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April 22 to May 12, 1937

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Notes Taken in the Presence of Shoghi Effendi

Agnes Baldwin Alexander

April 22 to May 12, 1937

Message to the Americans.

They have a {{p1}} twofold task of promoting first: teaching and second
the completion of the Temple ornamentation; the seven year plan to the

end of the first century. If they cooperate and persevere they will succeed. Mr. Schopflocher has offered \$100,000 and the remaining amount would be \$30,000 per year (for the seven years). It is very easy to achieve this if the friends persevere and cooperate. Two more units are needed. If cooperation is sustained to the end — and the teaching work must not suffer and must be established before the end of the first century, at least a group in every state, and if a group is not possible, then one residential believer not only in every state and province in America, but in every republic in the American Republic. (?) and the eight islands of Hawaii, a residential believer on each island, is a part of the World Plan. Every nation in the Bahá'í World must direct its attention to the neighboring countries. In every country it is possible to {t}each the Cause. If you know how to teach you can find a few receptive souls. Germany must establish the Cause in Balkan States. In the future there will be service through Greenland to America.

Just before leaving Haifa the Guardian sent for me and again spoke of the American friends. He said they have a twofold task only eight years time and repeated “time is short” that they must make a tremendous effort in teaching and a tremendous effort to finish the second and third units of the Temple by the end of the first century and inauguration of {the} second century — that it was 25 years time since the Master laid the corner stone. It will be 32 years in erecting and more than that would be detrimental to the friends. By the first century they must be through with the ornamentation and particularly as this will enable the friends in Persian to start the third Temple. He said the Master laid the corner stone in Wilmette before there was any plan and the Persian friends could do the same. He quoted the Master's words that another Temple could not be built until the one in Wilmette was completed.

April 22.

Palestine is the heart of the world, the uniting place of three continents. No country in the world has such a unique place as the meeting place of three continents. (Africa, Asia and Europe)

Any person considering to become a believer must make up his mind to give up drink. Bahá'u'lláh says, “Do not approach it”, that is, you must not drink it. A believer is expected to accept the law of Bahá'u'lláh without question. We have no perfect Bahá'ís, only the Master was perfect. A Bahá'í is a person who accepts the law with entirety. The Jews were fanatically attached to the Sabbath and the laws of Moses, but Christ did not compromise, he was very severe. We must have implicit faith in the wisdom of the Manifestation and accept all that he reveals. The teachings themselves are the standard of justice, Gl. pg. 175. {{p2}}

The Bahá'í Faith is more than a religion, it is not a re-statement, it is a civilization which would blend East and West. The past Faiths could not establish a civilization. We can't compare it to previous religions and World Order is

another word for civilization. God's plan for humanity in this revelation is fully unfolded. It was only partially unfolded in the past.

The Nineteen Day Feasts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá stressed the Spiritual side but not the Administrative side. Now we stress the Administrative side.

There is nothing in the teachings that the Nineteen Day Feast should be held on the first Day of the Bahá'í month. It is only the custom. Give freedom in non-essentials. In essentials, unity; in non-essentials diversity and in all things, charity.

Those who deliberately violate a Bahá'í law cease to be voting Bahá'ís.

The vast majority centers in Persia are villages 600 localities and out of these 500 are villages.

You cannot compromise an Administrative principle. The local Assembly must intervene when the Cause suffers. In purely administrative matters, if a voting member disobeys a Spiritual Assembly he should cease to be a voting member.

The institutions of the International House of Justice and the Guardianship have different revenues. The Master and Bahá'u'lláh have both stated that each have their specific revenues. Bahá'ís are free to offer endowments to the local or the national or the international, conditional, or unconditional. We must discourage labeled contributions, but individuals are free to give all their property to a non-Bahá'í.

If anyone disobeys an Assembly he ceases to be a voting member if he has been repeatedly warned.

