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The Guardian rose to greet us, and his warmth seemed to reach out. He shook Roberta's hand and told her she was welcome. And as he welcomed me, he embraced me in the Persian fashion and kissed me on both cheeks. My concern dropped away and I felt at home. He placed Roberta at the head of the table next to him, and all seven nights that we had dinner with Shoghi Effendi, he had us keep these same places.

The Guardian is difficult to describe. He wears a simple, black Persian hat (a kulah). His long jacket coat this first evening was brown. Otherwise his clothes were western. His face is handsome and expressive. His eyes seem to be those of the Master; they look into you. His voice is strong and clear, and he speaks at times with rapid fluency. His short stature I noticed only at first. After that I was aware only of the man himself, a man with unlimited reservoirs of strength and power ready for instant use.

He asked us if our trip had been pleasant. His whole manner, simple, direct and loving, puts one immediately at ease. He himself served the food on our plates this first evening.

The Guardian showered us with kindness. He was loving and appreciative. He emphasized that we are in the Valley of Search and must be patient.

It is difficult to adjust to the flow of his idea; the scope and range is staggering. I found at times that I was not clearly aware of the sentence he was then speaking because I was still reaching out with my mind to grasp the last thought.

The Guardian talked of how the Faith should first be established in a country. It should always be with the majority of the people, not first with a minority. The minority of a majority is more important than the majority of a minority in teaching the Cause in a country. This has been why the Faith developed solidly in America. Americans became Bahá'ís and became dedicated to the Faith. In Egypt for seventy years the Bahá'ís were almost exclusively Persians. When the real effort was made to attract Egyptians and confirm them, the Faith in Egypt began to grow. This has been true also in India. But in India and Pakistan now the condition is changing.

The Guardian talked at great length about the Major Plan and the Minor Plan. The Major Plan is God's plan; it works mysteriously and we cannot understand it but we know that the result will be the unification of the world. The Minor Plan is Bahá'u'lláh's Plan; it is at present the Ten Year Crusade. One plan is disorderly, the other is orderly.

America is becoming more and more corrupt. The American people are pure-hearted but they need suffering to develop capacity. The American people, through suffering, will become purged and thus really purified. Afterwards they can lead the world spiritually. He used the phrase, "Welded in the fire of adversity." The racial question is becoming worse. Even the Bahá'ís are tainted with prejudice.

He emphasized the function of the Hands — to protect the Faith and to propagate the Faith. He said that the propagation of the Faith was the most important thing. He explained the functions of the Guardian — to interpret what has been explicitly stated in the Writings. The International House of Justice will legislate on what is not explicitly stated. He talked of the levels of administration from local to national to international.

He spoke of the three charters. The first is the Tablet of Carmel of Bahá'u'lláh, which is the Charter of the World Center. The reference to sailing the Ark of God's Law on Carmel is an allusion to placing the World Administrative Center there. The second is the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which shows how to construct the Administrative Order. And the third is the Tablets of the Divine Plan for the propagation of the Faith throughout the world.

Roberta asked about "this remote prison" referred to in the Tablet of Ahmad. Shoghi Effendi said that this referred to Adrianople; this was a remote place in relation to the birthplace of the Faith in Persia. Bahá'u'lláh refers to three prisons in His Writings — the Síyáh-Chál in Tíhrán, Adrianople, and 'Akká. Bahá'u'lláh was in Constanople only a short period and did not have restrictions on Himself while there. 'Akká he called the Most Great Prison. The Síyáh-Chál was the lesser prison.

I asked about the recurrent phrase in “Prayers and Meditations” — “the good of this world and the next.” He said it meant spiritual blessings, material and spiritual bounties. He emphasized the word bounties.

Shoghi Effendi talked much of the Ten Year Plan. It is the first world plan. It will be followed by other world plans in succession through the Formative Age and into the Golden Age of the Cause.

Africa is the only continent with all its territories open, plus all the surrounding islands. Then he quickly enumerated all the islands off the other continents which were still to be opened. His vision of the Cause includes the minutest details and also transcends the limits of generations and time.

When I said something about there not being many islands or territories not included in the present plan, he corrected me gently, saying that there were many. The next plan will include these islands and will concentrate on firmly establishing the Administrative Order. I asked if this would be similar to the objectives on America during the first Seven Year Plan, and he said yes.

