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A Conversation with Abú'l-Qásim, the Gardener of the Riḍván

Isabella Brittingham

September, 1901

Utterances of our Blessed Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in His exact Words, revealed to three pilgrims; Thomas Breakwell of England, Herbert Hopper (an American) from Paris, and Isabella D. Brittingham of America, September, 1901.

The Master’s Message to the believers in America.

He said: Two or three years ago He wrote to some of the believers in America and also to Dr. Kheiralla, stating these events (His imprisonment and persecutions), which have now taken place. He also wrote the same things to other countries, and they are now exactly fulfilled. He said, now that these events have come to pass, we must feel happy, not sorrowful. The believers must not be troubled nor distressed about the confinement of the Master — He wishes them always to be cheerful. He is accustomed to imprisonment. We must not feel distressed, as this is sent from God, and it should be pleasant to us to have troubles from God. If we hear also of other things taking place, we must not feel grieved, but trust in God. Still greater things than these will happen, all of which have been prophesied. All of the believers must be in such a mood that when calamity exists in the greatest degree, they must rejoice exceedingly. The confinement of the Master must be the gladdest tidings to all, and it must be the cause of their steadfastness and confirmation. We should be very happy even under confinement. Neither hunger nor thirst, nor confinement in prison, nor bloodshed, nor martyrdom, should prevent us from being true to the Blessed Perfection. We should accept all of these things all of our lives; we should hope for them, and then we will be happy when they come. He said all the believers are under the Shadow of the Manifestation. We are not physical beings, He said, but spiritual bodies. We must thank God for our spiritual existence. The body is earthly, but the spirit is heavenly. The first is of this world, and the second belongs to the Kingdom. The first is of the attributes of darkness, and the other of illumination. The first is limited to space; the second is Placeless and Limitless.

The Master also said that the gladdest tidings to Him are that the believers are living in love and obedience, and are spreading the Great Message; and that our

love, our unity, our obedience must not be by confession, but of reality. He also said that 1901 is the first year of tribulation.

The Master said that the differences between this Revelation and that of Jesus Christ are that, in this Cycle, all the inhabitants of the world will be gathered into one nation; universal peace will prevail; bloodshed and war will cease; there will be a general language; union and harmony will reach the highest state; there will be no bigotry. All will be gathered under the tent of peace. Before the universal peace is established there will be wars and a general overturning of society. These wars are to warn the people, so that they may learn, if they do not follow the teachings, they will be punished, for the power of the Spirit will be taken from them and they will become as lamps without light. {{p2}}

The beginning will be in our time, and the truth will be generally known by the year 1917.

The differences between this Manifestation and that of Jesus Christ are:

1st. The teachings of Christ amounted to a very few pages, but the teachings of the Manifestation, Bahá'u'lláh, amounted to twenty books.

2nd. The teachings of the Manifestation are greater than the teachings of Jesus Christ. For example, from the teachings of the Manifestation you can do everything; they include everything.

3rd. Apparently Jesus Christ was opposed by the Jews only, but the Manifestation was opposed by the whole universe. Jesus Christ, on account of injury from the Jews, and their opposition, used to go from one place to another, but that the Manifestation stood before all was evident, as He was seen by all and did not hide Himself, even in a village. At all times He said, "I am ready." He wrote to the King of Persia: "Let all the divines and doctors of law assemble together and discuss the matter with Me, and I am ready to prove it."

4th. In the time of Jesus Christ the greatest one of the disciples was Peter, yet he denied his Master three times But the followers of Bahá'u'lláh, under the most severe torture, were repeating the Name of Bahá'u'lláh and never denied it, not only one, a hundred or a thousand, but twenty thousand followers hastened thus to martyrdom.

5th. The Cause of Jesus Christ existed for three hundred years before it became known, but the Cause of the Manifestation, in the Day of the Manifestation, was known all over the world.

6th. Jesus Christ came to establish proofs of the Old Testament, and this was for the Jews, consequently His opposers were few. But the Manifestation came for all the world, and for all religions, and to explain all the Holy Books of those religions. Another proof was that during the imprisonment of the Manifestation the Governor and Officials were His humble servants. Even His enemies were

submissive to Him. Because the Cause of the Manifestation is universal, it will envelop the world.