£1,000,000 has been spent on Haifa Port. Jerusalem is the religious center in Palestine and Haifa the commercial port. Formerly Jaffa was the leading port, but now Haifa has taken its place. The position of Haifa is much more favorable than Jaffa.

Sometimes it is very difficult to say what constitutes legislation and constitutes interpretation. If the woman is not given the right to divorce, it is not equality of men and women and therefore it would not be according to Bahá'í law.

Arabic beautifies and enriches the Persian language. 'Abdu'l-Bahá called them milk and honey.

Obligatory prayer originated in Islám. "Strengthen thou my hands", means to help us from acting dishonestly. The law of God is sustained by two pillars, — prayer and fasting. {{p3}}

Haifa will be the terminus of a train line and Calcutta the other terminus. And another line will run from Haifa to Cairo and to the Sudan, and from there will be extended to Central Africa and Cape Town.

In the East the reforms are very superficial, — they change dress but not their hearts. Bahá'u'lláh speaks of cleanliness — The Bahá'ís of Persia must introduce these things — bath, etc.

(The Guardian said in regard to a Japanese Buddhist priest that he could not be a Bahá'í and remain a Priest, that he should make every effort to find other means of livelihood even tho it were less money, and that it should be explained to him:)

Bahá'u'lláh is the bearer of a New Revelation which abrogates the old, — the Founder of a New Dispensation. We must not be members of any organizations, but we must cooperate with all, provided cooperation does not imply acceptance. We must do just what others do who enter our meetings, — reciprocate like people who address Bahá'í meetings but do not join us. Our Faith abrogates the laws of previous revelations, therefore we cannot join other associations and affiliate.

Summer Schools

The Summer Schools should invite non-Bahá'ís. It is a place of association as well as study.

The Bahá'ís must make a Will by the law of Bahá'u'lláh, and if no Will is left, then it must be divided according to the law of Bahá'u'lláh.

The Master laid two conditions on the Temple: — it must be circular and have nine sides. The element of sacrifice vitalizes the contribution. It must be alike for the rich and poor. The structure will then have much greater power.

The Gleanings were taken from about 12 books, some of which were in manuscript.

Eighty percent of the Guardian's time is devoted to correspondence and eighty percent of that to individuals. There are so many problems now that the Guardian has not time enough for them all.

Divorce although permissible is highly discouraged. The Assembly should solve such cases, and then they should obey and if not they must cease to be voting Bahá'ís. They should first not live together for one year. Smoking is not as serious as divorce. Smoking is highly discouraged but not prohibited.

The Bahá'í Revelation is to promote unity. Marriage without the consent of the parents does not promote unity and also there is another reason.

Frankness and courage must be adopted by the Bahá'ís in Persia with the Government. In the Assemblies, the Bahá'ís must discuss how to win the Government. Secrecy breeds suspicion. Never make any statement which is against truth, but we cannot disobey the Assembly. An order from an official on behalf of the Government must be obeyed before the Assembly. {{p4}}

The Bahá'í constitution is not an American constitution, it is a Bahá'í constitution. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá said the light from the East will go to the West. In "America's Spiritual Mission" 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote: "The continent of American is the land where the lights of the Faith will first be revealed — the continent where the mysteries — "The Faith was born in the East and the Child ushered in, in the West. The Faith now has a child (administration) and the World Order is the birth of civilization. The term World Order was first mentioned by the Báb in the Bayán and Bahá'u'lláh used the same term. Aḥmad Sohrab disassociated the writings of Bahá'u'lláh from the World Order. The Bahá'í Faith is more than a religion because it has institutions established by the Founder of the Faith which makes it a civilization. The Kingdom of God is this World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. When it is established the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come," will be fulfilled.

The religious institutions are trembling because they were not established by the Founders. On these ruins will be established the Bahá'í institution which is established by the Founder.

After the world war, there will be a reaction in favor of the Cause but the whole world will not immediately become Bahá'í.

