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author: Leone Barnitz, Agnes Parsons
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April 1-11, 1954

Whatever the House of Justice decides is the Will of the Blessed One. In this way there is order – otherwise there will be confusion. The Bahá'í laws are not rigid and unalterable. Whatever the House of Justice must be carried out.

Dictated: “Political laws in the House of Bahá'u'lláh are not rigidly fixed. Whatever decision is arrived at by numbers of the House of Justice (which is like a Parliament) either unanimously or by a majority – according to the requirements of time and place – that is the law of God.” In other words the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is not circumscribed, for this reason, that circumstances of time and place change. For instance the laws of America cannot be carried out here, and the laws of this place would be unsuitable for America. The circumstances are different.

In the time of Moses, the children of Israel were in the wilderness. There was no ease and comfort. Therefore ten offenses were made punishable by death. In the time of Christ there were towns and cities and civilization. The exigencies of the time did not require those ten laws for capital punishment, so he abolished them. Why? Because the time and circumstances were different. In the former time these laws were necessary and in this time other arrangements are required.

Q: It is missing, is it not, to say that the Bahá'í Cause cannot be organized?

A: How is it possible that there should be no organization? Even in a household, if there is no organization there will be hopeless confusion then what about the world? What is meant is that the organization is not rigid. In ancient times it was rigid. In the Torah all the political affairs were rigidly fixed, but in this Cause they are not. In this Cause there is political freedom, i.e. in each time the House of Thia is a brief explanation of the Master.

(Evening after Mírzá Maḥmúd's marriage) Supper, Jan. 2, 1920

Talking of the marriage ceremony 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Here we do not have much talking but there (in Amrica) they speak too much that no one can follow what they say. I was invited to a wedding in America. People were talking in couples. In the East one talks one talks and the root listen. When he has finished snother will speak, but they do not talk so much. Every place has its special customs. Every nation likes its own ways. At Christian weddings they smoke cigars and the room becomes filled with smoke."

Dr. E. remarked that it was nice to have the bride and groom take part in the ceremony themselves, as in the West, instead of by deputy.

A.B. It is so now. Everything depends on the time. Now it is impossible in the East for the bride to appear.

Mrs. P. In America all the interest centers in the bride. The groom is insignificant.

A.B. The marriage which is associated with spirituality and illumination is good. In the Arab districts only the bride and bridegroom are present. They place two stones. The bridegroom says, "I am on one stone and all the world is witness that thou art my wife and thy husband" The words are few but comprehensive. In the religion of God the consent of both parties is necessary. This is obligatory. In the East it was customary that the girl was not consulted in the matter at all. She knew nothing whatever about it. Her father would give her to some man and could not protect. To whomsoever he thought best he would give her. But the Blessed Beauty in the Kitáb-ul-Aqdas, explicitly says that no one must interfere between the two. Without the consent of both sides and the consent of the parents the marriage cannot take place. But you in America and Europe attach no importance to the parents consent. Even if the parents do not consent the young people do so they wish. If the parents are not agreeable, it will lead to inharmony. In the East, among the Muḥammadans and Christians, there is no love between the bride and her mother-in-law, as a rule, there is continually quarrelling and contention, because the consent of the parents had not been obtained for the marriage. Of course the mother does not wish her son to marry someone she disapproves and the son resents her interference. But amongst the Bahá'ís, it is very rare to find any unkindness amongst relations by marriage. As regards divorce, Bahá'u'lláh says that if a husband or wife cannot agree, there should be a preliminary separation of one.

Notes of a Pilgrimage to Haifa in January 1920, taken from Utterances of His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Q: What should be done about the Liberty Bonds that were sent as contributions to the Mashrak El Askar fund?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: That rests with the delegates to the Convention, dele-gates only - not strangers. The Convention Is like a parliament. The delegates represent

the opinion of the whole body of believers.- What they decide unanimously or by a majority must be accepted. The majority must rule.

Q: I am afraid the Convention will have a hard time unless - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá prays for us.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Your duty is to go with the majority and accept its decisions.