7th. The miracles which appeared through the Manifestation the Master did not like to mention, because they will not be proof to others. They were only a demonstration for those who witnessed them. If the Master mentions all of these, the people will say that the idol worshippers attributed many wonderful things to their idols. The hearer will say this is right and this is wrong. While the miracles which actually appeared in the time of the Manifestation are greater than all, the Master did not wish to mention them, for the Manifestation said that the miracles would be like a veil over the people, for, in every time, the proofs (of this Word) will be so evident and clear that the people can understand them. {{p3}}

The Master said, if anyone asks you about the Manifestation, say He is the Trainer of the whole universe. His teachings are the cause of the life of the worlds, the unity and harmony of the creatures, the agreement of the people, and the universal peace. Every great thing of which we hear, and every great event in the world must have something that will stand steadfastly for it and to defend it. The greatness of the Cause will be as a flood. It will be like the waves of the Pacific Ocean. No other waves are as large. If the Cause is firm and on a good foundation, all these events that take place will be the cause of its assistance and promulgation. When the winds blow severely, the small trees will be uprooted, but the fixed and large trees will remain firm. This illustration is in harmony with this Cause. It must have great assistance. The opposition and rebellion of the people will be very great indeed, but these oppositions and disturbances of the nations will be the cause of the strength and power for the Truth. Thus, if we see that the nations and people act and exert their utmost to destroy this Cause, we must not be at all disturbed, because the more they oppose the more the Cause becomes illuminated. So all must be like confirmed mountains; fixed and firm believers; but we must act through cautiousness and wisdom. All of our deeds must be done in kindness. We must not fling wisdom away, but we must always seize it. Be assured and confident that the assistance of God will be poured out upon you. The servants of God are the victors and they are the hosts of God. Meditate upon the time after Christ and upon this time and you will understand.

Once the Manifestation was imprisoned and chains were around His neck. At this time the Master was with some of the believers in another place, and the people finally captured Him also. The boys of this place gathered together and began to beat Him; about two or three hundred children surrounded Him. They beat Him severely on the head, cursed Him and otherwise persecuted Him. It may come to pass that the people will curse the believers, beat them, injure them, abuse them and do harm to them, and even cause animosity between them. God willing that that you may be steadfast and firm and never be shaken. But under all kinds of tribulation you must always keep in mind the Love of the Master and remember to what a great degree He loves you.

The nations oppose and persecute each other for supremacy, and they cause opposition and persecution against the Master because He is uniting the people. What a wonderful thing that the Oriental people clasp hands with the Occidental people and mingle together! So many different people — those who are fierce, and who hold animosity toward each other, will be gathered in union and harmony under one tent, to lay the foundation which will be the cause of harmony and union of all the creatures. To meet animosity and hatred by love and kindness! Thus war will be changed into peace, the sword and bayonet into the fragrance of flowers, bloodshed and the destruction of man will be transformed into joy and tranquility. Thanks be to God, in these days the steadfastness of the Truth is taking place; that this seed of love, {{p4}} after it was planted, has yielded, and the fruit of that is our meeting here tonight — all of us in one circle. On reliance and dependence upon God, we hope that this circle may be enlarged and that it may encircle the whole universe, until the entire human race will be gathered under one tent, and all will be under one law, as one nation, one family, one home. All this will exist and be manifested through the Power and Aid of Bahá'u'lláh. The more the teachings are distributed, the greater will be the success of the Truth. Pray for this; beseech and invoke the Kingdom for it. All this prophecy will, in a comparatively short time, be fulfilled, and love, peace and concord will be established. Praise be to God that you are the manifestations of the help of God and that the Light of God is enveloping all. The Hosts of the Kingdom are your helpers; the Holy Spirit is assisting all. The wave of God is your guidance and strength. Thus I invoke the Kingdom. Through the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh you will be aided. Do not interfere with one another's sword. Do not raise disturbance with anyone. Be kind to all people; love them with a pure spirit; ask God for all. Should opposition or injury happen to you, bear it and be kind, as kind as you ever can be. Through all, love the people, and not by mere confession. If they beat you with swords, ask them for forgiveness. If they attribute infidelity to you, pray for their guidance. If they blame you, be sincerely grateful to them. The Manifestation said, "If it were not for the sake of the religion, I would appoint the one who should murder Me to be My inheritor." From this statement we can conceive the station of the martyrs and saints in His Cause. The Master told us to pray to God that we would be steadfast in His service, for us He is the Ruler and the Supreme. To serve humanity is to serve God.

