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An Epistle to the Bahá'í World

Mírzá Badí'u'lláh

1907

Translator's Preface {{p2}}

A few days ago the following command was received in the blessed handwriting of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Center of the Covenant of God:

“O Ameen Faríd! Translate the epistle of Mírzá Badí'u'lláh and soon print and publish it.”

(signed) “‘Abdu'l-Bahá ‘Abbás.” {sig}

For the enlightenment of the Bahá'í friends in the English speaking lands, this humble translator will write what follows: After the ascension of the Heavenly Father (Bahá'u'lláh) — glory be to Him! — when the book of His Covenant became known among the Bahá'ís, all who were faithful obeyed His will and turned to 'Abdu'l — Bahá, the Center of His Covenant, for guidance in the Kingdom of Abhá. Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí disobeyed the command of the Father, and the author of this booklet, Mírzá Badí'u'lláh, sided with him. About four years ago Mírzá Badí'u'lláh returned to the Center of the Covenant ('Abdu'l-Bahá) and published, on February 4th, 1903, a confession which will be cited as an introduction to this epistle.

This epistle was written by him to set forth the reasons for his “return” and to inform the sincere seekers after the Truth concerning the attitude, the conduct and the actions of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí. The original Persian manuscript of the author, with his seal upon it, is preserved in Egypt, where the booklet has been printed and published throughout the Orient.

Amín'u'lláh Faríd, M.D. Chicago, Illinois, August 27, 1907. {{p1}} {sig}

Translation of the Confession

Written and Signed by Badí'u'lláh

He is El-Abhá! {greet}

Praise be to God the Unique, the Incomparable, who has aided and assisted me through His great bounty and absolute mercy while in this great and glorious prison in this holy and luminous land! He hath revealed and manifested to me the reality of that which had long since been hidden. He has helped me to grasp the firm support of His Covenant and Testament, and has strengthened me to become firm and steadfast under the protection of the standard of the Blessed Perfection. Exalted is His Name! Majesty and glory be to Him!

O ye beloved of God, who have turned unto the horizon of the Kingdom of God! Know that this servant, while writing this brief confession, testifies with heart and tongue that all that has occurred, since the departure of the Adored One (Bahá'u'lláh), through the Náqíqín, has been a violation of the Covenant, a transgression of the Testament of the Almighty God, an opposition to the texts of the Books of the “Conclusive Proof” and a contradiction of the absolute will of the Lord of Lords.

The intentions and intrigues of the violators (Náqíqín) were concealed from this servant until the powerful hand of God rent the veils asunder and removed the coverings. That which was misunderstood and misapprehended by me is now clear and manifest to me and has caused me to turn my face to the appointed station, {{p4}} ‘Abdu’l-Bahá — May the life of all existent beings be a sacrifice to Him! — and to be sheltered under the shadow of the Divine Covenant. Now — Praise be to God! — this servant is severed and detached from all else save Him and is united with and following Him.

I hope the friends of God will pray and supplicate God to assist me that I may render Him an acceptable service and may God — Glory to His Name! — assist the others, as He has assisted me, to return unto His Covenant and Testament, forsaking enmity and hatred that they might be delivered from their great abasement and be sheltered under the shadow of the Holy Tree. but, alas! they are hindered by their designs and prevented by their egotism.

O beloved of God! — May the Glory of God, El-Abhá, be upon you! — It behooves all of us as servants to speak with one accord in the Cause of God, saying, we believe, we confess, and we are firm in Thy Covenant.

In brief, this servant has understood their intentions and realized that their only thought is contradiction and their only purpose is to confuse and mislead the weak ones and to confound the single minded. Therefore, I have entirely turned away from them and have taken firm hold upon the Covenant of God. I have forsaken “the left hand” of error and sought “the right hand” of perfect assurance.

“When the Sea of Meeting sinks and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your face unto to Him whom God hath willed. He who branched from this Pre-existent Root.” “By this verse is intended the Greatest Branch. thus have We revealed the command as a grace from Our presence, and I am the Gracious, the Beneficent.” [Bahá'u'lláh] {{p5}}

I supplicate to God to aid me to manifest such firmness as will amaze the minds, and I humbly beseech Him to awaken the others also and to forgive their sins. For the favors of God and the compassion of the Center of the Covenant are boundless. “Verily, this is not difficult with God.”

Mírzá Agha Jan wrote something before his death. Now the Náqídíns have recently added certain passages to it, have interpolated it and are intending to publish that spurious copy. Let it be known that even Mírzá Agha Jan, in his last days, having learned their designs, repented and endeavored to return to the Covenant. Now they have lately written a false writing in his name, which bears many signatures. Note ye that we (those who have returned to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) do not sanction and are quit of the contents thereof.

Praise and glory be upon ye and upon those who love ye for the sake of God and listen to your words in the Cause of God.

Upon ye be greetings and praise.

(Signed) Badí’u’lláh {{p6}} {sig}

The Epistle

He is El-Abhá! (The Most Glorious) {sit}

O ye assisted hosts of Abhá, who are turning unto the Horizon of the Covenant of the Lord of the Kingdom!

