

knowledge, gazelles delicate and comely, roaming the plains of the love of God. You must attach the greatest importance to the education of children, for this is the foundation of the Law of God and the bedrock of the edifice of His Faith.

If it were known how much joy you have imparted through what hath been done for the children, the believers would surely educate all their children in the same way.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

When a speaker’s brow shineth with the radiance of the love of God, at the time of his exposition of a subject, and he is exhilarated with the wine of true understanding, he becometh the centre of a potent force which, like unto a magnet, will attract the hearts. This is why the expounder must be in the utmost enkindlement.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Each of these revered souls, who are the servants of the world of humanity and the promulgators of universal peace, shall erelong shine like unto a brilliant star from the horizon of humankind and illuminate the whole earth.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

We have previously written and sent out a detailed letter regarding the education of children in faith, certitude, learning, and spiritual knowledge, and their being taught to call upon the Heavenly Kingdom with suppliant hearts.

It is certain that ye will exert every effort toward this end.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou handmaid of God! Do thou establish a heavenly school and be thou a teacher in that house of learning. Educate the children in the things of God and, even as pearls, rear them in the heart of the shell of divine guidance.

Strive thou with heart and soul; see to it that the children are raised up to embody the highest perfections of humankind, to such a degree that every one of

them will be trained in the use of the mind, in acquiring knowledge, in humility and lowliness, in dignity, in ardour and love.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The greatness and honour of man reside in purity, truthfulness, benevolence, virtue, and constancy, not in earthly wealth and riches. Should a soul succeed in rendering a signal service to world of humanity, and in particular to the land of Persia, he will be a leader among leaders, and among those of preeminent rank he will be held most dear. This indeed is abounding wealth! This indeed is abundant prosperity! This indeed is everlasting riches!

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Wherefore thou shouldst seek to impart the Message to influential persons and become a cause of guidance to the learned and distinguished, that perchance there may be raised up in Iran wise, sagacious souls who shall be solicitous for both the good of the state and the welfare of the populace; who shall labour diligently night and day to the end that their great nation may retrieve its former glory and restore, for all the world to see, the splendour of the Kíyáníyán kings, and that its illustrious people may shine out amongst mankind with an extraordinary brilliance and attain to lasting happiness and contentment.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

... when spiritual perfections and virtues and the splendours of the All-Merciful are manifested in the vesture of women, and shine in the lamp of handmaidens, their reflection is more resplendent.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The obligatory prayers are binding inasmuch as they are conducive to humility and submissiveness, to setting one’s face towards God and expressing devotion to Him. Through such prayer man holdeth communion with God, seeketh to draw near unto Him, converseth with the true Beloved of his heart, and attaineth spiritual stations.

As for Green Acre, if this become a centre for the Bahá’ís—with

attendance granted to other groups—the divine call will reach all who wish to hearken unto it. If on the other hand it become a focal centre and rallying point for a host of empty-headed enthusiasts, each purveying his own fantastic creed, they will take up everyone’s time to no purpose propounding this or that outlandish notion.... Certainly we shall not deny access to members of other religions, but at the same time we have no wish that Green Acre should become a breeding ground for superstitions. Indeed, our ardent hope is that the cry of the Kingdom may be raised in that spot, and that the Bahá’í character of the school may become sufficiently evident for it to attract the notice of other groups.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In the beginning of his life man was in the world of the womb, wherein he developed the capacity and worthiness to advance to this world. The powers necessary for this world he acquired in that world. He needed eyes in this world; he obtained them in the world of the womb. He needed ears in this world; he obtained them there. All the powers that were needed in this world he acquired in the world of the womb. In that world he became prepared for this world, and when he entered this world he saw that he possessed all the requisite powers and had acquired all the limbs and organs necessary for this life, in that world. It followeth that in this world too he must prepare for the world beyond. That which he needeth in the world of the Kingdom he must obtain and prepare here. Just as he acquired the powers necessary for this world in the world of the womb, so, likewise, he must obtain that which he will need in the world of the Kingdom—that is to say, all the heavenly powers—in this world.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In short, O ye beloved of the Lord! Regard ye not the tyranny and iniquity of the ignorant. Resist oppression with justice, oppose tyranny with equity, and respond to bloodthirstiness with loving-kindness. Be the well-wishers of the advancement of Persia and its people, and strive to promote civilization for all humanity.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The “true and radiant morn” is the dawn of the Covenant and the first light of the Testament of the Day-Star of the world. The “Tree of Anísá” is the blessed tree which hath flourished in the Most Great Paradise and casteth its

shadow upon all regions.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As to the Nineteen Day festivity, it is of the utmost importance that the friends should gather at a meeting where, in complete attunement and love, they should engage in the remembrance of God and His praise, and converse as to the glad-tidings of God, and proofs of the advent of Bahá’u’lláh, and should recount the high deeds and sacrifices of the lovers of God in Persia, and tell of the martyrs’ detachment from the world, and their ecstasy, and of how the believers there stood by one another and gave up everything they had.

The Nineteen Day festivity is, therefore, of very great importance.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O servant of the Blessed Beauty! Blessed art thou, since thou art engaged in rendering a service which will make thy face to shine in the Abhá Kingdom, and that is the education and training of children. If one should, in the right way, teach and train the children, one would be performing a service than which none is greater at the sacred Threshold. According to what we have heard, thou art succeeding in this. Thou must, however, strive unceasingly to win ever higher achievements.

At all times, I implore Almighty God to make thee the means of illuminating the minds of those children, of bringing their hearts to life and sanctifying their souls. Greetings be unto thee, and praise.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O young trees and plants, matchless and tender, that grow in the meadows of guidance! O ye newcomers to the Fraternity of Truth! Although now ye be learners, the hope is that through showerings from the clouds of grace, ye will become teachers; that ye will flourish even as flowers and fragrant herbs in the garden of that knowledge which is both of the mind and of the heart; that each one of you will grow as a tree rich in yield, fair, fresh, and strong, heavy with sweet fruit.

May the hidden confirmations of God make each one of you to become a well-spring of knowledge. May your hearts ever receive inspiration from the denizens of the Concourse on high. May the drop become as the great sea; may the mote dazzle as the shining sun.

His Holiness the Báb hath said: “Should a tiny ant desire in this day to be possessed of such power as to be able to unravel the abstrusest and most bewildering passages of the Qur’án, its wish will no doubt be fulfilled, inasmuch as the mystery of eternal might vibrates within the innermost being of all created things.” If so helpless a creature can be endowed with so subtle a capacity, how much more efficacious must be the power released through the liberal effusions of the grace of Bahá’u’lláh! What confirmations will be garnered, what influxes of the heart!

Wherefore, O ye illumined youth, strive by night and by day to unravel the mysteries of the mind and spirit, and to grasp the secrets of the Day of God. Inform yourselves of the evidences that the Most Great Name hath dawned. Open your lips in praise. Adduce convincing arguments and proofs. Lead those who thirst to the fountain of life; grant ye true health to the ailing. Be ye apprentices of God; be ye physicians directed by God and heal ye the sick among humankind. Bring those who have been excluded into the circle of intimate friends. Make the despairing to be filled with hope. Waken them that slumber; make the heedless mindful.

Such are the fruits of this earthly life. Such is the station of resplendent glory. Upon you be Bahá’u’l-Abhá.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou steadfast in the Covenant! In reply to thy letter, I am obliged to be brief. Praise thou God that thou hast succeeded in becoming a teacher of young Bahá’ís—young trees of the Abhá Paradise—and at the same time art able to benefit the other children as well.

According to the explicit divine Text, teaching the children is indispensable and obligatory. It followeth that teachers are servants of the Lord God, since they have arisen to perform this task, which is the same as worship. You must therefore offer praise with every breath, for you are educating your spiritual children.

The spiritual father is greater than the physical one, for the latter bestoweth but this world’s life, whereas the former endoweth his child with life everlasting. This is why, in the Law of God, teachers are listed among the heirs.

Now you, in reality, have acquired all these spiritual children free and gratis, and that is better than having physical children; for such children are not grateful to their fathers, since they feel that the father serveth them because he must—and therefore no matter what he doeth for them, they pay it no mind. Spiritual children, however, are always appreciative of their father’s loving-kindness. This, verily, is out of the grace of thy Lord, the Beneficent.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou servant of God! Thou didst ask as to the education of children. Those children who, sheltered by the Blessed Tree, have set foot upon the world—those who are cradled in the Faith and are nurtured at the breast of grace—such must from the beginning receive spiritual training directly from their mothers. That is, the mother must continually call God to mind and make mention of Him, and tell of His greatness, and instill the fear of Him in the child, and rear the child gently, in the way of tenderness, and in extreme cleanliness. Thus from the very beginning of life every child will be refreshed by the gentle wafting of the love of God and will tremble with joy at the sweet scent of heavenly guidance. In this lieth the beginning of the process; it is the essential basis of all the rest.

And when the child hath reached the age where he can make distinctions, let him be placed in a Bahá'í school, in which, at the beginning, the Holy Texts are recited and religious concepts are taught. At this school the child is to study reading and writing as well as some fundamentals of the various branches of knowledge, such as can be learned by children.

At the start, the teacher must place a pen in the child's hand, arrange the children in groups, and instruct each group according to its capacity. When the children have, in a given place, been seated in rows, and each holdeth a pen, and each hath a paper before him, and the teacher hath suspended a blackboard in front of the children, let him write thereon with his chalk and have the children copy what he hath written. For example, let the teacher write an alif (a) and say, "This is an alif." Let the children then copy it and repeat: "This is an alif." And so on, till the end of the alphabet. As soon as they properly recognize the letters, let the teacher make combinations of the letters, while the children follow his lead, writing the combinations on their paper, until, by this method, they come to recognize all the letters, singly and combined in words. Let the teacher then proceed to writing sentences, while the children copy what he hath written, each on his own sheet of paper. Let the teacher then explain the meaning of the sentence to the children.

And once they have become skilled in the Persian tongue, let the teacher first translate and write out single words and ask the students the meaning of those words. If a pupil hath grasped a little of this, and hath translated the word, let the teacher praise him; if all the students are unable to accomplish this, let the teacher write the foreign language translation beneath the given word. For example, let him write

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(heaven) in Arabic, and ask: "How do we say this in Persian?" If one of the children replieth, "The Persian translation of this word is

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", let the teacher praise and encourage him. If they are unable to answer, let the teacher himself give the translation and write it down, and let the

children copy it.

Later, let the teacher ask: “How do they say this in Russian, or French, or Turkish?” If they know the answer, excellent. If not, let the teacher say, “In Russian, or French, the translation is thus and so”, write the word on the board, and have the children copy it down. When the children have become skilled in translating single words, let the teacher combine the words into a sentence, write this on the board, and ask the children to translate it. If they are unable, let the teacher himself translate the sentence and write down the translation. It would of course be preferable for him to make use of several languages.

In this way, over a short period—that is, three years—the children will, as a result of writing the words down, become fully proficient in a number of languages, and will be able to translate a passage from one language to another. Once they have become skilled in these fundamentals, let them go on to learning the elements of the other branches of knowledge, and once they have completed this study, let each one who is able and hath a keen desire for it, enrol in higher institutions of learning and study advanced courses in the sciences and arts.

Not all, however, will be able to engage in these advanced studies. Therefore, such children must be sent to industrial schools where they can also acquire technical skills, and once the child becomes proficient in such a skill, then let consideration be given to the child’s own preference and inclinations. If a child hath a liking for commerce, then let him choose commerce; if industry, then industry; if for higher education, then the advancement of knowledge; if for some other of the responsibilities of humankind, then that. Let him be placed in the field for which he hath an inclination, a desire, and a talent.

But the indispensable basis of all is that he should develop spiritual characteristics and the praiseworthy virtues of humankind. This is the primary consideration. If a person be unlettered, and yet clothed with divine excellence, and alive in the breaths of the Spirit, that individual will contribute to the welfare of society, and his inability to read and write will do him no harm. And if a person be versed in the arts and every branch of knowledge, and not live a religious life, and not take on the characteristics of God, and not be directed by a pure intent, and be engrossed in the life of the flesh—then he is harm personified, and nothing will come of all his learning and intellectual accomplishments but scandal and torment.

If, however, an individual hath spiritual characteristics, and virtues that shine out, and his purpose in life be spiritual and his inclinations be directed toward God, and he also study other branches of knowledge—then we have light upon light: his outer being luminous, his private character radiant, his heart sound, his thought elevated, his understanding swift, his rank noble. Blessed is he who attaineth this exalted station. Greetings be unto thee, and praise.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O ye handmaids of the Merciful! The school for girls taketh precedence over the school for boys, for it is incumbent upon the girls of this glorious era to be fully versed in the various branches of knowledge, in sciences and the arts and all the wonders of this pre-eminent time, that they may then educate their children and train them from their earliest days in the ways of perfection.

If, as she ought, the mother possesseth the learning and accomplishments of humankind, her children, like unto angels, will be fostered in all excellence, in right conduct and beauty. Therefore the School for Girls that hath been established in that place must be made the object of the deep concern and high endeavours of the friends. The teachers of that school are handmaids close to the Sacred Threshold, for they are of those who, obedient to the commandments of the Blessed Beauty, have arisen to educate the girl children.

The day will come when those children will be mothers, and each one of them in her deep gratitude will offer up prayers and supplications to Almighty God and ask that her teachers will be granted joy and well-being forever, and a high station in the Kingdom of God.

Name ye this school the Mawhibat School (The School of Bounty).

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye daughters of the Kingdom! In past centuries the girl children of Persia were deprived of all instruction. They had neither school nor academy, no kindly tutor and no teacher. Now, in this greatest of centuries, the bounty of the All-Bountiful hath encompassed the girls as well, and many schools have been founded in Persia for the education of girl children—but what is missing from them is character training, and this despite the fact that such training is more important than instruction, for it is the primary accomplishment of humankind.

Praised be God, a school for girls hath now been established in Hamadán. Ye who are the teachers thereof must devote more of your efforts to character training than instruction, and must raise up your girl children to be modest and chaste, of good character and conduct—and in addition must teach them the various branches of knowledge.

If ye follow this course, the confirmations of the All-Glorious Kingdom, in a great rolling swell, will rise and surge above that school.

My hope is that ye will succeed in this. Upon you be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O maidservants of God! Now is the time to take hold of the viol of love, raise the melody of the Kingdom of God, eradicate war and lay the foundation for peace. The love of God will so overflow from the hearts as to stream forth like unto a torrent, flooding the whole world with the outpourings of His incalculable favours. Ye are the exponents of this love and are enraptured by the beauty of the Lord of Oneness. When your hearts are wholly attracted to the one true God you will acquire divine knowledge, will become attentive to the proofs and testimonies and will commit to memory the glad-tidings concerning the Manifestation of the Beauty of the All-Merciful, as mentioned in the heavenly Scriptures. Then ye shall behold how wondrous are His confirmations and how gracious is His assistance. And upon ye be salutation and praise.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Praise be to God, within the sheltering grace of the Blessed Beauty, here in the lands of the West, a breeze hath blown from over the rose-gardens of His bestowals, and the hearts of many people have been drawn as by a magnet to the Abhá Realm.

Whatever hath come to pass is from the confirmations of the Beloved; for otherwise, what merit had we, or what capacity? We are as a helpless babe, but fed at the breast of heavenly grace. We are no more than weak plants, but we flourish in the spring rain of His bestowals.

Wherefore, as a thank-offering for these bounties, on a certain day don thy garb to visit the Shrine, the ka'bih of our heart's desire, turn thyself toward Him on my behalf, lay down thy head on that sacred Threshold, and say:

O divine Providence! O Thou forgiving Lord! Sinner though I be, I have no refuge save Thyself. All praise be Thine, that in my wanderings over mountains and plains, my toils and troubles on the seas, Thou hast answered still my cries for help, and confirmed me, and favoured me, and honoured me with service at Thy Threshold.

To a feeble ant, Thou hast given Solomon's might. Thou hast made of a gnat a lion in the thicket of Thy Mercy. Thou hast bestowed on a drop the swelling waves of the sea, Thou hast carried up a mote to the pinnacles of grace. Whatever was achieved was made possible through Thee. Otherwise, what strength did the fragile dust possess, what power did this feeble being have?

O divine Providence! Do not seize us in our sins, but give us refuge. Do not look upon our evil ways, but grant forgiveness. Consider not our just deserts, but open wide Thy door of grace.

Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful! Thou art the Seer, the Knower!

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou divine Mi

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kín! A thousand praises be to the one true God, that for years thou didst suffer in the path of the Heavenly Beauty, enduring separation, affliction, and captivity, and no sooner was there some respite in restrictions, than thou didst hasten to the Most Great Prison, turned thy face away from all else but Him, melted away in the fire of His love, sought His good-pleasure, and recognized the Candle of the Covenant. Through the bountiful grace of the Blessed Beauty, mayest thou revive the gatherings of the friends and cause the hearts of His loved ones to be united. This, however, is on condition that at such meetings thou makest mention of naught but the soul-stirring remembrance of the Ancient Beauty....

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

... and this servant has, as a thing divinely ordained, been unwell for some time past, until I went to Beirut for a change of air. I have recently come back from there and at present I am staying at the village of Yarká, which lies on a hill some eighteen kilometres from 'Akká, and I intend to remain here for a while.

Praise be to God, the Lord of mankind, that the illness is now remedied, though a state of infirmity still persists. Moreover, I am overshadowed by the bounties of God from every side.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Lamp of the assemblage of the high-minded, the Prince of the enlightened,

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u'r-Ra'ís,—may he be a ray of God and a dazzling moon!

O kind Friend! What thy musk-laden pen hath inscribed bestowed joy and brought delight. It was not a dew-drop but an ocean; not a lamp but a beam of sunlight. Praise and glory be to God, Who hath endowed creation with such beatitude and conferred such tranquillity upon the hearts, and by imparting heavenly knowledge made the friends stars of the East brilliant moons, so that they would enkindle the light of understanding, and with the showers of the rain of their utterance make human hearts the envy of meadows and rose-gardens. O kind Friend! The All-Bountiful God guided thee and led thee to traverse mountains and deserts, to reach the city of thine ancestors. That land stood in great need of one mighty soul like that loving friend to enter therein, engage in discussion, show the Way of God, embellish the assemblage of men with mysteries unveiled, and watch over their spiritual lives so that they might abide under the shade of the tree of hope. Thou shouldst speak forth, wax eloquent, divulge the hidden secrets, share the Word of God, inaugurate a school of the Kingdom and give instruction in heavenly Books, ignite a shining lamp, and burn down

the veils of the imaginings of the ignorant. May thy soul be joined to the Beloved.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As for your desire to publish a monthly magazine in the Arabic and Persian languages that would have a circulation in a number of countries—it would be unwise to embark on such a project at the present time, unless the magazine were to be devoted in its entirety to purely scientific and literary topics, and to contain no mention of political subjects, whether in the form of articles or news reports. My prayer is that God will enable thee to be divinely inspired, not politically motivated—this condition is what befitteth thee, for it is based upon a permanent foundation and its effects are lasting. The scientific matters discussed in your proposed journal should be limited to those that will be of profit to the people, and not such questions as do not go beyond empty verbiage and can have no other outcome, if pursued, than idle contention; rather, the journal should treat of such matters as divine philosophy, mathematics, natural sciences, arts and crafts—areas, in short, from which the people will derive benefit. By the same token, you should refrain for the time being from broaching subjects connected with religion, for such discourse is calculated to provoke an outcry from the ignorant; unaroused from their sleep of heedlessness, they will merely be confirmed in their stubborn adherence to their own wayward beliefs.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

The handmaid of God, Miss Barney, had asked a question as to the wisdom of burying the dead in the earth. She said, too, that scientists in Europe and America, after prolonged and wide-ranging research and debate on this subject, have concluded that according to the dictates of reason, the benefits of cremation have been fully established—and wherein, then, lies the wisdom of the Holy Religions requiring burial in the earth?

As thou art aware, this servant doth not have the time for a detailed explanation, and therefore can write only a brief reply. Where universal phenomena are concerned, no matter how long and hard the human intellect may struggle to find the right procedures or the perfect system, it can never discover the like of the divine creation and its order of transferences and journeyings within the chain of life. For the transferences, the compositions, the gatherings and scatterings of elements and of constituent parts and substances proceed in a chain that is mighty and without flaw. Observe the effective universal laws and see to what a degree they are solidly established, secure, and strong.

And just as the composition, the formation, and growth and development of the

physical body have come about by degrees, so too must its decomposition and dispersal be gradual. If the disintegration be rapid, this will cause an overleaping and a slackening in the chain of transferences, and this discontinuity will impair the universal relationships within the chain of created things.