The Master said: Have you read the Tablet written by the Blessed Perfection to Napoleon? Do you remember the words? That Tablet is a sufficient proof. It was revealed when Napoleon was so powerful that he said, "On this globe I am the one God." In such a time this Tablet was written and this was published over the world. The Manifestation was imprisoned in 'Akká, the Governor in Chief of 'Akká craved to be honored by admission to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. For five years this one man, called Zeah Páshá, asked the Master if He would supplicate the Manifestation to permit him to make this visit, but the Manifestation never granted it. All the people of 'Akká know this. The Blessed Perfection was imprisoned, yet He had that power to refuse anything or to do anything that

He wished.

The Master said that He Himself had been ill for three years, but ever since He had been re-imprisoned He has been very cheerful and happy. Before this His appetite was poor, but now it is better. He says, God willing, tribulation and trials may increase day by day. If life passes in ease, with no trials, it is useless and its result is fruitless. What is the conclusion and result if a person should live easily and comfortably for one hundred years? But if he passes through trials and hardships in the Cause of God, this is the extreme end of the Supreme Gift. When they took Qurratu'l-'Ayn to kill her, she put on the best clothes she had and she was beautifully adorned. They took her to a {{p5}} garden and there they killed her. Just think how many maid-servants and how many humble and submissive ones die in God's Cause! See how He trained them! It is not now understood, but many people hereafter will appear in the Cause and will be like the brilliancy of the sun. They may be attacked and taunted, but through humbleness and submission they will be enabled to spread the Cause. As they advance in His service, so they will be attracted to God, and as they give up their lives in the Cause of God, so also will they be enveloped by the assistance of Bahá'u'lláh. See the wonderful Power of the Manifestation that He has gathered us now! What great love! What a high degree of love! We must remember these meetings and their results will appear later. As the rain falls today upon the seed and the results appear afterwards, when it reaches the state of maturity it brings forth fruit. The tree has the power, but it is hidden, but, when it reaches the state of maturity, it stands forth. The Master hopes this will appear and be manifested in us.

Explanation of the First Portion of the Second Commune,

which is taken from the "Prayer of the Dawn."

This "Letter" means a person. As the word came forth from the Mouth, that person is the reflection of the Light of God. It is the Letter in which are all the mysteries of the Holy Books. It is the Letter that came forth from the Mouth of the Blessed Perfection.

"The seas moved" — the seas of existence; the seas of life; the seas of sciences; the seas of knowledge; the seas of understanding; the Seas of the Love of God rolled.

"The winds did blow" — these breezes are the causes of life to the trees. These are the fragrances which will revive the beloved of the Kingdom of God, and which will cause the fragrance to exhale from them.

"The fruits appeared" — the new conditions upon the earth began to manifest and appear.

"The trees began to thrive" — the trees are the people in the Paradise of Abhá, who, through the fragrance of this Letter will be nourished.

“The traces were destroyed” — these are the ancient traces which are destroyed by the Light. For example, the radiance of the Sun will destroy the sparkling of the star.

The Origin of Evil.

