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author: William Sears  
title: Pilgrim Notes notes: ...

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## Pilgrim Notes

Curtis Kelsey

1921

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502 Grenville Avenue,

West Englewood, N. J.

### STATEMENT BY CURTIS D. KELSEY OF EXPERIENCES IN WHICH HE PARTICIPATED, A PART OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH IN AMERICA.

Our family first heard of the appearance of the Bahá'í Revel Revelation around 1909, through Mrs. Latimer, mother of George Latimer. George and his mother were early and very active believers on Pacific Coast. We were all living at Portland, Oregon at the time. Mrs. Latimer and ay mother were very dear friends and together they participated in club and civic affairs.

Mrs. Latimer was very anxious that my mother know about the Faith and somehow she managed always to swing the conversation around to comments about the Faith. Mother would bring these comments and what little literature she received home to the family and try it out on us. However, we treated her comments politely, but it made very little impression upon us. The reason being that our family was drifting away from serious attention to religious beliefs. My father as a boy had decided against membership in any particular church because he could not accept the disunity in Christian beliefs, there were so many branches of the same Faith and he did not like the dogmatism and the critical attitude they held towards each other. He decided that all that was necessary to do was to live up to ones idealism and carry out one's life with integrity, honesty etc. In those days father was very active in the West. He was a well known Civil, Hydraulic and electrical engineer and he had great deal to do with power and irrigation development in this country. I had reached the point where I thought his outlook was very good and adopting the same pattern

I shall always be grateful to my beloved parents for the freedom they imparted to us from the usual fixed pattern of the day, such as belonging to any one of the hundreds of concepts of Christianity. Of course, mother sent us to Sunday school as we grew up, but she made it very clear to us that we did not have to accept any particular belief. This resulted in our associating with various groups. We attended Baptism, Congregational, Unitarian, Christian Science, New Thought and other groups. And finally we were letting go of any fixed attendance with any group. Mother brought her family up this way because she did not like the fear engendered when she was a girl and she was finished also with the dogmatic literal interpretation of the Bible. So she decided that her children would not be subjected to the same limited experience. She knew that there must be some other answer to life's problems.

You can see from what I have told you that we should have been ready ground for the Bahá'í teachings. But at the time we were first hearing of the Faith very little was being given out. There were many mixed up ideas that were being given out by some of the early believers, that we later found were not Bahá'í. I can remember when they would refer to 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a great Persian philosopher, teacher and etc. They expected he would soon come to America. They were not sure he would come as far as Portland. Mrs. Latimer said, she heard that he would be in California and she and mother planned to go there to see him. However, circumstances prevented their having that wonderful bounty. Several years passed and our family had moved to Tacoma Washington. One day my mother announced that Admiral Remey's son, Mason Remey and Roy Wilhelm would be in Tacoma in a day or two. She said, she was going to arrange a meeting at our home where her friends could come here and hear them talk about the Bahá'í Cause. The day came and some 40

Well if any of you have ever had this Illinois, you know what a severe headache goes along with the Illinois. One night mother had given me a large ice pack to try and stop the pain and make me more comfortable. However, it did not seem to relieve the pressure and I can remember my turning over and pushing my head in the pillow to try and get relief. While I was doing this I heard a full piece orchestra in the room. I was aware that it was not a physical experience, but I could hear all the instruments very clearly. At the same time the pain stopped instantly. I turned around quickly and sat up in bed and called to my mother. She came in quickly thinking something had happened. But it was not what she expected. When I told her what had taken place, she brought in the Bahá'í books, saying, perhaps we can find the answer in the Bahá'í writings. We stayed up most of the night talking about the experience and reading. We were both reading very carefully and as I read, I said, mother this is all true, why have you not shown me this before. She said, I have been trying to tell you about it for nine years and you always said you were not interested. This only goes to show that the statement, "God screens us evermore from premature ideas... our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare as in the face until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened..., then we behold then, and the time when we saw them not is like a dream.