Praise be to God! The banners of the Cause of God are waving in the center of the world, and the holy hearts of those who are firm and steadfast are attracted and happy. The fragrance of the Supreme Word is diffused throughout all regions and climes and the lights of the Sun of Reality are shining in all countries. Through the confirmed power of the Center of the Covenant, who is inspired by God, the life-refreshing proclamation of faith is being heard from the Occident; the heart-attracting voice of certainty is raised from the Orient; the people of the North commemorate the most wonderful Name of Abhá, and the people of the South are made happy by the praise and glory of the Supreme Lord.

The universe is perfumed through the scented fragrance of the Covenant, and the essences of existence are enlightened through the radiance of the Sun of the horizons. The Lamp of the Cause of God is clear and shining in the world, and the light of His Will is bright and gleaming in the assemblages of the people. The boundless Bounties are enveloping the world, and the Mercy of God is extended to all regions. The Power of the Lord of Glory is become manifest in the temple of “him who branched from the Ancient Root,” [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] and {{p7}} the Divine favors are shown forth through the Holy Being of the Chosen One.

It is time for joy and happiness. It is the period of ecstasy and gladness. It is the day of zeal and attraction. The Expounder of the Book of the Lord of Lords

is present, and the light of the Promulgator of the Cause of God is radiant from the horizon of the world. the table of happiness is spread; the means of joy and gladness prepared; the eternal blessings are surrounding all.

In these days it behooves these servants to strengthen the loins of endeavor in the utmost of unity, concord, love and accord, and win the goal of eternal happiness. We should follow the Path of the Covenant, bear unto the souls the glad tidings of the Kingdom, and guide them to the shade of the blessed Tree of God, the Sadrat el-Montaha. We should all abide under the canopy of the Testament, and, if need be, sacrifice possessions and life in the path of the Supreme One. We should close our eyes to the world and its belongings, and with our eyes to the world and its belongings, and with our powers latent and manifest we should promulgate the Word and spread the Cause. Thus may we be accounted as the people of faithfulness in the supreme Kingdom and Glorious Horizon.

With smiling faces, free minds, attracted hearts and pure souls may we approach the Holy Threshold and become blessed with His good pleasure. May we with loud and cheerful voices proclaim the glad tidings, and bless the hearing of those who are far and near with the blessed Word — Alláh-u-Abhá!

The intention of this servant of the Sublime Threshold in writing this paper is to elucidate briefly that which has occurred in these days and in those days of the past, and to reveal to the pure minds of the beloved of the past, and to reveal to the pure minds of the beloved of God that which will tend to make them confident and assured. Thus they may remain firm in the Covenant and be protected from breaking it. They may look forward to the {{p8}} utterances of the Supreme Pen, and with all power, endeavor, firmness and constancy, observe this blessed verse:

“When the Ocean of Meeting sinks and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn unto Him who is chosen by God, who is branched from this pre — existent Root” (i.e., after the departure of Bahá’u’lláh, all Bahá’is must look to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá for heavenly guidance).

O ye friends of God! — May my spirit be a sacrifice for your love! — This servant had the intention some time ago to bring about that which would take away dissension and replace it with love and unity. Thus hatred and jealousy, which are contrary to the Divine Law, might be effaced that all may abandon the people of the “left” the violators of the Covenant, and unite with those of the “right” who are firm to the Center of the Covenant. So the unpleasant odor of this dissension which was the cause of dispersing the people, disturbing the minds and saddening the hearts, might disappear, and the fragrance of love and harmony prevail. That, through the decisive command of the Testament of God, and turning to “Him whom God hath willed,” the sun of unity may dawn from the horizons of the hearts, the Supreme Collective Word become freed from the oppression of discord, the table of hate (spread in the name of religion) be rolled as a scroll, and the sun of the Blessed verse: “Make not the means of order the

cause of disorder” — the cause of unity the cause of disunity” — dawn and enlighten the eyes.

That which prompted the intention was as follows: {noid}

Previous to the late imprisonment there appeared actions and conduct by Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, which were diametrically opposed to trustworthiness, the true spirit of religion and the commands of God. This servant awaited opportunity in order to investigate certain matters which they had attributed to His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá {{p9}} — May my life be a sacrifice for His beloved! Thus truth might become distinguished from falsity, and the real intentions of Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí become evident. Opportunity did not afford until in this prison, which in reality is a paradise to me, my desires were fulfilled and God directed me to my object.

One day I attained the honor of visiting His Holiness, “Him whom God hath willed,” (‘Abdu’l-Bahá) and heard from His blessed tongue all that which proved the untruth of the statements made regarding Him (by the Náqíḍín). Later I directed my steps to the house and conversed with Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, and pleaded with him to forsake all personalities and to follow what he commanded, hoping that he might cease opposing the Cause of God and disturbing His believers. The more I pleaded with him, the more he refused and the prouder he appeared. He said nothing save words and expressions indicative of hatred, jealousy and enmity against the confirmed Center of the Covenant. He further tried to conceal the matter from those connected with him and from outsiders, and to throw suspicions whereby my object might remain hidden.

