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Myron Phelps' Notes

Notes taken by Myron Phelps during his second visit to 'Akká,
from the Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Pilgrim's Notes

Myron Phelps

1917

"It is a {{p1}} certain fact, absolutely established, that people whether righteous or wicked, the people of light or darkness, pious or mischievous, live on after the death of the body and physical dissolution and disintegration. But the life of the wicked in comparison with the existence of the believers is as non-existence. This is why Christ speaks of this life (of faith) as everlasting Life. He says: 'If you follow me, you will attain Life eternal, and whosoever believes not on me is deprived of the Life eternal.' The meaning of Christ's saying was not that the unbelievers become absolutely annihilated; the meaning of Christ is that the life of those, who reject Him is as non-existent, compared with the life of those who accept Him."

"The mineral has existence, the vegetable has existence, but the existence of the inferior kingdom as compared with the existence of the human kingdom is as non-existence. Even the mineral is living in relation to its own kingdom: but the mineral kingdom in comparison with the vegetable kingdom is non-existent, and the vegetable with the animal is non-existence. The ignorant with the knower is dead; the rejected compared with the accepted is dead. The imperfect compared with the perfect is dead."

Here the Master took up a photograph of a Virgin and Child, by Raphael and said: "Many babies at the time of the childhood were living, but Jesus was more alive than they. It is not meant that the wicked after death will absolutely perish; this was the belief of the ancient Greek philosophers. They believed,

that whosoever did not attain any distinction or power of function on this plane of being, perished. That is why Christ speaks of the righteous entering the Kingdom of heaven; and the wicked being cast into hell. This problem was not solved in any dispensation until it is solved in this dispensation for the people ask “Where is this kingdom in which the righteous dwell?” — The kingdom was spoken of by the prophets as Heaven, it being said that man after death could ascend into heaven. Then afterwards it was found there was no such place as Heaven; the stars and planets are in truth all in motion and are not stationary, and they are all material. It was then asked ‘Where is hereafter?’ Existence must be visualized, must be made tangible, else it is non-existence. Any existence which is not realized on the material plane is only a figment of the mind therefore, existence must be externally realized. In response to the question: ‘Where is hereafter?’ Since we do not see it, we will say that as the mineral and vegetable belong to this world and are utterly ignorant of the human kingdom— one might question the mineral — find it utterly ignorant of the vegetable, one might even find that it denied the existence of the plant— that if one questioned the embryo in the womb about the human kingdom, it would know nothing of it, and would even deny its existence; even so the realities of the Kingdom of Heaven are not to men.”

“The fact is certain that there is a world of GOD, and that it is above this human world; therefore, it can not be apprehended in the human world. The human world is ignorant of this Kingdom. It is called the Heavenly body, and this is what is meant by Christ, when He says, that after leaving this body man enters the Kingdom; It is beyond the human Kingdom. This is what is meant by Bahá'u'lláh when He says: ‘The Supreme Concourse welcomes you’. This problem was never solved until this dispensation.”

Question: “What is the relation of the mineral and vegetable with the human spirit?”

Answer: “All are connected by the bond of existence. What greater bond is there than this? Furthermore, none of these can continue to exist independently of the other; for interrelation and solidarity make their existence possible. For example, from the plant a certain element is exhaled which gives life to the animal. We call this the fiery element and you call it oxygen. And from animated beings a certain watery element is given, {{p2}} which you call hydrogen, and that promotes plant life and its growth and evolution. So there is a connection, and the growth and evolution of each are dependent and contingent upon the other. So are all the other beings (connected) making the world of existence as one person — a great person. Just as the members and parts of man co-operate and work together, likewise the parts and members of the world co-operate with each other and are interdependent. This chain of interrelation is continuous throughout all existence. Not a single one of the parts of the chain can be loosened; if it were loosened the organization of existence would be faulty.”

Question: “Will animal and vegetable ever become the human?”

Answer: “The spirit will not become human spirit, nor will vegetable spirit become animal spirit. Existence is one, as it appears in every grade, according to the exigency of that grade. Existence in the mineral grade takes the form of the mineral; in the vegetable; the vegetable form, and in the animal kingdom the animal form. In the human kingdom it appears as a human being. As existence is limitless, therefore it appears in limitless forms. This is a new philosophy, but it is plain and evident.

