mankind's heedlessness, and all horizons are hidden by dark clouds. The world of humanity has become afflicted by hardship and mourning and all the tribes of the world of humanity are lost and bereft of guidance. From the beginning of human history until now such a world devouring fire has not been ignited and such a conflagration has not been lit, destroying all horizons. All eyes are in tears, all hearts are burning sore.

The continent of Europe is all a field where blood is being shed, and it is the veritable arena of atrocity. In the words of the poet:

"There is no blade of grass or thorn that is not red with the blood of martyrs."

Cries and lamentations are rising to high heaven and tears of orphans flow like unto a torrent. All one sees is the sadness and sorrow of fathers who are mourning their sons. All one can hear is the lamenting of mothers, which affects one's soul and heart. From all sides sighs, regrets and lamentation and the cry of pain can be heard emanating from bereaved hearts. In all corners the wolves of hatred and rancor are hiding in ambush. This weakling, the human species, is surrounded by these calamities. Despite this they are all asleep with the sleep of heedlessness, they have all alienated themselves from any fellowship or love. There is no reflection, there is no meditation, there are no deep thoughts or delving as to the cause of events. No one prays in an earnest communion; no one seeks from God the remedy of these afflictions. There is no remorse, no supplication, no repentance, no turning back to the threshold of the Creator.

All this in spite of the fact that in my journeys and travels in Europe and America, in all their Churches, assemblages and meeting places, crying aloud I warned them, I admonished them in these words:

“O revered people in these assemblies! Unstop your ears. There is a great danger ahead. A most afflictive catastrophe is impending. The whole continent of Europe has become a storage house of weapons and explosives. Inflammable material is hidden in every nook and cranny. It is all waiting for one spark so that a great flame may reach the heights of heaven. Through a single explosion all things will be turned upside down. O people present here, strive with the entirety of your endeavor that these fires be extinguished, so that ye may be the instruments of prevention of this great earthquake. Otherwise this calamity like a deafening lightening, will hit the children of humanity from all sides. All countries will be destroyed. All cities will become bereft of security and tranquility. All nations will witness the fire of hell. All countries will have exhibitions of dust and ashes. Humanity will become dispersed then, but what benefit would remorse and regret achieve then?

“It is better that you learn the heavenly Teachings now, that you may chant the divine melodies in all parts of the world now. You should raise the banner of the Oneness of humanity that you may become occupied in the promulgation of universal peace. From the inception of history nearly six thousand years there has been warfare, belligerence, manslaughter, atrocity and bloodshed. The children of men have not had a moment of rest or tranquility, but praise be to God that this century is the century of light, this age is that in which truth is revealed and the mysteries are unraveled. It is also most evident and clear that enmity and hatred destroy the foundation of the world of humanity, and that love and faithfulness give eternal life. Conflict is the most afflictive torment and death itself, whereas peace is the fountain wherefrom the water of life flows. Hostilities uproot institutions, whereas peace causes reconstruction where there was destruction before. Wars result in

sorrow and regret, but peace and reconciliation result in joy and exhilaration. Killing and slaughter is sadness and bereavement, but concord and reunion result in great festivity. As much as in your power, strive and exert yourselves so that the flag of the oneness of the world of humanity may wave in the midmost center of existence, and the Son of Truth may illuminate with the light of love. Swords and arrows may be put aside and the life-giving breeze of agreement, fellowship and affection may give new life. This darkness of the human tragedy may be dispelled, and heavenly light may shine over both East and West. The thorn bush of existence may become a rose garden, and the wasteland may become the meadow of the merciful. The season of autumn may finally end, and the life-giving breeze of springtime may establish itself over mountain and mead.”

All those present would agree with me that this should be the case, but they were asleep in the couch of heedlessness. No one gave it a deep thought, no one tried hard, and consequently this spark and conflagration has started to burn the foundation of humanity. Now East and West are in the great commotion, and this devastating tornado has uprooted all the fresh trees of existence. Glory be to God! What manner of ignorance is this, what manner of negligence and inattention?

“The well is on the path, and the wayfarer knows and is conscious of it. I am amazed, though, at how veiled are the wayfarer’s eyes.”

Human beings with their own feet, of their own volition, have entered the midmost fire. Humanity is capable of sullyng the pure choice wine, of transforming the sweet fountain of water into a brackish and salty pool. They wish to extinguish a lighted candle to darken the luminous dawn, to exchange the honey of faithfulness for the lethal poison of unfaithfulness, and at the same time they desire glory in this achievement.

At any rate, the teachings of the Blessed Beauty – may my life be a sacrifice unto Him – were all spread and were proclaimed openly in America, Britain, France and Germany, in all their

large meetings and in their church gatherings. Haply after this Great War eyes may yet see, ears may yet hear, the banner of the oneness of the world of humanity may yet be uplifted in the center of existence, the canopy of Universal Peace may yet overspread East and West, the Blessed Tree may yet grow and give branches and the admonitions of the Blessed Beauty may be promulgated. I am certain that after this Great War these teachings will be upraised in all regions, this life-giving breeze will cause a vibration in the entire world.

The friends of God must now prepare themselves so that the moment the fire of this war is stopped they may raise the melody of the kingdom of Abhá and they may stir the ears and hearts of all those who seek the kingdom in their spiritual assemblies, singing these divine melodies. Praise be to God that through the protection and safekeeping of the Most Great Name all the friends in the Holy Land are in a state of radiance and spirituality. This is through naught except His bounty, grace, and generosity. I yearn for all the friends with all my heart and soul, and send the handmaidens of the All Merciful my most wondrous Abhá greetings. Upon you all be the Glory of the Most Glorious One.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás.⁵²⁴

⁵²⁴ This translation was contributed by Dr. Khazeh Fananapazir.

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476 **Eight Years Near ‘Abdu’l-Bahá**

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