Evil does not exist. Death is only the lack of life; therefore death does not exist. Darkness is only the lack of light. Evil is only the lack of good. Ignorance is only the lack of knowledge. Poverty is the lack of riches. Misleading is the lack of guidance. Miserliness is the lack of generosity. The non-existence of light is darkness. The lack of sight is blindness. The lack of hearing is deafness. All these things are non-existent. God did not create any evil thing. God did not create a man poor. Poverty is only the lack of riches. Guidance is the Gift of God, and if a person is deprived of it, he will be misled, but he is not misled by God; it is only the lack of the Gift of Guidance. {{p6}}

Everything save man has one condition, but man has two. The animal has one condition or nature, but man has the animal nature (human) and the Divine nature (spiritual). If the Divine nature predominates he will be good, but if the human nature predominates he will be evil. One will lift him up, but the other will send him down to the lowest depths. Man can become so debased that he will worship a stone, which is of the lowest kingdom; but the spiritual will lift him to the Supreme Realms. Jesus Christ had the same two conditions, the earthly and the heavenly, and man has the same. Man has the power of knowledge which will exalt him to Heaven, and the power of ignorance which will debase him to the lowest condition. The more the person advances in Divine things, the more will he receive the Attributes of Light; and the more he retrogrades, the more will he receive the attributes of darkness. This world is dark and in darkness, but the Spiritual World is Light. This is the Heavenly Kingdom.

Children of unbelievers and infidels, who die before the age of responsibility, are not punished, because they are under the favor of God.

Universal Language in the Spiritual World.

There is a spiritual language and that is one language. It is a language by which the hearts speak to one another. It is not the language of utterance, but the language of the heart. In this material world there is also a material language of the heart and by which the hearts speak. There is a poem in Arabic which says, “We keep silent when love speaks,” and that is called the spiritual conversation. The original conversation was the spiritual conversation. The material language is nothing, but the spiritual language is everything. What we feel now we feel spiritually, as we are in a spiritual condition. For instance, there are some here and some in America and they are speaking together through the spirit. There is another poem in Persian which says of a lover speaking with his beloved: “I am speaking to you now without using my lips. I am speaking to you through

my love.” This is the spiritual language, the language of the Kingdom of God.

From this time, for the sake of the Blessed Perfection, you will endure many hardships; you will be persecuted severely; people will say evil things about you; they will shun you and they will seek to trouble you. When these trials come upon you, you must rejoice exceedingly, with great devotion and praise to your Lord that these calamities have come to you from God for His sake. If the people curse you, saying they are doing God’s service, that curse will be turned for you into a commemoration. In the days of Christ, Caiaphas was a most learned man and was greatly honored by the people, but now that praise is turned into a curse, while the disciples of Christ and Mary Magdalene, who were all cursed in that time, are now praised and worshiped, and their pictures and statues are now in the churches, and healing is asked of them. Therefore your calamities, hardships and troubles are for the Cause of God and are merciful ones. {{p7}}

The Abomination of Desolation.

The abomination of desolation is the one who appears and tries to destroy the Truth and make some changes in the teachings of God. He will destroy the foundation of the teachings of God from among the people. His intention is destruction, and it is divided into two parts, one physical and the other spiritual. The physical abomination of desolation is the razing and destroying of buildings. The spiritual abomination of desolation is the destruction of the teachings of God.

“Do animals have souls and so these souls exist after death?” The Master replied: Once it was said that the plant had a spirit and the spirit of the plant is the name which was given to it. Once it was said that the animal had a spirit, and the spirit of the animal is the sensation which it feels; that is, animals are a composition of the elements. They have feeling and sensation, but no mind (comprehension). For instance, the spirits of the birds cannot comprehend anything (reality), and cannot realize spiritual things. They cannot think about knowledge. The spirit of the animal can only feel and sense things, but can realize nothing about the spiritual. They are simply the results of the combination of the elements, and when they die nothing remains of them. Once it was said that man had a spirit and that power in the man was his sensation of reason. He can realize sensation and comprehend spiritual things. For instance, the globe of this world is round. Columbus discovered the existence of other lands than his own through his spiritual sense. All of the inventions, all of the arts and all of the improvements are by the power of the spirit in man. In past ages the existence of the elements was not known, but was afterwards discovered. In the Spirit of God, we — the believers — and the unbelievers, are called. “Let the dead bury their dead.” “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.” All who possess the Power of the Spirit are equal. The Spirit of the Kingdom is the favor of the Holy Ghost. Whosoever is granted that Power of the Spirit is one of the saved and believing ones, but otherwise he is a lamp without light.