The next morning when the doctor came in he was very surprised to find no sitting up in bed. He was interested in the experience but had no answer for it. Several days later the doctor allowed the Bahá'ís to come into to see me and the following two weeks were ones I shall never forget. Into the room came Howard Ives, Mary Ranford Yard, Hooper Harris, Roy, Mrs. Florian Krug and many others, so you now I heard a great deal during their visits and it really a wonderful time. When well and able to leave the house I camped on the door steps and meetings of the friends every here. I could not seem to get enough of the teachings and also I wanted to find some explanation of the experience I had been through. The right answer did not come to me until several years later while at Haifa. Palestine, in 1921. One day in talking with the beloved Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he told me that the experience was spiritual, that it was real and that the music I heard was of the Kingdom, and that it had caused my spirit to become awakened. Sometime later I read a tablet written to another believer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who had had a similar experience. In the early days many people enter the Faith through experience. You will recall from a previous statements that I had practically closed the door to any mental focus of attention. This condition can be almost as bad as an orthodox position.

One day I was down at 104 Wall Street to see Roy and to have lunch with him. After lunch and when I was saying goodbye, Roy said, How would you like to go to Haifa? I replied that I would like nothing better, but I did not think there was such chance of my doing so. Roy said, well you don't know, you never can tell and we parted. Several 'woks later I received a cable from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and it read, CURTIS KELSEY PERMITTED, signed 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ 'ABBÁS. With the receipt of this cable I had a very strong impression that I must do everything possible to arrive in Haifa as quickly as possible I thought it would take about 20 days. Our family were now living at New Rochelle, N. Y. I must say right here, that all through these related experiences, my father was friendly with the Bahá'ís, but gave it no attention as he was too preoccupied with his business affairs. He was beginning to think it was taking up too much of my time etc. Like many young men I had very little money and I was planning on ways to raise the funds to go to Haifa. I had an old model T Ford and I drove it down town one evening around six o'clock. I stopped at a grocery store where I knew several fellows there. It was during the rush hour and I called out to the boys and said, how would you like to buy my ford. It took them by surprise and they did not answer right away so I started to walk out. One of the boys came running over and said, wait a minute Curt, if that buggy of yours can climb a certain hill here in town, I'll give you \$150.00 for it. I said, hop in and over the hill we went in high gear. I knew it would be alright, because I just cleaned the spark plugs, in the car. Now I had my first money and I sold several other items. All this time, I had not said a word to my father about what I was planning to do. Not being a Bahá'í I also knew he would not understand why I was going to make the trip. I could understand his attitude but I wasn't ready yet to tell him about the trip. Then I went to see Roy and when he found I was serious about making the trip, he gave me \$500.00 towards the trip. I found

out that he had written to the Master about my coming over to Haifa that he knew a young man who could set up the lighting plants there. Some time ago Roy had read the statement of the Báb in the Bayán, “How veiled are ye, O my creatures who without any right, have consigned Him unto a mountain, (that is the fortress of Maku) not one of whose inhabitants is worthy of mention... With Him, which is me, there is no one except him who is one of the letters of the Living of My Book. In his presence, there is not at night even a lighted lamp. And yet, in places of (worship) which in varying degrees reach out unto Him unnumbered lamps are shining! All that is on earth hath been created for Him, and all partake with delight of His benefits, and yet they are so veiled from Him as to refuse Him even a lamp.” After reading this statement Roy had written to the Master and asked permission to send a lighting plant over to light the Shrine of the Báb. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá cabled back and told Roy to send three lighting plants. Roy being one of those Bahá’ís who acted at once on a request from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá immediately made arrangements to send the three plants to Haifa. These plants had been at Haifa for a year or two when he had written to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about my coming over to install them.