Having observed these actions, behaviors, words and deeds, this servant utterly despaired and closed his eyes to him. After the lapse of some time I discovered that he had composed untrue statements, and by hints and symbolic writing endeavored to keep people ignorant of his intentions, and claimed that he was oppressed and persecuted, while the fact was that day and night he remained at home and was engaged in cursing and execrating the Center of the Covenant. He has written an announcement, wherein he made statements of his being wronged and his holding to the law. For the purpose of casting suspicions, he has written certain expressions, all of which are void of truth and far from the reality. {{p10}}

Since brevity must be considered, I shall write the full details of his announcement and his papers, which he is yet engaged in writing, at a future time. After a while these falsities and bad conditions attained such magnitude that I was compelled to resolve to ask the Government to transfer me from this prison to that of Rodos [Rhodes], so that I might be free from hearing that which harmed me physically and spiritually. Thus I wrote a petition to the Porte at Constantinople, and also a formal application to the Valiyet, but when I met the Center of the Covenant, His advice changed my desire.

In those days the Honorable Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥasan Khurasání — Upon him be the Glory of God! — arrived and visited the Holy Threshold. He met this servant

several times and asked to go once more and see Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí and advise him to return to the Center of the Covenant, hoping that he might, for the love of God’s Cause and obedience to His Commands, lose sight of personality and follow that which is commanded. He said that, should Muḥammad-‘Alí return, the object would be attained; otherwise this servant should announce his own return to His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá — May my life be a sacrifice to Him! — Knowing as I did his personal feelings, enmity and jealousy. I thought my effort would prove fruitless. However, I investigated the matter and I heard the same statements and old ideas. Therefore I severed myself entirely from him and published the announcement [confession given above] of my return. Thus I joined with His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and cut myself from all else save Him.

Later, one day, in company with His Holiness, the blessed twig, Ḥájí Mírzá Seyyid ‘Alí — Upon him be Bahá’u’lláh-el-Abhá! — I met Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí and performed that which was my religious duty and due to love. I besought him to unite me and attain {{p11}} the great blessing. Hearing useless words, which referred to nothing but personality, I arose and went directly to the household of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. According to his old rule and custom, Muḥammad-‘Alí wrote a paper in behalf of the few who have turned away from the Center of the Covenant and addressed it to the twig (Afnán H.M. Seyyid ‘Alí) in order to mix statements, disturb the minds and throw suspicions upon hearts of the simple, he requested a meeting with us. Presently I sent a message that we were always ready, whenever it might be, to manifest the word of Truth and disprove that which is far from it.

His Honor Afnán (i.e. Ḥájí Seyyid ‘Alí) conveyed the message to him (Muḥammad-‘Alí). He held to other pretexts and prepared another form of suspicion, which he endeavored to instill into the minds by his peculiar ways. Whatever he says or writes, or whatever he spreads, results in naught but manifest loss.

To awaken and inform the beloved of God, it is necessary to write concerning some of the pretexts which have been used by them (the Náqíḍín) and thereby they have raised the cry of being wronged. Thus may the truth of the matter be clearly demonstrated to the pure minds.

One of the questions is that of stealing the traces and interpolating the verses (the writings of Bahá’u’lláh) and also that of concealing certain commandments from the beloved of God. This they have done in effort to prove their having been wronged and the difficulties which prevent their turning to (or acknowledging) the Center of the Covenant. They mourn and lament their state, although all that has been said of them by some souls is truth itself and the facts of the matter.

Now this servant will forget all he has heard from other souls concerning the matter and will only write that which he has seen with his own eyes and heard {{p12}} from their own tongues (i.e. of Muḥammad-‘Alí and his followers). thus may the truth of the matter be clear to all.

O ye beloved of God! The question of stealing the traces (writings) is as follows: during the days of the illness of the worshipped Countenance (Bahá'u'lláh) — the illness which preceded His departure — one day He summoned this servant to His Presence and gave him the keys to His blessed depository and chests, which were in His room, and ordered that the locks should be renewed. According to His command, this servant sent for Muḥammad Kaani and had him renew the locks, which he did, and Mírzá 'Alí Ridá brought the locks and helped to affix them in their places. We locked the doors and presented the keys to Him and He said, "Keep them." He also ordered that the key to my own depository in my room be renewed, and this was done. Likewise, during those blessed days, His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá was summoned (by Bahá'u'lláh) was commanded by Him to gather together all His blessed writings and traces. This command (indicative of what was to come) produced such a feeling (in 'Abdu'l-Bahá) that his tears descended like unto rain, and, while his body was trembling and his heart aching, he was obeying the command, gathering together the important manuscripts. He placed them all in the two large trunks which had always held the important Tablets and writings, when Bahá'u'lláh went to 'Akká, Haifa and Kassre. These had always been in the blessed room as a trust of His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for they were given him by Bahá'u'lláh.

When the night for the great ordeal arrived, the sea of meeting sunk, the lamentation of the Supreme Concourse raised, the earthquake of the pillars of the horizons occurred, and the radiant Sun of Beauty passed behind the veils of Glory. It was the time for the washing of the blessed body. Water was brought, and they {{p13}} were prepared for the blessed purpose, when Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí said: "now there will be much water spilled in this room, and, in order to prevent these trunks being affected by dampness, let me help you carry them to another room." He had them deposited in the room of this servant with the help of Mírzá Majduddín.