The largest dome in the world is that of St. Peters, the second is St. Pauls; third, the cathedral of Seville; fourth —, and the fifth the dome of the Temple in Wilmette.

\$150,000 just for the dome. \$120,000 for structure \$150,000 for ornamentation

'Abdu'l-Bahá said that always from the beginning until now it has been the case that the light of God has been shed from the East to the West. He referred to the Christian dispensation which was shed from the East but was more powerful in the West. The administrative center always shifted from the East to the West. In this Cause the Spiritual and administrative center will always be here in Palestine. The Christian to Rome, — the Muslim from Mecca to Medina, Damascus, Baghdád, Egypt and at last Constantinople.

Gleanings, pg. 175. "Ark of God" is the Ark of His Cause. "His Laws" is the House of Justice which will be on Mt. Carmel. From the "Tablet of the World", pg. 23. "Say O Friends! Why fear and whom shall ye dread."

This is the "coming of age" of this planet. Just as America was discovered, so other planets may be discovered and in conjunction with them we may become a member of a greater entity.

Hinduism and Buddhism are the only existing true religions of the Far East today.

After the next war the U.S. will unite with other nations. Wilson was ahead of his age, he brought vision. {{p5}}

Bahá'u'lláh has said nothing about the punishment of the child. The House of Justice will have to decide that in the future. Refrain from severe punishment

but to some extent punishment is required; not necessarily bodily punishment. Severe punishment paralyzes the faculty of the child. Discipline though is necessary. Society cannot function without the principle of punishment and reward given by Bahá'u'lláh in His Tablets. Discipline always implies punishment and reward. Justice depends on punishment and reward. Encouragement is not sufficient. Encouragement without punishment spoils the child, and punishment without encouragement kills initiative. To punish without encouragement makes the child stiff. Severe punishment kills the initiative, — keep the balance between the two. Much depends upon the child and the environment, etc. The mother should be active in instilling Bahá'í principles in the child, and warn it from following the standards of fellow students. Teach the child truth before everything. Truth is the foundation of Faith.

The Boshes have rendered great service to the Cause. The spirit which animates them is the greatest. They have surrendered their will and all to the Cause. Whatever we offer to the Cause we should cease to oppose the will of the Spiritual Assembly. Green Acre is not as prosperous as other Summer Schools. If the whole property should become National property, it would solve the problem.

The effects of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Tablets to the blind in Japan we are now beginning to witness. The braille committee has been internationally extended. The blind should be told that the Cause will be the greatest comfort and the words of Helen Keller should be quoted and they should be told what the Bahá'ís are doing for the blind, in particular that it is international in scope. There will be many more blind after the war.

The Oneness of Humanity stress in almost every newspaper article. It is the call of humanity and the unity of mankind. We must identify it with the coming of age of the whole race. This is a new teaching which the world is now ready for. "He will guide you into all truth" the maturity of the age. The forces are now released and are preparing humanity to attain that stage. The principle of oneness of humanity is the corner stone of Bahá'í civilization. It is the call to the Bahá'í teachings. Unity of mankind is new. Christ could not have given it. The world was not ready. Forces have now been released and are preparing humanity to attain that stage. The Child is not yet born. The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh was the stage of conception. Now is the stage of incubation. The Child is world civilization.

The immediate future in Japan is very dark. Japan is going to suffer. The time is not now for great headway. The Pacific will become a great storm center in the coming war, — great suffering. What we require in Japan is the recognition of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Station. A Bahá'í teacher must be active in searching for those who will be spiritually minded, religious, not orthodox. The method of approach depends on the individual. Do not lose time with those who come out of curiosity or for personal gain.