Now having almost \$700.00 in hand I felt it was time to talk to my father about the trip. Just as I expected he was not in favour of my making such a trip. He said, here you are a young man just getting started in life and you are planning to go half way around the world to do this work and they are not even paying you for the work. If you go ahead with your plans, do not expect any help from me. You must be taking leave of your senses to even think of such a thing. Of course I could understand his point of view, but I said Dad, I just have to make this trip. Then he said, well if you are set on it, go ahead, but don’t expect any help from me, so I went ahead with plans. I then went to the steamship office and told them I wanted to reach Haifa in 18 or 20 days. They told me I could not make it in that time as it would at least 30 or more days. Nevertheless I bought my ticket via Paris, Naples, Alexandria, Cairo and Haifa, a day or two later I left New York and quite a number of friends came down to say goodbye and my father was also along. He mewed over to me to say goodbye and in doing so placed something in my hand. Later when I opened the envelope I found nearly \$200.00. On reaching Paris I made immediate inquiry about sailing out of Naples and was told there would not be any for two or three weeks. I said, well. I’ll go on to Naples anyway perhaps something will happen. They told me to stay there, that I would have more fun in Paris. I said, no thanks and continued my trip to Naples. On arriving there and at the steamship office they confirmed the report received at Paris. However I told them I would be down the next morning to see them again about sailings. The man said, no don’t do that, we know our business but let me have your hotel where you are staying and if anything happens, which I’m sure will not as quick as you expect, I will call. This satisfied me and I returned to the hotel. That night he telephoned me at the hotel and said, How did you know that the Esperia was putting into port here. I replied that I didn’t know it. He then said, the boat had put in here to take off a sick passenger who has a first class passage on to Alexander, do you

want it for the rest of the way. I said, yes brother hold it for me and I was again soon on the way. On this part of the journey from Naples to Alexandria I met Mr. Charles Dana who had charge of American missionary work in the Near East. He was interested in why as a young man was travelling to Haifa and of course I told him all about the trip. He told me he was going on to Beirut and that he knew a number of Bahá'í students at the university there and that the fine students. He asked why it was that the Bahá'í were able to win so many Muḥammadians to accept the teachings. He doubted if all their own efforts had made sincere converts to Christianity. I said, we were successful because we did whittle down or belittle the teachings of Muḥammad. That the Bahá'ís as bringing the same message. And as a matter of fact Muḥammad, himself had questioned the Arabians on their not accepting the previous prophets. Mr. Dana stopped off with me at Haifa and went up to see the Shrine of the Báb. Then he went on to Beirut. Our train reached Haifa waiting there at the station was Dr. Lotfulla Ḥakím and Fugeta who is Japanese. They drove me up to the Western Pilgrim House in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's high buckboard wagon. The pilgrim was then, was then located on the lower end of Persian street. The front steps faced the sea looking towards 'Akká. On arrival there I found western friends and Mde. Standard who had arrived from the East. The dining table was all set and we were waiting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá who was resting, in one of the rooms off from this central. We had only been talking a few minutes when the door opened and through it came the majestic figure of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and looking in my direction he said, Mahaber, Mahaber, You are welcome, you are welcome. Then he seated us all at the table and he asked after the health of the friends etc. Then turning again to me he said, did you notice how easy it was for you to come here. I replied that I had and then it dawned on me that I had reached Haifa within the time I had set myself, about 20 days. After lunch the Master bid us all goodbye, told us to rest and that he would see us again that night. For the next 15 days I was busy around Haifa that were out of order. There were two cars in the Master's garage, a Cunningham and a Ford. They were out of order because no one knew how to fix so no minor trouble. This also I took care of. I also put in my time getting the different parts of the three lighting plants ready to install and I was putting out of things to do. I wanted to get started at the work of setting up the plants, but I didn't dare ask the Master because I knew he would tell me when he was ready. One day I was standing directly in front of the Master's house in the street talking to Rúḥí Effendi, and I said, Rúḥí when do you think 'Abdu'l-Bahá is going to let me start the work. This will take quite some time and if I don't get started I'll never get back home. Rúḥí said, I don't know. Just after the comment 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to the doorway of his house and called to us and said, We will start the work tomorrow and went back in the house. I know he couldn't have heard as talking as we were in the center of the street and at least a hundred or more feet from the house. That night we were told that the Master was going to visit the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and that I was to go along. Dr. Lotfulla, Fugeta and I shared a room together just off the rear doorway to the pilgrim house. The next morning before any of were up, there stood the Master at the doorway to our room. The foot of