Three days after this event Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí said to me: "The Blessed Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) — Exalted is His Station! — said: 'We have written something and it is in Our depository.' which I would like to see." He took the keys from this servant for that purpose. Later I saw that, through Mírzá Majduddín, 'Alí Ridá, his sister, and the mother of Mírzá Shua'u'llah, he (Muḥammad-'Alí) carried the blessed trusts (the writings of Bahá'u'lláh) by way of the window and the gallery of the Bahjí to his own place. He took away all the traces of the Supreme Pen and the special Tablets revealed for the beloved of God. When this servant reproached him, and endeavored to reclaim them, he spoke so much that should I attempt to write it here, Mathnaví "becomes seventy pounds of paper" (an expression meaning that the matter is most voluminous).

Among other things he said to me that the preservation of the blessed writings was referred to him by a blessed command, that he possessed a Tablet from the Supreme Pen to that effect. He did not even allow this servant to read the writings. By various means he endeavored to insinuate to this servant that His Holiness the Greatest Branch was against the Blessed Law, that if the blessed

writings fell into his hands they would be effaced and no name of the Blessed Beauty would remain in the world.

Another question concerns the interpolation. It is as follows: For a long time, by means of allusions and hints, symbols and signs, he gave me to understand that {{p14}} he possessed a Tablet from the Supreme Pen concerning His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, which, he said, if he should reveal, the name of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be effaced. He spoke of this on numerous occasions to some members of the family. Some time elapsed, during which some souls inquired of me concerning the Tablet in question, and I asked him for it, but every time he offered me an excuse and sought a pretext to avoid it. Finally, prior to the imprisonment in the most great prison of Abhá, one day he took out of a drawer a blessed Tablet from the Supreme Pen, wherein were mentioned the deeds, the actions, the oppression of Mírzá Yaḥyá (Subh-i—Azal), mentioning him often as “My brother,” which he gave me to read. I read it and remarked: “This has no connection with these days.” (It refers to the former days.) He said: I have permission from the Blessed Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) to use my pen in the blessed writings (interpolate) for the protection of the Cause. Now, since some souls have exaggerated (the station of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) and the Master claims Divinity, I will erase the word ‘My brother’ and insert in its place ‘My Greatest Branch,’ which I will show to people in order to check his influence.”

I was entirely dazed, but said nothing to him, waiting to see if he really dared to do such a thing. A few moments passed and I saw him take up the Tablet, erase “My brother” and replace it with “My Greatest Branch.” Having seen this, I immediately said: “This deed is a great sin and a breach of trust. If you show this Tablet, this servant will divulge the whole account, will point out the interpolation, and this will cause all the writings in your possession to be considered unreliable. Hereafter whatsoever of the writings traced by the Supreme Pen you may show me, I will not accept as authentic until I have carefully compared the manuscript with the original handwriting which is elsewhere preserved, and have examined the same with a magnifying glass.” {{p15}}

Upon hearing these words he was very much disturbed, promised and made a covenant that he would not show the Tablet to any one, and, further, he requested this servant not to reveal the matter.

From that day this servant entirely lost confidence in him and did not trust him in matters which concerned the Cause and the conscience. He continually sought opportunities for the investigation and scrutiny of the remaining questions for which he (Muḥammad-‘Alí) had discussed and insinuated since the departure of the Blessed Perfection. He first referred to the manuscripts compiled by him (Muḥammad-‘Alí), and discovered that all the verses revealed by Bahá’u’lláh concerning the people of Bayán and the souls who, subsequent to the martyrdom of His Holiness the Supreme (the Báb) — May the spirit of all else be a ransom to Him! — had claimed Divinity, the station of Manifestation, the degree of successorship, or that of Mirror-ness, were transposed and applied to the days following the ascension of the worshipped Countenance (Bahá’u’lláh). In this

wise and by this means they endeavored to perturb the minds and hinder the souls from turning (to the blessed Center of the Covenant). If this servant attempted to write the full account of these matters, the work will be endless. However, to the possessors of wisdom and intelligence, who are informed of past events, the reading of the said verses will suffice.

The blessed Tablet, so often cited in their pamphlets, will be sufficient. This is the Tablet which was revealed on the occasion of His exodus from Adrianople. It is as follows:

“O Salmán! At the time of leaving Irak, the Tongue of God informed some (of the followers) of the fact that the Sameri (This refers to idolatry as was practiced among the Israelites) would appear, the goat would {{p16}} bleat, and the bats (literally, birds of night) would move after the setting of the Sun,” etc.

In response to the inquiry of a person concerning this blessed Tablet, He has said: “As to what thou hast asked concerning that whereof We informed the servants at the time of leaving Irak, to wit, that when the Sun disappears the birds of night will move, the standards of Sameri will be hoisted, etc., verily, the birds of night did move in those days, and the Sameri did call, and blessed is he who knew and was of the knowing. Then We informed them of the goat. Verily, all We have told them appeared, and must have appeared, for thus did the Pen of Power and Glory reveal.”

Now this blessed Tablet, which makes mention of the goat, Sameri, and the birds of night, through excessive animosity and hatred they attributed to these days. They are so thoughtless regarding the meanness and baseness of this sort of transposition. Likewise, the numerous Tablets and Writings (revealed by Bahá'u'lláh) for the promotion of the Word of God and the preservation of the Cause of God, concerning the harmfulness of dissensions, divisions and disagreements, have all been used to promote their own selfish desires, and used as means for instilling enmity and hatred (in the minds) against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Notwithstanding this, they account themselves of the people of faithfulness and style themselves “Unitarians.”