For example, this elemental human body hath come forth from the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal worlds, and after its death will be entirely changed into microscopic animal organisms; and according to the divine order and the driving forces of nature, these minute creatures will have an effect on the life of the universe, and will pass into other forms.

Now, if you consign this body to the flames, it will pass immediately into the mineral kingdom and will be kept back from its natural journey through the chain of all created things.

The elemental body, following death, and its release from its composite life, will be transformed into separate components and minuscule animals; and even though it will now be deprived of its composite life in human form, still the animal life is in it, and it is not entirely bereft of life. If, however, it be burned, it will turn into ashes and minerals, and once it has become mineral, it must inexorably journey onward to the vegetable kingdom, so that it may rise to the animal world. This is described as an overleap.

In short, the composition and decomposition, the gathering and scattering and journeying of all creatures must proceed according to the natural order, divine rule, and the most great law of God, so that no marring nor impairment may affect the essential relationships which arise out of the inner realities of created things. This is why, according to the law of God, we are bidden to bury the dead.

The peoples of ancient Persia believed that earth burial was not even permissible, that such burial, to a certain degree, would block the coursings and journeyings required by nature. For this reason they built Towers of Silence open to the sky, on the mountaintops, and lay the dead therein on the surface of the ground. But they failed to observe that burial in the earth doth not prevent the natural travellings and coursings which are an exigency of creation—that rather, earth burial, besides permitting the natural march of phenomena, offereth other benefits as well.

And briefly stated, beyond this, although the human soul hath severed its connection with the body, friends and lovers are still vehemently attached to what remaineth, and they cannot bear to have it instantly destroyed. They cannot, for example, see the pictured face of the departed blotted out and scattered, although a photograph is only his shadow and in the end it too must fade away. So far as they are able, they protect whatever reminder they have of him, be it only a fragment of clay, a tree, or a stone. Then how much more do they treasure his earthly form! Never can the heart agree to look on the cherished body of a friend, a father, a mother, a brother, a child, and see it instantly fall to nothing—and this is an exigency of love.

Thus the ancient Egyptians mummified the body that it might remain intact to the end of time, their belief being that the longer the dead endured, the nearer they would draw to the mercy of their gods. Yet the Hindus of India cremate the body without any concern, and indeed the burning is a solace to their hearts. This lack of concern, however, is fortuitous: it deriveth from religious beliefs and is not a natural thing. For they suppose that the more rapidly the body is destroyed, the nearer it will come to divine compassion. This is the opposite of what the ancient Egyptians believed. The Hindus are even persuaded that, as soon as the body is with great rapidity disintegrated, forgiveness will be assured, and the dead will be blessed forevermore. It is this belief which reconcileth them to the cremation.

Greetings be unto thee, and praise. I did not have the time to write even a line, but out of regard for Miss Barney, this hath been set down.

He is God.

Another point remains, and it is this: that in case of contagious diseases, such as the plague and cholera, whether cremation of bodies with lime or other chemicals is allowable or not. In such cases, hygiene and preservation are necessarily more important; for according to the clear divine texts, medical commands are lawful, and “necessities make forbidden things lawful” is one of the certain rules. Upon thee be the glory of the All-Glorious!

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The vegetable spirit, the animal spirit, and the human spirit—the rational soul, that is—do not return after death to this world of the “first creation”.

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As for that spirit of faith by which is meant the light of guidance, and that Holy Spirit, the reality of divine revelation, these both return, in every dispensation and cycle, to this the realm of the “first creation”.

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Cf. Qur’án, 56:62; also 29:20 and 53:47.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Through the maidservant of God, Lua, to the maidservant of God, Corinne True, upon her be the Glory of God

He is God.

O thou whose heart is turned to the Kingdom of God! I was informed of the contents of thy letter to the maidservant of God, Lua, and found it to be a most wondrous message, a call to the true path, and freed from all doubt and

uncertainty. Indeed the day hath come whereon the divine edifice, the merciful sanctuary and the spiritual Temple must be raised in America.

I ask God to strengthen His faithful friends in a great service and enable them to exert endeavours adequate to the erection of this great edifice, for which there will be a resounding call in all countries. By it shall the Lord grant confirmation to His loved ones in that land. How great is the endeavour! How sublime the undertaking! For this is the first House of Worship that shall be established in those regions for the commemoration of His praise—a praise which shall reach the Kingdom of divine mysteries. And from that Temple shall be heard the anthems of glorification throughout all regions.

Of those who arise in the service of this edifice there shall be no soul but shall be imbued by God with a power emanating from His mighty Kingdom, and upon him shall rain such spiritual, heavenly blessings as shall fill his heart with a wondrous light and illumine his eyes to behold the glory of the Ancient of Days.

Convey my greetings to thy revered husband and say to him: There shall appear in that great continent, a sign. Turn thy attention to it, so that thereby thy luminous heart may attain confidence. Verily, thy Lord is All-Powerful. Upon thee be salutation and praise.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

To the Members of the Spiritual Assembly, upon them be the Glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O ye who are chosen! O ye who are firm! O ye who are calling! O ye who are sincere! Verily, I praise my supreme Lord for choosing you to call in His Name among the people, for attracting you to the beauty of the All-Glorious, and for strengthening you to render His Cause victorious.

I trust in Him to make your faces shine forth with a glorious light in that clime, radiant as the face of heaven at early dawn, casting its light upon all regions.

Verily, I announce the glad-tidings of the confirmations which will sustain you, by the mercy of your Lord. For ye have arisen with all your powers to serve God's Cause in that vast land. Ponder this great bounty, this wondrous attainment!

With all joy and great happiness I send you the good news of the beginning of the Ma
sh
riq'u'l-A
dh
kár in 'I

sh

qábád. The friends of God assembled together with great rejoicing, and carried the stones themselves, upon their backs, attracted by the love of God and for the sake of the glory of God. Soon shall that great Temple be completed and the voice of prayer and praise ascend to the sublime Kingdom.

I rejoiced to hear of the momentous undertaking upon which ye have embarked with such joy, ardour, and manifest zeal. I beseech the Lord to aid you in the promotion of His Word, and to assist you, by His ancient grace and favour, to lay the foundation of the Ma

sh

riqú'l-A

dh

kár. Ye, who are the first in that great land to set about this mighty task, shall see ere long how the renown of this undertaking will spread throughout all regions, and how the tidings of its fame will thrill the ears of the people in every land.

Exert your energy to accomplish what ye have undertaken, so that this glorious Temple may be built, that the beloved of God may assemble therein, that they may be constant in their supplication, their glorification and praise, and that they may pray and offer glory unto God for guiding them to His Kingdom.

Convey my greetings and praise to the beloved of God in that glorious country.

Upon you be salutation and praise.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Praised be God ye have adorned yourselves with devotion and love, and are engaged in serving the Cause of the Kingdom. Heavenly blessings will certainly descend upon you, and the Kingdom of God will surely be established in that country in the plenitude of its glory. Place your whole trust in divine confirmations. I cherish the hope that the tabernacle of the oneness of mankind will be reared in that land. I love you all with the full affection of my heart and my soul, and beseech true felicity and prosperity for every one of you.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Upon him be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

O thou who art serving at the Pilgrim House of the Lord! Thou art a servant, but in reality thou art ministered unto—a steward, but in truth master of all. The Spirit Jesus hath said:

“If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all and servant of all.”

“And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.”

2

To serve the beloved of God is truly the principal role of this grief-stricken Servant. However, I am deprived of this service, but now thou hast won the day and adorned thine head with this glorious crown. We shall know in future what God hath decreed.

Convey Abhá greetings to Áqá Jamál, thy mother, and all the pilgrims. Upon thee be His glory!

1

Mark 9:35.

2

Matthew 20:27.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O thou attracted maid-servant of God! The celebration of the Feast of Naw-Rúz made me glad. Consider how different this meeting was from that of last year. Consider the bounty and the blessing of God. Therefore, know that this Cause is progressive. No obstacles in the world can hinder it. Thou didst realize divine joy and happiness in that meeting. Is it possible for earthly gatherings to give such divine joy? This bounty is itself the greatest evidence of the appearance of the Kingdom. I beseech God that the flame of the love of God may be intensified in the hearts of the friends and their zeal may be increased with every passing day. Thus may that land become a veritable paradise and the heavenly attainments become manifest.

If thou knewest in what spiritual state I write this letter, thou wouldst surely become like a flame of fire and set aglow the hearts by the fire of the love of God.

Thou hast written concerning the Most Holy Book.

1

It is intended that in the future, God willing, means will be provided, and with the utmost care it will be translated and sent to those regions.

O thou dear maid-servant of God! The souls who bear the tests of God become the manifestations of great bounties; for the divine trials cause some souls to become entirely lifeless, while they cause the holy souls to ascend to the highest degree of love and solidity. They cause progress and they also cause retrogression.

Dr. ... hath well said. Surely this Cause is beyond imaginations and thoughts. Convey greetings of respect to him, to his revered wife, to his son and to his bride.

O thou maid-servant of God! Surely, if some holy souls appear and arise to befittingly carry out the commandments and precepts of God, and be engaged in His service, they will verily become centres of light; an illuminating ray will extend from their hearts to all regions and the continent will become radiant.

Surely, all must today be called to love, to unity and to kindness; to integrity, to friendship, to fellowship, and to divine worship. I hope that thou and thy dear husband may continue to serve in all spirit and fragrance and that in this world ye may remain two radiant candles and from the eternal horizon ye may glisten like unto two shining stars.

1

Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

According to ancient custom, every nation has general holidays when all the people rejoice and are glad. That is, they choose the day of the year whereon a great or glorious event had occurred. On that day they manifest great joy and happiness. They visit one another; if they have any feelings of bitterness towards one another, they become reconciled on that day; hard feelings pass away and they unite in love for each other. As great events occurred on the day of Naw-Rúz for the Persians, that nation therefore made it a national feast and considered it a national holiday.

This is, indeed, a blessed day because it is the beginning of the temperate season and the commencement of springtime in the Northern Hemisphere. All earthly things, whether trees, animals, or humans, become refreshed; they receive power from the life-giving breeze and obtain new life; a resurrection takes place and, because it is the season of springtime, there is a general marvellous activity in all contingent beings.

There was a time when the Persian dynasty died out and no trace remained thereof. On such a day [Naw-Rúz] a new one was founded. Jam

sh

íd

1

ascended the throne. Persia became happy and at peace. Its power, which had been dissipated, once more returned. Hearts and souls became possessed of wonderful susceptibilities, to such a degree that Persia became more advanced than it had been in former days under the sovereignty of Kayumars and Húshang.

2

The glory and greatness of the government and the nation of Persia rose higher. Likewise, a great many events occurred upon the day of Naw-Rúz that brought honour and glory to Persia and to the Persians. Therefore, the Persian nation, for the last five or six thousand years, has always considered the Feast of

Naw-Rúz as a day of national happiness, and until now it is sanctified and recognized as a blessed day.

In brief, every nation has a day to mark as a holiday which they celebrate with joy. In the sacred laws of God, in every cycle and Dispensation, there are blessed feasts, holidays, and workless days. On such days no kind of occupation, commerce, industry, agriculture, or the like is allowed. All work is unlawful. All must enjoy themselves, gather together, hold general meetings, become as one assembly, so that the oneness, unity, and harmony of the people may be demonstrated in the eyes of all. As it is a blessed day it should not be neglected or left without results by making it a day limited to the fruits of mere pleasure. During such blessed days institutions should be founded that may be of permanent benefit and value to the people so that in their conversations and in history it may become widely known that such a good work was inaugurated on such a feast day. Therefore, the intelligent must look searchingly into conditions to find out what important affair, what philanthropic institutions are most needed, and what foundations should be laid for the community on that particular day, so that they may be established. For example, if they find that the community needs morality, then they may lay down the foundation of good morals on that day. If the community be in need of spreading sciences and widening the circle of knowledge, on that day they should proceed in that direction, that is to say, direct the thoughts of all the people to that philanthropic cause. If, however, the community is in need of widening the circle of commerce or industry or agriculture, they should inaugurate the means of attaining the desired aim. If the community needs protection, proper support, and care of orphans, they should act upon the welfare of the orphans, and so forth. Such undertakings as are beneficial to the poor, the weak, and the helpless should be pursued in order that, on that day, through the unity of all and through great meetings, results may be obtained, the glory and blessings of that day may be declared and manifest.

Likewise, in this wonderful Dispensation, this day [Naw-Rúz] is a blessed day. The friends of God should be confirmed in service and servitude. With one another they must be in the utmost harmony, love, and oneness; clasping hands; engaged in the commemoration of the Blessed Beauty; and thinking of the great results that may be obtained on such a blessed day.

Today, there is no result or fruit greater than guiding the people, because these helpless creatures, especially the Persians, have remained without a share in the bestowals of God. Undoubtedly, the friends of God, upon such a day, must leave tangible, philanthropic, or ideal traces that should reach all mankind and not only pertain to the Bahá'ís.

In all the prophetic Dispensations, philanthropic affairs were confined to their respective peoples only—with the exception of small matters, such as charity, which it was permissible to extend to others. But in this wonderful Dispensation, philanthropic undertakings are for all humanity, without any exception, because this is the manifestation of the mercifulness of God. Therefore, every universal matter—that is, one that belongs to all the world

of humanity—is divine, and every matter that is sectarian and private is not universal in character—that is, it is limited. Therefore, my hope is that the friends of God, every one of them, may become as the mercy of God to all mankind.

1

Legendary king of Persia.

2

Kings of Persia from ancient mythology.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

To the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Bombay

O ye friends of God! It is understood that a wall hath been put up around the Bombay Cemetery, and that water supply is now available. It is a source of joy to the hearts that the friends are busily engaged in important matters, especially in regard to the graves of Bahá’ís, which to outward appearance should look majestic.

It is understood that the land for the cemetery is twenty yards wide and sixty yards long. The design of all cemeteries should be as follows: four large avenues intersecting at the middle like a cross. Each avenue should be at least two yards wide, with a water pool in the centre of the four avenues. Thus the width of the land will be divided into four sections, and each section similarly divided in the form of a cross.

Each grave should have a one-yard-wide flower bed to its right, left, top, and bottom. In other words, the graves should not be joined together. Each grave must have its own flower bed, and if beautiful trees were planted all around the cemetery as well as the water pond, it would be pleasing indeed.

The main point is that the graves should be situated separately in proper order and should have borders of flowers. However, you may deal with this as you deem advisable.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O Friends of God! Now is the time for joy and gladness, for acquiring the characteristics of the All-Merciful. This transitory world is passing even as a fleeting shadow, and the days of life are speeding by. When finally we hasten from this world to the next, we should do so with a candle in our hand, a brightness in our countenance, and a spirit in our heart. Observe how the exterior is the sign of the interior. All tombs and sepulchres, even of the world’s most celebrated monarchs, are dark and gloomy, whereas the holy resting-places of the chosen ones of the All-Merciful are radiant and luminous. Let us then exert ourselves with heart and soul, and lift up our voices in a

gladsome chorus, that we may become acceptable at the Threshold of Oneness; be made alive by the fragrant breaths of holiness; detach ourselves from whatsoever is of the world; become devoted servants at the threshold of Him Who is the Ever-Living, the Self-Subsisting; be made recipients of His infinite bounty, and attain to everlasting life. Upon you be salutation and praise.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye flock of the Lord of glory! Blessed are they who have observed the fast during its appointed month, who have gathered together in perfect unity and harmony, have freed themselves from the insinuations of doubt and stood firm in the Covenant, have been graciously enabled to promote the Cause of God, and have arisen with utter self-abnegation for love of Bahá'u'lláh.

O ye who are nigh unto the threshold of the Lord of grandeur! Render thanks unto God that in this age of the Covenant ye have been drawn together under the sheltering shadow of the Beloved of the worlds and that your faces have been illumined with the light of the most great guidance. I beseech God that ye may tread the path of truthfulness and rectitude, of fellowship and of devotion to God, that ye may gain everlasting life, be adorned with every human virtue, become the heavenly angels of the kingdom of universal peace and the conquering hosts of the realm of the oneness of humanity. Upon you be greetings and praise.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O friends of God! Every assembly is in need of seasoned members who are worthy of its membership and are endowed with innate capacities. Likewise, the members of the Spiritual Assembly must acquire the capacities and merits that are requisites of this lofty station, and through the power of the spirit become experienced members of that assemblage. Those capacities are faith, assurance, insight, loving-kindness, spirituality, radiance, purity, detachment, sanctity, holiness, high endeavour, and nobility of character. My hope is that the members of that assembly shall be distinguished by these attributes and qualities, and shall each day prove anew the existence of these blessings within the reality of their own being. If it be so, Burma shall become even as the snow-white Spot, and those regions shall become the arenas of God's most great bestowals. Upon you be the Glory of the All-Glorious!

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The followers of truth hold dear not only human beings but animals as well. Man should, therefore, be kind to both human beings and animals and try, to the extent possible, to protect animals and provide for their comfort.

As to surgical dissection, it is productive of scientific benefits and medical

advantages that contribute to the welfare of all humankind. The dissection of one animal may perhaps lead to discoveries that would bring life to a thousand million souls.

Although this surgical operation does harm in the particular instance, it is of universal benefit. This exploratory dissection may even be of benefit to the animal world. From this viewpoint, that which is conducive to general advantage is acceptable, even should it bring harm in the particular case. It is permissible because the dissection of that animal yieldeth very great results.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who circlest in adoration round His hallowed Shrine! Render thou thanks unto God for having received so heavenly a bestowal and partaken of so limitless a bounty! Thou hast attained the Spot round which circleth the Concourse on high, the Cynosure of the inhabitants of the Kingdom of glory. The lights of the All-Merciful dawn from its horizon, and the stars of divine mysteries shine brightly in its heaven. Its soil is redolent with perfume and ambergris, and its very dust is even as the most fragrant musk to the spiritual. In all the sacred Books and Scriptures it is known as the Holy Land, and its precincts are referred to as the Blessed Spot.

1

It hath been called the Vale of Towa and the snow-white Spot. Its heights are Mount Sinai and its hills the place of the revelation of the Lord of the heavens on high.

Unto Him Who conversed with God

2

it is the haven of peace and security, and unto the Friend of God

3

a shelter and a refuge. For Lot it is "a mighty pillar",

4

and for Jacob a glorious homeland. For David it is the altar of adoration, and for Solomon the throne alluded to thus: "My Lord, grant a kingdom unto me such as shall not befit anyone after me."

5

Unto Zechariah it is the sanctuary of supplication and servitude, and unto John the Baptist the vale of the Kingdom and the wilderness of glad-tidings. For the Spirit of God

6

it is the scene of effulgent splendours and for the Beloved of God

7

the Farthest Mosque referred to in the verse “Glory be to Him who by night carried His servant from the Sacred Mosque to the Farthest Mosque.”

8

It is the abode of the Prophets and the dawning-place of the lights of the mighty signs of the Lord. It is the dayspring of holiness and the niche wherein appear the splendours of the all-glorious Lord. It is the appointed place for attainment to the Divine Presence and the site of the night journey of the Prophet Muhammad. Every divine light or revelation hath originated from this blessed land, or its most excellent Luminary hath emigrated thereto, or it hath found its consummation therein.

These perspicuous proofs and conclusive evidences are as manifest as the sun and leave no room for any soul to hesitate or doubt, for they have been explicitly revealed in the Holy Books and heavenly Scriptures, and spread abroad amongst the peoples and kindreds of the earth. Yet until the one true God chooseth to manifest a matter, it remaineth hidden behind the veils of concealment, even were it to be as renowned as the sun and the moon. When once He lifteth the veil, however, it becometh clear and apparent. May His Spirit and His Glory rest upon thee.

1

Qur’án 28:30.

2

Moses.

3

Abraham.

4

Qur’án 11:80.

5

Qur’án 38:35.

6

Jesus.

7

Muhammad.

8

Qur’án 17:1.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou my companion! It appeareth that thou hast become a prisoner in the city of Haifa, for when travel is postponed, a place becometh like unto a prison for the traveller; but this, verily, is a token of the grace of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate. This delay in Haifa, too, hath been a divine gift, for it hath led thee to breathe the sweet savours of God and inhale the musk-laden fragrances. It is my hope that, by the favours of the Almighty, thou mayest be confirmed and assisted in all matters on this journey. May thou be graciously aided to serve the Cause of God, achieve triumph and victory over the hosts of self and passion, spread abroad the Divine Fragrances, and bind together the hearts of the beloved of the Lord.