Bahá'ís should be careful in their investments. All will be affected. {{p6}}

The future is very dark. Consult experts in investments. The whole world will

be involved. We know two things, — suffering will be intense, and all will be involved. The last war was the great war, the next will be the greatest war. The last was only a prelude to the next. A greater war will be required to give birth to a true League of Nations. If we can remain in a foreign country during the war, that is, have enough money to do so, we should remain. There will be a tremendous reaction afterwards. The Lesser Peace will be of non-Bahá'ís. The Greater Peace is referred to in the Tablet to Queen Victoria. As the Cause develops the governments will embrace the Cause and embrace peace. The greater war will end war. The Bahá'ís must be loyal to their governments and if the government says to keep silent on peace, as in Germany, keep silent.

Christian Science may be a stepping stone but that does not mean the founders are instruments of God. They think they believe in truth but it is imagination. Many of these new movements are tainted by politics. Like the teachings of the church which have no relation to Jesus. The greater movements are disintegrating and the people seek Christian Science, etc. Christian Scientists are sincere but misled. What the Catholics, Christian Scientists, Theosophists teach is superstition.

The Master was the perfect Bahá'í. He was the perfect mirror. He has the element of a prophet but not his rank. He is a human being which is perfect, yet human. That is why He is a mystery. He is all knowing and yet not a prophet.

The other world may be the physical universe, or the spiritual real. There are remarkable teachings in “Gleanings” about both the physical and the spiritual world. Sir Oliver Lodge is ahead of the scientists but he will never be able to analyze or reveal the spiritual world. Most of men's visions are pure superstition or fancy. There is only one spiritual world. The nature of other worlds may be discovered because they are physical but we shall never know the spiritual realm. {while on this plane} [The braces in this case are included as part of the handwritten note. — ed]

There were 12 photos of Bahá'u'lláh distributed by Him in Adrianople, The Master's photo is quite different from that of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh, which must not be exposed, but friends could own them.

The Cause is so much above personalities, — it will survive all attacks, etc. It is providential Sohrab left the Cause. In a mysterious way these things help the Cause. Mrs. Chanler is hypnotized by him. He may have been sincere but has lost his faith.

The enemies in Palestine are the Muslims, Christians, Muḥammad-‘Alí's party. It is only the beginning of the opposition of the church. This opposition will gradually increase and spread to the Church of England and afterwards will affect the Catholic religion and will bring the downfall of the Pope. The religious opposition is shifting to the West beginning with the politicians. The West starting with the religious leaders there is an increasing opposition of the {{p7}} church and later on it will affect the State. Be confident that whatever happens

will eventually be for the good of the Cause. The Bahá'ís must ask to be given administrative positions, that is, secondary posts and prove their ability to administration. They must be well informed and read the books of the enemies as well as Bahá'í books and be prepared to refute arguments. The challenge will be intellectual. What the Cause requires is perseverance.

The Hebrew University in Jerusalem, (300,000 books in library) the largest Hebrew University in the world, is open to all religions. Prof. Norman Bentwich of this university referred to the Bahá'í Faith as the fourth faith in Palestine. (see Bahá'í World, pg. 345) Professors have now been forced to come from Germany, but in the future they will come from America and England, and the Christians and Arabs will attend this university.

Íqán — The last translation is an attempt to approach the unattainable God [goal?].

The Arabs had a kind of culture, that is, a literary culture before Muḥammad. They composed poetry but couldn't write. It is the task of the Bahá'ís to interpret the Qur'án, according to the Bahá'í teachings.

The site of the manger in Bethlehem is the only authentic (Christian) site in Palestine, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said.

Jerusalem. Two reasons for visiting there. First to see the holy places and second to contrast them to those in Haifa and Bahjí. Jerusalem will be the last stronghold of Christianity. There are very powerful forces now at work there allied with the government. Some of the members of the government in Jerusalem are missionaries. They are first imperialists and then missionaries.