A blessed Tablet was shown me (by Muḥammad-‘Alí), which had no beginning or end, revealed by the Supreme Pen. He asked me to unite the separate fragments and frame it — that is, to place them on a board and thus join the two fragments. He said: “These two (fragments) are of one blessed Tablet, revealed on two pages.” This servant, considering the matter to contain a project, did not acquiesce in this work, and said: “This servant will not interfere in these affairs. If you wish to paste them, do it yourself.” Finding him urging {{p17}} and encouraging this servant to the work in a great degree, he was more certain that the two fragments did not belong together, but that he wished them joined to affect the meaning of the word “Covenant” which occurred in them. He said: “I have spoken of this to Agha Jamál and he has commended it.” This servant remarked that whoever wishes may commend this, but it will not induce me to interfere with any such matter or entangle in like affairs. When he be-

came disappointed in this servant he made no further revelation regarding these things.

As to the imprisonment (the last confinement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and his brothers to ‘Akká), it is as follows: A certain day he said, while in the Kassre (Bahjí), that His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá — May the spirit of existence be a sacrifice unto Him! — negotiated with Constantinople regarding the removal of the Blessed Station (the sacred remains of Bahá’u’lláh) to Mt. Carmel. In this matter, he said, we must make our plans. This servant having observed those actions from him and having decided not to interfere in such matters made no remark.

However, he made arrangements to send Mírzá Majduddín, with a present and letter in Persian text, to Nazim Páshá, the Governor of Damascus, to seek his aid in this affair. After hearing of this arrangement, this servant remarked that the said Governor being a man of politics, if certain matters were communicated to him, he would doubtless convey the same in a petition to the Sulṭán and cause suspicion in the court, producing harmful results, and thus bring calamity to all. This servant, during the same days, conveyed this matter to His Honor, the twig (a relative of the Báb), Hájí Mírzá Seyyid ‘Alí — Upon him be Bahá’u’lláh el — Abhá! Notwithstanding all this, he sent Mírzá Majduddín, with presents, a letter and verbal suggestions and instructions to Damascus. He met the said Nazim Páshá, and, {{p18}} according to his own words spoken to this servant in Haifa, all that he could he told the Governor, concerning the building on Mt. Carmel (the Tomb of the Báb), the coming and going of the American friends and the gatherings and meetings in ‘Akká. In order to get all this information, the Páshá showed him the utmost kindness and assured him of his help.

Mírzá Majduddín returned, and, only a few days later, a telegram, transmitted in symbolic code, from the Royal Porte (Constantinople) arrived, the purport of which was the imprisonment of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l — Bahá, of this servant and of them (Muḥammad-‘Alí, et al.). As soon as I heard this news I told them that it was the fruit and the result of the trip of Mírzá Majduddín.

Although they have been the cause of this great matter, yet every day they arranged a new fiction and spread it here and abroad. Once they said a Christian gentleman, among the friends of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l — Bahá, who resides in Egypt, had spoken publicly of the Cause, in a church, without caution and wisdom, and this had caused the imprisonment. At another time they said that his Honor Mírzá Abu’lFaḍl — Upon him be Bahá’u’lláh! — had composed a book and published it, and, this having fallen into the hands of the doctors of Azhar (University) had caused this misfortune. In short, they have done all they could, secretly and publicly. “They scheme and God schemes. Verily, God is the best schemer.”

In those days a certain person came from Damascus to ‘Akká and told some of the souls among the outsiders that the cause of the imprisonment of His Holiness ‘Abbás Effendi was Nazim Páshá, the Governor of Damascus. The strangest of this, that, after imprisonment, Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí wrote a letter to Nazim

Páshá for the purpose of his own deliverance, and the person who transcribed the letter into Turkish is now {{p19}} present in ‘Akká. The said Páshá, however, did not answer a word in reply to the first or second letter.

Now, O ye beloved of God! I ask you, by your Lord El-Abhá, is it possible for me to remain with them (Muḥammad-‘Alí and his people) after witnessing these deeds and actions which are opposed to the decisive texts of God and are against the honesty and integrity recognized among all sects and peoples and after I have learned the falsity of the things they attributed to the Center of the Covenant of God? Is it lawful, according to any Divine law, for me to be connected with Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí? No, verily, by my Lord El-Abhá! Nay, rather, to him is a lawful command and a wise and solid counsel. As He (Bahá’u’lláh) has said: “If ye sense any odor of jealousy and envy from any soul in the Cause of God, keep aloof from him.” Is he who manifests such actions and deeds an enemy or a friend, an interested or disinterested person?

Notwithstanding all this, this servant, in the spirit of supplication and humility, hopes and begs of God, the Almighty, to guide then unto the shade of the blessed Word of the Covenant and Testament, to treat them with absolute mercy and to aid and to confirm them in that which is befitting. Verily, He is Near, the Answerer.