Convey thou my greetings to Jináb-i-Raf‘at.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O Shoghi! I have no time to talk; leave me be! Thou didst say “Write”, and I have written. What else should I do? Now is not the time for thee to read and write; it is the time to jump about and to chant “O my God!” Memorize the prayers of the Blessed Beauty and chant them for me, that I may hear them; there is no time for anything else.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

To the pilgrim Hájí Nabíl-i-Musáfir, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou pilgrim unto that Spot round which circle the embodiments of holiness! It is among the greatest of divine blessings that thou wert brought into existence in this wondrous century, wert numbered among those who worship God, didst hasten unto the holy court of the King of the seen and unseen, didst achieve the honour of attaining unto His Presence, and didst hearken unto the matchless words that proceeded from His sanctified lips. Thou hast now also attained unto the bounty of circumambulating the Spot round which circle the spiritually illumined ones. Thou art firm and steadfast in the Covenant, and hast clung to the hem of the All-Merciful. Wherefore, render thanks unto the one true God that thou hast attained unto all these bestowals and hast been confirmed therein. Now, with a blissful heart and exalted soul, travel forth through every region and cheer and gladden the people of Hamadán with the

divine tidings.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who hast attained unto the Threshold of that Shrine which is sacred unto all the world and the envy of the most exalted Paradise! Praised be God that thou hast, through the gracious favour of the Lord, attained the honour of pilgrimage to the Spot round which circle the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom. Thou hast illumined thy countenance, perfumed thy locks, and sweetened thy disposition. Thou hast encountered that which hath been the utmost desire of the loftiest angels. Thou hast offered thine all in the path of the Beloved, and hast hastened to attain His nearness. How fortunate art thou! Wherefore, unloose thy tongue in praise of the Abhá Beauty and occupy thyself with the remembrance of Him—may my soul and spirit be a sacrifice for His loved ones—that the divine confirmations may become all-encompassing, and Divine Unity, like unto a flame, may blaze in the chamber of thy heart and burn away all the veils. The Most Great Name beareth me witness! The very dust of the Threshold of His Beauty is the loftiest throne of the realities of existence, for it is there that His Beauty is revealed in the visible realm. And yet, alas! Where is the eye capable of discernment? Where is the ear fit to hear, and the heart worthy of comprehending? Blessed are those who inhale the musk-laden fragrances wafting from that Holy Shrine. Glory be upon thee and upon all who are firm in the Covenant.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou who circlest round the Holy Sanctuary! Render thanks unto God that thou hast soared unto the heaven of sanctity and hast attained unto the firmament of Divine Unity. Thou hast quaffed the choice wine of loving-kindness proffered by the Cup-Bearer of Divine bounties, and hast partaken of the bread of the All-Merciful from the banquet table of God. Thou hast anointed thine eyes with that sacred earth which is the collyrium of the chosen ones of God, and hast burnished thy sight with that musk-scented dust. Thou hast entered beneath the shade of the Divine Lote-Tree and hast partaken of the fruits of the blessed Tree that is “neither of the East nor of the West”.

1

Thou hast joined the assemblage of the All-Merciful and hast hastened forth, with thine entire being, on the path of the love of God. Thou hast kindled and illuminated thy heart and soul with the effulgent lights emanating from the dayspring of Oneness. Thou hast perfumed thy nostrils with the sweet savours wafting from the Divine rose-garden. Well is it with thee! Blessed, doubly blessed art thou! By God, the True One! Wert thou to recognize and comprehend

what God hath ordained for thee, thy heart would rejoice with exceeding delight, thy breast would be filled with gladness, thine eyes would be cheered, and thy soul would be exhilarated. Glory be unto thee!

1

Qur'án 24:35.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

To Jináb-i-Áqá

Sh

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kh

Kázim, upon him rest the glory of God, the Most-Glorious.

He is the All-Glorious.

O thou pilgrim to the Spot round which circle the Concourse on high! Unloose thy tongue and render thanks for the bounties, bestowals, and special favours that the heavenly Beauty hath conferred upon thee, for thou hast become a source of divine confirmations and a wellspring of divine assistance. Thou hast attained unto the bounty of kissing the ground of the sacred Precincts, and hast been invested with the honour of inhaling the life-giving fragrances and soul-stirring breezes that waft from that pure and holy Shrine. Thou hast blessed thy countenance and hair with the dust of that sacred Threshold, and hast brightened and illumined both thine outer and inner eye. Many a desert, mountain, wilderness, and sea didst thou traverse till thou didst reach thine ultimate goal, the habitation of the Beloved, and attain unto this immense bounty and abiding bliss. Were the people of the world to become apprised of this bounty and of this Holy Spot and its Lord, they would assuredly regard the dust from the sandals of the devoted pilgrims as a collyrium of insight and would reckon it to be the greatest of gifts in the world of creation. Glory be unto thee and unto every firm and steadfast pilgrim.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

To the pilgrim Áqá Siyyid Yúsuf, upon him rest the glory of God, the All-Glorious.

He is God.

O thou who circlest round the Point of Adoration of all that dwell on earth! Though thou hast endured the toils of travel and traversed both land and sea, yet praise be unto the Ever-Abiding, the Ancient of Days, for thou hast reached a destination that is the utmost desire of those who worship God. It is the

focal point of prayer and the seat of glory. It is the snow-white Spot, the holy vale of Towa, and Mount Sinai. It is the Holy Land and the luminous wilderness. It is the Spot round which circumambulate the saints. And it is the object of the invocation "Holy, holy, the Lord our God, the Lord of the angels and the spirit!"

1

Wherefore, as a thank-offering for these inexhaustible blessings, lift up thy hands and recite thou this prayer with devotion and fervour:

"O Thou who art the answerer of the cries of the needy! O Thou kind Lord! What merit did I possess, that Thou didst bestow upon me so priceless a gift and vouchsafe unto me so excellent a favour? Thou hast conferred upon me the privilege of kissing Thy sacred Threshold. Oh, what a Threshold! For the souls of the Concourse on high are its watchmen, and the hearts of the denizens of the Abhá Kingdom stand, kneel, and prostrate themselves before it, lowly and submissive, like unto righteous believers."

Thou wert engaged for some time in rendering outstanding services in that most glorious spot

2

and wert responsible for essential tasks. Thy services were praiseworthy and thine efforts pleasing. Return, now, to that land, and resume thy former services. It is hoped that, through the bounties of the All-Glorious Lord, thou wilt achieve even greater success than before, wilt cheer all the friends through distinguished services, and wilt, at all times, arise as an obedient servant to render service to the loved ones of God, for service to the loved ones of God is service to God. Glory be upon all who stand firm in the Covenant of God.

1

An invocation/prayer of Prophet Muhammad quoted by Shoghi Effendi in *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. 352.

2

Reference to the land for the Ma
sh
riq'u'l-A
dh
kár in 'I
sh
qábád.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou musk-scented pilgrim! It is incumbent upon thee to pass through those lands like unto a fragrant breeze, delivering to them a message from the Sacred Threshold and perfuming the nostrils of the yearning souls. Say:

“O ye lovers! The breezes of dawn and the sweet savours of rose blossoms wafting from the Holy Shrine are reviving the senses, stirring up the enamoured souls, bestowing new life, nourishing the spirit, conferring delight, and granting vision to the eyes and hearing to the ears. Praise be unto God that ye have attained a portion from this ocean, and a share of these vernal showers. O friends! Only the ear of the spirit can hearken unto this call, not that of the impotent body. And only receptive and aspiring souls can be revived by this perfume, not those who, sick with rheum, are incapable of smell. The latter remain deprived, for inhaling the sweetness of these fragrances is the portion of those whose senses are clear and who soar in flight. My hope is that all may delight in this bounty and become the recipients of divine grace and favour. Upon you be the glory of the All-Glorious.”

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

To Jináb-i-Hájí Áqá Ján, upon him be the glory of God.

He is God.

O thou pilgrim to the land of the Beloved! Thou didst endure the toils of travel till at last thou didst arrive at the sanctuary of the court of the Almighty. Twice hast thou attained unto this supreme bounty and been singled out for this honour and distinction. Thou hast become the object of the praise of the Concourse on high and the recipient of the blessings of the Abhá Beauty. The glance of His loving-kindness is all-encompassing, and His favours and bestowals are unfailing. Rejoice thou with delight for having such good fortune! The dwellers of this ephemeral world, high and low alike, spend their days and nights in pursuit of worldly matters only to suffer, in the end, manifest loss. Praised be God that thou hast partaken of a fruit from the Tree of Life, and hast discovered a glimmer of the bounties of the Lord of manifest signs. Thou hast quaffed a cup of the wine of heaven, and hast left an enduring legacy in this transitory world, notwithstanding that those who have renounced the world seek neither name nor fame, and pursue neither ambition nor desire. They show no regard for this world and seek naught save the good-pleasure of God. They tread no path but His, and speak naught save His praise. Notwithstanding, the blessings of this world too are destined for the beloved of God, whereas the fate of the heedless is naught but loss and ruin in both this world and the world to come. Render thanks unto God that thou hast been attired with this vesture and adorned with this crown! Upon thee be greetings and praise.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

To the pilgrim Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím, upon him be the glory of God, the Most Glorious.

He is God.

O pilgrim unto that Spot round which circle the holy ones! Praise be unto God that thou didst travel vast distances and traverse mountain, desert, and sea, till at last thou didst reach the sanctuary of the Desired One and kiss the Threshold of the All-Merciful. This is that Consecrated Spot and Holy Land wherein all the Prophets prayed and unloosed their tongues to announce the divine glad-tidings. At times they groaned and wailed, tearfully lamenting the grievous wrongs that would be suffered by the Beloved of all the worlds. At other times they rejoiced with exceeding gladness at the bountiful favours of the Lord of Hosts. The time is now at hand for those promised favours to be fulfilled, for those lights to shine forth, and for that everlasting sovereignty to be made manifest. Announce, therefore, unto all the Israelites the auspicious and joyful tidings that they shall become the recipients of the bounty of the Lord.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All Glorious.

To the pilgrim, Áqá

Kh

udádád, upon him be the glory of God the Most Glorious.

He is the All Glorious.

O thou musk-scented pilgrim! The Holy Shrine is the quintessential musk, the ambergris and sweet fragrance that perfume the nostrils of the embodiments of divine mercy. Whilst the heedless perceive but mere dust, those endowed with insight behold a spotless jewel and luminous star. To the eye of a child, the pearl and its shell are of equal worth. And in the estimation of the ignorant, crude glass is indistinguishable from a resplendent gem, and base copper hath the same value as the purest gold. But whensoever the matchless pearl and the lustrous gold are brought under the scrutiny of the assayer in the jewellers' market, their value and quality become readily manifest and recognized. In like manner, the denizens of the Concourse on high perceive the sweet scents of the Most Holy Shrine, and the manifestations of sanctity within the Abhá Kingdom inhale the vivifying fragrances wafting from the Most Sacred Sepulchre, for its very dust is life-giving and its atmosphere reviveth the spirits of those endowed with perception. Render thanks, therefore, that thou hast received this most precious bestowal and hast been strengthened through this supreme bounty. Return, now, in a state of utmost enkindlement, joy, and fervour, and convey greetings and affection on behalf of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the loved ones of

God. Say:

“O friends! This is the time for fellowship and harmony. This is the day of oneness and of being everywhere united in speech. For disunity is tantamount to death and destruction, whilst harmony conferreth life and salvation. The glory of the Cause of God and of His loved ones dependeth upon unity and wisdom, whilst disunity, falsehood, and estrangement cannot but lead to the degradation and abasement of both. Wherefore, strive to the utmost of your ability to increase your unity and harmony, that ye may become the manifestations of divine mercy.”

* * *

O physician of the body and the spirit! Thy letter dated 12 April 1919 was received and renewed our old covenant; that is, after an interruption in our communication for some time, we once again began to correspond.

Miss Stevens is in England.

Praised be God that thou art now in an important place, a place where there is great capacity for the propagation of the divine teachings. For some time it hath been my wish that the call of the Kingdom of God may be raised in that great land. Nowhere in the whole world may be found people as civilized and humanitarian as the inhabitants of that land. Therefore, it is my earnest hope that the Divine Spirit may rapidly bestow eternal life upon those receptive souls, and that thou mayest be one of the summoners to the Kingdom, for I think it will become evident on all sides that divine confirmations will be vouchsafed to those heavenly souls from every direction. I am confident, and thou shouldst likewise be confident and engage in spreading the teachings of God.

Convey my greetings and love to all the friends, especially Mr. Schwarz,

1

Mr. Herrigel,

2

Mrs. Taereh,

3

who is truly radiant, and to others. Upon thee rest greetings and praise.

Haifa

7 May 1919

1

Albert Schwarz.

2

Wilhelm Herrigel.

Alice Schwarz.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O handmaiden of the Most High! Thy letter was received. Thou hast written that thou seekest to establish a new hospital and art arranging and planning it together with five other Bahá’í doctors. Should such a matter be accomplished, it would be most beneficial.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

When that essence of holiness and reality of sanctity, her honour the Virgin Mary—upon her be salutations and praise—became purified and sanctified from all else save God, she brought forth such a luminous fruit that she became the shell for that divine Pearl and the target for the darts of infinite malice.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The meaning is this: Although those ill-mannered ones offered thee insults and taunts, cursed and reviled thee, and at last dismissed thee with the greatest disrespect and banished thee from thy town, it doth not matter. It behoveth thee to offer thanksgiving and praise for having attained to so great a bestowal, so manifest a bounty. O servant of Bahá! The Ancient Beauty, may my life be sacrificed for His loved ones, was repeatedly exiled from one land to another and banished from one country to the next. Thou didst follow in the footsteps of the Blessed Beauty and didst drink a cup from the ocean of His tribulations. May it redound to your health! God willing, thou wilt drink again from this brimming, life-giving chalice of joy and wilt partake of this delectable sweetmeat. Delight therein!

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Glad tidings! The light of the Sun of Truth hath shed its radiance from the East!

Glad tidings! The heavenly powers are set in motion!

Glad tidings! The powers of the earth are quaking!

Glad tidings! The sun of religious imitation is clouded!

Glad tidings! The moon of superstition is eclipsed!

Glad tidings! The stars of worldly glory have fallen!

Glad tidings! The Spirit of God and the hosts of the Kingdom are rushing in!

Glad tidings! The angels of heaven have scattered throughout all regions!

Glad tidings! The breaths of the Holy Spirit have been wafted!

Glad tidings! The morn of joyful tidings hath dawned!

Glad tidings! The Sun of Truth hath shone forth!

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Our hope is that the Spiritual Assembly of Rangoon may shine resplendent and become as delightsome as the highest heaven, that eloquent words and sweet utterances may be voiced therein, that it may ever consult upon and determine the means of exalting the Word of God, and that it may resort to every possible measure so that the light of truth might shine forth in that country and the banner of divine guidance be unfurled therein.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

As regards the seven qualities which thou hadst requested be enumerated, they are as follows:

First is knowledge: man must attain to the knowledge of God.

Second is faith.

Third is steadfastness.

Fourth is truthfulness, for truthfulness is the foundation of all the virtues of the human world, and without it prosperity and salvation are unattainable to any soul in all the worlds of God. Whenssoever this holy attribute becometh securely established in one's being, the acquisition of all heavenly virtues will be realized.

Fifth is trustworthiness, a quality which ranketh among the greatest of all divine bestowals.

Sixth is faithfulness, another quality which ranketh among the finest attributes of a spiritual man.

Seventh is utter self-effacement, by which is meant that man should so surrender his will to God, and become so oblivious of his own pursuits, that he may attain unto the station of living sacrifice: Thus, if he sleepeth, it should not be for the sake of bodily repose, but solely to recuperate his strength in order that his discourse may be clearer, his utterance more pleasing, and that he may serve God's creatures and expound His proofs; and if he waketh, he should remain alert, engage in service to the Cause of God, and utterly submerge his own desires and inclinations in the will of God. When he attaineth unto this station, the confirmations of the Holy Spirit shall surround him, and, armed with such a power, he shall be capable of withstanding all the peoples of the earth.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou whose heart hath been filled with love for the beauty of God! I have perused thy gracious letter and intoned thy words that testify to the intensity of thy love for God, to the strength of thine attachment to His Cause, and to the greatness of thine attraction to His Kingdom; truly, this befitteth such as thee. From this sublime retreat I greet thee, and bestow upon thee praise and salutation. Distant as thou art in that far region, yet with my heart's eye do I see thee here before me, and with my spirit's tongue do I address thee, saying, "Happiness, all happiness is thine! Do thou announce unto the beloved of God in those regions the joyful tidings of His Glory."

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

The Hand of the Cause of God, Jináb-i-Ibn-i-Abhar,
upon him be the Glory of God!

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! A few days ago I was glancing at some photographs of the friends. By chance I came across thy photograph. As I beheld thy person standing poised and in the utmost dignity with chains around thy neck, I was so affected that all sorrow was turned into joy and radiance, and I praised God that the world's Greatest Luminary hath nurtured and trained such servants who, while tied in chains and under the threat of the sword, shine forth in the utmost exultation and rapture. And this is but a token of the grace of thy Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Tihrán

The Hand of the Cause of God Ibn-i-Abhar, upon him be the glory of God, the All-Glorious

He is God.

O harbinger of the Covenant! Thou hast written concerning
Kh
urásání, the Muslim divine of Najaf.

1

Thou shouldst assuredly write in confidence to Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh-i-Mázindarání, asking him, if possible, to make a journey to visit him. He should, with a resolve born of the Kingdom, with spiritual strength and holy aspirations, with the breathings of heaven, and assisted by the confirmations of the Holy Spirit proceed thereto and speak forth with

proofs and evidences, that perchance the light of the Most Great Guidance may illuminate Khurásání's heart and soul, delivering him entirely from his self, and causing him to find peace within the shelter of divine bestowals.

He should, moreover, help him to understand, through proofs and evidences, that the institution of

ijtihád

,

2

the dominion of the 'ulamá, the pleading of cases before the mujtahids, the attachment of the masses to them and their congregating behind them, and the rule of the religious leaders—all these will ere long be rolled up. The people will all adopt the disposition of the Europeans and become preoccupied with the comforts of this world. The foundation of religion will be entirely shaken and undermined—indeed, behold how weak and feeble it hath already become within this short period of time!

It is thus evident that religion and faith will soon be swept away and forgotten, even as it hath already happened in Europe, unless the hearts are vivified and the souls freed from the world through the breaths of the Holy Spirit and a new Dispensation is inaugurated. This matter is clear and manifest and requireth no further proof or evidence. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee!

Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Asadu'lláh must protect the confidentiality of this distinguished personage and speak to him with the utmost forbearance and wisdom. That is to say, he must not vehemently rend the veil asunder.

1

Mullá Muhammad-Kázim, known as Ákhund-i-Kh

urásání (d. 1911), one of the “founders” of the Constitutional Revolution in Iran.

2

The power of Shí'ih divines to issue decrees and judgments on points of religious law upon using independent effort, reason, and the principles of jurisprudence.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bahá'u'lláh hath proclaimed the universality of education, which is essential to the unity of mankind, that one and all may be equally educated, whether girls or boys, and receive the same education. When education is universalized in all schools, perfect communication between the members of the human race will be established. When all receive the same kind of education the foundations of war and contention will be utterly destroyed.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

My hope is that the Tarbíyat School may be under the protection of the one true God, and may achieve extraordinary progress.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

... if you seek immunity from the sway of the forces of the contingent world, hang the Most Great Name in your dwelling, wear the ring of the Most Great Name on your finger, place the picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in your home, and always recite the prayers that I have written; then you will behold the marvellous effect they produce. Those so-called forces will prove but illusions and will be wiped out and exterminated.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou spiritual teacher! In thy school, instruct thou God's children in the customs of the Kingdom. Be thou a teacher of love, in a school of unity. Train thou the children of the friends of the Merciful in the rules and ways of His loving-kindness. Tend the young trees of the Abhá Paradise with the welling waters of His grace and peace and joy. Make them to flourish under the downpour of His bounty. Strive with all thy powers that the children may stand out and grow fresh, delicate, and sweet, like the ideal trees in the gardens of heaven.

All these gifts and bounties depend upon love for the Beauty of the All-Glorious, and on the blessings in the teachings of the Most High, and the spiritual instructions of the Supreme Concourse, and on ecstasy and ardour and diligent pursuit of whatsoever will redound to the eternal honour of the community of man. Greetings be unto thee, and praise.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O ye friends of God! The All-Merciful hath created humankind for the adornment of this contingent world, so that men may array the earth with the manifold blessings of heaven; that the inner reality of the human being may, like unto a lamp of the spirit, cause the community of man to become as a mirror for the assemblage on high.