my bed faced the door. He bade us to rest and then said to me, I cannot go to Bahjí today, what shall I do about it. I answered at once, that when the Master was ready I would be ready and he said. Bali, very good and left. That afternoon word came over to us that we were going to Bahjí. About 5 o'clock that evening Kosrow, Rúhí Effendi and I went down to the railroad station with the Master, where we were to ride the train of the little narrow gauge Turkish rail to 'Akká. It made the sixteen mile trip over at night and came back the next morning. Well the Master did not get on the train right away He sat down in the station and waited for someone. The conductor quite worried as he wanted to get started. They had to reach 'Akká before sunset because after sunset the gates to the city were closed and you would have to stay outside the walled city until morning. Finally an Arab came into the station and had a talk with the Master then the Master got up and went on to the train. The engineer pushed the train we reached the station outside 'Akká before sunset. But the Master sat down in the station and waited. Rúhí and I stood and waited. The sun had gone down and the moon was rising. Pretty soon Kaled one of the caretakers at the Bahjí came into sight leading the white donkey of the Master. He stood with us and waited also. Right after out of the dusk, came a tall Arab, who went into the station where he talked with the Master. In a few minutes the Master came out mounted the donkey and we started off to Bahjí about two and one half miles north east of 'Akká. Rúhí was walking on the left side of the donkey, I on the right side and Kaled was leading the donkey. It was a wonderful night, the air was just right and white clouds were floating met a full moon. The Master would pull his Abba around his shoulders and then he would comment beautiful clouds, beautiful moon, wonderful night etc. Then he turned and asked if I was finding it hard to walk and of course I told him I wasn't. I didn't even notice my steps I was so intent on the Master. In those years the land outside 'Akká, Bahjí and Haifa was just wild land and at night the jackals come out and howl like the coyotes in our Western country. In a half hour or so we reached the Bahjí. The Bahjí is really a group of buildings, the main building being the Loftly Mansion where Bahá'u'lláh lived and where he received Prof. Edward G. Browne. The living quarters are on the second floor. To the left, northeast of the Mansion and separated from it were a group of six one story buildings. At the north end of this group is the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. In this year 1921 the Mansion was not in possession of the Bahá'ís so that night when we reached there with 'Abdu'l-Bahá we stayed in the end of building at the south end of the smaller group. In this building you walked up several steps into a small court room off of which branched four rooms, an inner garden with an orange tree and a kitchen. Kosrow had gone ahead of us and dinner was ready when we got there. The main dish was a small squash stuffed with rice, meat candied orange peel. There were bowls of must, sour milk, also oranges, pomegranates and most unusual grapes, large bunches 12 or more inches long. The skin of the grapes so tender, that you hardly noticed it when eating them. We also had glasses of tea. While we were eating and talking, there in Arabic and I was anxious to know what was being said, so when this man left then they told me of the conversation. In the garden at Bahjí 'Abdu'l-Bahá had

some sweet orange trees and someone had been stealing them. The Master had asked this Arab at dinner, if it was not a custom among the nomad Arabs that if the father had not stolen during the day, his wife would not let him come in the tent at night. The Arab replied that this was true. Then the Master asked this man if he had ever been kept out of the tent and he said no. Then the Master asked him if he had ever tried the sour oranges with sugar on them and he said he had not. The result was that in the next few days someone began to steal the sour oranges at Bahjí. After dinner we went with the Master to pray at the threshold of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Before we entered the shrine we removed our shoes, then Rúhí and I stood behind the Master as he chanted the Tablet of Visitation. After this, 'Abdu'l-Bahá turned to Rúhí and gave instructions that the beautiful rugs and other things were to be taken to 'Akká. We didn't know that the Master knew what was going to happen a short time after this visit. We spent the night at Bahjí and the next morning we went into the yard back of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh and the Master asked me how I would light the shrine. I told him then he made me acquainted with two of the friends who had just arrived from 'Akká. He said these men will help you put up the building for the light plant. After this we walked back to house where we were staying and there waiting for us was Asfendir with the Master's four seated, high buckboard wagon. In a short time we were on our way to 'Akká, where we visited the Most Great Prison and then we went to the House of Aubud. While we were there the chief of the Druses with his two sons arrived and we soon sat down to dinner. The Chief was very unhappy and wept. All the time the Master would try and cheer him. Later I found he was weeping because he sensed something serious was going to happen to the Faith. This man was in his 90's. Right after dinner we said goodbye to these friends and with the rafter we started driving back to Haifa along the seashore. About halfway back the sun was just setting over Mount Carmel. It is such beautiful sunset that I asked the rafter if we could stop while I took a picture and he complied. This picture came out as one of my best photographs. We soon reached Haifa and before bidding good night he said he wished me to complete tree lighting of the Shrine of the Báb and of Bahá'u'lláh so that the lights could be turned on at the same time. I must digress here to tell you that other friends of Roy knew of his sending of the three lighting plants to Haifa. Mrs. Franklin paid the expenses of a young man from California to go to Haifa and do this work. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would work and sent him back to America. Another young man (Ḥusayn Caribi) a Persian believer living in India, learned about these plans and he had had some experience in electrical work so he went to Haifa and asked the Master if he could not do the work. The Master, however, told him no that the time was not yet, but that later he would send for him and he could help with the work. Just before I started the work the Master made me acquainted with Hosien and said, he is your friend and he will help you with the work. He does not speak English and you do not speak Persian, but you will get along. I can assure you before very long we were getting along very well. At the start for instance if I wanted to know the name in Persian and I would do the same in English and it was surprising how quick we get along. In order to accomplish the Master's