As to the ways by which they cast their suspicions, it is necessary that they be outlined briefly, in order to inform and awaken the souls. (This refers to the way by which they try to affect the mind of a newcomer to them and to estrange him from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá — May my life be a sacrifice to Him! — Translator) Thus may no one be caught in the trap of the polytheism of their doubts and become deprived of the eternal blessing of God. The first thing they do is to appear most obedient to the Divine Laws and night and day engage themselves in the writings of the verses to such a degree that the newcomer imagines that they are absolutely evanescent and absorbed entirely in servitude, having no thought or purpose {{p20}} save the Blessed Cause and the Blessed Verses. After a while they give vent to certain mentions and insinuations in order to hinder the listener from turning to the firm command of the Covenant of God. That is to say, they begin to interpret and misconstrue some of the verses, and some they interpolate and transpose with perfect delicacy, giving one to understand they are wronged. They convey all that which tends to instill enmity and hate in the new-comer’s heart against His Holiness, “Him whom God hath willed” — ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Later, they encourage him by various means to say evil things against ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and they, themselves, outwardly voice the Verses of Bahá’u’lláh. “The Tongue is for the mention of good; stain it not with evil sayings.” On the other hand, they make light of the important command of “Turn your faces to Him whom God hath willed,” which is the greatest command of God. They give much importance to insignificant, petty matters.

If the subject be correctly considered, after the ascension of the Adored Countenance (Bahá’u’lláh) the decisive command which holds the first degree of importance, which is incumbent upon all, is the one mentioned above. Second

in importance are the other commands of the book of God. For instance, if a person commits a murder he has committed a crime, the harmful result of which will concern him; but if he disobeys the word of the Covenant of God (disobeys ‘Abdu’l-Bahá) and causes dissension in the Law of God, the harmful result of it will touch the Cause itself (humanity at large). In this wise he will be absolutely nonexistent and in evident loss. The fundamental basis of unity and concord rests upon the gathering of all under the shadow of one Word. This is the Oneness and Singleness mentioned in so many Tablets by the Supreme Pen. Now, what Word is greater than the Word of {{p21}} “Turn to (‘Abdu’l-Bahá) after the ascension (Turn to Him who is chosen by God, who is branched from the Pre-existent Root. By this verse is intended the Greatest Branch (‘Abdu’l-Bahá). From the KitábAhdi. — Translator) — and what command is greater than that? But, alas! that selfish motives and passionate desires have proved the greatest hindrance to the divine, eternal happiness. They further give the newcomer to understand that His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá claims a station higher than that of the Ancient Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) — Magnified is His Station! — that He wishes to efface the ordinances and laws of the Blessed Perfection and to rule independently, establishing a new law and code. As witness to this matter they cite the saying of such souls as are distant from His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and who entertain extraordinary enmity and jealousy; likewise, they offer poems and certain pamphlets which contain sentiments differing from the true belief of the Center of the Covenant and the hopes of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Soon, through the power of the pen and utterances of the Center of the Covenant, the horizon of realities and meanings will become illumined and that which is the desire of the heart and life of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá — that is, absolute servitude at the Holy threshold, will be established and proved.

As to the dissension in the Cause, which is shaking the pillars of the Divine Law and causing conflagration of the fire of religious hatred and enmity, they consider it a religious duty — nay, the basis of the Holy Laws. If a person mention a word agreeing with the texts of the Books of God against dissension and concerning the necessity of unity, they consider him a polytheist and call him rejected and raise the voice of “where is the law!” Yet the Laws of God all concern unity under one Word, and the original purpose of the Divine collective Manifestation is for the solidarity of all sects and peoples of the world. {{p22}}

In most of the Blessed Tablets this point has been explained and elucidated, as, for example, in one of the Tablets Bahá’u’lláh says: “O people of Bahá! Strengthen the loins of endeavor, perchance religious strife and quarrel may be removed and erased from among the people of the world. for the love of God and His servants, arise to serve this Cause. Religious animosity and hatred is a world — consuming fire and the extinction thereof is most difficult unless the Hand of Divine Power rescue the people from this awful ordeal.”

Likewise He says: {.noid}

“In the Name of God, the Unique! O people of the world! After the removal of the veil some people held fast to verses. We revealed verses. Some took

hold of proofs (evidences); We manifested them; and certain souls turned to commandments, and We revealed the greatest proofs thereof. Whatever they said was performed and whatever they wished was granted. The purpose of all that was manifested was that the ears might become ready for hearing this Supreme Word, and that is this: O people of the earth! Make not the religion of God a cause of enmity. If this Word take root in the world, all will find themselves free and at peace. Say, verily, by the life of God! the tenet of God and His religion hath come for unity and concord, not for dissensions and disagreements. To this bears witness the Mother Book, and the people hear not! The glory which is shining from the horizon of the Heaven of My Kingdom be upon thee and upon them who have left superstitions, holding to the lights of certainty.”

Now they have forsaken these firm commandments and for selfish motives they have held to the sayings of this and that one, and are enkindling the fire of animosity in the breasts and hearts. It is for this reason that Bahá'u'lláh says in the Book of the Covenant: “O ye My Branches! In existence is hidden latent a great power and perfect strength. Turn to it and consider {{p23}} that which is conducive to its unity and not to that which is its apparent disagreement.” Likewise, He says: “O servants! Do not make the means of order the means of disorder, and the cause of unity the cause of discord.”