It is clear that learning is the greatest bestowal of God; that knowledge and the acquirement thereof is a blessing from heaven. Thus is it incumbent upon the friends of God to exert such an effort and strive with such eagerness to promote divine knowledge, culture and the sciences, that ere long those who are schoolchildren today will become the most erudite of all the fraternity of the wise. This is a service rendered unto God Himself, and it is one of His

inescapable commandments.

Wherefore, O loving friends, strive with heart and soul and strength to make the Tarbíyat School a center of enlightenment, and a well-spring of truth, that the children of God may shine with the rays of boundless learning, and that these tender plants of the divine garden may grow and flourish in the grace that showereth down from the clouds of knowledge and true understanding, and advance to such a degree as to astonish the company of those who know.

I swear by the bounty of God's wisdom that if they win this great prize, the members of the Tarbíyat School will be admitted to the assemblage of God, and that unto them, beyond a peradventure, the portals of His grace will open wide. Salutations to you, and praise.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O handmaid of the Most High! Our hearts rejoiced at thy letter concerning a school for girls. Praised be God that there is now a school of this type in Tihrán where young maidens can, through His bounty, receive an education and with all vigour acquire the accomplishments of humankind. Erelong will women in every field keep pace with the men.

Until now, in Persia, the means for women's advancement were non-existent. But now, God be thanked, ever since the dawning of the Morn of Salvation, they have been going forward day by day. The hope is that they will take the lead in virtues and attainments, in closeness to the Court of Almighty God, in faith and certitude—and that the women of the East will become the envy of the women of the West.

Praised be God, thou art confirmed in thy service, art exerting every effort in this work and taking great pains, and so, too, the teacher in the school, Miss Lillian Kappes. Give her my most affectionate greetings. Upon thee be the glory of the All-Glorious.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

It is incumbent upon the youth to walk in the footsteps of Hakím

1

and to be trained in his ways, for such important souls as he and his like have now ascended to the Kingdom of Abhá. The youth must grow and develop and take the place of their fathers, that this abundant grace, in the posterity of each one of the loved ones of God who bore great agonies, may day by day increase, until in the end it shall yield its fruit on earth and in Heaven.

1

One of the distinguished believers of Qazvín.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It behoveth the servant to pray to and seek assistance from God, and to supplicate and implore His aid. Such becometh the rank of servitude, and the Lord will decree whatsoever He desireth, in accordance with His consummate wisdom.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is the Most Glorious.

O true servant of God! Gird up thy loins, set firm thy steps, exert a mighty effort, and enter the plane of sacrifice. Be swift in the path of God and seek an abode loftier than the heavens. The fleet-footed charger is at the ready, the vast arena is beckoning, the ball of good fortune is in play, and the mallet of divine confirmation is at hand. It is time to spur on thy steed and carry away the prize from the field of play. “I do as bidden and bring the message.”

1

Make haste, make haste, for time is short and the minstrel’s melody is nearing its end. If, at this feast, thou dost not clap thy hands, beat the drum, lift up thy voice, and sing out the songs of joy, when wilt thou then know blissful rapture and heavenly intoxication?

1

Sa’dí.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As to Mr. Robert,

1

the news of his ascension saddened the hearts. He was in truth most devoted. Gracious God! What a shining candle was lighted within that black-coloured lamp. Praise be to God that this candle ascended from its earthly lamp unto the immortal Kingdom, to gleam and shine in the assemblage of heaven. Praise be to God that ye adorned his blessed finger with the ring bearing the inscription “I came forth from God, and return unto Him”.

2

This too is a proof of his devotion; with his last breath he was aided to say “Alláh-u-Abhá” and stir thereby the hearts of those present.

O Thou Provider, O Thou Forgiver! Exalt dearly loved Robert in Thy Kingdom and, in the garden of the Abhá Paradise, make him an intimate of the birds of the meadow. O All-Knowing God! While that innocent soul was black in colour, he was, like unto the black pupil of the eye, a source of radiant light.

O Thou Forgiving Lord! Enable that yearning soul to behold Thee and cause that thirsty one to drink his fill of the water of life. Thou art the Bestower, the Pardoners, the Loving.

1

Robert Turner.

2

Kitáb-i-Aqdas, paragraph 129.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is the all-Glorious.

O thou servant of the sacred Threshold! It is possible, nay most easy, to please God, for if only one is pure in heart, His good-pleasure is attained; but to please the people is of the utmost difficulty. God Himself did not succeed in pleasing the people—how can thou and I hope to do it? Still, we should strive as far as possible, for “that which cannot be achieved in its entirety should not be discarded in its entirety”.

1

It is my hope that, through the infinite bounties of the Almighty Lord, thou mayest achieve both. I for one have not succeeded; God willing, thou mayest succeed and pray in turn for my success. For the good-pleasure of God and that of His servants are the greatest of divine bestowals; indeed God’s good-pleasure resideth in our being pleased with His servants.

O Lord! Graciously assist me and this servant of Thine to attain unto this supreme bounty, that we may be pleased with everyone and they may be pleased with us. I beseech God to grant that we both may be confirmed in service to His holy Threshold. The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Arabic proverb.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

... every great Cause in this world of existence findeth visible expression through three means: first, intention; second, confirmation; third, action. Today, on this earth there are many souls who are promoters of peace and reconciliation and are longing for the realization of the oneness and unity of

the world of humanity, but this intention needeth a dynamic power so that it may become manifest in the world of being. In this day, the divine instructions and lordly exhortations promulgate this most great aim, and the confirmations of the Kingdom also support and aid the realization of this intention.

Therefore, although the combined forces and thoughts of the nations of the world cannot by themselves achieve this exalted purpose, the power of the Word of God penetrateth all things and the assistance of the divine Kingdom is continuous. Ere long it will become evident and clear that the ensign of the Most Great Peace is the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and the tent of union and harmony among nations is the Tabernacle of the divine Kingdom; for therein the intention, the power, and the action, all three, are brought together. The realization of everything in the world of being dependeth upon these three elements.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The aim of the Bahá'ís is to raise aloft the banner of the world's Great Peace, to eradicate the foundations of war and conflict throughout all regions, to gather together all the divers nations and peoples beneath the single-hued Tabernacle of God, and to eliminate prejudice—whether racial, national, religious, sectarian, or political—from the face of the earth, so that all countries may become as one country, all races as one race, and all nations as one nation. Thus may the world of creation attain unto peace and tranquillity.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Therefore, in this day the doors of contention must be barred and the causes of strife prevented, and this is not possible unless all follow the Interpreter and obey the appointed Centre of the Covenant. That is, they must cleave unto his explicit utterance and hold fast unto his clear testimony in such wise that their tongues may relate only the words spoken by his tongue and their pens recount only that which he hath uttered. They must not speak a single letter more or less than he hath, nor add a word of interpretation, exegesis, or explanation, that all may be gathered beneath the shadow of the word of Divine unity and assembled under the banner of the oneness of God. This matter is the most important of matters and this foundation the greatest of all foundations. If two souls contend with one another, both are wrong, for there is no fault or defect greater than discord. Perceptions differ; should the understanding of individuals be made the authority on matters, the Frequented Fane

1

would, in a moment, be laid waste, the Verse of Light

2

would be annulled, and darkest night would descend. Wherefore, O ye loved ones of God and spiritual friends, listen with heart and soul, content yourselves

with the explicit statement of this servant, and transgress it not, even to the extent of a single letter.

1

See Qur'án 52:4.

2

See Qur'án 24:35.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O friends of God! 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the embodiment of servitude and is not Christ; He is the servant of the world of humanity and is not its chief; He is utter nothingness and is not possessed of any existence; He is pure evanescence and is not ever-abiding. These discussions will yield no result or benefit: We must set all such debates and controversies entirely aside—nay, we must consign them to oblivion and arise to accomplish that which is enjoined and required in this Day. These are mere words bereft of inner meaning; they are mere superficialities devoid of all reality.

That which is true and real is this: that we become united and agreed in our purpose and arise to flood this darksome world with light, to banish all enmity and foreignness from among the children of men, to perfume and revive the world with the sanctified breezes of the character and conduct of the Abhá Beauty, to cast the light of divine guidance upon East and West, to raise the tabernacle of the love of God and gather all people under its sheltering shadow, to confer peace and composure upon every soul beneath the shade of the blessed Tree, to show forth such love as to astonish the enemy, to turn ravenous and bloodthirsty wolves into the gazelles of the meadows of the love of God, to cause the oppressor to taste the sweet savour of meekness, to teach them that kill the submission and acquiescence of those that suffer themselves to be killed, to spread abroad the verses of the one true God, to extol the virtues and perfections of the all-glorious Lord, to raise to the highest heaven the cry of "O Thou the Glory of Glories!", and to cause the call of "The earth shall shine with the light of her Lord!"

1

to reach the ears of the denizens of His Kingdom. Herein is reality! Herein is guidance! Herein is service! Herein is the exaltation of the world of humanity!

1

Qur'án 39:69.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye true friends! Day and night 'Abdu'l-Bahá calleth his loved ones to

mind, and with every breath he communeth with them and longeth to behold their blessed faces. I beseech the Lord of the worlds that they may all attain unto that which is meet and seemly and may succeed in wholly following the Law of God.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bátúm

The friends of God and the handmaids of the Merciful, upon them rest the Glory of the All-Glorious

He is God.

O ye who are sincere! O ye who are enraptured! O ye who are steadfast in the Covenant and Testament! Praised be God that the barred path hath been cleared and communication hath been reestablished. Joyful news hath been received from the friends in those lands, bearing the tidings that they are steadfast in the Cause of the Ever-Living, Self-Subsisting Lord, and stand as firm as a lofty and immovable mountain in faith and certitude.

Until now, it was not possible to travel and pass through that port, but, praised be God, in these days some friends have arrived from those regions and brought with them joyful tidings. Henceforth, the movement of the friends to and from those lands shall continue unabated. It is my hope that that port city may become illumined, the number of the friends therein may increase with every passing day, and souls may gather beneath the shadow of the Word of God, chant the verses of His Divine Unity, make the preserved Tablet of the Covenant an adornment around their necks, and attire their heads with the crown of firmness and the diadem of steadfastness. May they kindle the fire of love and burn away the veils of doubt, so that the beauty of the Divine Teachings may be fully unveiled, may shine like a bright candle in every gathering, and may reveal its splendour in every assembly.

Owing to the recent war and the great convulsion that ensued, souls that were fast asleep have been awakened, the heedless have become mindful, and the fame of the Divine Teachings hath been diffused throughout all regions. After fifty years, that which was promised in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Súriy-i-Haykal hath been fulfilled and realized, and the significance of the words addressed to Berlin hath become as apparent and manifest as the clear horizon. The mystery of the words of warning to Wilhelm hath been made evident, and the address to the "Spot situated between the two seas" hath become as manifest as the sun and moon in the heavens. The verse "the throne of tyranny hath, verily, been established upon thee" and the great prophecies and momentous happenings foretold by the Pen of the Most High have all come to pass.

In brief, it hath become apparent to all that the spirit of the age and the well-being of this century are today dependent upon the Teachings revealed by the Pen of Glory. Even the President established fourteen points as the

foundation of the League of Nations.

1

Twelve of these were, fifty years ago, explicitly revealed by the Pen of the Most High, were disseminated throughout the world by means of newspapers and epistles, and the prominent people of Europe and America were apprised thereof.

Our purpose is this, that the time hath come for the friends, one and all, to arise to guide the people, and to lead the souls aright by their conduct, their deeds, and their words. Should they arise to do so, confirmations from the Kingdom of Glory shall descend upon them continually and the sweet savours of holiness shall be spread abroad.

The Glory of the Glories rest upon you!

30 July 1919

1

A reference to the Fourteen Points outlined by Woodrow Wilson in January 1918.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

O ye friends of the Beloved! The candle of guidance is burning, and the light shining from the Supreme Horizon adorneth every assemblage. The showers of grace are pouring down, and the bestowals of the unseen Kingdom are abundant. The angelic voice is raised in song, and the birds of the garden warble the Psalms of David. The musk-scented breeze sheddeth its fragrance, and the gentle wind wafting from the garden of roses reviveth the souls of the righteous. Yet, the heedless are as dead and the ignorant fast asleep. The wavering souls are withered and the chilled hearts downcast. For the sun lighteth the eyes of the seeing, not of the blind; the songs of David transport the spirits of the hearing, not of the deaf; and the nectar of eternity is sweet in the mouths of those with taste, not of the dead.

Praise be to God that your vision is illumined and your hearts like unto a rose-garden. Your cups are filled with choice wine, and your assemblage adorned with the Cup-bearer's beauteous face. The eyes of the loving-kindness of the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name, are turned towards you, and the glances of the eye of mercy are cast upon you. Wherefore, in thanksgiving for such grace and bounty, strive ye to spread abroad His fragrances and drink deep from His refreshing cup. Burn brightly even as a candle, be ablaze as the Fire that was kindled in the right side of the Vale,

1

and illumine the whole world. Thus may the Caucasus become the nest of the immortal Phoenix and the people of Tiflis intimate companions of that cherished Bird; thus may the fowls of holiness sing and chant in its gardens of reality

and the gazelles of unity amble and stroll in its fields and mountains. When that land is quickened by the breezes of the Self-Subsisting Lord, it will become even as the Abhá Paradise.

1

Cf. Qur'án 28:30.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O my friend! Render thou thanks unto God for having illumined thy sight with the effulgent rays shed from the Sun of Truth, and for having quickened thee and baptized thee with the water of life and the fire of the love of God.

* * *

Extract from a talk of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The love of God is spoken of as fire, for it burneth away the veils, and as water, for it is the source of life. In short, the love of God is the inmost reality of the virtues of the world of humanity. Through it, human nature is purified. Through the love of God, one is delivered from the defects of the human world. Through the love of God, one maketh progress in the realm of virtues. The love of God is the cause of the illumination of the world.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá! The tumult of the nations and the clamour of their peoples are certain and inevitable in the Day of the Manifestation of the Most Great Name. The wisdom of this irrevocable decree is clear and evident. For when the winds of tests blow, the frail trees are uprooted while the blessed trees are made firm and immovable. Torrents of rain distress and scatter the creeping things that walk upon the earth while the gardens are filled with anemones and bring forth roses and sweet herbs, and the nightingales warble their melodies, chanting a myriad songs at every moment. This is a bounty unto the righteous and a calamity unto those who are weak. Render thanks unto God that your feet are firm and your faces, like pure gold, are aglow in the fire of tests. I beseech the one true God that day by day ye may increase in firmness and steadfastness.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Thou hadst asked about the meaning of the statement "the transgressions of the parents will affect four generations of their descendants." Know thou that spiritual diseases are like physical ones. Thou seest that if a person is afflicted with a chronic physical illness, traces of his ailment will linger in three or four generations of his offspring. Likewise, should he be afflicted with a spiritual disease, that of an immoral character, this will have a great

influence on his progeny, for upbringing exerteth an astounding influence and that person's character will be passed on to his descendants. A powerful force is thus needed to eliminate that influence. By this "transgression" is meant immorality and heedlessness of God. In truth, this transgression is the breaking of the Covenant, the abasement resulting from which will linger in the descendants for four generations.

And now, I hope that thou shalt become the cause of the illumination of souls, so that they may acquire a heavenly nature, and that thy goodly character may exert its influence upon a vast number of people.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Seize thy chance, exert every effort, and pay no heed to matters that do not yield any fruit.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Every assembly held for the purpose of bringing about unity and concord will be conducive to turning strangers into friends and aliens into companions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá will be present in heart and soul at that gathering.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Likewise, when the regiments of an army and the members of a legion stand together and are connected with one another, mighty victories will be won. However, if they gather together one day and disperse the next, no results will be produced.

Therefore, as ye are a heavenly host and have become the army of life, ye must remain firm and unshakeable in unity, steadfastness, and concord, that ye may win spiritual victories.

With tearful eyes, I supplicate at the Divine Threshold that ye may be confirmed in steadfastness and constancy and may become the cause of the guidance of the people of that land.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The highest wish of them that are filled with the Divine Spirit is unity and harmony amid the friends and spiritual connection among the hearts of the believers; that they may shine like unto brilliant stars in this darksome world, teach all the peoples of the world the mores of love, and show everyone kindness and friendship, sympathy and courtesy; that they may become as refreshing water to every thirsty one, the bread of heaven to every hungry one, a healing medicine to every ailing one, and the cause of everlasting glory to

every abased one.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! Thy letter was received and its purport was made plain and evident. Thou hadst written of the high endeavour, the exertion and the determination evinced by the loved ones of God, of their irrepressible enthusiasm for the construction of the Ma

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riqu'l-A

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kár, and of the engagement of their blessed persons in carrying its building stones. In truth, this news brought such joy to the hearts as is impossible to describe or recount, for it conjured the image of that noble assemblage bearing stones in the utmost humility and meekness and yet considering themselves exalted above the kings of the world. They serve as manual labourers in the Ma

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kár, they carry the earth and mortar, and this they offer as a gift to the Threshold of Oneness, particularly Jináb-i-Hájí

'Alí-Asghar-i-Mílání, who in such a frail state moveth the rocks, and yet with such dignity. How I long with all my heart to see a photograph of those distinguished souls!

O Lord, my God! Confirm them in Thy service; strengthen their backs in bearing the stones for the erection of the Ma

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kár. O Lord, my God! Illumine the faces of these righteous ones with the light that shineth from the dawning-place of Thy mysteries. Verily, Thou art the Mighty and the Unconstrained, and verily Thou art the Merciful and the Compassionate.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Verily I say unto thee: I am with you in heart and in spirit. I delight in your joy and my spirit rejoiceth in your happiness. With mine inner ear I hear your call and with mine inner sense I inhale the sweet savours of the garden of your hearts.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Verily, I beseech God to cast upon you the glances of the eye of His mercy, to raise you up through His celestial power, to stir you into motion by His

heavenly breeze, to aid you to declare the conclusive proofs and testimonies of His oneness, to sever you from the world and all that is therein, to purge and sanctify you from all that pertaineth to this earthly life, and to enable you to spread abroad the outpourings of the realm on high.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

I beseech God to illumine thy sight with the light of hope, to enable thee to extol His praise among His handmaidens, and to make thee firm in this path whereon the feet of the people have slipped through the severity of trials.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Verily I say unto thee that if thou be steadfast in this Cause, and arise with all thy power to promote the Word of God in those regions, and exert thine utmost effort to breathe the spirit of life into the hearts of the righteous, thou wilt find thyself assisted by the angels of heaven and the hosts of the Concourse on high. Thou wilt raise the banner of peace and sound the clarion of love and unity throughout those lands, guide the souls unto the wellspring of life, lead them unto the arena of true understanding, grant them to drink from the cup of certitude, quicken them with the breaths of the All-Merciful, attire them with the robe of bounty, and give them to quaff of the wine of faithfulness through the love of Bahá. Thus will they be awakened from the slumber of selfish desire and behold the mighty signs of their Lord in this exalted creation. Better is this for thee than all the glory and dominion of the world.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Verily, I place my brow upon the dust, turn my face towards the Lord of Lords, and invoke Him with all fervour and attraction, that He may look upon you with the glances of the eye of His providence and watch over you with the gaze of His loving-kindness. May He unite your hearts, gladden your breasts, harmonize your souls, rejoice you with exceeding gladness, give you to drink from the cup of salvation, and make you firm in His Cause. May He enable you to hold fast to the hem of grandeur, to hasten towards the field of sacrifice, and to be sheltered beneath the shade of that blessed Tree whose roots are planted firm and whose branches reach unto heaven.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Striving meaneth this, that ye should live and move according to the divine counsels and admonitions and be filled with zeal and fervour, that ye should seek no rest and be engaged at all times in service.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Strive with the full fervour of thy soul that the wellspring of true understanding may flow within thy heart and bestow upon thee the outpourings of divine mysteries from the Kingdom of Lights. Thereupon wilt thou grasp such inner meanings as lay treasured and concealed in the Sacred Scriptures.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

A soul is known through his conduct, manners, words, and deeds. We must therefore strive with heart and soul that, day by day, our deeds may become more worthy, our conduct more pleasing, and our association with others ever greater, that is, that we may love and deal kindly with all who are on earth.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O ye true friends! Make ye a mighty effort, that this world may become another world, and this darksome earth may become shining and resplendent through the rays of the Sun of Truth.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In brief, though outwardly far away and remote, and burning with the fire of separation, yet, because we are inebriated with the same wine and rejoicing in the bounties of our Forgiving Lord, because we are immersed in one ocean, wanderers in one desert, birds of one rose-garden, and fishes of one sea, therefore are we close companions and intimates, attuned and in harmony. The power of the Abhá Kingdom hath bound us together. The East and the West have embraced, distant lands have drawn near, and all on earth have become even as a single assemblage. Amongst us, therefore, no separation, remoteness, or deprivation can be conceived.