Faith is a great gift of God. Character and faith are different but both are necessary. They are complementary. Man may have faith in God and yet not have character. A Bahá'í is a person who feels the necessity to give up a habit, — he must make an effort. Not to drink is a conscientious obligation which is left to the individual. It is breaking a law to drink. We must not make a compromise. Bahá'ís must prove by their action that their religion is alive. The adherence of Bahá'ís to their laws has great influence. Character and adhering to the laws of Bahá'u'lláh is different, that is, Faith is different from Character.

Some of the Báb's laws were severe, as the Báb wished to bring the Muslims from their old beliefs. The laws of the Aqdas cannot be abrogated, at least for 1000 years. There is no rigidity except with the laws which Bahá'u'lláh has already revealed, that is, prayer, fasting, drink, marriage. There are three classes of laws in the Aqdas. First, such as social crime, — bigamy; second, spiritual obligation; third, advice, such as smoking.

There is a decline of morality all over the world, especially in {{p8}} Persia. In Japan a certain quality of character restrains them. In the meantime the Bahá'ís must not follow with the current. This decline is providential; it must set in, in order that the people will learn through bitter experience. It is a preparation for the Cause. God has offered the Cause to mankind for a 100

years. In the “Hidden Words”, “A great calamity followeth you and a great retribution awaiteth you.”

The Báb was like the sun at the vernal equinox, the spring. Bahá’u’lláh was like the middle summer, the sign of Leo. The Light of the Cause is different from the splendor of the Dispensation.

Christ’s birth. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained in a Tablet in Persian first what has been the usual way, the germ in man, but said, as to Christ, He was born from the Spirit of God through a breath of His Spirit in an extraordinary manner different from the way which is universally known rule. “Christ”, the Spirit of God, was born through a breath of His Spirit in an extraordinary manner.” There is one passage in the Íqán and two in Some Answered Questions. Every revelation has its mysteries....

The ideal way is for Bahá’ís to work one-half of their time for their living expenses and give the other half of their time to the Cause.

We must not imitate the missionaries in our chanting or singing, but make it something new. We must not imitate under any circumstances the Christians. Be original. In the East there is extreme fundamentalism. In the West extreme liberalism or extreme orthodoxy. The Master said that before his death Prof. Brown would realize his mistake. (In being influenced by the Azalís). Nicolai believed that the Báb was a prophet of God. Gobineau and Nicolai believed that Bahá’u’lláh usurped the Báb’s place. Gobineau has not changed but Nicolai has realized that the Bahá’ís are the friends of the Báb. The enemies of the Cause had a very powerful subtle influence on people. We mustn’t be either provocative nor be too submissive. Ventilate our feelings with frankness and moderation. The tone must be moderate and we must be very frank with friendliness. Firmness and at the same time frankness can be combined. To be brave is different from being cautious. Over cautiousness is a defect. We must ponder before we take action. Audacity in teaching, but not in applying the principles of Administration. We must be absolutely loyal to the Administrative principles. It is difficult because it involves personalities. Spiritual principles do not involve personalities. We must disregard personalities.

The “Hidden Words” are translated and printed in 12 languages.

(Someone at the table spoke of a cake made with alcohol. The Guardian said:) “Alcohol is alcohol whether in cooking or drinking and the Bahá’ís should know this.” Speaking of wine in more than one Tablet Bahá’u’lláh has said, “Do not approach it.” (Shoghi Effendi has the originals of these Tablets.) Women particularly {{p9}} should refrain from wine. They should go to parties and enjoy the rest, and why not write to the hostess and say, “We are not drinking wine.” We must not be ashamed. One extreme is to stay away, and the other extreme is to drink. Be frank, reasonable and brave. It often happens that what to us appears to be an embarrassing situation turns out to be to the advantage of the Cause. Timidity is an evidence of lack of faith. If faith is strong, one is full of courage and audacity. Association is a fundamental principle of the

Cause, as in the Words of Bahá'u'lláh, “Consort ye with all,...” Association does not imply affiliation. Do not collaborate with them. In a political party we may associate ourselves but not accept membership. The reason why women cannot be members of the House of Justice will be revealed to us. The Master in a Tablet has said it will become clear as the sun. Sometimes we cannot find the reason for things, but it is a challenge to our faith itself. A revelation implies a wisdom which transcends the human mind.