O people of equity! It is meet and behooving for them to withhold vision from the Great Power and direct it to the sayings of the souls; to make the cause of order in the world that of dispersion; and to prefer personal interests over the Divine Laws? Although they are in the utmost degree of jealousy and hatred, they consider themselves abiders by the Holy Law. By all means they endeavor to extinguish the light of the Divine Covenant, and consider the Testament of the Son of the World a toy for children. Night and day they work for the destruction of the edifice of the Supreme Word and the foundation of the Holy Cause of Abhá. No, verily, by Him whose hands hold the reins of the Cause! Rather it is meet and behooving that when they heard the verses of the Book of the Covenant they should have said: “We believe and are assured.” They should have considered themselves evanescent and absorbed in the command of the Testament of God. They should have arisen with all power and strength in obedience to His holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and should have strengthened the loins of service among the people. but, alas! as the author of Mathnaví says: “When personal interest appears, man’s accomplishments will be concealed and the veils of the heart will blind the eyes.”

If personal interests were to be forsaken by them, if they would turn to the Center of the Covenant of God and would perceive the power of Divine evidence which emanates from His tongue, they would see clearly that all that is not the mention of absolute servitude is outside of His verbal commands and writings of His pen. Although He is the Center of the Covenant of the Blessed Perfection, in the degrees of utterance, he holds himself the servant of the beloved of God, and has no {{p24}} desire save the promulgation of the Word of God, the

promotion of the Cause of God, the diffusion of the fragrances of God and the education of souls. The greatest proof of this is the boundless writings of His pen. Among them is an utterance which emanated from His blessed tongue recently and copies of which have gone to all regions. This will be cited here in order to manifest to all that outside of the mention of servitude and the station of servitude, there is no other mention in that station:

“Through His Honor Agha Ghulum ‘Alí — Upon him be Bahá’u’lláh! — to the beloved of God. (Upon them be Bahá’u’lláh-el-Abhá!) {.greet}

He is God! {.sit}

“O my God! O my God! Thou knowest, verily, that my heart is replete with the love of Thy beloved ones, my spirit is attached to the spirit of Thy chosen ones, my breast is dilated with the mention of Thy trustworthy ones, and my reality is attracted by the mention of Thy servants. The ecstasy of their love has taken such hold of me that Thou caused me to open my tongue in their praises. I pray Thee with my heart, my spirit and my tongue, and supplicate Thee to cause Thy heavenly table and merciful blessing to descend upon them, to lay upon them the Hem of Thy Garment, to fill for them the chalice of Thy Grace, to cast upon them the glance of Thy Mercy, to submerge them in the seas of Thy Bounty, to specialize them with the glory of Thy Bestowal, to choose them for the promotion of Thy word, and to perfect for them Thy Benefit. Thus may the Lights of Thy Oneness shine in their hearts, the breeze of Life pass through the garden of their minds by Thy bounty and generosity; the verses of Thy knowledge be imprinted upon the mirrors of their hearts; their eyes may become bright with the witness of the manifestations of Thy bounty; their tongues may utter Thy wonderful mysteries; their souls may be assured by the comprehension of Thy signs, and the bounties of Thy Names and Attributes may envelop them.

“O Lord! O Lord! Aid them in Thy service, confirm them in Thy servitude, make them the signs of Thy Oneness, the banners of Thy Glory, the trees of the garden of Thy Love, the words of the book of Thy Knowledge, the lamps of Thy Guidance, the stars of the horizon of Thy Bounty, the waves of the sea of Thy Oneness, the meteors of the altitude of Thy Grandeur, the lights of the Sun of Thy Manifestation, the myrtles of the meadows of Thy Mercy, the fountains of Thy Mysteries, and the evidences of Thy guidance. Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Giver, the Confirmer, the Almighty, and the Generous.

“O ye beloved of God and the helpers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! When the Sun of Reality became concealed (refers to the departure of Bahá’u’lláh from the mortal to the immortal realm. — Translator.) behind the veils of glory and the Orb of the universe disappeared from the dawning pit of evidence and arose in the Invisible World and conferred successive bounties upon the contingent world from the Unseen Realm, the bats began to move and spread out their wings in a race. They imagined that they could interrupt the glorious bounties of that Beautiful Face, extinguish the shining rays of the Sun of Reality, put out the