How sweet is the music that reacheth the ears of these eager ones from every corner of the world! It is the celebration of the praise and glory of the All-Forgiving Lord, the song bearing the glad-tidings of the Day of His manifestation.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

In the Dispensation of Abraham, by “immolation” was meant attainment to the station of sacrifice, not butchery and the shedding of blood. This is the mystery of sacrifice, and inexhaustible are its meanings. Among them are freedom from passion and desire, laying down one’s life in the path of guidance, and detachment from all save God. Another meaning is the annihilation

of the seed and its appearance in all respects in the tree and the fruit. The seed doth truly sacrifice itself for the tree, for were the seed not to disintegrate outwardly, that tree with its branches, fruits, leaves, and blossoms would not come into being in the world of existence. Yet another meaning of sacrifice is for the Point of Truth, with all His manifold tokens, signs, precepts, and acts, to appear and become evident in all manifestations, whether universal or particular. That is to say, souls would derive their grace from His splendours and hearts receive their illumination from His rays. This mystery of sacrifice is clearly evident in the essence of every sanctified Reality, every celestial Being, and every effulgent Manifestation, in accordance with the rank and station of each. All have sacrificed Themselves, all have laid down Their lives in the path of God, and all have hastened to love's field of martyrdom. For this reason, Isaac and Ishmael are both sacrifices, as are indeed all the true servants of God. This station is one of the necessary attributes of the Stars of the heaven of Divine Unity.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Hath the Blessed Beauty instituted this Covenant and Testament in order to exact obedience from all, or to bring about disobedience? If the latter is intended, then we have nothing to say; but if obedience and compliance are the goal, then wavering will lead to utter loss, and disobedience and waywardness are grievous error.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Now one must either say that the Blessed Beauty erred and led the people astray, for He directed them to obey someone who ought not to have been obeyed, or else say that the least deviation from the Covenant and the Testament entaileth deprivation from the bounties of Him Who is the Luminary of the world. Of these two alternatives, one must be true; there is no third.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Whosoever entereth the Kingdom of God is under the protection of Bahá'u'lláh. The changes and chances of the material world, whether good or bad, are like the waves of the sea, which pass away and are no more. They are not worthy of attention ... The denizens of the Kingdom derive their joy from the bounties of God and set their hopes on His infinite grace. They exult in the outpourings of divine bounty and are gladdened by the favours of the Lord of Hosts. In the fire of tribulations they remain fresh and verdant, and in the tempest of trials and afflictions tranquil and at peace, for they rest their backs against a mighty mountain and take refuge in a ship wrought of steel.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The friends of God and the handmaids of the All-Merciful should know that in every movement of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in every word He uttereth, there lieth a great wisdom. If what He doeth appeareth to be strange, this is because the wisdom is not known to the friends.

* * *

Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O ye who thirst for the truth!

Iran is in ruins; indeed, all parties have taken an axe in hand and are striking at the root of this ancient edifice, utterly unaware that this axe is destroying the foundation and these blows are uprooting it. Each party imagineth that it is engaged in construction and yet, as is stated in the Qur’án, “by their own hands they demolish their houses”.

1

However, these homeless wanderers have no affiliation with any party and are not inclined towards any one of them. We labour instead for Iran’s vitality to be strengthened. And it is evident that such strengthening is impossible save through instituting divine virtues and morals. When virtues are established and characters refined, progress in all matters is assured. No nation can attain prosperity and success save through the refinement of morals. When characters are improved, sciences and arts flourish; minds become vastly enlightened; hearts are filled with truthfulness and trustworthiness, with zeal, devotion, and determination; statesmanship attaineth its highest degree; new industries become widespread; commerce is expanded; and courage and audacity raise aloft their banner. The nation passeth from one condition to another. It becometh a new creation, and the verse “Blessed, therefore, be God, the most excellent of Makers!”

2

is realized.

The Land of Hijáz was a sandy desert—arid, barren, and uncultivated. Yet through the dawning of the Sun of Truth, it became the Qiblih of the world and a land round which circle peoples from every region of the earth. Now that the Most Great Light hath risen above the horizon of Iran, consider what the future will hold for it. It is my hope that ye, too, will be among those who labour to establish this great edifice.

Upon you be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

1

Qur’án 59:2.

2

Qur'án 23:14.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Not a single morn did He find comfort; not a single night did He repose in peace. So intense did His tribulations become that, for three years ere His ascension, His blessed body burned with fever like unto a torch.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Thou didst ask about not combining incompatible foods at the table.

1

By incompatible foods is meant those dishes that do not agree with one another. However, He hath not stipulated whether these are to be determined according to the ancient school of medicine or the modern one. What is meant is that if two incompatible foods are served together at the table, it is not permissible to partake of both. And this dependeth on one's constitution and on whether the digestive system is weak or strong. For instance, to consume two heavy foods or two dishes whose ingredients are both either cold or hot by nature may not agree with a delicate constitution. Or perhaps one's natural disposition may not tolerate two different forms of a certain food or two foods each of which would impede the digesting of the other. Hence it is not permissible to combine these foods. This is a matter that must be determined by physicians. Whatever foods physicians forbid a person to combine would be regarded as incompatible.

1

Reference to a verse in the Lawh-i-Tibb (the Tablet of Medicine) by Bahá'u'lláh

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

“This house of sorrows will become a rose-garden one day; grieve not!”

1

Exert the utmost effort and sincerity in service to Iran and its people, and sorrow no more.

1

Háfiz.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The future of Iran is of the utmost greatness, majesty, and glory, for it is the native land of the Blessed Beauty. All the nations of the earth will turn

to and regard Iran with high esteem. Know of a certainty that it will make such progress as to dazzle the eyes of the mighty and the learned throughout the world.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O God, my God! Thou beholdest Thy servants who are sincere towards all humanity, even their enemies, and who, with pure hearts and sanctified breasts, serve the entire human race. They are in grave danger from the darts and arrows that rain down upon them and from the pointed spears and unsheathed swords that are drawn against them. O my Lord! They have fallen victim to oppression at the hands of the enemies, and are sore tried within the claws of the ravaging wolves and ferocious dogs from among the evil-doers. They have no refuge or haven except Thine unfailing protection. Keep them safe, O Lord, with the watchful eye of Thy loving-kindness under the sheltering shadow of Thy care, and guard them within the stronghold of Thy tender mercy against the wicked ones amongst Thy people. O God! They have none to help them but Thee, and no one to protect them except Thee. O Lord! Grant that all tribulations be the lot of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and make me a target for the shafts of the peoples of the world. Shield Thy sincere servants from the mischief of the evil plotters, and make me a sacrifice for all Thy loved ones, so that my heart may find peace, my soul may be assured, and mine eyes may be solaced upon the field of a most glorious martyrdom. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the Most Exalted.

O loved ones of God! Ye must be calm and composed.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is the All-Glorious.

O beloved physician! If thou art indeed a skilled and able healer, prescribe a healing medicine, for I am ailing; administer a soothing remedy, for I am sorely afflicted. Bring peace and tranquillity to my bereaved soul, and relieve the burning grief that consumeth my being. Lay a balm upon my wounded heart, and shed a sprinkling of healing waters upon my inflamed limbs and organs. This servant's ailment is his separation from the Abhá Beauty. The wound in his heart is his remoteness from Him Who is the peerless Beloved. The illness afflicting his soul is want of beholding that world-adorning Countenance. The remedy he needeth is admission to the precincts of His transcendent mercy and ascension unto the Abhá Kingdom. Grant, O Lord, that I may attain thereunto! The Glory of Glories rest upon the people of Bahá in the world to come.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Baku

Jináb-i-Áqá Siyyid Nasru'lláh, may the Glory of God be upon him!

He is God.

O thou who hast held fast unto the unbreakable Handle!

1

Render thanks unto God that thou hast quaffed from the cup of steadfastness and constancy and clung unto the sure handle of perseverance. Thou hast been inebriated with the wine of true knowledge; thou hast proceeded from the habitation of ruin to the abode of prosperity. Wherefore, seize the chalice of the Covenant, exhilarate the friends with the wine of the Divine Testament, and frustrate the purpose of those who waver. Tear off the robe of stillness, drink deep from the pure chalice, and hasten to embrace the true Friend. By the grace and bounty of God, souls have been raised that stand immovable as a mountain of iron in the Covenant and are as firm and strong as an impregnable foundation. They are like unto a steel barrier in the face of the Gog of vacillation, a strong wall before the Magog of confusion, a shelter amidst the whirlwind of sedition, and a safeguard against the tempest of trials. I fain would hope that through the bounties and bestowals of the Ancient Beauty—may My soul be a sacrifice for His faithful lovers—this exquisite robe may befittingly adorn the figure of that servant of the Abhá Beauty, and thou mayest be so firm and steadfast that all the friends in that land may too become steadfast and firm.

The Glory of God rest upon thee and upon all them that have held fast unto the Covenant!

With regard to the late King's assassin, His Excellency the Prime Minister

2

informed all the consuls in the surrounding regions that, after careful investigation and inquiry, it had become clear that the contemptible assassin was an anti-monarchist and an atheist who had no affiliation with other groups.

3

Indeed, the establishment of the truth of the matter was due to the competence, discernment, capacity, fairmindedness, and justice of the Prime Minister. Praised be God that the truth of this treason and the partisanship of that arrogant outcast were made clear and evident. This is for no other reason save the confirmations of the Kingdom. All the friends of God must pray continuously, by day and by night, for the glory of His Majesty, the new just king,

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and should also value the fairness and justice of the Prime Minister and pray for his well-being.

The Glory of God rest upon thee.

Ibn-i-Abhar—upon him be the effulgent Glory of God—highly praised the steadfastness and constancy shown by thee and by all the friends in that land. Blessed, doubly blessed, are ye, O servants of the All-Merciful!

Deliver thou the enclosed letters. Among them is a letter to Nabíl-i-Musáfír, that is, Hájí Muhammad-Báqir-i-Hamadání, which must be delivered to his son Hájí Muhammad-Taquí, who hath returned from the Holy Land. Be sure to deliver it.

1

Cf. Qur'án 2:256.

2

'Alí-As

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ar

Kh

án, the Amínu's-Sultán.

3

Following the assassination of Násiri'd-Dín

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áh on 1 May 1896, it was assumed, in the atmosphere of all-pervasive fear, and in light of the previous attempt on the life of the

Sh

áh in 1852, that his murderer, Mírzá Ridáy-i-Kirmání, was a Bábí.

Only later did the government acknowledge the fact that Mírzá Ridá was an adherent of Siyyid Jamálu'd-Dín-i-Af

gh

ání, a political activist and an enemy of the Cause.

4

Muzaffari'd-Dín

Sh

áh.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou Divine youth! Thou hast ever been present in my mind, and at all times am I occupied with thy remembrance. The days of our meeting have not been forgotten. Thy countenance and character are ever before my gaze. From the Kingdom of Signs I entreat for thee Divine confirmations, that day by day thou mayest become happier and sweeter, and mayest delight thy palate with the sweetness of the love of God, becoming a cause of the constancy and steadfastness of the precious friends, so that the tree of life may bear a

fruit, and the prayers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá may produce an effect.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art attracted to the Beauty of God! On this blessed day, the birthday of the Day-Star of the world, the Resplendent Luminary,

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I thought of thee, and penned this festive greeting in order that the heart and soul of that lover of the countenance of the True One, the Beloved of the world, might be cheered and gladdened.

1

The Birthday of Bahá’u’lláh.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O true friend! Thou art ever before mine eyes, and dearly cherished; before my gaze, and highly respected. There is no mightier bond in the world of being than the attachment of the heart. Even a chain of steel hath not the same degree of strength. Praise be to God, that bond between the friends is firm and solid; is binding, capturing, and concentrating the Perspicuous Light; and is day by day becoming firmer and stronger. Wherefore, be thou happy and assured that thou hast an attachment of heart and soul, and that, beneath the shadow of the Omnipotent One, thou art the object of illimitable favours.

Do thou deliver the enclosed letter to Áqá Músá.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou servant of the True One! Sulphur is the fire of the love of God, and mercury is the quicksilver of the ocean of the knowledge of God. Combine then these twin noble elements, and harmonize and unite these twin soundest pillars, and so obtain the Noblest Stone—that is, the Jewel of Jewels, the Ruby of the Mine of the Kingdom—so that thou mayest discover the Most Great Elixir and find the Alchemy of Truth, and, casting it upon the copper and iron of men’s souls, transmute them into purest gold.

Seekest thou the Mystery of Alchemy? It is this! Seekest thou the Inestimable Elixir? It is this! Seekest thou the Philosopher’s Stone? It is this! While

all else besides this is devoid of fruit or consequence, of benefit or useful outcome.

Heed thou my words: Seek thou this Most Great Elixir of the Kingdom!

The Glory of God rest upon thee.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou respected lady!

1

Thy letter hath arrived. Thou art right in what thou hast written: It is incumbent upon the Bahá'ís to assist thee, for thou wishest well, and thine intention is to promote the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. At this time, however, the war and revolution have come to such a pass that it would be impossible, even in Europe, to make the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh the subject of a dramatic spectacle. All peoples and nations are occupied with bloodshed; nay, naught is to be seen but the flame of war, which hath ascended unto the very height of heaven! At such a time no one hath leisure for theatre-going. Should a certain figure be made the subject of a drama—even though he be among the world's most eminent personages—it would have no great attendance; and even should a few people attend it, their thoughts would be preoccupied with news of the war. For this reason, do thou for the time being set about publishing thy composition; the time for staging it will come. Although the Bahá'ís are distracted, and, for the most part, poorly circumstanced—except for a small number who are well endowed—yet assuredly they will lend thee assistance in the publication of thy book.

As for the dramatic representation of this book in the theatres of Europe, this will, in truth, have a considerable impact. In Iran, however, no representation of this kind will have any impact whatsoever. A prolonged period must pass ere Iran acquireth such readiness. For the moment no Bahá'í theatrical representation is possible, for most people are inimical to the Bahá'ís. Such is the frequency with which, night and day, passion plays and theatrical representations of the Imáms and Prophets of old have been staged, indulging in vast exaggeration—angels, for example, are shown descending from heaven—and relating highly embellished tales, that such representations have been reduced to the level of a mere childish sport, and have in consequence absolutely no effect.

I am hopeful that thy book will be staged in Europe, but at a time when safety and security, peace and tranquillity, prevail.

As for the question of the fruit of thy works: The greatest fruit is the good-pleasure of the Almighty, which is the foundation of eternal glory; the second fruit is illumination of heart and soul, which is the greatest Divine

bestowal; the third fruit is renown in both the East and the West, which shall shine forth effulgently in times to come; and the fourth fruit is that thy book shall in future be greatly in demand. I beseech for thee the exaltation of the Kingdom, as I entreat for thee likewise heavenly illumination, nearness to the Court of Grandeur, eternal life, and spiritual effulgence.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Isabella Grinevskaya.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou servant of the Sacred Threshold! Thou knowest not what a convulsion there is in these parts! All the people are dismayed and distraught, whilst the townfolk wander without home or shelter in the mountains and villages; for they are fearful lest the ironclads should of a sudden burst into thunderous action, razing the cities to the ground. In brief, thou art well out of it, and free from all this grim clamour and commotion.

Although, inevitably, there are disturbances in those parts also, yet they cannot be of the same severity as those afflicting these parts; for thou art on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where no state but Russia hath warships, whereas we are on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, where all states have host upon host of fire-scattering destroyers, and the people are fearful lest they should of a sudden launch an attack.

For our part, however—praise be to God!—we are, under the shadow of the loving providence of the Blessed Beauty, occupied day and night, in the utmost tranquillity and assurance, with the protection of the Sacred Threshold; engaged in the remembrance of God; and transported by the utmost fellowship and love.

I beseech for the beloved of God the help of His grace.

A letter hath been received from Isabella Grinevskaya; please find enclosed both the original and the reply, so that—once having perused them—thou mayest send on the latter. If the respected lady wisheth to print and disseminate her book, then, should the beloved of the Lord provide her with some measure of assistance, and extend to her some degree of support, it would be a source of encouragement and stimulation to her.

People are not all on the same level: Some there are who perform their works solely for the sake of God, desiring for their endeavours no other recompense than to draw nigh unto the Threshold of Grandeur—and this is right and proper; yet others there are who belong to that party which is represented as entreating, “Render unto us on earth a favour, and in the world to come a favour likewise.”

1

One must deal with people compassionately, for otherwise matters will become fraught with difficulty.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Cf. Qur'án 2:201.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! The news of the ascension of his honour Áqá Músá was a source of grief and sorrow, while the problems caused by his former spouse added further to the despondency thus engendered. That the late Áqá Músá was a Bahá'í is famed throughout the East and West, and known to the government. There is no doubt about the matter....

As for the letters of Áqá Músá that were in the possession of Áqá Mírzá Haydar-'Alí, since a considerable time hath now elapsed, these have been lost.

The journey thou didst wish to undertake to the regions of the Caucasus, and other lands, in order to proclaim the Word of God is a most blessed enterprise. God willing, thou wilt undertake this journey with the utmost enthusiasm and rapture, joy and exhilaration, and become a cause of the exaltation of the Word of God.

The treatise thou hast composed relating the new ideas to the Divine teachings is very good. The "sharing" and "equality", however, which are mentioned in the Divine Teachings denote measures that are undertaken voluntarily;

1

in other words, should anyone of his own free will have mercy on the poor, and with the utmost gladness bestow upon them his wealth, such a person is favoured in the Court of Grandeur. And indeed, many of the loved ones of God have with the utmost joy and gladness bestowed their wealth upon the poor, practising voluntary sharing in the fullest measure—but of their own free will. As for the new thoughts current in some European countries, these have to do with compulsory, not voluntary, dispositions, which are destructive of the body politic, and a cause of chaos and confusion in all lands. By equality and sharing, as set forth in the Divine Teachings, however, is intended those actions which one putteth into effect of his own free will and with a goodly grace; and this is a sign of magnanimity, and a cause of the good ordering of the human world. It would be good if, in the second edition, thou couldst make this point, that the difference lieth in this, that while no one is entitled to

covet, or dispose of, the property of others, yet souls who are detached from all save God, for the love of His Beauty have mercy on the poor and expend their substance on the destitute—nay more, with the utmost joy and pleasure bestow their whole wealth, or a part thereof, upon the poor. In other words, in their love for their fellow men they are self-sacrificial, preferring the interests and comfort of the generality of the people to those of a particular group; and this is voluntary, not compulsory, and a sign of magnanimity, not of coercion and violence.

Convey to the well-favoured handmaid of God, Fátimih

Kh

ánum,

2

a most wondrous Abhá greeting....

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

4 July 1919

1

In the Bahá'í Writings, “sharing” (muvását) and “equality” (musávát) denote, respectively, preferring others to oneself, and treating them equally to oneself.

2

The wife of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Nakhjavání.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! A letter was dispatched some days previously, containing a letter written to the spouse of Áqá Músá; a testimony was likewise composed, which was sent as an enclosure. God willing, they will arrive.

Thou didst write that even in times of hardship the friends are still engaged in teaching. Such indeed is the attribute of the well-favoured, and the characteristic of the sincere: that by no obstacle can they be obstructed, nor by any eventuality can they be deprived; nay rather, under the direst constraint and calamity, they continue to promote the teachings of the Kingdom on high, while under the threat of sword and fetter they raise the cry “How blessed are we!” and “How blissful is our lot!”

The vicissitudes of the age encompass friend and foe alike. It is not the fate of mortal man ever to attain unto tranquillity of heart and soul. For this reason, one must not attach importance to the changes and chances of the fleeting days of life; rather, he should arise to perform whatsoever it

behoveth and beseemeth him to do, irrespective of whether he be reposing upon a couch of ease or threatened by the sword of his enemy.

Thou didst write concerning the progress of the friends of Bákú, reporting that in all worldly and heavenly respects they have charted a course of advancement and success, becoming one and all distinguished from all other communities.

As for the small number that have fallen a prey to the wicked-doers, this may be accounted for by the consideration that when the fire of sedition is kindled amid the dry jungle, it is inevitable that some verdant trees too will be consumed.

