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... shortcoming and omission in forwarding the letters and papers to this land. Know ye this of a certainty. Some of the letters have been received but there has not yet been time to answer them; while, on the other hand, some of them are lost in the mail. Whatever has been received, its answer depends upon time and opportunity.

But concerning the articles:- these articles must be revised and corrected by those souls who know the history of the Cause: if they approve their circulation, undoubtedly it will lead to the rapid promotion of the Cause. For this Servant has no time whatsoever to revise these articles. Regarding tile despatch of letters and their early acknowledgement, a new and complete system is organized. God willing, it will become perfected and put in execution.

(signed) 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás { .sig }

Translated by M. Ahmad Isfaháni, June 5, 1907, Washington, D. C. { .ed }

4 - Second Personal Visit in 1907

Knowing that some recent pilgrims had remained nine days in 'Akká, had rather set my heart upon a visit of the same length. Reaching Haifa I was told that on account of the trouble conditions surrounding 'Abdu'l-Bahá I would be able to remain with Him but a few hours, and that even this short visit could be arranged for with much difficult. At first the thought of so short a visit was a keen distress and disappointment. Upon second thought, however, I realized that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was above material conditions, althouh seemingly held by them; that in reality He was free and master of the situation and wan planning for the best; and that even under these conditions I would be able to get all that my soul needed at that time.

Whether or not one benefitted by meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá depended upon the real or soul contact. It was the open, unprejudiced and seeking souls who united with the soul of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. When this spiritual contact was effected, through

turning to Him In spirit and serving In His Cause, the personal .visit to Him was not essential for enlightenment; for which spiritual connection between the soul of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who was the heart of the Bahá’í Cause, and the believers, the members of the body of the Cause were one with Him. Through this unity His divine wisdom and love went forth to all His followers.

Although this my second visit with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was very short, I would not have wished it otherwise. Again I left Him In great joy, with my soul overflowing with the love of the Kingdom which He so freely radiated. The one great lesson - which He taught me at that time, as I recall it, was dispelling negative fear - with positive assurance. The natural tendency of many people is to close the door of the heart to others, and to shut themselves away from people. This becomes a habit, and one which causes much distress and suffering, because humanity is one whole and its health and proper functioning depends upon a free and frank interchange of thought and good feeling free from repression and constraint. Rather through his manner and the way in which He received and treated me than from anything which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to me. I saw clearly that the way to serve Him in the Cause was never to remain aloof from people, but literally to attack humanity with a good spirit of X01.10 and grace. I saw that it was because of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá freedom from constraint, and His fearlessness and friendly way of approaching people, His frank expression of love, faith and assurance, that He was able to reach the souls of men and Impart to them His courage and wisdom and to break down the barriers of separation.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá entered into the lives of all about Him. Through this contact He undoubtedly suffered much, nevertheless He was enabled thus to reach the people and to minister to them. his life was a lesson to all, for in His method one saw the way In which the Bahá’ís must live in order to do their work among men.

5 – Oriental Bahá’í Hospitality

“Are you all well? Are you all happy?” was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s favorite greeting. He placed great significance on being well in spirit and correspondingly so in body, and always happy, under all circumstances. He said, “The East and the West are becoming one and showing the signs of Unity and Love. The hopes of Bahá’u’lláh are that there be no more separation or discord, for ye are all the waves, of one sea the birds of one heaven and mirrors of the same bounty.”

In a tablet of 1907 He wrote to a believer:

“‘Abdu’l-Bahá has the Glad tidings of the kingdom of Abhá. His happiness has no sorrow in its trail, and His life is not followed by any death. To Him, prison is a court; to Him a tomb is a spacious palace; to Him a wail is the apex of Heaven; and to Him manacles and chains are the throne of nether.

“If at times He becomes sad it Is not an account of afflictions and

adversities, but that grief is produced from a word or an act which is against the exhortations and behests of the Blessed Perfection.