The Bahá'ís should express gratitude for what the British Government has done. 1st Service. Gen. Allenby received an order from Mr. Balfour that when they entered Haifa, ‘Abdu'l-Bahá should be protected. He gave directions to Gen. Allenby and to the military official in charge and the first one Gen. Allenby called on was ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. It surprised everyone in Haifa. He asked the Master what He desired and He replied just one word to cable to Persia that He was safe, and it was the military official who sent the cable and then Gen. Allenby and his wife drove with the Master to ‘Akká, and it was a great surprise. 2nd Service. The British Government established the fact that the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh was the property of the Bahá'ís in 1922. Muḥammad-‘Alí’s party seized the key forcibly from the Gardener at night and for over a year the police were stationed at the Shrine. The High Commissioner of Palestine received letters and telegrams from all countries — The British officer was ordered by the High Commissioner in Jerusalem to deliver the key from the police to the same gardener. 3rd Service. Muḥammad-‘Alí is owner of 1/6 of the Mansion through bribery and they hoped to get the rest, but failed. They are very well off but they wouldn’t restore the Mansion. Muḥammad-‘Alí, although he owned 1/3 (in ‘Abdu'l-Bahá’s time) lived in the Mansion for 40 years and ‘Abdu'l-Bahá allowed him to do it, but now they cannot occupy it. The British Government guarantees the place as a sacred place, so Muḥammad-‘Alí’s share in it is not only useless but a loss to him. The 4th Service was that the British Government recognized the place and exempted it from taxation. Also all the property in Haifa.

During 300 years 12 generations of Bahá'u'lláh’s family — He is from Abraham — one of his sons who migrated to Central Asia and established himself in Khurasán — he was neither Ismael nor Isaac — He is also from Jesse, the son of David who is from Isaac.

Zoroaster conversed with the Jewish prophets 1000 years before Christ. He lived at the time of the Jewish prophets who were not endowed with constancy. The Sabian religion existed before Abraham — just as Christ appeared among the Jews — In the Qur’án Zoroaster was mentioned but not by name — Rass. Prof. Jackson is the leading authority on Zoroaster. {{p10}}

Hidden Words: “The comb I have ...” meaning what I have given you to use as a means of — misusing. Religion has often been misused by the leaders of religion and “comb” means religion or the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, which should be the instrument for the establishment of peace — The misinterpretation of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

On the whole it is much wiser to invest in real estate remote from the centers of population (that the bombs may not fall) and the friends must not be misled by temporary prosperity — for the crash will come later.

The Master's photograph should be circulated amongst the Believers. Bahá'u'lláh should live in the minds of the Believers rather than to see a photograph — Then there is always the fear of worshipping the photograph. The Bahá'ís must concentrate on the spirit and not on the form — Even the Master used to refer to Himself as the channel.

Nationalism and militarism are all instruments that God is utilizing for the use of His purpose — This turmoil is a preparation — The coming war will weld the nations into a Kingdom of God. The Bahá'ís are preparing the way at present for this great fusion.

To teach the Cause is the paramount duty of the friends. Every Bahá'í should teach — if not publicly, by their action. The more they teach the more manifest the confirmations will come — they are suspended between earth and heaven and what is required is a magnet and that magnet is the actions of the Bahá'ís. They are ready to descend and it is the deeds of the Bahá'ís which will attract as a magnet these confirmations which are suspended ready to fall. It is not what we achieve but the purity of our motive.

American Bahá'ís effect of the Divine Plan of the Master's Tablets. Like Nabíl's Narrative — it was not appreciated at the time.

I am urging the American Bahá'ís now to scatter as the Master did in His Will, to settle and stay to the end of life and never feel discouraged.

[END]