This lamp is one and the same lamp; it has cast its light upon the wall, upon the floor and on this glass, but its manifestation on the mirror is very superior to that on the wall. The manifestation of that light in the eye is not witnessed in the ear; but the light is the same. Mind is a universal power but it appears in every man according to his capacity.

Perfect souls are like mirrors, and the light of the mind becomes most effulgently manifest in them. Imperfect souls are like the stones, — the light of the mind reflected in them is only a semblance (of the light in the mirror), but the light is the same.

Bickerings, etc., among nations must be done away with. Consider plants — how harmonious are all their elements. Those revolving stars which have inter — communication thought the attraction of gravitation, how good and beautiful that is!

When we study beings in general, we discover that there is a tendency (propensity) for the lasting of life, or for continuous living, so that whenever these elements unite to form a composition, the resultant compound makes it possible to live — e.g. — certain elements have united in a composition, forming this leaf; likewise, certain elements have agreeably united and composed, the resultant being known as man. Likewise in the stone — we find that in this formation certain elements have come together.

Therefore it is most evident that composition or organization and union are perpetuation of species. When the composition, or rather, compound is subjected to a flaw in the agreement (of the elements) separation and dissolution result. Therefore, it is plain and evident, that agreement and union among men are productive of life results. Every movement which aims at separation, causes disagreement and produces dissension amongst men, is to be condemned and rejected.

“Consider the animals; — those which are tame associate with each other agreeably; they live in companies. The sheep are loving to each other, hence they live in company as a flock. Tame birds are to be found in flocks, but birds of prey and ferocious animals live separately — such as the lion, tiger, bear, dog — all of these live separately, in solitude, and do not form companies. Likewise, vultures and birds of prey live solitary.

“If agreement and union obtain in a home, there will be upbuilding and prosperity therein; the honor and virtue of that home consists in its unity and harmony.

Enlarge this condition, if the inhabitants of a village should be united, how much this unity and agreement will conduce to the happiness of that village. Enlarge this circle yet again — the people of a city if united and agreed, how much this would be the cause of rest and $\{\{p3\}\}$ composure and well-doing in that city. Still widen the circle, the people of a country, if in the utmost unity and solidarity know this will become (conductive) to the welfare and advancement! Therefore, consider if all the inhabitants of the earth become united, what great results and what immense happiness will obtain.

“BAHÁ’U’LLÁH has hoisted the tent of Unity of mankind. He has addressed men thus: ‘Ye are all the leaves of one branch and fruits of one tree.’ No matter how many are the flowers in yonder garden, — even though their lines and colors and the forms of the leaves and the shapes of the plants differ, yet we know that the same rain falls upon them — how delightful, how magnificent! All of them receive heat and light from the same sun, one cloud showers its bounty upon all, the same sunshine and the same zephyrs animate them, — all of them are refreshed by one breeze!

“Look at these people, how they are negligent and inadvertent, how superstitious! The exposition of Reality is evident and plain. All the nations are inimical to us, — they persecute us because of this; They speak evilly of us because of this; when they cannot do anything else against us, they lie about us. In order that this animosity may be suppressed and hidden, we forbear everything. Pray that, GOD willing, you may be confirmed. The Blessed Perfection has said that if any religion or faith is productive of hate and enmity, it must be abandoned.”

Received from Luṭfu’lláh Ḥakím, 13 Wood Lane, Shepherd’s Bush, London, W. England.

In a letter dated June 7th 1917, to Jos. H. Hannen, the following is an extract from Luṭfu’lláh Ḥakím’s letter on this subject: “Doubtless you know of Mr. Myron Phelps, — the one who wrote the book called: “THE LIFE AND TEACHING OF ‘ABBÁS EFFENDI.” He has been for a second time to ‘Akká some years ago, and took some very interesting notes of what the Beloved ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said in answer to his questions. Some time ago we got a copy of these notes, and I am sure you and the friends there would like to see a copy of it. So I have copied it and am sending you enclosed copy. These notes must not be published until we have permission of Mr. Phelps.”

copied by H.G.P. Jan. 7th 1918.

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