“For instance: I hope that the believers of God may become the cause of the Unity and agreement of the human realm, and suffer other nations and communities of the world to enter under the shade of the Canopy of Oneness. Now when the new reaches me that the slightest differences have crept in among the believers of God, I become sad and heartbroken.

The point is this Afflictions or hardships, ordeals or trials, do not make me weak or faint, nor do they, in the slightest degree, make me sad or unhappy.”

Another pilgrim of 1907 left this account of her visit “in the Home of Peace” as she termed it.

“Outside the sea is raging and the wind howling, which it has done since we came – and it is as if this were to show us the perfect contrast of Serenity and Gentleness In the spiritual, atmosphere of The Master’s Home.”

“Our Beloved Master holds in this home an absolute reign of Love and Peace, and those who visit here can but realize more and more that they must help in sending out over the different countries to which they return the rays of that love, kindness and courtesy.

“I, myself, felt so much awe when first entering His presence that I was unable to ask the many things which I had intended; but the questions in my mind have been answered by Him in His talks to us all together without My having asked them. This has been the experience of many besides myself. His explanation and knowledge seem to flow endlessly as water from a fountain, and if one leaves ‘Akká with one spiritual tiger and thirst unsatisfied it will be from the unworthiness of one’s own soul to receive and not from any limitation of his power of explanation or enlightenment.

“I would wish all pilgrims who come here to look for Divine virtue and example and not for any supernatural experiences or astonishing visible signs, and to remember that in looking for the extraordinary or supernatural, the clouds of the human body will most surely veil such from their sight and prevent their eyes from being opened to the true essence of the Light and Teaching which is to last into the far future, whereas the presence and form visible to our eyes will be taken from us.

“Among the several talks which the Master gave us in the five days of our visit, I will close with the one He gave yesterday on the subject of the opposition and rejection of the Prophets.

“Moses prophesied and taught the people Truths which they scorned and rejected, whereas it was His Truth which lasted and was fulfilled and their words which were proven false and worthless. In the time of Jesus Christ, His Words were

fulfilled and are now honored, and the words and thoughts of those who mocked have been exposed and judged. Thus it is in the Days of Bahá'u'lláh, and the opposition of those who now scorn and reject will be proved worthless and His Word honored throughout the ages.

“There are ladies from ‘Ishqábád (Russia) here who have taken a journey of twenty-two days to come. One lives in ‘Ishqábád, in a room belonging, to the New Temple, and serves the believers who come to visit.

“Looking from Haifa on that beautiful view of ‘Akká in the dim distance, we, who can enjoy the beauties of Mount Carmel and all the lovely scenery on our journey home and have the good things of the world and freedom to use them, may well realize and remember that The Beloved Master who with kindness and limitless love receives one in His home, is a prisoner and exile for the sake of the great Teaching and Truth He has come to bring to the world and has not passed through the gates of ‘Akká for three years, though He has come to bring the true freedom to all Nations.”

Some visitors in 1907 thought to prolong their visit to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá by proposing every day a different name. One day they said they wished to dine with Him in the name of the Council Board of Chicago, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied “Not only in remembrance of the Council Board but also of all the believers. And when you go to the Holy Tomb you must remember all the believers.” He said that if He would go to America to meet them, His enemies would say He had fled away, and in the spirit the believers are always with Him. Then He said in English “Very well,” and was so happy that He repeated it in French, “Tres bien,” in Italian “Molto Bono,” and in Turkish, Persian, and Arabic.

“The need itself attracts generosity,” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said. “To be thirsty shows that there is water.” A metaphysical statement.

“When I was in Tīhrán I met the Bahá’ís in a garden, where a large number of Muslim Bahá’ís were gathered to greet us. Here we heard the story of how they believed because of their own prophecies which foretold the coming of the Lord in these latter days and the establishment of His Kingdom.

It has been my privilege to travel among and associate with the Bahá’ís in many foreign countries and I can testify to the spiritual qualities, trustfulness and genuine hospitality manifested in their lives.