The spiritual senses are numberless. They are the Perfections and Favors of God. The Spiritual Powers are the means of conveying to all the Spiritual Bounties vouchsafed to man.

Explanation of the Valley of Dry Bones, 37th chapter of Ezekial.

The Master said this meant the River of those who went before; that is to say, the religious laws of each preceding prophet are annulled by the succeeding one and are as dry bones. In the time of Christ the commands of Moses were as dry bones, and in this time all previous laws are as dry bones, but which are to be refreshed by the Great River of this time, and are to be clothed with the new sinews of Life by this Revelation. When the Blessed Perfection came, all previous things became as dry bones. {{p8}}

The Prodigal Son.

The “fatted calf” is the Heavenly Table of Knowledge; the “ring” is the Sign or Characteristics; the “sandals” are the symbol of action; the “robe” the Adornment or Embroidery of the Cause. Peter promulgated the Cause more than any other.

A question was asked regarding the elder brother and the Master replied: In any cycle or time some one has shown pride. In the time of Christ it was Judas. In the days of the Blessed Perfection, Şubh-i-Azal. Now it is the head of the Náqiđíne.

People must live for one another and not live in seclusion as the monks and nuns. People should not live solitary lives. Light is of no value in an empty room. A tree is of no service to anyone on the summit of a mountain, but should be in a place where it can give shade and where its fruits may be gathered. The Master also said the believers must always be together as much as possible. He said two lamps in a room give more light than one lamp, and that the believers are like flowers gathered from different bushes into one bouquet.

Man must work and in that work show the qualities of God and thus do good. His work, both material and spiritual, must show what he is. By his arts, sciences, inventions and all of his work he must show his best ability. It is better to do both kinds of work unless one is not in need materially, and then one may serve entirely.

At table one evening the Master said: The repast is divided into two parts, material and spiritual. We hope this is both. The Tables mentioned in the Bible are the Spiritual Tables. The effect of the material table lasts for twelve hours, but that which is Divine is Everlasting and Eternal. For example, Revelation is one of the Heavenly Tables. As an illustration, the knowledge revealed 2000 years ago we now feel the effect of and that effect will remain forever. Some of the Heavenly Tables are the Divine Teachings of this time, and their power and effect will {{p9}} be everlasting. Another of the Heavenly Tables is Love, which

is the Cause of Eternal Life. Some of the Tables are unity and harmony among the believers. As we are gathered here tonight, so the effect will remain forever.

Our Lord was asked the question, “Are those who truly believe in this Great Revelation saved?” He said: All believers have attained the Heavenly Gift, but each in a different degree. All have arrived at this Great Rolling Ocean, but each one has taken that which will quench his thirst.

Justice and Mercy.

God selects a few souls and bestows upon them His Special Gifts, for it says, “Many are called but few chosen.” This is not of the Justice, but of the Bounty of God. For illustration, children are to be fed with milk; but Guidance is a Perfect Bounty, therefore His Favor is Bounty. But the strength and power come through obedience and piety. For instance, a person may be apparently unsuited to receive the understanding, therefore the Spirit of Faith will be a Gift which God bestows upon whom He chooses. God bestows His Mercy upon whomsoever He wishes. If the creatures act according to the Commandments, this has nothing to do with Mercy, but is Obedience. For illustration, a man called Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥasan was made to attain the Gift, therefore the station of the Bounty and Mercy is altogether different from that of Justice. If a person does everything in Heaven and earth, he may not be fitted to receive the Gift of God. For example, a king has many officials, but those who are called to sit with him and associate with him are few. Again, for instance, a monk, who worships God morning and eve for sixty years may yet be excluded, and perhaps a very simple person may attain the Godly Bounty. Like Caiaphas and Annas, who were excluded, but Peter succeeded in attaining. In the time of Muḥammad, Abu Jahl, who was entitled “The Father of Wisdom” by the people, and Abu Amir, who were two great learned ones among the Arabs, were excluded, while Suhaib, the basket maker, and ‘Abdu’l Rahman, another humble one, attained the Gift. The real intention in this teaching is that it refers to spiritual children, and the real relationship between the prodigal son and the elder brother is spiritual and not physical. For example, the real brothers of Jesus Christ were His spiritual brothers. Canaan was one of the children of Noah, but only physically, not spiritually. All of you are the spiritual descendents of the Blessed Perfection because He is the Father of all.