For this reason I wrote previously that the friends must hold aloof from all confessions in political affairs, and conduct themselves in an impartial manner. They should attend the gatherings of no party, nor seek fellowship with any faction. Praise be to God! Through the preservation of the teachings of the Blessed Beauty, in all parts of the world the friends have remained protected and preserved.

On behalf of these few souls who, by chance, have quaffed the cup of martyrdom—and likewise those souls who have suffered financial loss—fervent prayers and supplications were offered at the Threshold of Oneness, that the abundance of God's grace might encompass all, and those souls who chanced to be slain might, in the Court of Oneness, be accounted martyrs. Such is the highest hope of this servant.

Áqá Músá—upon whom be the mercy of God, and His Divine good-pleasure—was not successful, during his lifetime, in founding and instituting in Bákú a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár; and I too, as thou knowest, accepted naught from him. If, however, he had erected this mighty structure, what an influence it would by now have exerted, alike in the kingdoms of earth and heaven!

Now the wealth is fallen into the hands of people who, as thou sayest, he would not have consented should enter his home, and whom he held in the utmost abhorrence. Take heed, then, O men of insight! Gracious God! The wealthy friends exert no endeavour, nor render any service, such is their attachment to these earthly riches. Yet then it chanceth that after death their wealth falleth into the hands of their enemies! These latter feast thereon, and, as the common people say, “recite the Fátihih.”

1

Thou and some others had requested permission to come on a visit to the Holy Land. During these days, to come on such a visit would entail much trouble and many difficulties, such that ye might conceivably spend six months on the way. Do ye postpone the time of your visit to another occasion.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

14 July 1919

1

The opening Súrih of the Qur'án; in other words, they pay lip service to the memory of the deceased, over whom the Fátihih would be recited at the time of interment.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou my companion! I sent thee a letter written in mine own hand, which assuredly hath by now arrived. Since telegrams from here cannot be received in the Caucasus, the letter was sent care of the friends. Now I am writing again to say that thou art permitted to come hither, and we are awaiting thine arrival. Dr. Díyá,

1

accompanied by the handmaid of God Zínat,

2

arrived here two weeks ago and await thy coming.

Advise all the friends that no one should ever utter any derogatory word with regard to the new faction, all should preserve silence. This is extremely important.

Upon thee rest the Glory of God.

Deliver a most wondrous Abhá greeting to the handmaid of God, Fátimih

Kh

ánum.

3

1

Dr. Díyá'u'lláh Ba

gh

dádí.

2

Dr. Díyá'u'lláh Ba

gh

dádí's wife, Zínat

Kh

ánum, the sister-in-law of Mírzá 'Alí-Akbar-i-Na

kh

javání.

3

The wife of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Nakhjavání, and elder sister of Zínat Khánum.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

A prayer beseeching forgiveness for him recently ascended unto God, Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Nakhjavání, upon him rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious

He is God.

O my God! O Thou Remover of adversities and Dispeller of afflictions! I, verily, implore Thee, as one beset by trouble imploreth the Almighty and Most Exalted King; and I beseech Thee, as one burdened with sin beseecheth the Lord of pardon and forgiveness, Him Who revealeth Himself through heavenly mercy, saying:

O my beneficent Lord! Verily, Thy servant ‘Alí-Akbar hath believed in Thee and in Thy Signs; hath acknowledged Thine omnipotence and Thy sovereignty; hath been attracted by the fragrance of Thy sweet savours; hath become enkindled by the fire of Thy love, even whilst in the flower of life and the flush of youth; hath proclaimed Thy Name amongst his fellows; hath supplicated unto Thee with a heart intensely ardent; and hath summoned the people unto the kingdom of Thy grace, both in the daytime and in the night season, with a goodly manner, a gracious disposition, and a radiant heart, and with a breast dilated through the contemplation of Thy most resplendent signs.

Never, night or day, did he weary of Thy remembrance: His tongue would sing Thy praise at both dawn and dusk, whilst he was directed towards Thee and turning his face unto the quarter of Thy grace; and he would call upon Thee alike with his heart and his tongue, entreating Thy blessings and confirmations, wishing to reach the door of Thy mercy, and seeking to attain the wellspring of Thy grace. Ever was he thrilled by Thy sweet savours, and his breast dilated by the sight of Thy signs; and he would recite Thy words, guide the people unto the way of guidance, summon them unto piety and righteousness, and nurture them through Thy teachings, which are a light unto the eyes, a spirit unto the hearts, a boon unto the righteous, and life unto the hearts of the godly.

O my Lord! Verily, this Thy servant ever besought Thee, both privily and openly, and called upon Thee, with heart and tongue alike, saying:

O Lord my God! Long hath been the term of separation, and hard upon me the effect of deprivation! I, verily, yearn for the meads of Thy mercy even as a dove yearneth for a companion in its sylvan bower, wishing to behold Thy beauty in the World of Mysteries and to enjoy Thy pardon and Thy forgiveness in the Realm of Lights.

O Lord my God! I, verily, am athirst; give me then to drink from Twin Gushing Fountains, and cause me to enter the Twin Verdant Gardens.

1

Forgive me my sins and dispel from me my griefs, O Thou Who art the Knower of things unseen!

O my Lord! Lowly am I; ennoble me through admittance into the Kingdom. Poor am I; enrich me from an imperishable treasure in the Divine Realm. Sick am I; heal me of my grievous malady. Cause me to enter Thy Most Exalted Paradise, O my All-Glorious Lord, and leave me not forlorn and lonely. Shelter me within the shelter of Thy Most Great Mercy, and deliver me from these besetting darkneses. Destine for me all good in the world to come, and supply me with Thy gifts and bestowals. Forgive me my sins, and pardon me my trespasses. Purify me from all passions, and cause me to enter into the garden of Thy Oneness with a luminous countenance and a heavenly disposition.

O Lord my God! I, verily, long to meet Thee, and yearn to abide for ever among the Concourse on High.

O my Lord! Disappoint not my hopes, pardon me my misconduct, and make me a sign of Thy bounty in the midst of Paradise, that I may burst into song like the birds upon the branches and, with a blissful conscience, celebrate Thy praise amidst the boughs.

Thou, verily, art the All-Bountiful; Thou, verily, art the Most Compassionate; and Thou, verily, art the Ever-Forgiving, the Ever-Pardoning, the All-Merciful.

25 Dhi'l-Qa'dih 1339

1

See Qur'án, súrih 55.

2

31 July 1921.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bákú For the attention of the beloved of God, upon them rest the Glory of God, the Most Glorious

He is God.

O ye who have quaffed an intoxicating draught from the cup of fidelity to the Covenant! Thanks be to His Holiness the Self-Subsistent that ye are come beneath the shadow of the Mighty Tabernacle, and arrived within the Abhá Paradise, in the Illumined Garden. Ye are transported by the wine of fidelity to the Covenant, and stirred into a tumult by the heat of the fire of the love of God. My hope is that, through the grace and bounties of the Abhá Beauty, ye may become leaders of the free and commanders of the company of the righteous;

become a focal centre of the traces of Him Who is the Living, the Self-Subsisting, and a dawning-place of the effulgences of His Holiness, the Object of all knowledge; become signs of Divine Unity and manifestations of Heavenly Detachment; become shining stars and radiant lamps; and so kindle the fire of the love of God in the very summits of the earth and the midmost heart of the world that its flame may spread to all parts and regions, and the sweet savours of holiness may be wafted from the rose-garden of understanding throughout the whole of the Caucasus.

O my God! This is a city wherein the fire of Thy love hath blazed, and the lights of Thy knowledge have shone. Make then its precincts illumined, its environs fragrant, its courts spacious, and its happiness immense, through the light of Thy Divine Unity which shineth from that city in every direction of that region; and make Thou Thy loved ones therein the waves of the sea of Thy oneness, the troops of the hosts of Thy knowledge, the trees of the garden of Thy bestowal, and the fruits of the tree of Thy providence.

Thou, verily, art the All-Bounteous, the Most Exalted.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who hast believed in a Beauty that hath shone forth upon all regions! Although, to outward seeming, it is some while since correspondence and communication took place between us, yet mine inmost heart is thrilling with the remembrance of the loved ones of God, is stirring like unto the zephyr, and is surging like unto the mighty deep.

These days, the region of the Caucasus hath acquired an extraordinary receptivity. An effort must needs be exerted so that it may be proven that "Qáf, by the glorious Qur'án"

1

is the nest of the Divine Eastern Phoenix: Haply, the voice of the Símurgh

2

of the Cause of God may be raised from those territories and regions, and the reflection of this luminous mountain fall in effulgence and splendour upon this illimitable expanse.

He said:

Phoenix of Truth! For thee have I yearned!

Yet praised be God, from Mount Qáf thou'rt returned!

3

Let it be seen what the power of the outstretched arm of the friends may now accomplish!

The Glory of God rest upon thee.

1

See Qur'án 50:1.

2

A mythical flying creature of Persian legend, sometimes equated with the griffin or the phoenix.

3

Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bákú The Beloved of God and the Handmaids of the Merciful, the Glory of Glories rest upon them, men and women alike

He is God.

O intimates of the court of the Beloved! O adorers of the countenance of the Beloved! The entire region of Caucasia is regarded as attached to the Araxes River, which in the Qur'án hath been alluded to by the expression "the companions of Ar-Rass."

1

A company of prophets, of whom all record hath been lost, were in ancient times raised up in that clime, and perfumed the world of humanity with the fragrant breaths of the All-Merciful.

Likewise, in more recent times, His Holiness the Exalted One—may my life be a sacrifice to Him—was banished to

Ch

ihríq and incarcerated within its confines. A savour thereof reached the nostrils of Háfiz of

Sh

íráz, who recited this couplet:

O zephyr, shouldst thou pass by the banks of the Araxes,

Implant a kiss on the earth of that valley and make fragrant thy breath.

His Holiness Zoroaster too travelled and ministered awhile in those surrounds. The "Kúh-i-Qáf" (Mount Qáf) which is mentioned in the traditions and chronicles is this same Qafqáz (Caucasus). The Iranians believe it to be the shelter of the Símur

gh

, and the nest of the Eastern Phoenix. The hope is cherished, therefore, that this Phoenix, which hath spread the wings of sanctity over East and West—by which is meant none other but the wondrous Divine Cause—will make its nest

and shelter in the Caucasus.

Praise be to God that the friends of Bákú were, throughout these years of war, at peace with all communities, and, in conformity with the Divine teachings, compassionate unto all. They evinced an ebullient enthusiasm in the Cause of God, and were intoxicated and transported by the wine of the Love of God. Now must they roar like the leviathan, make up for the years of war, and, with a rousing anthem and a rapturous refrain, stir that clime into an ecstasy of motion, in order that Divine illumination may so suffuse men's hearts that the rays of oneness may shine forth, the shades of estrangement may be banished, and all communities may mingle happily together—may, in love and amity, shed forth an ineffable sweetness and engender such a tumult of rapture and elation that surrounding countries too will be stirred into an ecstasy of motion.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you—men and women alike.

3 July 1919

1

See Qur'án, 25:38 and 50:12.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the love of God! It is some time since I wrote a letter; yet at all times I have been fervently pleading at the Threshold of Oneness that thou mayest in all thine affairs become the embodiment of God's bountiful favours, mayest with heart and soul expend thyself in the path of the Omnipotent One, and mayest occupy thyself with rendering services to Áqá Músá,

1

enabling his mind to be at rest.

Praise be to God, thou art assisted and confirmed, for he is to the utmost degree satisfied with thee, while his contentment is a source of happiness to the hearts of all, especially at this time when he hath been assailed by tests; yet praise be to God, despite such trials he remaineth patient and steadfast, and I fain would hope that, through the grace of the Almighty, his peace and composure may reach the point of perfection. For during the past year, Divine tests assailed everyone with the utmost severity and intensity; yet, through the help and favour of the True One, the friends all made firm their steps and evinced a prodigious steadfastness. Wherefore it is my hope that, by the leave of God, Áqá Músá will provide the friends with a goodly example, and one which, in occasions of adversity, they will all emulate.

A prayer hath been composed beseeching forgiveness for his late lamented son,

who ascended unto a seat of truth:

2

thou must recite it, making clear and evident its purport.

Greeting and praise be upon thee.

1

Áqá Músá Naqíuv.

2

In allusion to Qur'án 54:55.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou servant of the kindly Beloved, Bahá'u'lláh! I can find no nobler title than this wherewith to address thee. Only an hour ago I wrote thee a letter; and now, as I was sorting through my papers, the portrait of that loving friend fell out. When I beheld that adorable countenance, I bestirred myself again to write this present letter, in order that thou mightest know how dearly thou art cherished in these precincts. I fain would hope that at all times, through the grace and bestowals of the Blessed Beauty, that countenance may, through the lights of Divine confirmation, become the envy of the radiant moon, and be brightened and illumined by the rays of the Sun of Truth.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

Shouldst thou be able to convince that Armenian gentleman

1

to write the truth, and himself repudiate what he hath written—which is utter falsehood and pure calumny—it would be most agreeable. Exert thou the utmost effort in this regard.

1

Sargis Mubagajian (“Atrpet”).

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thou didst trace a design for a Bahá'í emblem. It is wondrously well done! Yet the badge of the Bahá'ís must be such conduct, deeds, and manners as are in conformity with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the emblem of Him Who is the Traceless, the Brilliant Orb of the heavenly world.

Thou didst write concerning the Spiritual Assembly. Should I write aught, it would be a cause of sorrow to some. Wherefore do thou in an agreeable fashion endeavour that the Spiritual Assembly may be organized. This is the better way.

As for Count Tolstoy, when once that Armenian person

1

hath, thanks to thine endeavours, corrected his errors in his book, send thou a copy thereof to Count Tolstoy. It would be difficult, however, for Tolstoy to accept this Cause, for his aspiration is to be the unique and peerless figure of the age amongst men. In view of this prepossession and determination on his part, it would be most difficult for him to recognize the advent of a Universal Manifestation from the Dayspring of Divine Unity during his days. Rest thou assured, however, that ere long thousands like unto Count Tolstoy will be gathered beneath the shadow of the banner of the one true God.

Deliver to all the friends a most wondrous Abhá greeting.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

Shouldst thou be successful in inducing that Armenian himself to repudiate his words, confessing that certain self-interested persons had misled him, it would be most agreeable, for, as thou hast observed, that which he hath written is utter calumny and sheer misrepresentation on the part of the Covenant-breakers.

1

Sargis Mubagajian.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou herald of the Covenant and Testament! Thy numerous letters have been received, and the contents of all were a cause of joy and gladness. Praise be to God that thou hast been thus aided and confirmed to render service, and hast arisen in such a manner to evince thy servitude to the Sacred Threshold. This is an abiding sovereignty, this is a perpetual bestowal! The response to thy missives hath been delayed, a delay occasioned by the severe disruptions, numerous preoccupations, and pressing concerns—among them the impending journey—leaving no opportunity to attend to the matter.

Now, since I have arrived from Haifa at Port Said—there being a surpassing wisdom in this journey, which shall be revealed hereafter—I am writing a brief response; God willing, I shall respond more fully later.

Convey to all the beloved of God a most wondrous Abhá greeting, saying: “O friends! The time hath come for you to devote yourselves with all your powers to the service of the Cause of God, to arise to spread abroad the sweet savours of God, and to make such a joyful noise that Caucasia—nay the whole of Russia—will be stirred into motion.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá hath with all his soul dedicated himself to sacrificial service: He cherisheth the hope of expending himself in this endeavour a hundred times more devotedly than heretofore, and each day longeth to hasten unto the field of martyrdom. The friends too must, in this service and endeavour, be my comrades and companions, my partners and peers: most especially Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar, who, with a godly power and a heavenly resolve, must sacrifice himself in the path of the Lord.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

Kindly deliver on my behalf to his honour

Sh

ay

kh

‘Alí-Akbar

1

the following message: “Time and again we suffered exile and banishment; for thee too a draught from this cup is needful, and a share of this most great bestowal is requisite, for thou art deserving of this bestowal and bounty.”

The Glory of Glories rest upon him.

1

Presumably Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Qúchání.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art dear to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Thy letter was received, and the report of Count Tolstoy was also perused. In truth, it is thanks to thine endeavours that the Count hath become more fair-minded, completely abandoning his former partiality. I hope that in all instances thou wilt be confirmed and assisted in rendering service to the Abhá Threshold—may my life be a sacrifice to His loved ones—and that thou wilt correspond with the aforesaid count. It would do no harm to send him the translation of certain Tablets that are appropriate to his circumstances and agreeable to his taste: yet not in such a manner that the Russian state would suspect that thou art in agreement and concert with him in all principles—even that of involvement in political affairs, for the aforesaid Count is extremely involved in political affairs.

Thou didst write concerning the Russian lady:

1

thou hast permission to come with her on a visit hither. I hope that in this journey thou wilt be blessed with the gracious favours and loving-kindness of Him Who is the All-Glorious, the Most Great.

When once thou hast rendered the Hidden Words into Russian, shouldst thou print

this, it would be most acceptable; and shouldst thou also translate Some Answered Questions, that too would be agreeable.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Probably Isabella Grinevskaya.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O true friend! The letter thou didst send hath been perused. In these last few days we have returned from the territory of the Franks—lovely as a rose garden!—to Alexandria, the homeland of the Copts. Behold “the disparity of the way—from whence we departed, and whither we are come!”

1

The tidings of the steadfastness of the friends, and of their service to the Divine Threshold, was a source of joy and gladness.

Madame Isabella hath truly, in the composition of her book, exerted an extraordinary endeavour. Convey to her on my behalf the utmost good-pleasure and satisfaction. God willing, she will be successful in representing and enacting these two dramas.

Thou hadst requested a teacher of the Cause. None is available in these parts; a message will be sent to Tihrán.

As for the Theosophical Society, shouldst thou attend their gatherings and speak of the oneness of humanity; of the contents of the Divine Tablets; of the spirituality born of heaven; and of equality, concord, love, and harmony among the children of men; and consort with them with the utmost attraction, this will doubtless be beneficial.

Gulnár

2

is in Egypt: When I came to Alexandria, she sent a telegram of felicitation on my arrival, and I too wrote her a reply. The thoughts of this lady are slightly distracted.

In fine, in Bákú there is freedom of faiths and religions: If the friends exert an effort, the Faith will be greatly propagated, and the Divine fragrances will stir the people into motion.

That true friend is in truth exerting the utmost industry and diligence that he may render a service to the Sacred Threshold. My hope is that, through the gracious favours of the True One, he may prosper in all his affairs.

1

The quotation alludes to a famous ode of Háfiz.

2

Olga Sergejevna Lebedeva.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! The letter which thou didst compose after thy return hath arrived. In this journey, the Russian lady was, through the diligent endeavours of that faithful friend, guided unto the pathway of the Beloved.

The first book, she should assuredly correct; if she be successful in this, the harbinger of Divine bounty shall reach her and make of her an illumined candle. Concerning the enactment of her piece, to the extent possible no effort will be spared; thereafter the matter is in the hands of God.

The news of the unity and concord of the friends, and of the fellowship and oneness of Áqá Kíshí

1

and Ustád Áqá Bálá,

2

was a cause of the utmost joy and gladness. I hope that under all conditions thou wilt be assisted and confirmed.

Praise be to God, that Armenian gentleman

3

hath, in the Petersburg newspaper, made good his oversight in respect of what he had written in his first treatise, become apprised of the reality of the matter, and corrected the tenor of his address; and this too is thanks to your diligent endeavours.

Praise be to God, after thine arrival public gatherings were arranged and properly organized in Bákú, and this is as a result of Divine confirmations.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

O thou faithful stalwart! In truth, in the pathway of the Most Great Name, His Holiness the Glory of the heavens and of the earth, thou hast evinced—as thou dost still—the utmost degree of self-sacrificial devotion. Be thou assured of assistance and confirmation.

Praise be to God, thine honesty and trustworthiness are evident and proven in the eyes of Áqá Músá. In fine, in Bákú and Bálá-Khání—nay, throughout the whole of the Caucasus—some effective means must be adopted so

that their inhabitants may benefit from the bounties of God and, having escaped from the darkness of waywardness and ignorance, become illumined beings.

If thou art able to establish a school for the youth, wherein, under the tuition of Áqá Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar,

4

they may study how to teach the Cause and become informed of the Divine proofs and testimonies, it would be most agreeable.

Gulnár the Russian

5

arrived in Alexandria, where she met me and experienced some mild spiritual sensations; yet since she was intending to return to Kazan, her thoughts were much preoccupied. She had absolutely no leisure. Do thou communicate with her: Perchance through thy guidance and that of the Russian lady

6

she will little by little be fully awakened.