At a meeting in Persia a Jew, a Christian, a Zoroastrian and a Muḥammadan were present and remaining for the night, shared the same bed. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “Consider what the Dower of the Covenant has accomplished. It was an absolute impossibility for a Zoroastrian to unite with a Jew, a Siyyid, and a Mullá and for these to unite with a Christian was an impossibility; but the power of the Covenant has even so gathered them that they are accounted as one spirit. Although the bodies are numerous, the spirit is one.”

6 – Third Visit Preceding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Liberation

My next visit to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was during the climax of His troubles and difficulties, just previous to the fall of the of despotic Ottoman power and the re-establishment of the constitutional government in the midsummer of 1908. Upon arriving in Haifa I found that some recent American Pilgrims had not been able to meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but had returned to America happy in having seen Him from a distance as He walked upon an elevated balcony on His house within the fortifications of ‘Akká. Four Arabs recent converts to the faith, had for several months been confined in the prison fortress on account of their belief. Others of the Bahá’ís, in order to avoid pending trouble, had by the Master’s advice sought temporary refuge in Egypt; while those remaining in ,Syria were all but panic stricken by the trouble and persecutions which were daily descending upon the Bahá’í community from the hands of the unscrupulous government officials. During the five days I welted in Haifa, before it was possible to proceed to ‘Akká, the troublous condition was to some extent ameliorated by the liberating from the prison of ‘Akká of four recent converts to the faith, who had for several months, been confined there because of their allegiance to the Cause. About this time a special guard placed before the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to watch its inmates was by order of the governor removed, so that matters began to take on a less troubled aspect.

Notwithstanding these changes for the better, I had to be very careful in entering and leaving the city.

After I had waited several days in Haifa, word came from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for me to go to ‘Akká and proceed to the house of a certain Persian, one of the oldest and most faithful of the believers. In the guise of a native Syrian, wearing fez and ata, with the assistance of one of the oriental Bahá’ís, entered the prison city, passing through the guarded gates along with a small crowd of comers and goers without being halted.

Once established in the .privacy of the house of the Persian friend, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, having the freedom of the city within the fortification, came to see me several times. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house being watched by spies, I did not go there, but spent the two days and two nights of my visit within the confines of the house of Áqá Siyyid Taghl Afnán, the venerable Bahá’í (known as the Great Afnán) under whose direction the arrangements for the building of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in Ishgabad were made and executed. here ‘Abdu’l-Bahá care to see me twice each day.

The eldest living relative of The Báb, known as the Great Afnán, remained a Bábí or Bahá’í and lived at Haifa. His name was Áqá-Siyyid-Taqí-Afnán. He was a first cousin of The Báb, and was the son of Hájí-Mírzá-Siyyid-Muḥammad, the brother of The Báb’s mother. The Afnán was six or seven years younger than The Báb. The Temple at ‘Ishqábád, in Russia, was afterward built under the personal direction of the Afnán. He was deceased in 1911. His tomb is now at Haifa.

A convert of only thirty-one days service In the Cause whom I met was particularly kind to us. In speaking of the Bahá'ís in Persia, and their relations with those in the West, this believer struck the keynote when he said that in this country that Bahá'ís had suffered such long and strenuous persecution and trouble, that they had become tired and heartsick, and needed the association and more support of the friends of the West. How often we thought of the reverse conditions existing in the Test, where we are in need of this spirit, which the Oriental Bahá'ís have received through suffering.

Although under the most severe physical difficulties, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was visibly in the greatest spiritual strength and power. In strong contrast with the fear and terror of His followers for His safety, impossible to describe, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stood forth in the greatest Joy- of soul and tranquillity of spirit. He radiated calmness and assurance and through his strength the community of the friends was saved from despair. The situation was dramatic in the extreme. It was shortly followed by the tragic downfall of the government that for forty years had held 'Abdu'l-Bahá a prisoner.