Q: Then it is the delegates to the Convention and not the Unity Board that have to decide on the plans.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Yes, the delegates must decide. The Board must carry out the decisions of the Convention. There must be order. It cannot be that everybody has the right of interference: in that case nothing would be accomplished.

Q. They say that all organization is forbidden by the Teachings.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: That is all talk. The Text of the Blessed Book cannot be changed. No one can interfere with it, things not definitely stated in the Book are referred to the House of Justice. Whatever the House of Justice decides, this is obligatory. Now, it is not possible for all the world to come together. The Convention is similar to the House of Justice to a certain extent. Its decisions and laws must be carried out

Q. In the beginning of the Big Ben Pamphlet, the words occur, “The Bahá’í Revelation is not an organization. The Bahá’í Cause can never be organized. Is this a correct translation?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: No. That gives the wrong idea. In the Cause of - Bahá’u’lláh there is the Beit-ul Adl (House of Justice) Political affairs are not explicitly settled in the Tablets. They are referred to the House of Justice. Whatever the House of Justice decides is obligatory. In the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh instructions are given with regard to worship, but the assembly of the House of ,Justice sees that at one time a certain arrangement is necessary and in another time a different arrangement. It is not circumscribed in its action. One hundred years ago one ruling was necessary; today another, tomorrow perhaps another, therefore, the Cause of God is of rigidly circumscribed. It is in accordance with the exigencies of time and place. Political affairs are not definitely fixed by Bahá’u’lláh. This is the object of what is said in the Book of Aqdas. Bahá’u’lláh says political affairs are referred to the House of Justice. Whatever they think wise according to the requirements of time and place ought to be carried out But the Command of Worship is to be found in the Book, politics will not remain unchanged, the politics of a hundred years ago are quite impracticable today. For example, there was slavery one hundred years ago; could that be carried out now?

The members of the House of Justice will be inspired Whenever it is established it will be under the protection of the Blessed Beauty; whatever the House of Justice decides is the Will of the – Blessed One. In this way there is order – Otherwise there would be confusion The Bahá’í Laws are not rigid and unalterable. Whatever the House of Justice decides must be carried out.

Dictated: "Political Laws in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh are not rigidly fixed. Whatever decision is arrived at by the members of the House of Justice (which is like a parliament) either unanimously or by a majority according to the requirements of time and place, that is the Law of God. In other words, the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh is not circum-scribed for this reason that circumstances of time and place change. For instance, the laws of America cannot be carried out here, and the laws of this place would be unsuitable for America. The circumstances are different."

"In the case of Moses the children of Israel were in the wilderness, There were no ease and comfort. Therefore ten offences were made punishable by death. In the time of Christ, there were towns and cities and civilization. The exigencies of the time did not require these ten laws for capital punishment, so He abolished them. Why? Because the times and circumstances were different. in the former times these laws were necessary, but in Christ's time, they were no longer necessary, and in this time other arrangements are required."

Q: It is misleading is it not, to say that the Bahá'í Cause cannot be organized?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: How is it possible that there should be no organization? Even in a household if there is not organization there will be hopeless confusion. Then what about the world? What is meant is that organization is not rigid! In ancient times it was rigid. In the Torah all the political affairs were rigidly fixed, but in this Cause they were not. In this Cause there is political freedom - i.e., in each time the House of Justice is free to decide in accordance with what is deemed expedient. This is a brief explanation of the matter.

Q: It was the delegates and not the Unity Board who were to decide, was it not? This was spoken of yesterday, but the notes were not taken down. Will the Master please repeat so that it may be taken down today.

When the Turks came and attacked the place they brought the wines of all description a great number of barrels of wine, wines of twenty years old. The Turks sated themselves with drink and wine and said, "No matter how much the store is not exhausted." They brought out boxes of tinned beef, salmon, etc, so it became evident that the monks used meat. Sweets and chocolates also they found. The Col. declared, "In all my life I have never tasted such wine. It is wonderful. A little in a glass with water is delicious."

Dr. E. Where was it the Master lived! In the lower cave of Elijah near the bottom of the slope?

A.B. Yes, in the lower cave.

Mrs. P. Was it in the upper or the lower cave that Elijah lived?