For the rest, deliver unto each of the friends a most wondrous Abhá greeting; cleave unto that which is the cause of enkindlement and attraction, and hold the Nineteen-Day Feast.

Convey on my behalf to the heavenly

Sh

ay

kh

‘Alí-Akbar the utmost love, devotion, and kindness.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Karbilá’í Áqá Kishíy-i-‘Alíuv.

2

Ustád Áqá Bálá Karímuv.

3

Sargis Mubagajian.

4

Presumably Shaykh ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Qúchání.

5

Olga Sergejevna Lebedeva.

6

Isabella Grinevskaya.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! The letter thou didst write hath been perused. Thou didst write concerning the diffusion of the Divine fragrances in that city. This was news such as to uplift the spirit. Assuredly thou hast by now brought together several of the friends, and been successful in dispatching teachers to outlying parts.

Convey to Madame Isabella the Russian my utmost love.

Should Mr. Browne

1

pass through Bákú, do thou assuredly extend to him the utmost love and kindness: Perchance he will forgo his present tendentious course and speak with fairness, for the Azalís have misrepresented the matter in his eyes.

With respect to Isabella's book, I wrote a letter to Paris, but this apparently hath not arrived. I shall write again.

In fine, my hope is that, through God's invisible assistance, thou mayest day by day render ever greater service, and conduct thyself with the utmost steadfastness, so that the Caucasus may become the nest of the phoenix of mystery,

2

Bákú may become redolent of musk, Tiflís may become a precious gem, Ganjih

3

may become a store of riches, and Shíshih

4

may become a scintillating pure crystal.

The debt of Alexandria and Haifa hath been discharged, for the sum hath been received, and the receipts that thou hadst previously requested have been sent.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Professor E. G. Browne.

2

The Caucasus, identified with the fabled Mount Qáf, was the reputed home of the phoenix.

3

Ganja, Azerbaijan's second largest city.

4

The intention is perhaps the city of Shusha.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy most recent letter hath arrived from Bákú. Likewise, a missive and accompanying printed composition have been received from Madame Isabella from Paris. From the contents of both letters it became evident that her intention is to stage in Paris a dramatic representation of the Cause of His Holiness the Exalted One. I have written her a letter, which is enclosed. After translating it, kindly send it on to her.

Do thou accord importance to the study of English; and should it be necessary to travel to London, that too is permitted.

Thou didst enquire concerning the deputies to the members of the consultative assembly. The deputies too must be elected by the people; that is, those persons who, after the elected members, have acquired the most number of votes must, with the cognizance of the consultative assembly, be appointed deputies. These matters are at the discretion of the consultative assembly. No one should directly, of his own accord, carry out any matter, even should it be in conformity with the approved constitution of the people and state; rather, it should for the present be carried out with the permission of the Spiritual Assembly, and thereafter through the intermediary of the government.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Bákú

He is God.

O thou who art firm in the Covenant! I am on the verge of setting out towards the West. For this reason I have not leisure to write at length. The speeches delivered in Europe have been collected and corrected—nay more, are in the process of being printed. Shouldst thou translate and publish whichever of these are suitable for the Theosophists, it would do no harm. I shall embark in two days' time. Shouldst thou have an intense yearning to be in attendance, permission is granted thee. Convey to all the beloved of God a most wondrous Abhá greeting.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! A message hath been sent verbally with Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar-i-Nakh

javání in a particular regard, which since it is involved, this pen hath not the opportunity to set it all down in writing. In question is the matter of confining the teaching work to Muslims. Ye should by all means treat this matter as important, and conduct yourselves accordingly, inasmuch as there is an all-embracing wisdom in such a course. Otherwise, those territories will become intractable—nay, more inimical than Iran. Ye must act with extreme caution: This is necessary and essential.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou mine intimate and my confidant! In Montreal I could not be more busily occupied. The interactions and discussions during the day, and the nightly conversations, are extensive. Of all places, this is the best. There is a great deal to see, a small glimpse of which may be obtained from the newspapers. With respect to thyself, do thou carry out what I instructed thee. There is no opportunity to write more than this. Send thou the letter of Ahmadov,

1

together with the details of the events that transpired.

1

Referring perhaps to one of the Ahmadov brothers, sons of Hájí Ahmad-i-Mílání, who were resident in Tbilisi.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy letter hath arrived, and, for want of opportunity, I am now replying to it in brief.

The formation of a teaching council is most acceptable and beneficial. It is hoped that in days to come the desired outcome will become apparent.

The name of his Holiness the Purest Branch was Mihdí, and at the time of his ascension he was in his eighteenth year. The Leaves, or daughters, of the Blessed Beauty were three in number: the Greatest Holy Leaf, Furú

gh
íyyih
Kh
ánum,

1

and Samadíyyih
Kh
ánum.

2

The Greatest Holy Leaf was continually engaged in service to His blessed Person; nor had she an hour's respite from her devoted labours. In the inner quarters, the Leaves were occupied with the remembrance of God, and with the exposition of questions relating to the Cause of God. Thus did the hours pass. The mother of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

3

was throughout her life, both night and day, engaged in fervent supplication and remembrance, and occupied with the mention of God and the exposition of religious questions and of proofs in vindication of the True One.

The difference between Bahá'í and other women is that, among the other communities of the East, the women are occupied either with the management of the life of the household, or with the pursuit of pleasure and diversion. Bahá'í women, however, while concerning themselves as far as possible with the ordering of the affairs of life, devote the rest of their time to the exposition of Divine truths and mysteries.

As for the miracles that took place in the war of the children of Israel with the unbelievers, and are recorded in the Holy Bible, these have a figurative meaning and metaphorical interpretations; and yet withal the Bahá'ís do not hold the miracles of the Prophets to have been impossible of performance.

Concerning those souls who were formerly in the circle of Áqá Músá, and have now left it, this was as a result of the coercion and insistence of others. For this reason, allow no unseemly word about Áqá Músá to pass thy lips, but maintain towards him a respectful attitude. Almighty Providence will provide for those souls a source of livelihood, while they for their part must abide by the counsels of the True One and, with respect to Áqá Músá, by no means allow any word expressive of dissatisfaction to pass their lips.

Thou didst request that the questions of Áqá Mírzá Haydar- 'Alí be printed and disseminated. To print and circulate them among the Bahá'ís is permissible; but to do so outside the community is by no means permissible, for this would give rise to universal rancour and enmity. Should the friends, however, commit to memory these facts, verses, and traditions, and, in gatherings, question the 'ulamá about them, then, the latter being unable to deliver a response, the people would become aware.

The friends must not—either with the people in general, or with the ‘ulamá—speak in a contentious fashion, but rather they should express themselves with the utmost consideration, kindness, and propriety. Nor must they allow any topic to lead to conflict and altercation, for contentious and polemical speech will never be productive of any useful result, but will rather engender rancour and enmity. Wherefore they should speak with the utmost kindness, self-effacement, humility, and lowliness, nor ever let a harsh word pass their lips, saying instead: “We have no quarrel or dispute with any group of people, nor hold them in contempt, but regard both ourselves and them as servants of the one true God. We are all the fruits of one tree, and grown from the same bough. The only difference is that some are searching for the truth, while others are calm and silent, and occupied with themselves and their own interests.”

Do thou have the
Narrative

4

translated into German.

It is not at present permissible to publish the treatise to the
Sh

ay
kh

.

5

Permission is granted thee to travel with Áqá

Sh

ay

kh

‘Alí-Akbar

6

to Iran.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

The daughter of Bahá’u’lláh’s third wife Gawhar

Kh

ánum.

2

The daughter of Bahá’u’lláh’s second wife Mahd-i-‘Ulyá.

3

Navváb.

4

A Traveller's Narrative Written to Illustrate the Episode of the Báb
, translated by E. G. Browne.

5

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.

6

Presumably,
Sh
ay
kh
'Alí-Akbar-i-Qú
ch
ání.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy numerous letters have arrived.
God willing, replies will be written to each one of them.

Thou didst write concerning the Russian official. It is evident that, thanks to
thine endeavours, he hath become somewhat attracted to the Cause; God willing,
he will come little by little to believe in it entirely. Shouldst thou have in
thy possession a copy of the

Narrative

, send him thereof however much he wisheth, and write to him that Mírzá
Abu'l-Fadl hath composed a treatise concerning this Cause, which hath been
translated, and printed in America.

1

Let him request it of the friends in Paris, and likewise the book

Some Answered Questions

, which hath been rendered into the French and English tongues. If he is able,
let him render the

Narrative

into the German tongue and likewise the translation of the Tablets Tarázát,
Tajallíyát, Kalimát, Bi

sh

árát, and I

sh

ráqát. In fine, whatever books there are about this Cause may be found with
Mr. Dreyfus

2

in Paris: Let him obtain them from him.

Convey to the Russian lady

3

the utmost loving-kindness on the part of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and, so far as thou art able, strive to attract that respected personage to the Divine fragrances; for if once that virtuous matron becometh attracted and assured in faith and certitude, then, through the power of the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty, she will become in Western lands a brilliant candle.

Thou didst write concerning the disturbances in Bákú. Do thou have recourse to the government so that preventive measures may be taken; yet not in any adversarial fashion: rather, in a moderate manner state thou that such is contrary to justice and inimical to fellowship and love among all the subjects of the respected state.

In brief, I found myself exceedingly happy and satisfied with thee for thou hast arisen to serve the Cause of God. My hope is that thou wilt be assisted to perform outstanding services and become a means of exalting the Word of God.

Always extend to Count Tolstoy loving and heartfelt greetings and treat him with the utmost courtesy, as we are indeed commanded to behave in this way. Perchance he may become fair-minded. There are signs that his attitude hath improved and moderated. It is hoped that, God willing, it may improve further and that he may speak with justice about this Cause. It might be beneficial if thou wert to despatch to him, and others like him, the letter of this servant addressed to the believers of the East and the West

4

which is translated and published in Russian.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Probably

Hujaj’ul Beheyeh (The Bahai Proofs)

, translated by Ali Kuli Khan (New York: J. W. Pratt & Co., 1902).

2

Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney.

3

Probably Isabella Grinevskaya.

4

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá known as the Lawh-i-Sharq va Gharb (The Tablet of East and West,

Makátíb-i-Hadrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá

, vol. 1, pp. 307–24).

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! Thy letter hath arrived, and likewise the power of attorney which thou hadst sent for Áqá Mírzá Muhsin.

1

He hath gone to Jerusalem. God willing, he will return to ‘Akká and take measures to purchase the land for thee.

2

Should Áqá Músá intend to travel to America, he must assuredly come to the Holy Land, and from here proceed to his destination.

Thou didst write concerning the arrival of

Sh

ay

kh

‘Alí-Akbar,

3

saying that this had been instrumental in generating a spirit of attraction. The hope of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is that, through the grace and bounty of the Blessed Beauty, he will raise aloft in that region the banner of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!”, becoming the cause alike of the greater enkindlement of the friends, and the guidance of others. Thou didst write that three Russian persons had accepted the Faith. Erelong shalt thou witness all peoples and kindreds entering beneath the shadow of the tabernacle of the oneness of humanity.

Proceed nevertheless with rendering into Russian, and publishing and disseminating, the

Narrative

only if there is no harm in doing so. Yet shouldst thou translate the Epistle of East and West, and send it to Tolstoy, that would be most agreeable.

Convey to the beloved of God a most wondrous Abhá greeting.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Áqá Mírzá Muhsin Afnán.

2

A piece of land in Haifa which was bought in the name of Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar.

The one intended may be the martyr

Sh

ay

kh

‘Alf-Akbar-i-Qú

ch

ání, who, in 1327 A.H. (1909 A.D.), was directed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to take up residence in Bákú in order to nurture its burgeoning Bahá’í community.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! The letter dated the last day of the month of Dhi’l-Qa‘dih hath arrived, its contents charged with firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant of the Wronged One.

Concerning the correction of the book of that Christian person,

1

shouldst thou be successful in this matter, it would be a great achievement, and a most necessary one. If and when he writeth the book he now hath in mind, let him then bring it with him. Pictures of the sites of ‘Akká have been drawn in America, and printed and disseminated there. We will send thee a copy thereof, so that thou mayest give it to him.

We beseech God graciously to grant a cure to Áqá Músá.

For the rest, convey to all the friends a most wondrous Abhá greeting.

The Glory of Glories rest upon thee.

1

Probably Sargis Mubagajian.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou who art steadfast in the Covenant! During the days when thou wast present here, and honoured to visit the Sacred Tomb, thou didst raise several questions. No opportunity was found at the time to reply to them; now a brief reply is set forth in writing.

The Ma

sh

riqu’l-A

dh
kár

1

must be sanctified from such matters as fund box and treasury; but if, for the sake of poor relief, a box be set in a special place, there is no objection.

This decision resteth with the Universal House of Justice, and the receipts of the poor-box must be expended at the discretion of the House of Justice.

As regards the matter of the “Mahallu’l-Barakih,”

2

this is similar to other companies and is also subject to the decision of the House of Justice. A portion of the accruing interest should be expended upon charitable objects.

The term of service of the members of a consultative assembly, ere the convening of the House of Justice, is five years. When the House of Justice is convened, whatsoever its members deem fit must be obeyed by all.

For the present, members of consultative assemblies are at liberty to resign. When more than half the members of a consultative assembly gather together, they may take counsel together and arrive at a resolution.

The chairman of the consultative assembly enjoyeth the prerogative associated with this position, being entitled to cast two votes.

These matters are according to the principles and standards observed today. When, however, the Universal House of Justice is established, it will deliberate upon all these matters, both large and small, and, according to the exigencies of the time, issue a binding resolution.

Whatever hath been set forth in this sheet is not mandatory: At the present time, the course indicated is merely recommended.

A special letter hath been written to the members of the service council

3

through the intermediary of Áqá ‘Abdu’l-Kh
áliq.

4

1

Projected for Bákú. Áqá Músá Naqíuv had volunteered, with the approval of the Master, to build a House of Worship in Bákú.

2

“Mahallu’l-Barakih” (literally “The Place of Blessing”) referred to a community enterprise created by the Bahá’ís in Iran for the purpose of

setting up a fund that could be used, among other things, for assisting the poor and needy, the education of children, and the propagation of the Bahá'í Faith.

3

The term “service council” (majlis-i-khidmat

) was employed at this time to denote a committee of an Assembly which would attend to all practical, functional matters and details of the Assembly, its meetings, or the organized gatherings of the friends.

4

Presumably Mírzá ‘Abdu’l-Khálíq-i-Ya‘qúbzádh.

* * *

A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

He is God.

O spiritual friends! When Jináb-i-Nákh

javání was in this Divine Abode, he requested that letters be written to each one of you. Having now faithfully discharged his commission, he hath freed himself from reproach; yet I for my part am abashed, since, having no leisure, I am unable to write to each of you a separate letter. “Whoever is constrained by circumstances is excused, and exempt from the imputation of neglect.”

1

I have accordingly composed a single letter, in which I have mentioned all the spiritual friends.

Ye are all the waves of one sea, the rays of one sun, the flowers of one garden, the lions of one thicket, the birds of one meadow, and the fragrant blossoms of one rose garden: wherefore ye are even as a single soul, and this letter is in reality written to each one of you.

Render thanks unto the grace and bounty of the Abhá Beauty for having lighted such a resplendent candle of unity whereby the human world hath been illumined. Whatsoever flaw there be in our unity and concord proceedeth from our own shortcoming; for otherwise, the outpouring of grace eternal hath gathered all beneath the shadow of a single tabernacle, breathing the breath of life eternal, and causing the fragrance of the oneness of the human world to perfume the nostrils of humankind.

Now, exert ye night and day a mighty effort that ye may become dawning-places of the lights of oneness, and daysprings of the splendours of detachment; and, with unsurpassed affection, so mingle together that the cloud of God's loving providence may rain down its bounties, and the lights of His divine favour may shine forth refulgent. Each night and day, each dusk and dawn, I offer fervent supplications to the Kingdom of Mysteries, entreating Almighty God that ye may under all conditions show forth constancy and steadfastness, fellowship and love.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

1

Arabic maxim.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

In this day, no greater manifestation of love and kindness can be conceived in the world of existence than this, that, at the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, one should call to mind a loved one, make mention of him, and offer prayers for his well-being. This is God's mightiest favour, His greatest bounty, His highest gift, and the sign of His consummate bestowal.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Convey warmest, most loving greetings to Mark Tobey on my behalf, and heartfelt affection to Marguerite Bull.

1

What a sacred task is hers, serving helpless children! I ask God to assist her.

As for thee, obey the Convention,

2

travel for a time, and teach. After that, work to perfect thine art. For it is incumbent upon thee both to obey the Convention, and to perfect thine art.

I rejoice to hear that thou takest pains with thine art, for in this wonderful new age, art is worship. The more thou strivest to perfect it, the closer wilt thou come to God. What bestowal could be greater than this, that one's art should be even as the act of worshipping the Lord? That is to say, when thy fingers grasp the paintbrush, it is as if thou wert at prayer in the Temple.

1

The English equivalent of this name written in Persian by 'Abdu'l-Bahá is not certain.

2

Probably the Eleventh Annual Convention of the Bahá'í Temple Unity, held at Hotel McAlpin, New York City, 26–30 April 1919, at which the Tablets of the Divine Plan were unveiled.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Shouldst thou recite any of the revealed prayers, and seek assistance from God with thy face turned towards Him, and implore Him with devotion and fervour, thy need will be answered.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

He is God.

O thou dear handmaid of God! Thy letter dated 6 April 1906 hath been received. Thou hast written that Mrs. Mann hath regained her health. God be praised, this daughter of the Kingdom hath attained unto spiritual health. A disaster to the body, when spiritual health is present, is of no importance. That is the main thing. God be thanked, she hath attained that great bestowal; she hath taken on immortal life.

It is to be regretted, however, that her husband is still wrapped in the veils of his idle imaginings. If her dear daughter Margaret be trained according to the instructions of God, she will grow to be a peerless plant in the garden of the heart. It is incumbent upon the father to choose for his daughter the glory that dieth not. Nevertheless, this is up to him; he may educate her in any way he desireth.

As to what thou didst ask regarding the history of the philosophers: history, prior to Alexander of Greece, is extremely confused, for it is a fact that only after Alexander did history become an orderly and systematized discipline. One cannot, for this reason, rely upon traditions and reported historical events that have come down from before the days of Alexander. This is a matter thoroughly established, in the view of all authoritative historians. How many a historical account was taken as fact in the eighteenth century, yet the opposite was proved true in the nineteenth. No reliance, then, can be placed upon the traditions and reports of historians which antedate Alexander, not even with regard to ascertaining the lifetimes of leading individuals.

Wherefore ye should not be surprised that the Tablet of Wisdom is in conflict with the historical accounts. It behoveth one to reflect a while on the great diversity of opinion among the historians, and their contradictory accounts; for the historians of East and West are much at odds, and the Tablet of Wisdom was written in accordance with certain histories of the East.

Furthermore, the Torah, held to be the most ancient of histories, existeth today in three separate versions: the Hebrew, considered authentic by the Jews and the Protestant clergy; the Greek Septuagint, which is used as authoritative

in the Greek and other Eastern churches; and the Samaritan Torah, the standard authority for that people. These three versions differ greatly, one from another, even with regard to the lifetimes of the most celebrated figures.

In the Hebrew Torah, it is recorded that from Noah's flood until the birth of Abraham there was an interval of two hundred and ninety-two years. In the Greek, that time-span is given as one thousand and seventy-two years, while in the Samaritan, the recorded span is nine hundred and forty-two years. Refer to the commentary by Henry and Scott,

1

for tables are supplied therein which show the discrepancies among the three Torahs as to the birthdates of a number of the descendants of Shem, and thou wilt see how greatly the versions differ one from another.

Moreover, according to the text of the Hebrew Torah, from the creation of Adam until Noah's flood the elapsed time is recorded as one thousand six hundred and fifty-six years, while in the Greek Torah the interval is given as two thousand two hundred and sixty-two years, and in the Samaritan text, the same period is said to have lasted one thousand three hundred and seven years.

Reflect thou now over the discrepancies among these three Torahs. The case is indeed surprising. The Jews and Protestants belittle the Greek Torah, while to the Greeks, the Hebrew version is spurious, and the Samaritans deny both the Hebrew and the Greek versions.