7 – Troubled Conditions preceding, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Release

In a letter written about conditions in Syria just previous to the declaration of the Constitution; we re:

“Conditions in Turkey have been upset for years and up to very recent times they have been becoming more and more terrible. Within the past few months things were so bad that even our beloved brothers near the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were in the throes of terror and confusion. Even the peace of the kingdom was threatened. One concrete example gives a glimpse of what Turkey was:

“The Governor General of all Syria whose quarters were in Beirut, made a trip through the various cities and provinces of that country for the purpose of extorting Baksheesh (money) from the people. The various governors and high officials knowing that they were expected to give him large sums of money immediately began to extort the saris from those under them and so on and on until the poorest of the poor were much oppressed. The country was in a panic. Everyone was fearful, suspicious, and in a state of terror.

“'Abdu'l-Bahá, Himself, was approached and threatened but He have no 'Baksheesh' He sent word to the Governor General that He was 'Abdu'l-Bahá and that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was wholly independent of him, of his exaltation or his oppression. If he imprisoned 'Abdu'l-Bahá, if he killed 'Abdu'l-Bahá, or if he gave liberty to 'Abdu'l-Bahá he would not be adding to or taking from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for 'Abdu'l-Bahá was 'Abdu'l-Bahá under all conditions and circumstances. This message of the Master's He, Himself, told me.”

A great change took place in conditions in the Holy City. While I was there in Juno, all was in the greatest trouble; yet during my stay of nine days in Haifa the foreshadowings of better conditions were becoming manifest. It was several

weeks after that the troubles, which for so many years had been hanging over the Holy Land, were dispelled almost in the twinkling of an eye. Unexpected to the world the Constitution of Turkey was declared and within twenty-four hours all was changed. It is hard to realize what this change really is. It is as if Turkey had awakened from a horrible nightmare and now ‘ she is rejoicing that it is all past.

I feel that this change is the greatest psychological – phenomenon of the world’s history. The very character of the Sultán’s subjects is changed. Instead of being fearful and suspicious, in a day these characteristics have been changed to their opposites.

Several times I visited Constantinople before the Constitution. The corruption and intrigue there was horrible. On a sensitive person it produced an effect which cannot be described in words - that of being in the presence of a most diabolical enemy which one could not see nor locate, but only sense. Such was the condition which held the Ottoman government from the highest to the lowest of its subjects. None will ever know the history of the crimes which resulted from this condition for they are not recorded in this world’s writing.

Thus conditions in Turkey have been for years, and we to very recent times they have been becoming more and more terrible. Within the past few months things were so bad that even our Beloved brothers near the Holy Presence were in the throes of terror and confusion. Even the peace of the kingdom in Syria was threatened.

The twenty-ninth and thirtieth days after the constitution was declared I spent in Stamboul. I could not believe it to be the same place nor the same people. All of the old horror had passed away and was replaced by real joy. Quite openly visited some of our Bahá’í brothers there and found them rejoicing with the rest of the people.

Verily this is the day of the resurrection and the power of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (Who is the first Point of this new Dispensation) is now becoming visible to the world in general.

The Holy Cause in Persia is on the verge of a great move towards rapid growth. Its roots are well rooted and are firm. The steadfastness, unity and love of the Believers there is something which we in America little realize. At the same time the Friends there lack our energy, force and “go ahead.” need what they have to give us and they need at we have for them. The power of the Cause in both the East and the West will only become evident as the Unity between the East and the West is increased.

While in Stamboul I called on Prince Mírzá Ridá Khán, the Persian Ambassador to Turkey. He was Persia’s delegate to the first congress of Peace at The Hague. He has written a poem, the “Most Great Peace.” I arranged with him that we might publish this in America and publish it in both English and Persian, and send it to the East and West as well. Needless to say he was very pleased.

Also, I have with me a wonderful Tablet just revealed to the Believers of the world, both East and West, which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wishes spread. He said it would be well to print it in the two languages, English and Persian.

Shortly after the Turkish revolution of 1908, I was in Beirut and the joy of the Bahá’ís was a pleasure to see when in Beirut they first learned of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s freedom. With the going into force of the constitution, all of the political prisoners throughout the realm were liberated.