instructions we would have to work two weeks at Bahjí and then return to Haifa and work two weeks at the Shrine of the Báb. While at Haifa, I would have to come down from the mountain at noon time and have lunch with the Master. I would remove my work clothes, wash up and rush into the dining room. For several weeks there were no visiting friends so at lunch time there would be The Master, Rúhí Afnán, Fugita and myself. One day the Master asked Fugita, what was holding Kelsey up? Fugita told him that I was changing my work clothes and cleaning up. He said, you tell Kelsey to come in without changing his clothes. So I had to come to the table in my work clothes from then on. If I told you everything that happened at these times this story would run into a book. One thing I would like to convey and leave with you is the wonderful spirit and presence of the Master. The wholesomeness of this personality, his complete simplicity were disarming, made you feel at rest and forgetful of yourself. The radiance of the love he projected upon one is something you cannot describe. Love is a spiritual quality which passes from one to another. One experienced I believe you never can forget it. We never left his presence without a longing desire to be of real service to the Cause of God. Fugita had a lovely brown cat that the Master liked and sometimes we would hide it just before the Master came to lunch. The Master would always say let the cat out and the cat would run over to him and rub up against his feet. At the table, the Master would push his chair back and feed the cat. It was wonderful to see the Master relax at these times. Sometimes he would push his turban back on his head and sit there reading the paper or mail he had received during the day. Sometimes long periods passed without even a word being said. You felt you could sit in his presence as long as he would let you. In those days the subject of life after death interested me, so one day I said to the Master, thinking I would get a quick answer, what is the difference between the life of the cat and that of ourselves. The Master did not answer directly, but he gave a short talk on what happens when we take food into the body, how it is passed through the various organs of the body, how it is digested, refined, purified and then that which is of value to the body is used and that which is of no value is left behind. At the time it did not seem to answer the question but in later years I found it did. Think over the statement from the teachings, "We have placed mankind in the alembic and after due refining processes, the believers are the fragrant extracts thereof." Then the Master rose from the table and walked across the floor and as he did so his foot struck a loose tile. He stopped, looked at the loose tile and then said, It is progressing and it is possible for it to reach the state of a mirror (human temple).

It was not possible to hide, anything about yourself from the Master. If you were sensitive you knew and felt this and that he knew you better than you know yourself. An instance of this is shown in this story. On Sunday afternoons it was customary for us to go to the Shrine of the Báb and after a visit at the shrine, we would rather in the central front room of the shrine building and hear the master talk about the Faith. On these occasions there would be 30 or more believers present. The talks were in Persian or Arabic and I did