ignited fire and destroy the praised Light. For they supposed that on account of the ascension of His Holiness the Beloved, the Divine Foundation would be demolished, the edifice of God would be destroyed and the Blessed Tree uprooted. 'Evil was that which they imagined and vain was that which they supposed, and ye see them today in manifest loss.' For, according to what is heard, in certain regions, the enemies hearing the news of the {{p26}} great ordeal (the departure of Bahá'u'lláh), feasted and rejoiced, celebrated festivals, burned incense, served sweets and flowers, lit the candles, mixed honey and wine and played lutes and harps. That night until morn they spent in feasting and rejoicing in gladness and happiness. But they were ignorant of the fact that the Light of this Sun has no end, the torrent of that plain is free from interruption, the Light of that Blessed Orb is eternal, the Merciful One is established upon the Throne of Sovereignty, and the Throne is permanent. Nay, rather, the human temple (the body), like the clouds, hinders the visions from the Light of the Sun. It is for this reason that the Gospel records the statement that when the promised One comes He will come upon the clouds, and when the respective clouds pass away, then shall the disk of this Sun appear and the penetrating Light thereof spread. Thus, in a little while the great glad tidings spread throughout the world and the pillars thereof trembled; the East shouted with joy and the West reverberated the Blessed voice; the Most Radiant Sun of the Beauty of Reality appeared from the invisible zodiac and shone upon the Center of the world; the veil of concealment and mystery fell; the fire of the love of God burned in the hearts; the beloved of God radiated as a candle, and, like unto the witnesses of love, they became known in the assembly. From every region the melody of joy was raised and the voice of 'O our God! Verily, we have heard Thy Voice from all countries,' was raised; the Word of God was promoted; the fragrances of God spread, the fame of the Truth enveloped the world; the call of 'Am I not your Lord?' reached the ear of the far and near; the Cause of God became greater; the edifice of the Law of God loftier; all the nations were impressed and the enemies of the Blessed Beauty became fearful and at loss. When they noticed that the ascension of His Holiness the Desired One (Bahá'u'lláh) — May my spirit be a sacrifice to His {{p27}} beloved! — became the cause of the promotion of His blessed Cause and the flame of the burning fire became greater and every confident believer took a firmer stand — therefore the dawning of the Light caused the opposing nations a great loss, and, likewise, the blessing of God adorned the Royal throne of Persia with the coronation of a just Sháh. With the power of God that perfect Crown Head became kind to the oppressed sect. This, also, was a confirmation from His Holiness the Almighty God. Likewise, certain holy souls among the beloved of God arose with faithfulness to sacrifice self in the pathway of the Beauty of Abhá; they left their own rest and peace and turned to the horizon of Oneness; they became callers to the Covenant and held the chalice of the Testament in their hands and gave the world the ecstasy thereof; they spread the fragrances of God, conveyed the Cause of God and guided many souls.

"Praise be to God that the confirmations of the Beauty of Abhá arrived suc-

cessively and the victory of the Supreme Concourse shed a light as that of the early dawn, the Hosts of the Supreme Concourse descended as unto the waves and the zealous armies of gladness of the Kingdom of Abhá, with perfect power and strength, conquered and upbuilt the domains of the hearts. These hosts were the Divine inspirations and these armies were the waves of the Divine seas. They conferred eternal life upon dead souls and attacked the countries of the heart, giving them life and spirit, for they are the hosts of life and the army of salvation. May God increase them in power, glory, strength and number.

“Therefore, O ye beloved of God, this is the time when ye should arise, and, in thanksgiving for this bounty, do that which is your duty: Abide by the Law of God, pray to the Divine Threshold in the Mashrek — el-Azkar, supplicate and implore, praise and glorify Him; fast in the month of fasting and keep watch during its nights. {{p28}}

All this should be done in perfect wisdom and not in a manner which may cause the uproar and tumult of the ignorant.

“I have one request to make of all the beloved of God, and that is the desire of my life — that they all praise me in the absolute servitude of the Holy Threshold without interpretation. They must not praise ‘Abdu’l — Bahá except according to the expressions and words which have emanated from the pen of this Servant. They must never exceed that, but must content themselves therewith. Verily, my praise, my quality, my attribute, my name, my title, my entity, my reality, my essence and my manifestation is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and I have no other station than this. Certainly the beloved of God will accept this request from this Servant who makes it in the utmost lowliness and humility, and will make happy this sad heart and will confer a new life upon this weak body. Thus may ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, through hearing this great glad tidings and attaining this Supreme bounty, rejoice and attain Divine happiness and gladness.

(Signed) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás {sig}

But, as the Náqidín (the violators of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh) have no God save passion and no object save personal interest; if they see a hundred thousand traces of the power of God, they will increase their enmity and jealousy; they will not under any consideration observe the honor of the Cause and that of the beloved of God, and will never be awakened or warned. “God has sealed their hearts, their hearing and their sight.”

In short — Praise be to God! — the souls who are turning to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá all believe in the Great Manifestation of God, and, through His Sublime commands, are turning to the established Center and the evident Station. And, after the commands of the Blessed Beauty — Exalted is His Station! — obedience to the commands of {{p29}} His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is considered by them a duty, a cause of spreading the fragrances of God and the means of promulgating the Laws of the ancient Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh).

Consider how great is the utterance of His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that inhabi-

tants of America, notwithstanding the long distance and the difference in the tastes and customs, have been so attracted and enkindled as to cause the amazement of intellects. In these days one of the believers and assured maid-servants from that land, known as the maid-servant of God, Lua (Mrs. Getsinger), is present in this blessed spot. She is enkindled and attracted beyond description and sheds tears night and day, seeking permission from His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to go to Persia and quaff the cup of martyrdom. With all this they (Muḥammad-‘Alí and his people) mourn and cry, saying, the Cause of God has vanished. What Cause of God is among them and what trace thereof is in their hands?

O Lord! Thou knowest and bearest witness that this servant seeks only Thy Will and hopeth only for the promotion of Thy Word, and, with perfect endeavor and steadfastness, is arising to serve the Center of the Covenant, looking and turning to Him. He begs the ocean of Thy generosity to guide them, also, to the straight path and to help them obey that which they have been commanded. Thus may that which rejoices the hearts of the enemies of Thy religion and law be removed from among them, and the hearts of those who hold fast to the hem of Thy Covenant and Testament be made happy and joyous. Verily, Thou art the Able and the Powerful!

El-Abhá be upon the people of faithfulness who have turned to the horizon of the Covenant of the Lord of the creatures.

(Signed) Badí’u’lláh { .sig }