8 – Visits in 1909 and

Several months later I was again permitted to travel in Syria and visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Although it had not been long in point of time since my previous visit, yet the conditions surrounding ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had so changed as to take the previous time seem, by comparison, to have been on some former decade. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was free! The utmost liberty existed. ‘Akká had ceased to be a penal colony and the gates were no longer guarded but wide open to the world.

The Bahá’ís had not yet recovered from their first ecstasy of joy over the freedom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, yet through all this manifest jubilation He was conducting His work as usual. It was then that I realized, to the extent of my capacity, how far above this world’s conditions ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood. Not discouraged by criticism, persecution, calamity; not elated by applause, commendation or good fortune, He was apart from the ever changing world of human affairs, upon a firm rock: the spiritual foundation of the Kingdom. By virtue of this severance from all save God he was enabled to change the interest of the people from the world’s thought, and from materiality to spirituality, and to create in men’s souls the fire of God’s love.

Almost two years after the great change in Turkey I again went to Syria. Low that which previously I had allowed to pass unnoticed was to be my chief lesson. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s mental grasp of things and the manner in which He dealt with them in proportion to their importance were all of the deepest interest to me.

I recall kneeling before the Master as I was leaving Him on one of my pilgrimages, kneeling to the earth, and His placing and resting his hands on my shoulders. And I recall my starting to move several times, and He held me down tightly until thought my knees would break upon the marble floor. And after He had held me thus for some time He bade me rise and I parted from Him.

(Eventually want to write a lot of very intimate things not intended for circulation, but for record, pertaining to A. B.) {ed}

The fatuousness of remarks by some of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s visitors is illustrated in this story – a rather exceptional example, however, for it was seldom that either man or woman met ‘Abdu’l-Bahá without being at once more deeply affected than the youth in this cases.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá looked below the surface. In many respects .end under many

conditions ye was very conventional, but He was not on the conventional plane at all. The conventions of the Orient are extremely rigid. One does not notice it at first, but after a while one discovers, and then one is very often shocked by little, things one sees and does that do not mean anything at all. The older (Persian and Western) Bahá'ís all showed 'Abdu'l-Bahá the greatest veneration and respect. They would dislike even to speak in His presence until He opened up the conversation. One of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreter was telling the story of a certain young American lad who blew in one day to see the Master. He came unannounced. His steamer was in port. He had heard the message in this country. He blew in to the house at Akira while 'Abdu'l-Bahá was still living in the fortress. He asked if he could see the Master.

'Abdu'l-Bahá came in. A number of Orientals were in the room. 'Abdu'l-Bahá began to speak some words of welcome to be translated by the interpreter. The young man said, "Tell Him I am very glad to see Him." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "I am very glad to see you. This boy was just bubbling over. The young man said, "Tell Him I heard of his Cause in the West, and I believe and I want to devote myself to His service." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Very good," and then started to say something in Persian.

The young man took his watch out and pried off the back. He said, "I am very much in love with a girl and here's her photograph."

The interpreter demurred a little bit at translating this because in the Orient they do not usually speak of these things before strangers, but only among immediate members of the family. The Master asked the interpreter to translate it, and he did so. The Master looked at the photograph. The young fellow said, "I pray that she may become a worker in your Cause." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "She will be accepted. Her service will be acceptable."

The young man said, to the interpreter, "Ask Him if He doesn't think she is very beautiful?"

The interpreter simply could not interpret that before all those people, but the Master Insisted upon knowing, and then he said, "Yes, she is very beautiful. She has the smile of the Kingdom on her face." The young man was very pleased. 'Abdu'l-Bahá started to say something again. Then the young man opened the other side of his watch and said, "Well, I am in a great hurry. My ship is sailing. Tell Him Good-bye."

The old Hadgis there were simply paralyzed. But the Master said, afterward, "I look below the surface. That young man's heart is very pure. I wish that I had more friends of that type."

9 – Further Personal Recollections

To be dictated more details about early it to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. {.noid}

1. • About members of His household

2. • Other visitors – American and Oriental
3. • The Bahá'í Tombs at that time
4. • Violators' activities
5. • Positive Assurances of divine inspiration of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.