He said that up to 1953 the teachings had been translated into 90 languages. Now the total is over 180, and 30 of these are supplementary languages. Clearly any supplemental task achieved brings him great joy.

He explained carefully that the Ten Year Plan was to have two Bahá'ís as a nucleus in each of the new 133 territories, islands, and countries. In many cases this has already been surpassed and there are even assemblies.

He said that there are over 2,000 Negro believers in Africa. Four years ago there were none. I commented that this would soon surpass the number of American believers. He hesitated a moment and then said, yes, very soon. He went on to point out how fitting this was because the dark races outnumber the white in the world. We go by majorities.

He talks much of moderation. This is essential in everything. In material and spiritual things.

Shoghi Effendi talked about the persecutions in Persia. Thanks to our enemies, they gave us publicity which has helped make the Faith known throughout the world. They were publicity agents. Now we have hired a publicity agent in America. Our first publicity agents were a God-sent; the second we are paying for. It comes from American generosity.

He mentioned the leading English papers — the Times and the Manchester Guardian, which would not publish anything about the Faith after the passing of the Master. But they reported the persecutions, and they continue to print articles.

The clergy and government of Persia hoped to wipe out the Faith in one blow. They did not realize what the result would be. They gave the Faith unparalleled publicity. The persecutions were reported in newspapers all over the world. The

government and clergy would not have attempted to harm the Bahá'ís if they had expected this result.

He told us how the father of the present Sháh of Persia was deposed by the western powers at the end of the war because he had been friendly to Germany and anti-western. This former shah had been an opponent of the Bahá'ís. He had closed the Terbiat School. The shah was exiled to the Maritius Islands and then to South Africa. He died in Johannesburg, and now we have a flourishing center there.

He talked about the sections of Russia. He enumerated the countries in the Soviet Union. He told us of the three sections of the Caucasus where the Faith had formerly been established. The believers there were dispersed, but there are probably still some.

The Guardian talked at great length about the various stages of the development of the Faith. He pointed out that in Africa there are over 3,000 believers, over 2,000 of them are Africans, and over 1,000 of these Africans are in Uganda. Uganda is the heart of Africa — this is fitting. The Faith in Africa is still in the stage of obscurity.

In Persia the Faith went from obscurity almost immediately into the stage of persecution. It has remained in this stage for over 100 years. The situation in Persia is very unstable. Persia might go directly from the second stage (persecution) to the fifth stage (establishment) . This is a possibility because the situation in Persia is so unstable that anything can happen.

In America the Faith started in obscurity. There was some persecution through the attacks of missionaries. The Faith in America is emancipated and now in the fourth stage — recognition.

The Faith in Egypt is in the third stage — emancipation — which came about through the court case. The Faith in Israel is in the fourth stage of recognition.

I asked the Guardian about the time of the proclamation of the Faith. This, he said, is the final stage. The growth is successively from (1) obscurity, through (2) persecution, (3) emancipation, (4) recognition, (5) establishment as the official religion of the country with special privileges, to the creation of a (6) Bahá'í State when a majority of the people in a country become Bahá'ís and the religion assumes temporal power, following which is the uniting of several Bahá'í States into the (7) Bahá'í Commonwealth. After this comes (8) the proclamation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, and the birth of a world civilization. Then a new process of evolution is like the emergence of the United States from thirteen small colonies, he explained, culminating in American civilization.

There are two vast processes at work in the world. The world is creating the means of unity. The Bahá'ís are building the Administrative Order. These two processes are simultaneous. When the political means for uniting the world are complete and established, this will be the Lesser Peace. When the Administra-

tive Order and the politically-united world fuse and coalesce, this will be the Most Great Peace. It will give birth to a world civilization.

Israel is the meeting place and crossroads of three continents. The Shrine (of the Báb) is on Mount Carmel, facing north to ‘Akká and Bahjí, and beyond to Tiberias, the scene of the ministry of Jesus Christ. Here He met and summoned His disciples. To the west is the Cave of Elijah. To the east is Bethlehem, the birthplace of Christ, and Nazareth, where Christ spent His childhood. To the south of the Shrine, back of it, is Jerusalem, the scene of the passion and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Jerusalem is sacred to three of the world’s great religions. To the Jews, because it was the seat of their temple. To the Christians because of the passion and crucifixion of Jesus. To the Muslims, it is the third holiest city, Mecca is first, Medinah is second, and Jerusalem is third. Farther south is Mount Sinai, which is the birthplace of Judaism. Farther south still is Arabia, with Mecca and Medinah, the holy cities of Islám.