The Three Baptisms.

We are told in the Bible of the Baptism of Water and of the Spirit, and also of the Baptism of Spirit and of Fire, and these are the Three Baptisms.

Number Nine of the Greatest Name.

Number nine (9) is the last number and it is the greatest number. Number ten (10) is simply the continuation of the number one (1) because number 10 is 1 and 100 is 1. Place the units up $\{\{p10\}\}$ to 10 and we simply return to the

number 1, but they will be ended at 9. One cannot find any number greater than 9 written in one digit, and of all numbers it is the highest. Also, in the tens 90 is the highest, and in the hundreds 900 is the highest. Then see if you can find any number greater than 9 to be written. In a digit. All other numbers are simply a repetition of other digits. So number 9 is the highest, and from it all other numbers are made. Write all the digits up to the number 9. Now, through adding 0 one can reach any number one likes. It simply originates from number 1 to 9. For example, the calculation of the number of the word “Báb” is number 5, and Bahá is 9. Now, if you multiply 9 by 5 you have 45. Now 45 is the Arabic numerical value of the word Adam.

Aliph equals 1 Dal equals 4 Mim equals 40 and the sum of all is 45

As Adam is the Father of Humanity and it means the real man, therefore the product of the number of the Báb and Bahá is equal to the number of Adam. There is no great difference between the Greatest Name and the name of Adam. In their nature they are one. Also, 1 plus 2 = 3; 3 plus 3 = 6; 6 plus 4 = 10; 10 plus 5 = 15; 15 is the number of Eve. By the physical marriage of Adam and Eve the whole race originated, and by the appearance of the Manifestation and the Báb, the Spiritual Generation originated. Therefore there is great knowledge and understanding when the two names are made into one, because if you add from 1 to 9 consecutively, it is equal to the number of Bahá and Báb multiplied together, which equals 45, and it is equal to the number of Adam, and this is the wisdom in it. Also, in the fractions, the greatest is 1/9. Also .9 is the greatest decimal. The Name of Christ in numbers has no relation to the Name of Bahá'u'lláh, because the Name of the Messiah of the Jews is a Hebrew name, and in order to compare them we must take both names in Arabic. His name was Jesus. The Name of God which Christ gave to His disciples was the Name of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. It was the same spiritually, but it was a name which was never pronounced. All the bible was written for Bahá'u'lláh. Everywhere “The Lord of Hosts” refers to the Manifestation.

Advance always in the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh; make always thy heart occupied by the mentioning of Bahá'u'lláh; consider that only in your eyes is Bahá'u'lláh; in your heart is Bahá'u'lláh; in your inmost heart is Bahá'u'lláh. If you fall into trouble, say “Ya-Bahá'u'l-Abhá;” and if anyone oppose you, say “Ya-Bahá'u'l-Abhá.” Even when you may be in your work, mention “Ya-Bahá'u'l-Abhá.” Thou wilt be blamed for My sake; thou wilt be injured for My sake; people will attribute to thee infidelity for My sake; thou wilt bear trouble for My sake. Be encouraged and not fear; it happened just the same in the time of Jesus Christ.

Our Blessed Lord said: “Know the greatness of these days.” {{p11}}

A Conversation with Abú'l-Qásim, the Gardener of the Riḍván, September, 1901

This conversation took place in the general reception room of our Lord's House, in the Holy city of 'Akká, Syria.

Abú'l-Qásim came in, bringing to us three pilgrims (Herbert Hopper of Paris, Thomas Breakwell of England, and Isabella D. Brittingham of America) many beautiful flowers from the Riḍván. The Riḍván is a beautiful Garden situated on the outskirts of 'Akká, and which has been made sacred by the frequent Visits of the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh. (Riḍván means Paradise.) In the Garden there is a little house where Abú'l-Qásim lives, and where Bahá'u'lláh often went to rest and to commune. He used to occupy a small cane seat chair by a window in the upper room of the house. Since His Departure that chair has been covered with flowers, and pilgrims coming to the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, visit — by His Direction — that Holy Garden, and bear those flowers away to all parts of the world.