A.B. It was in the lower cave that he used to teach and enlighten the people. Sometimes he would go up to the upper cave. There was a small cave there where he would go and sit for an hour or so when the sun was very hot, but his dwelling was in the lower cave. There he used to sleep and teach.

Dr. E. The cave has evidently been enlarged and squared by artificial means.

A.B. The lower cave was partly excavated by Elijah. It has since been enlarged, but the cave is very old. It dates perhaps from before the time of Abraham. It has been enlarged and squared by man, but there is still a divan there where Elijah used to sleep.

Dr. E. Were the buildings outside the cave there when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lived there!

A.B. I was in the room towards the West. The rooms on the Eastern side have been built since.

Dr. E. How long did the Master remain there?

A.B. One month!

Magam, Sunday afternoon, 15th Jan

“Whoever reads the books of the prophets and reads the prophecies concerning Carmel will understand the greatness of Carmel and will then appreciate the visit to the Tomb. What wonderful tidings the prophets have given concerning this Carmel! All those prophecies have now been fulfilled. Amongst the names given to it is, “The Door of God”. It is called Car-mel, i.e. Garden of God. Many tidings are given about it – continual tidings – amongst these are “Carmel is Bahá’u’lláh.” This is the Carmel of Bahá’u’lláh. When one reads these prophecies and becomes aware of their significance, then from visiting the Tomb one becomes very happy. (To Mrs. Parsons) if you wish, come one night here and be the guest of ‘Abbás Gholi and sleep here. Come at night and visit here and then see how spiritual it is. I will tell ‘Abbás Gholi that you may become his guest”

When in America at Washington, I spoke about the relations of white and colored people. Even you (Mrs. P.) said: “If the colored people come here, the white ones will not come.” You told me: “We have appointed a special place for the colored people but they do not go there.” They said, “Why you not let us come to the meetings with the white people?” They thought the arrangement was a slight upon them.

First, I spoke in a church, then in a University for colored people. I said: “I see a strange thing in Washington. There is a great rivalry between the white and colored, to such an extent it has reached enmity and hatred, and if it remains so, the result will be very disastrous. It is certain that the effects will be very bad. This inharmony arises from ignorance; it has no real foundation, because in the sight of God there is no distinction between white and black. If the heart is turned to God it becomes illumined even though its owner may be black. If the heart is blackened with the passions of the world of self and material things and with satanic fancies that person has fallen away from God, no matter how white his skin may be. And more over consider that there is a difference of color, in the world of animals also... (Here A.B. dove of different colors.. of different

colored flowers in a garden etc..) How is it that difference of color, which in the animal and vegetable worlds is the cause of beauty, should in the human world be the cause of enmity and hatred?"

O colored ones! The whites have done you a great service. They have sacrificed their lives and wealth for your liberation. For four years there was war in America for the sole purpose of liberating you, until at last success was attained and you were freed. Then this freedom extended to Europe and your fellows in Europe became free also. It also affected the East and all the black in the East became free. Then it reached Africa and your fellows there also became free. Now that not one colored man – even a barbarian – can be enslaved. The whites in America have sacrificed themselves for your freedom. Now it is fair that you should oppose them? This is great unfaithfulness and ingratitude and injustice. You should always express thankfulness and gratitude because the whites of America sacrificed themselves, enter into war, we spent money only for your freedom – and obtained it. Then this freedom extended to the whole world. In truth, the whites of America became the cause of the freedom of your race. Instead of showing gratitude you have risen in opposition. In no code of morale would such conduct be justified. If a person receives even a little assistance from anyone, he should not forget it throughout his life, he should always be thankful to that person - This is worthy of man. This is the requirement of religion, and this is justice. If man is not appreciative of help received, there is no doubt than he is worse than an animal. For consider: If a man does some kind turn for an animal, for example if he gives a piece of bread to a dog, the dog will never forget it. Also the cat and other animals do not forget a kindness shown. Briefly, you are human how can you forget this service, this sacrifice which the whites have made for you? What will you say, before the whites when the whites say: "O God, we have given our lives and our wealth to free the blacks and now they have risen in opposition to us. Instead of becoming humble."