He began to speak of capitalism and communism. America is the leader of one, and Russia the leader of the other. Because the Cause is literally world-wide, we must be above politics. We have Bahá’ís in countries on both sides, so we must not act in such a way as to endanger them. We are not against any government. We do not indulge in politics at all. We are not pro. We are not anti. We are super.

The Cause is supranational. It is above politics. The Cause is supernatural. It is a revelation. The Cause is superlative. It is the fulfillment of all religions. The corollary of being supranational [sic] is that we are non-political. One follows the other. It is a natural relationship.

From this, he went on to the subject of American materialism. He said that materialism was at an extreme in America, that Americans must suffer to be welded with the rest of the world. There must be blood-letting. This is essential for America’s destiny.

Rúhíyyih Khánum asked if this would be as extreme as Isaiah had said. He answered that it probably would be. He commented on isolationism in America, on the sufferings of Woodrow Wilson. He pointed out the warning in the “Hidden Words” of unforeseen calamity that would come suddenly. The first two world wars have been the beginning of this. But there will be great blood-letting.

American business is so materialistic that it has grown into a vast machine. Businessmen are slaves to it. This is true in England, too. If they have any leisure, they waste most of it in useless activity. The cinema and sports. These are not bad in themselves, but they give too much time to them. There is too much time and energy put into sport. Leisure must be used wisely.

He emphasized the blood-letting and suffering that must come in America because of its excessive materialism and the necessity for it to be welded with the other nations. Isolationism is past, and America is joining the world in

many ways. Through intense suffering she will be welded with other nations and develop the capacity to lead the world.

He talked of professors, saying learning is a veil, and he asked if I had not found this true of professors. Just as the Guardian was getting up from the table, he looked at me and said that I was a professor and a Bahá'í and a Knight of Bahá'u'lláh. And of these three, the most important was being a Knight.

The Guardian spoke of the significance of the Archives Building. He said that the local spiritual assemblies were the foundations, the National assemblies, are the pillars, and the New Archives Building is the beginning of the foundation of the dome of the International Administrative Order. He talked of the two spiritual centers here — the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel and the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí.

The Guardian then talked again of the persecutions in Persia. The enemies of the Faith have helped us. If they had understood what would happen, they would have been quiet. Now that they understand, they are calm. Our enemies never expected such a world reaction. The American government through the State Department exercised pressure. Noted people in a private capacity protested. But God's mysterious plan works in our favor. The United States and other countries did not want any disturbance in Persia. So they forced the Persian government to reverse its policy. The relationships of nations gave us this protection. Whatever happens, we win.

I asked the Guardian if it were true that the Israeli government had offered assistance. (He had detailed the threats that the Persian government made against the Faith, threats which it was prevented from carrying out. One of these threats had included exiling one third of all Bahá'ís.) He answered that the Israel government had offered assistance, but he had refused the assistance, saying that God would protect us.

He said that the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh is the holiest spot on the Bahá'í world. Bahá'u'lláh's prison room in 'Akká has not been changed. The Síyáh-Chál was the Lesser Prison; there Bahá'u'lláh suffered from external enemies — the government, the clergy, and the people. Adrianople was the remote prison. 'Akká was the Most Great Prison; here Bahá'u'lláh not only suffered from external enemies but from internal ones as well.

The South Pacific will be like Africa — there the Faith will grow rapidly, as it will in Japan. The Pacific will soon have five National Assemblies. There will be two magnetic poles there — the Japanese in the north and the Australians in the south. The peoples of these countries are antagonistic; they do not trust each other. But with the Bahá'ís it will be different. Spiritual competition, but friendly relations.

Speaking of the present, the Guardian said that conversion comes first and after that comes dedication. Conversion is passive.

The world needs two things — unification and spiritualization. This is highly

reasonable; in teaching intellectuals, begin with unification. This, too, is how the Master taught. Whenever the Master was asked what is new or unique in the Faith, His answer would concern the oneness of mankind.

Rúḥíyyih Khánum asked the Guardian a question I had asked her one day. In the future would non-Bahá'í scholars be permitted to see the manuscripts in the Archives? He said, yes, of course. There is no secrecy. We are proud of our manuscripts. The only thing such scholars cannot see will be the portraits of Bahá'u'lláh.