The following are the incidents which Abú'l-Qásim related concerning the Visits of the Blessed Perfection to the Riḍván:

At one time when the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, was in His little room at the Riḍván, a swarm of locusts filled the Garden. This troubled Abú'l-Qásim and he sought the Presence of the Blessed Perfection and told Him of their being there. The Blessed Perfection replied: "Go and entertain them. They are our guests." Abú'l-Qásim obeyed, gathering all the fruits and vegetables he could find, and placed them in the Garden. the locusts rapidly devoured these and then flew up and settled upon all the trees, shrubs and flowers, and upon every part of the Garden.

Again the gardener sought the Blessed Perfection, and expressed his fear that the insects would destroy everything, and especially the mulberry trees. The Blessed Perfection replied: "This is well. Let them devour them." The gardener supplicated: "This will not be good, for there will be no shade trees for Thee under which to sit." The Blessed Perfection replied: "Because you not wish them to remain, every well." And He then went down into the middle of the Garden, took the hem of His garment in His Hand, and, waving it, uttered thrice, these words: "Abú'l-Qásim does not want you! God Protect you!" Immediately, upon His uttering these words, the locusts arose in a body and flew away. There were many hundreds of them.

At another time Abú'l-Qásim was trying to beautify the fountain in the Garden, and he placed a tube in its apex to add to the grace of its flow. He also arranged some candles so that they would illuminate the spray of the fountain at nightfall. Then He sought the Blessed Perfection and supplicated Him to visit the Garden and see the fountain. The Blessed Perfection replied: "It is well. Ask the man to make ready the horses and I will go." When all was ready and they had started

for the Ridván, Abú'l-Qásim plead(ed) to be permitted to go {{p12}} on before Him and put the fountain in running order, the Blessed Perfection replied: “No, you have already walked here from the Garden.” When about half way there Abú'l-Qásim renewed his entreaty, and this time the Blessed Perfection granted it. In the twinkling of an eye the gardener found himself in the Garden, but was unable to explain how he arrived there. He turned on the water and, when the Blessed Perfection appeared in the Garden, He said to the one who attended to the horses: “Abú'l-Qásim does not understand how he reached the Garden so quickly. He does not know whether he flew, or walked, or ran.”

After seeing the improved flow of the fountain, the Blessed Perfection was about to depart, but Abú'l-Qásim supplicated that He would remain and see the illuminating effect of the candles. The Blessed Perfection said to him: “O Abú'l-Qásim! Know, verily, that it was prophesied and foretold that the fire would be conflagrating amidst the waters; and this is the time and now here is the fulfillment of that prophecy.” (N.B. — A deeper meaning is involved.)

Once, when the Blessed Perfection was sitting in His room in the Ridván, and Abú'l-Qásim was in the lower room with ‘Abdu’l Sali (the uncle of the Master, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) who had also come to the Ridván, — a man named Mírzá Musa knocked for admittance. The gardener went to the door, and then came in to the Blessed Perfection reporting: “It is the Master, Mírzá Musa.” The Blessed Perfection replied, looking intently at Abú'l-Qásim:

“The Master is One, and only One. Everyone else has his own name; but the Master is One. The Master is the Greatest branch. The Master is the Greatest Mystery of God. The Master is THE MASTER!”

At another time the Blessed Perfection instructed the gardener, Abú'l-Qásim, to attend to some business for Him, He and the Master both being in the Ridván. The Master, meeting Abú'l-Qásim just afterward, instructed him to go in to ‘Akká and bring them some food for supper.

The gardener sought the Blessed Perfection and supplicated that he might tell Him of the Master’s Command. The Blessed Perfection, Bahá’u’lláh, said in reply to Abú'l-Qásim:

“That is very well. You must go. You must do everything that the Master says. Everything the Master says is just the same as if I said it. He is ME, and I am HE. There is no difference between My Commands and the Commands of the Master.”