Our purpose is to show that even in Scriptural history, the most outstanding of all histories, there are contradictions as to the time when the great ones lived, let alone as to dates related to others. And furthermore, learned societies in Europe are continually revising the existing records, both of East and West. In spite of this, how can the confused accounts of peoples dating from before Alexander be compared with the Holy Text of God? If any scholar expresses astonishment, let him be surprised at the discrepancies in Scriptural history.

Nevertheless, Holy Writ is authoritative, and with it no history of the world can compare, for experience hath shown that after investigation of the facts and a thorough study of ancient records and corroborative evidence, all have referred back to the Holy Scriptures. The most important thing is to establish the validity of God's universal Manifestation; once His claim proveth true, then whatsoever He may choose to say is right and correct.

The histories prior to Alexander, which were based on oral accounts current among the people, were put together later on. There are great discrepancies among them, and certainly they can never hold their own against Holy Writ. It is an accepted fact among historians themselves that these histories were compiled after Alexander, and that prior to his time history was transmitted by word of mouth. Note how extremely confused was the history of Greece, so much so that to this day there is no agreement on the dates related to the life of Homer, Greece's far-famed poet. Some even maintain that Homer never existed

at all, and that the name is a fabrication.

A letter hath been addressed to Mr. Sprague, thou wilt find it enclosed.

It is my hope that through the favour and grace of the Abhá Beauty, thou wilt fully recover thy health, and engage in serving the Cause with all thy might. I am aware that thou art much afflicted, and in extreme distress; but if we taste a drop from affliction's cup, the Blessed Beauty drank down a sea of anguish, and once we call this to mind, then every hardship turneth into peaceful rest, and toil into merciful bliss. Then will a draught of agony be but refreshing wine, and the tyrant's wound only a friend's most gentle balm. Greetings be unto thee, and praise.

1

Matthew Henry and Thomas Scott, authors of
The Comprehensive Commentary on the Holy Bible

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* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Know thou that before maturity man liveth from day to day and comprehendeth only such matters as are superficial and outwardly obvious. However, when he cometh of age he understandeth the realities of things and the inner truths. Indeed, in his comprehension, his feelings, his deductions and his discoveries, every day of his life after maturity is equal to a year before it.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

As to that which hath been mentioned in the Torah and the Scriptures regarding Lot and his daughters and the apostatizing of some of the Prophets, these are but a medley of dreams for which God hath sent down no warrant. These are only the sayings of the chroniclers among the people of the Book. Know ye that the Torah is what was revealed in the Tablets unto Moses, may peace be upon Him, or that which He was commanded to do. But the stories are historical narratives and were written after Moses, may peace be upon Him. The evidence of this is that in the last Book

1

, there is mention of events that transpired after the passing of Moses, and this is a clear and manifest proof that these stories were recorded after Moses, may peace be upon Him. These narratives are not reliable; they are stories and accounts concerning which God hath sent down no warrant. For the noble Book and mighty Decree is the Tablets which Moses, upon Him be peace, brought from Mount Sinai, and the laws which He proclaimed unto the children of Israel, in accordance with the explicit text of those Tablets. Therefore, be not astonished by the accounts penned by the chroniclers after Moses, as these accounts are not amongst the firm and conclusive verses of the Scriptures and

Tablets.

1

The Book of Deuteronomy, the last chapter of which speaks of the death of Moses and the succession of Joshua.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

It is the wish of my heart and soul that the Sun of the divine heavens will shine with such splendour and beauty in that country that India will become a rose-garden.... India will sweeten the palates with delectable sweetness, will mingle ambergris and musk, and mix milk with honey.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Paris

The Friends of God,

Upon them rest the glory of God, the All-Glorious!

He is God!

O loved ones of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

Praise be to God! The fragrances of holiness are spread abroad. The pearls of bounty are scattered everywhere. The light of guidance is resplendent. The morning-star of the Concourse on High ascendeth. The cloud of mercy raineth down. The sun of bestowal blazeth and dazzleth. The wind of providence bloweth, and the fragrances of the Abhá Paradise nourish souls in the North and South. The East is illumined, and the West scented with roses. The world is perfumed with musk. Blessed is he who hath illumined his eyes by beholding these splendours and whose soul hath become a garden through inhaling this musk-scented breeze.

O loved ones of God! Now is the time to be drunk with the cup of the Covenant. Rend your garments in love for the beauty of the All-Merciful. In the banquet of the Covenant seize ye the chalice of divine knowledge. Drunk and yearning, raise up a song of the purity and sanctity of the Living, the Almighty God, till East and West are bewitched, and North and South set ablaze.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O flame of the love of God! The ray must shed light and the sun must rise; the full moon must shine and the star must gleam. Since thou art a ray, beseech thou the Lord to enable thee to give illumination and enlightenment, to brighten the horizons and to consume the world with the fire of the love of God. I hope that thou mayest attain such a station, nay, surpass it. Upon thee

be His glory.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

It may be that letters addressed to the women believers do indeed contain certain passages written by way of encouragement, but the purpose of such passages is to show that, in this wondrous Dispensation, certain women have outshone certain men—not that all women have excelled all men! The members of the Spiritual Assembly should do all they can to give encouragement to the women. In this Dispensation one should not think in terms of “men” and “women”: all are under the shadow of the Word of God and, as they strive more diligently, so shall their reward be greater—be they men or women or the frailest of people.... As for the large number of Tablets addressed to women enjoining them to teach the Cause: since the letters arriving in the Holy Land come for the most part from women, and only rarely from men, it is natural that women should be written to more frequently than men....

As to thy question: “To whom should we turn?”—turn thou to the Ancient Beauty. God willing, a copy of His blessed portrait will in due course be despatched to thee so that when offering prayer thou mayest turn thyself in spirit towards that Holy Likeness, and not towards some mere figment of the imagination. Know thou, however, that at no time should His blessed portrait be hung in the Ma

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As regards the question of young children and of weak, defenseless souls who are afflicted at the hands of the oppressor, in this a great wisdom is concealed. The question is one of cardinal importance, but briefly it may be stated that in the world to come a mighty recompense awaiteth such souls. Much, indeed, might be said upon this theme, and upon how the afflictions that they bear in life become a cause for them of such an outpouring of Divine mercy and bestowal as is preferable to a hundred thousand earthly comforts and to a world of growth and development in this transitory abode; but, if possible, God willing, all this will be explained to thee in detail and by word of mouth when thou arrivest here.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Know thou that the distinction between male and female is an exigency of the physical world and hath no connection with the spirit; for the spirit and the world of the spirit are sanctified above such exigencies, and wholly beyond the reach of such changes as befall the physical body in the contingent world. In former ages, men enjoyed ascendancy over women because bodily might reigned supreme and the spirit was subject to its dominion. In this radiant age,

however, since the power of the spirit hath transcended that of the body and assumed its ascendancy, authority and dominion over the human world, this physical distinction hath ceased to be of consequence; and, as the sway and influence of the spirit have become apparent, women have come to be the full equals of men. Today, therefore, there is no respect or circumstance in which a person's sex provideth grounds for the exercise of either discrimination or favour.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom!

Your letter dated September 30 of this year hath been received, and from the contents it became clear and evident that the fire of the love of God hath burst into a flame in that region—a flame that can illumine the whole world and transform the East and the West into a field for the knights of the Kingdom.

Consider how all the peoples of the world are slumbering upon the couch of negligence, but praise be to God, ye have been awakened. All men remain sunk in heedlessness, but ye have become quick of apprehension. They are deprived of the blessings of the Kingdom, but ye are among the well-favoured. Neither the crow nor the raven can take part in the delights of a sparkling rose-garden; the charm and perfection of the rose are as nourishment to the impassioned nightingale endowed with a melodious voice. The realm of the Kingdom is like the fountain of life and ye are as the fish, sore athirst and restless.

Render ye thanks unto God, inasmuch as in the Day of the advent of the Kingdom ye have drawn so nigh unto His court and are so greatly favoured at the Threshold of the loving Lord. Therefore it behoveth you to strive with heart and soul so that the human world may shine resplendent, that the basis of hatred and antagonism may be wiped out from the earth and that all mankind may live together in unity and harmony, with the utmost love and fellowship.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

In ancient times the people of America were, through their northern regions, close to Asia, that is, separated from Asia by a strait. For this reason, it hath been said that crossing had occurred. There are other signs which indicate communication.

As to places whose people were not informed of the appearance of Prophets, such people are excused. In the Qur'án it hath been revealed: "We will not chastise them if they had not been sent a Messenger."

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Undoubtedly in those regions the Call of God must have been raised in ancient times, but it hath been forgotten now.

Qur'án 17:15

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Bayán hath been superseded by the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, except in respect of such laws as have been confirmed and mentioned in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. The Book to which the Bahá'ís turn is the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, not the Bayán.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

I eagerly anticipate the day when New York will become a blessed spot from which the call to steadfastness in the Covenant of God will go forth to every part of the world, thus making that city outstanding from every point of view.

Bless Thou, O King of Kings, the city of New York! Cause the friends there to be kind to one another. Purify their souls and make their hearts to be free and detached. Illumine the world of their consciousness. Exhilarate their spirits and bestow celestial power and confirmation upon them. Establish there a heavenly realm, so that the City of Bahá may prosper and New York be favoured with blessings from the Abhá Kingdom, that this region may become like the all-highest Paradise, may develop into a vineyard of God and be transformed into a heavenly orchard and a spiritual rose-garden.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The question of economics must commence with the farmer and then be extended to the other classes inasmuch as the number of farmers is far greater than all other classes. Therefore, it is fitting to begin with the farmer in matters related to economics for the farmer is the first active agent in human society.

In brief, from among the wise men in every village a board should be set up and the affairs of that village should be under the control of that board. Likewise a general storehouse should be founded with the appointment of a secretary. At the time of the harvest, under the direction of that board, a certain percentage of the entire harvest should be appropriated for the storehouse.

The storehouse has seven revenues: Tithes, taxes on animals, property without an heir, all lost objects found whose owners cannot be traced, one third of all treasure-trove, one third of the produce of all mines, and voluntary contributions.

This storehouse also has seven expenditures:

General running expenses of the storehouse, such as the salary of the secretary and the administration of public health.

Tithes to the government.

Taxes on animals to the government.

Costs of running an orphanage.

Costs of running a home for the incapacitated.

Costs of running a school.

Payment of subsidies to provide needed support of the poor.

The first revenue is the tithe. It should be collected as follows: If, for instance, the income of a person is five hundred dollars and his necessary expenses are the same, no tithes will be collected from him. If another's expenses are five hundred dollars while his income is one thousand dollars, one tenth will be taken from him, for he hath more than his needs; if he giveth one tenth of the surplus, his livelihood will not be adversely affected. If another's expenses are one thousand dollars, and his income is five thousand dollars, as he hath four thousand dollars surplus he will be required to give one and a half tenths. If another person hath necessary expenses of one thousand dollars, but his income is ten thousand dollars, from him two tenths will be required for his surplus represents a large sum. But if the necessary expenses of another person are four or five thousand dollars, and his income one hundred thousand, one fourth will be required from him. On the other hand, should a person's income be two hundred, but his needs absolutely essential for his livelihood be five hundred dollars, and provided he hath not been remiss in his work or his farm hath not been blessed with a harvest, such a one must receive help from the general storehouse so that he may not remain in need and may live in comfort.

A certain amount must be put aside from the general storehouse for the orphans of the village and a certain sum for the incapacitated. A certain amount must be provided from this storehouse for those who are needy and incapable of earning a livelihood, and a certain amount for the village's system of education. And, a certain amount must be set aside for the administration of public health. If anything is left in the storehouse, that must be transferred to the general treasury of the nation for national expenditures.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye beloved friends of God and handmaids of the Merciful!

Call ye to mind the blessed Name of our peerless Beloved, the Abhá Beauty, in an uplifting spirit of unbounded ecstasy and delight, then unloose your tongues in His praise in such wise that the realm of the heart may be purged from the woes and sorrows of the world of water and clay, that the great heights of spiritual perception may be unveiled before your eyes, that the glorious signs of His Divine Unity may shine resplendent, a fresh outpouring of His grace may stream forth, and a liberal effusion of celestial confirmations may be vouchsafed unto you.

His Name is indeed the healing medicine for every illness, and imparteth warmth unto those chilled with cold. It is the sovereign remedy and the supreme talisman. It is the source of life in both worlds, and of salvation unto such as have gone astray. Today this hallowed Name serveth as a shield for all mankind, and as a veritable refuge for the children of men. It is the wondrous accent of the Lord of Mercy, and His celestial melody.

Wherefore, O faithful friends, raise ye the triumphal cry of Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá! O ye who yearn after the Beauty of the Almighty! Lift up your faces toward the Supreme Horizon. Rest not, even for a moment. Breathe not a single breath save in remembrance of His love and in recognition of His grace, in the promulgation of His Utterances and the vindication of His Testimonies.

Verily, this is the Magnet of divine confirmations. This is the mighty Force which will surely attract heavenly assistance.

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Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The Ancient Beauty

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—may my life be offered up for His loved ones—did not to outward seeming meet His Holiness, the Exalted One

2

—may my life be a sacrifice unto Him.

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Bahá'u'lláh.

2

The Báb.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Praise be to God that ye are present in this radiant assemblage and have turned your faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá! That which ye behold is from the grace and bounty of the Blessed Perfection. We are as atoms and He is the Sun of Truth. We are as drops and He is the Most Great Ocean. Poor are we, yet the outpouring of the treasury of the Kingdom is boundless. Weak are we, yet the confirmation of the Supreme Concourse is abundant. Helpless are we, yet our refuge and shelter is Bahá'u'lláh.

Praise be to God! His signs are evident.

Praise be to God! His light is shining.

Praise be to God! His ocean is surging.

Praise be to God! His radiance is intense.

Praise be to God! His bestowals are abundant.

Praise be to God! His favours are manifest.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The Morn of Guidance hath dawned.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The Sun of Truth hath shone forth.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The breeze of favour hath wafted.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The showers of the clouds of divine bounty have poured down.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The Sun of the supreme horizon hath shed its radiance upon all the world with boundless effulgence.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The hearts of all are in the utmost purity.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! His all-encompassing splendour hath been revealed.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The celestial concourse is astir.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! Zion is rapt in ecstasy.

Glad tidings! Glad tidings! The Kingdom of God is filled with exultation and joy.

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A Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá chanted by Him, the recording of the latter part of which is played for Bahá’í pilgrims during their visit to the House of the Master in Haifa.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As for thy question concerning those righteous souls who passed away ere they heard the Call of this Revelation, know thou that those who ascended unto God ere they heard this Call, but who followed the precepts of Christ and walked in the Straight Path—these verily attained, after ascending to the Divine Kingdom, unto the Refulgent Light.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

The residence is under all conditions the property of the first-born son, irrespective of whether or not the deceased should have left behind him other property as well. The first-born son receiveth, moreover, his share of the remainder of the estate. This is that which God hath prescribed. The testator is, however, at liberty while still alive to dispose of his property in

whatsoever manner he seeth fit. Likewise, the first-born son must himself, for the sake of God, take into consideration the other heirs, and be just and fair to them. In truth, it is obligatory for everyone, by the express requirement of the divine text, to draw up a will, so that it may be implemented after he hath passed away. This, verily, is the perspicuous truth. If, God forbid, he disobeyeth the divine command—faileth, that is, to draw up a will—then his estate must be divided up in the stipulated manner.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

As for the story of Adam, the Father of Mankind, which is recorded in the Sacred Scriptures, this requireth explanation and interpretation. By “genesis” is intended a spiritual creation and heavenly existence; for otherwise the most cursory reflection would be sufficient to convince even a child that this boundless universe, the world of being—this infinite cosmos, this prodigious system, this mighty and primordial workshop—is far more than six thousand years old, as hath in fact been realized in this illumined age by scientists and men of learning, on the basis of decisive proofs and evidences founded on both reason and discovery. In recent times remains have come to light which have been definitely and conclusively established to be more than ten thousand years old. Through the science of geology this hidden secret hath been grasped—that the age of the world surpasseth man’s conception. The one true God hath ever been the Possessor of all Names and Attributes, and the necessary concomitants of these Names and Attributes have likewise ever existed and shall continue to exist throughout eternity. He Who is the “Creator” requireth a creation, while He Who is the “Provider” requireth some object to provide for. A king, to be a king, must have a realm, an army, the insignia of sovereignty, the retinue and entourage of kingship. The sovereignty of God is everlasting; from time immemorial it hath existed, and at no time hath it been suspended. For a king bereft of troops and territory is a person of no consequence; and were One Who is the ‘All-Possessing’ to be entirely destitute, know then that no richer harvest would be reaped from His existence than from a fruitless cypress tree.

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Extract from a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

O pilgrim of the Sacred Dust!

Render a myriad thanks unto the All-Glorious, Who hath guided thee on this path and enabled thee to attain the threshold of the Omniscient Lord, to find refuge within the stronghold of His favours, and to obtain that which is the ultimate hope and desire of all His chosen ones.

Now, as thou returnest to ‘I

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qábád, thou must take with thee armfuls of flowers as a gift from the heavenly rose-garden that their sweet scent may perfume the nostrils and stir

the senses of the youth. For these lovely youth are the children of the realms above and the tender plants of the all-highest Paradise. They are flowers and fragrant herbs in the garden of certitude, the jasmine and eglantine of the All-Merciful Lord. They have been nursed at the breast of Divine unity and nurtured in the bosom of the wondrous Cause of God. They have become fresh and verdant through the outpourings of the clouds of loving-kindness.

O youth of this century of God! In this new age, this century of the Glorious Lord, ye must be so attracted to the Blessed Beauty and so enthralled by the Beloved of the World that ye may become the embodiments of the truth of this verse:

I am lost, O Love, possessed and dazed,

Love's fool am I, in all the earth.

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Marzieh Gail's translation, published in
Memorials of the Faithful
, pp. 22, 30.

* * *

A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye two pilgrims of the Holy Shrine!

The news of your safe arrival in Paris was received and rejoiced my heart, as did the description of the love and devotion of the friends in Paris, who met you with exceeding joy and radiance, and who show forth the utmost love, faithfulness, and sincerity.

Speak openly of all the signs of the Kingdom of God that ye have witnessed with your own eyes and share with the utmost happiness and exultation all that ye have heard of the divine teachings. I fervently supplicate God to bring assurance to your souls and to raise you up with such steadfastness that each of you may withstand an entire nation. May you become so inebriated with the wine of the love of God that ye may cause your hearers to dance with blissful rapture to the song and melody of the love of God.

This is the time for gladness, the day of joy and exhilaration, for, praised be God, all doors are opened wide through the bounty of the Abhá Beauty. But high endeavour and self-sacrifice are needed and the concentration of one's thoughts is required for the tree of hope to yield its fruit and results to be achieved.

* * *

Extract from a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Concerning the question of marriage and the stipulated period between the time

of the engagement and the marriage, this is the decisive text of the Book of God and may not be interpreted. In the past, serious difficulties and problems arose when a long period of time elapsed between the engagement and the marriage. Now, according to the text of the Book, when marriage between the parties is arranged, i.e., when the parties become engaged, and it is certain that they will be married, not more than ninety-five days should elapse before the marriage takes place, during which period preparations for the dowry and other affairs may be made. The marriage ceremony must take place on the same night as its consummation, that is, there should be no interval of time between the ceremony and consummation. This is a clear text and is not subject to interpretation, so that the difficulties that arose in the past may not recur on account of interpretation.

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A Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O ye two honourable souls!

Your letter was received and its contents noted. My heart was saddened to learn that those two respected persons, who were even as one soul, should now be separated and their affection turned into estrangement.

Although divorce is permissible, yet it is strongly abhorred and condemned in the sight of God. Divorce may only take place when no alternative is left, when the two parties feel aversion for each other and are in torment. Now, if such is the case, perform the divorce. However, after divorce is decided upon, ye must wait for one year for it to be effected. Should affection be renewed during this year of separation, it would be highly pleasing.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you both!

If divorce taketh place, the spiritual love and affection between you should increase, and ye should become like a brother and sister.

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AB05283[BRL_ATE#194x]
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AB00170[BRL_ATE#199x]

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AB00059[BRL_ATE#200x]
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ABU0518[BRL_ATE#201x]
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AB03251[BRL_ATE#202x]
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AB01935[BRL_ATE#203x]
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AB00335[BRL_ATE#204x]
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AB01398[BRL_ATE#205x]
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ABU0028[BRL_ATE#206x]
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ABU0532[BRL_ATE#207x]
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ABU0532[BRL_ATE#208x]
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ABU0231[BRL_ATE#209x]
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AB05591[BRL_ATE#210x]
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AB12833[BRL_ATE#211]
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