not understand what was being said, but always being present. Under these conditions my thoughts would drifting and I would be thinking about the various statements in the teachings that I didn't understand and some things I was questioning. While I was thinking this way, I heard an inner voice say, look up. I responded at Gaza and over in the opposite corner from where I was sitting sat the Master, He was looking directly at me and smiling. As soon as I looked into his face the doubts and questions vanished. At Haifa, in the evening around seven o'clock trio on would gather in the left front room of the Master's house to hear him speak about the Cause. The Master would usually sit in the corner of the room and the men would sit around the room with the chain against the wall and facing the Master. We always remove our shoes before entering the rooms would sit with their arms folded and no one spoke unless the Master spoke to them or asked then a question. The Master would sometimes say a few words to me in English, ask after my health and how the work was going along etc. One evening he asked me if I understood what was being said. I replied that I loved being present but that I did not understand Persian or Arabic. The Master replied, Well your heart understands and the language of the heart is much more important than words.

You might like this story about wiring the shrines. The wire that was sent over was of the knob and tube type to place on the surface of the wall and I did not like the idea of placing this black wire on the walls of the shrine. So one day I asked the tester if he would permit me to go to Cairo to see if I could get some lead covered wire and switches so that I could imbed it in the walls out of sight. The Master said I could go and that Fugita had always wanted to visit Cairo so he could go along with me. Fugita was delighted with the idea of this trip and said now I can wear my tuxedo. When he arrived at Haifa a number of years ago he had a Whole trunk full of good clothes that he had never been able to use around Haifa. I had known Fugita in America and he had been at our home many times. At the invitation of the Master, Fugita had travelled part of the trip with him across America. The Master told Fugita to study certain subjects at college and one day he would send for him to come to Haifa. Shortly after the first World war he came to Haifa as the Master had promised and a few years after our beloved Guardian was in Haifa, Shoghi Effendi asked him to return to Japan to teach and help the friends there. Fugita is now living in Tokyo. Now back to our story. Fugita was very fastidious. It loved to dress up and at the same time he was full of life and fun. Together we made quite a pair. He was short about 5'8" and I just six feet. With the 4 or 6 inch beard that the Master had him grow; when people saw us coming along they stopped to look a second time. When we got off the train at Cairo it was night and quite dark. We didn't know just exactly where we would stay while in Cairo. While we were thinking of IAA our next move would be Fugita heard someone talking and said, that sounds like American and we moved over to where we heard the voices. To our surprise we ran into the Norse family. Mother two sons and daughter. They were on their way to Haifa and were they surprised to see us. And when they found out what we were to do they said, but where are you

going to stay. We said we don't know just yet. Mrs. Norse said, that settles it you are going with us and we will not take no for an answer. So off we went to the famous Continental Hotel. Fugita hadn't slept in a good bed since he left America and I hadn't for several months. Well, when they ushered us into our room 20 foot square and high ceilings. When the door opened Fugita dropped his bags stood there for a second or two looking at the two beds which were about three feet above the floor. Then Fugita ran and dove across the foot of the bed landing in the middle and the feather bedding folded right up around. For a minute or two I didn't see him then out of the feather bed the first thing saw was this little head with a moth eaten beard, and it many looked small in the middle of this great big bed. Well, Fuge put on his tuxedo and down we went to the large dining room. Fuge made quite an impression and he was enjoying it. All eyes were on our table. You could sense people saying who is this person. It became more so when into the dining room walked a colorfully uniformed person and spoke to Fugita and said a Persian gentleman wished to speak with him. Fugita excused himself bowed to us and left the room with this man. Through the doorway we could see the man who asked to see Fugita greet him, embrace him and kiss his beard. All the Persian Bahá'ís knew that the Master loved Fugita, had had him grow his beard and often would tease Fugita by pulling it. Fugita would have tea early every morning with the Master and he made him laugh a great deal. The friends knew this and loved Fugita for it. We had quite a wonderful stay at Cairo accomplished our task and were soon back at Haifa. When we left Cairo many of the friends came out and sent us off with baskets of fruit and flowers.