When the Blessed Perfection first reached ‘Akká, He was confined in prison. Later on, after His release, He went immediately to the Ridván, remaining there twelve days, and having all the believers with Him. After those twelve days, He

returned to His abode. But coming or going, He would always visit the Riḍván.
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At another time Abú'l-Qásim came, in the early morning, to the Blessed Perfection, bearing to Him a bouquet of roses. When the Blessed Perfection inquired of him concerning the Garden, the gardener supplicated His Presence there, in the afternoon, saying: "You will see it when you come and bless it." The Blessed Perfection then said: "We have much work to do." The gardener replied: "Your work is never finished. But mine, in the Garden — if my work amounts to anything — will be finished by noon." The Blessed Perfection then promised to visit the Garden in the afternoon, and permitted Abú'l-Qásim to leave.

In the Afternoon a severe storm arose. Abú'l-Qásim prepared the samovar with its little charcoal fire, and placed it in the room of the Blessed Perfection, awaiting His arrival, in order to prepare some tea for Him. Then he climbed on to the roof of the house in order to command a wider outlook, and sat there a long time drenched to the skin from the rain, watching for the approach of the Blessed Perfection. After a time he saw the carriage looming up in the distance, and hastened down to make all things ready. And then he met the Blessed Perfection at the entrance to the Garden, with an umbrella, and walked by His side holding it over Him. The Blessed Perfection turned to Abú'l-Qásim and said:

"All the Household begged of Me to remain at home in this storm, but I said: 'No, I must go because I have promised.'"

Then the Blessed Perfection ascended the steps to His room. But before He reached the room the storm suddenly ceased.

Once the Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, were both in the Riḍván. Abú'l-Qásim brought a chair and gave it to the Blessed Perfection, and the Master turned and went up stairs to the room of the Blessed Perfection.

Turning to Abú'l-Qásim, the Blessed Perfection said: "Know thou, verily! All are creatures, — but the MASTER IS NOT."

Once the Blessed Perfection said: "If any one offers a cup of water, in the Day of God, for My sake, it will be greater than future offerings of mountains of diamonds and gold."

The Blessed Perfection, Bahá'u'lláh, said at one time when in the Riḍván: "This Garden is like the Garden of the Martyrs."

Abú'l-Qásim said that sometimes Bahá'u'lláh slept in His room at the Riḍván. At such times Abú'l-Qásim never slept, but, in his devotion, remained watching.

One night, sitting thus before the door of the room of the Blessed Perfection, being weary, sleep overpowered him. He was awakened by a touch upon his neck, and beheld the Blessed Perfection standing beside him, Who said to him: “You were sleeping and I awakened you.” He told the gardener to come into the room, and then He said to him: “Do you see this Garden? Do you see all these stones? All will be destroyed. But the time will come when these will be renewed, and then they will be fixed for all. {{p14}}

But the people will not be satisfied, but will bring marble. even this will not satisfy them. They will bring one brick of silver and one brick of gold. But these stones, in My Eyes, are greater than gold or silver the people will bring. And in that time the people will weep and cry, and will say: ‘What a great time was that when Abú’l-Qásim used to serve in this Garden!’ and they will beg to be permitted to visit this Place.

One day the Blessed Perfection said to Abú’l-Qásim: “All the trees in the Garden are mentioning thee, are saying that thou art doing thy best to serve them.”

The next day He again visited the Ridván, and while there He said: “I have never enjoyed being in any Garden as much as in this one, and I have never seen so beautiful a Garden.”

This was the last time before His Ascension that the Blessed Perfection, Bahá’u’lláh, ever visited the Garden.

Abú’l-Qásim said to us: “It seems to me that my inmost heart is melting when I am stating these incidents.

“None of the believers realize the greatness of these days, and that this is THE DAY for which the world was created. If the people will cut themselves from self and from the world, they will realize it; but, on account of their materiality, they are veiled from realization of it.”

He said the Blessed Perfection said, and the Master says: “Know the greatness of these days.”

Abú’l-Qásim also said that he could not possibly relate or convey the wonderfulness of the many events, or the power of the many experiences, which occurred in the Ridván.

[END]