With the new materials we brought book from Cairo we were able to put in concealed wiring in both the Shrine of the Báb and of Bahá'u'lláh. One morning just before we started work, word was brought excitedly to the house that Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Ḥasan Afnán had drowned himself in the sea. Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Ḥasan belonged to the family of the Báb and for many years had been living in Haifa across the street and directly in front of the Master's house. He settled up all his affairs after which he walked down to the sea, folded his clothes lay them on the shore, then walked into the sea and drowned. He was an elderly man living by himself at Haifa. He would see end talk with the Master quite often. He had had a great deal of suffering throughout his life and when the funeral procession passed in front of the Master's house, 'Abdu'l-Bahá came out into the street and placed a corner of the casket on his own shoulders and walked in the procession. (You can see a picture of this in Vol. 12, No. 18 of the Star of the West.) That evening in the men's meeting the Master spoke to us of the subject of suicide. Some of the words he spoke were these; "We must never take our own life, you must not injure yourselves or commit suicide." He said that God never placed upon us a burden greater than we could carry. Each burden was for our own good and development. He further said, should anyone at any time encounter hard and perplexing times, he must say to himself, 'this will soon pass'. Then he will be calm and quiet." "In difficulties, I used to say this to myself. Then I became patient." "If anyone cannot be patient and cannot

endure, and if he wishes to become a martyr, then let him arise in the service of the Cause of God. It will be better for him if he obtains to martyrdom in this path.” few days later when the Master left this earthly life we then realized, that Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Ḥasan realized the approach of this great calamity, the Master’s ascension and could not wait to see it.

November 27th, rolled around and Fugita, Dr. Lottfulla and I had gone to bed as usual. A little after 1 o’clock that night we were suddenly weakened by someone pounding loudly at our door, get up, get up, the Master, the Master then they were away. You would have thought we were firemen, the way we flew into our clothes and were over to the Master’s house. When we reached there, everyone was crying and moaning and a great deal of confusion prevailed. I passed up the steps there sat Rúhí Afnán beating his head and crying and blaming the American friends as contributing to the Master’s passing through disobedience. Of course this was not true. I rushed on into the Master’s room, members of the family were there and Dr. Florian Krug was just turning away from the bed and saying the beloved Master has just left us. I walked back into the main central room of the house and everyone was still crying and wailing. You could hear people say, Why does this have to happen and what will become of the cause now that the Master has gone. I knew I loved the Master but I did not feel emotionally disturbed. It was not like myself because I was not an indifferent person. I tried to force myself to feel it, then an inner voice spoke to me and said, no, not that, this is a time to observe. I quickly looked around the room and there on the other side of the room was the Greatest Holy Leaf going from one to another comforting them. You could see that she was getting control of the situation and it was wonderful to see how smoothly she was setting things in order. You could see the deep sorrow in her lovely face, but she knew just what was to be done. Being the beloved daughter of Bahá’u’lláh and the loving and sacrificing sister of our beloved Master ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and as I looked at her I realized that the Cause of God was in safe hands. You of course know that the Cause of God was actually in her hands until our beloved Guardian returned to Haifa from England about forty days after the passing of the Master. The Greatest Holy Leaf came over to where I was standing and said, Kelsey, will you take Kasrow and Fugeta and go to ‘Akká and inform the friends there. We immediately got the ford car and started on our way. The road to ‘Akká in those days was along the seashore. The night was balmy, a fall moon and clouds floating by. As I drove along, Fugeta sitting beside me and Kasrow in the back. We were not talking they were quietly crying, and now I too was crying. I was else praying and my thoughts were for the friends all over the world and what a terrible shock this would be to them. As we drove along we had to pass over two sand bars that were made by streams flowing into the sea. As we came to these streams Kasrow got out and ran ahead and I drove after him in the water and safely over each sand bar. We informed several of the friends and told them to come to Haifa and then we started our return trip. It was so soon in driving back along the seashore that we did not think it was necessary to check our roadway. We could see the tracks entering the water. We drove safely over the

first sand bar and when we came to the next one and were passing over the bar it had moved so the car started to settle in the water. We all jumped out and walked around the car lifting it to keep it afloat. Fugeta and Kasrow are both short and as they would bend over to lift, their feet would slide out from under them and they would float in the water. This could not go on so Kasrow ran down on the seashore where we could see in the distance Arab fisherman getting ready to pull in their nets. It was just nearing daylight. We continued to walk around the car. In about a half hour large group of these fishermen came on the run. When they reached us they picked up the car and placed it on shore. I cleaned the water out of the carburettor and we were soon back, Haifa.

A complete change had taken place, large numbers of people were gathering in the street and arrangements were being made for the funeral service to take place that day. Various dignitaries from the surrounding villages and Haifa and 'Akká, were coming and going inside the house in paying their respects to the family. Finally the British High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel arrived from Jerusalem with his entourage. Almost at once after they went into the house, the funeral procession. The first thing we saw was the simple casket coming through the doorway on the shoulders of the people. As they started up the street, no one was allowed to carry it more than a few steps when others would move in and take their positions. The casket was draped with a simple paisley shawl. About half way up the mountain the boy scouts joined the procession and they place a wreath on the casket. There were thousands of people in the streets. But for the rest of this story you can read it in "God Passes By, page 309."

As I look back it was wonderful to be present when Shoghi as a young man of 24 returned to Haifa and assumed the tremendous burden of the Guardianship. We now know what a tremendous responsibility he did assume and how marvellous and inspiring are the achievements he alone is responsible for.

A day or two after Shoghi Effendi's return the Will and Testament was read and the friends took all day in reading it I saw a number of the older men coming out of the house with tears in their eyes. They were overjoyed to know that the Beloved Master had provided so well for the continuation of the Cause of God. Knowing the conflict in the past history of religions, at that time it was difficult to realize that here for the first time in the spiritual history of mankind we were unveiling divinely guided institutions.

A short time after Shoghi Effendi's return to Haifa went back to work to complete the lighting of the shrines. You most likely know that Shoghi Effendi left Haifa for a short period because of the heavy burden on his heart and the weight of the responsibility ahead of him. I doubt, even today that there are any of us who can really appreciate what Shoghi Effendi had to face. True there were many loving friends who arose to serve and assist our beloved Guardian and the history of the Faith has proved it so, but without that divinely appointed station, the best of us would have been lost at sea.

April 1922 rolled around and I was soon to leave Haifa. I didn't want the day to arrive, but I knew it would come. The lighting of the Shrines was complete. When the searchlight shown down Mount Carmel Avenue the children would get out in the center of the street to see their shadow. When this searchlight was turned on it actually light house, because the light was so much brighter than the one in the Monastery at the point of Mount Carmel. Arrangements were made to leave it on from sunset to sunrise, as a guide for the ships.

When I was ready to leave Haifa, I found that I only had money to buy deck passage as far as Constantinople. I was young, felt I could handle my own affairs and told no one about it. I thought, well, I'll get some work at Constantinople to pay for my passage from there home. But the day I was ready to leave the Greatest Holy Leaf sent word for me to come over to the Master's house. When I entered she was in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room where we met in the evenings and the daughters of the Master were also there. As soon as I came in, they surrounded me and began to tell me how much they appreciated the work I had been doing etc. and I thanked them for all the kindness and happiness that I had had in doing it. Then the Greatest Holy Leaf spoke up and said, Kelsey, you need some money to return to America. I said, no thank you everything has been taken care of etc. Then from behind me one of the daughters said, no Kelsey, you need this money to return home. I told her the same thing I had said to the Greatest Holy Leaf and then another daughter made the same statement. This couldn't keep up so finally the Greatest Holy Leaf took my hand and placed an envelope in it and said kindly but firmly, you must take this money, you need it to return home. Tim said, well, I'll take it if you will let me return it when I get home and she replied, no because this is the money for you to return home. What else could I say. As I was leaving one of daughters came to me and said, Kelsey, I want tell you something that will make you very happy through your life. Then she said, you know then the Master would go over to the pilgrim house and be alone with you and Fugeta day after day at lunch time. I said, yes. Then she said, I spoke to the Master one day about it, and said to him, why don't you stay over at the house at noon and rest, I'm sure Kelsey won't mind if you do not go over there. Then do you know what he told me? He said I like to be with my friends.

I was soon on my way to Beirut with 'Abbás Adek Iqbal there we visited with the triangle, and then on to Damascus where we again met the friends. Then back to Beirut, then by steamer to Constantinople then on to Paris and base. On reaching home there were my family and many friends anxiously waiting to hear all about the trip.