1906 Pilgrim Notes of Ali Kuli Khan

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Ali Kuli Khan

David Merrick, editor

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About this copy of pilgrim notes (as written in the original)

Editor's Notes

Overview of the Work

These Pilgrim Notes are a graphic record from the pen of the highly-esteemed Ali Kuli Khan, of the words, stories and actions of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he witnessed. He spoke Persian fluently, was used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a translator, and submitted the most important of these notes for correction by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Many works were translated by him early this century. Given these details and the wide scope and substantial length of the topics addressed, these are very important pilgrim notes. At the same time, like all Pilgrim Notes they are not necessarily the exact words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and this must always be borne in mind when weighing matters up. Please note that page 50 was missing.

'Ali-Kuli Khán (c. 1879-1966)

Ali-Kuli Khán, also known as Nabílu'd-dawlih, was an eminent Iranian Bahá'í. He was born in Káshán (Persia) about 1879; his father was a mayor. About 1898, he became a Bahá'í and served briefly as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's English-language secretary (1899-1901), and was subsequently sent to America where he translated several Bahá'í books into English as well as continuing to translate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's correspondence with the American Bahá'ís and to act as a teacher. He was appointed Iranian chargé d'affaires in Washington in 1910 and later served in various high-ranking diplomatic posts, becoming Head of the Court of the Crown Prince Regent (Qájár), and ever maintaining a passion for linking together Persia and America. He married the American Florence Breed (1875-1950) in 1904, praised by 'Abdu'l-Bahá for being the first marriage between an Eastern and Western Bahá'í, and served the Faith for almost seventy years until his death in Washington DC on 7 April 1966. Their daughter, Marzieh Gail (1908-93), also became an eminent Bahá'í translator.

Key of Symbols

(* brackets with asterisks *) are original notes by the author placed in the flow of the text.

[pale text in brackets] are notes added by the editor.

Accidental unmistakable spelling mistakes and word-duplication in the text were corrected.

give clearly accidentally-omitted words that are added by the editor.

Information

Editor/Transcriber : David Merrick, Edinburgh (Scotland)

Contact David : All comments and corrections appreciated

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The Pilgrim Notes

Preamble to the pilgrim notes in the original

In 1906, when we (my wife and our baby son, Rahim, about eleven months old) were on the point of leaving America for Akka, a number of Bahá'í friends requested me to take notes of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's conversations during our visit, in order that these might be translated and published for the benefit of the Bahá'ís in America. This I did, and towards the end of our visit, I copied my Persian notes and submitted the most important among them to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for revision.

My translation of those notes (done in 1907) appears in the following pages. In rendering these beautiful Episodes and Teachings into English, my purpose has been to retain as much of the literal sense and the atmosphere of the original as possible.

By request, I also supplement these notes with my translation of some hitherto unpublished instructive Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, bearing upon the subjects treated in the above conversations.

Arrival in Akka

After two days' stay in Haifa, we proceeded to Akka where we arrived early in the afternoon of Saturday, June 9, 1906. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá and others had already had the mid-day meal, my wife and I were served separately in our room. After the meal, we were called into the side-room where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was awaiting us.

Meeting Abdu'l-Bahá, welcome and family blessings

He embraced me and kissed me on the cheeks. He also most warmly welcomed my wife, and took Rahim from my arms. He then sat on the Sofa holding Rahim on His lap, and while He gave the Baby His rosary to play with, He lovingly inquired after our health, and asked if we had had a good journey. Then looking at me, my wife and the Baby, He said to me while smiling, "O Khan! This is the sign of blessing and increase; you went to America one and returned three." These words we took to mean that He blessed our conjugal family life with unity and harmony, and that He bespoke for us Divine bounty and increase. He asked for the Baby's age and I answered that he was one year and four days old. Turning to my wife He said in part, while showing her great kindness and favor: "Welcome! Welcome! Marhaba! Praise be to God, that as a result of the Revelation of Al-Abha, the East and the West have embraced each other like unto two beloved ones. You are the first American bride to be united to a Bahá'í from Persia. Praise God, for this great favor."

Before being seated, and while I had the Baby in my arms, 'Abdu'l-Bahá looked at Rahim with His glorious face illuminated with joy, and He said in part: "This is the fruit of the union between the East and the West." Turning to my wife, He said: "I see that you love Rahim Khan very much." Upon other occasions during our visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá often said: "As Rahim Khan is the first fruit of the union of the East and West, whoever looks upon his face loves him."

Mrs Maxwell

He inquired of Mrs. Maxwell. I spoke of my visit of nine days at her house in Montreal before sailing, where I taught the Truth and spoke to large gatherings every night. He asked if I had remained there nine days and I said yes. Then I said how Mrs. Maxwell was wholly devoted to teaching and to service of the Cause, and how she had specially rented a house with a large parlor to hold meetings therein. He inquired after her health, and when I said that she seemed better than ever since she had become a Believer, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Some years ago when Mrs. Maxwell came to Akka, she was very weak and seriously ill, - so much so that no one could believe she would ever get well. But God healed her." Then in connection with Montreal, I spoke of Mr. Woodcock and his work, and He was greatly pleased to hear it.

Letter from Persia

Later in the day He showed me a letter which He had received from Persia. He told me to read it and to see how the Cause of God was growing in Persia, and with what devotion the Believers were bringing many new souls to the Truth.

'Abdu'l-Bahá arrives with white roses for Florence Khanum

The next morning while I was in our room with my family, a gentle rapping attracted me to the door. There I found 'Abdu'l-Bahá standing with a large white handkerchief full of flowers. He said, "Give these flowers to Florence Khanum and bring me back the handkerchief." This I obeyed instantly. To our joy and delight, we found the flowers to be no other than a bridal bouquet of white roses. In them I found another small bouquet. It was easy to see its significance! All can imagine our joy upon receiving that blessing! My wife burst into tears of joy; for in this lovely act of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's she found the fulfilment of a prayer she had offered for a long time. The prayer was that she might receive a rose from the hand of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On true freedom, pain and pleasure

In the morning, while I was in His presence with other pilgrims, He said in part: "I have just been telling Haji (Khurasani) that there is no real pleasure in freedom from pains and ailments as such freedom is not permanent. For if a man who suffers from a fever is freed from it, he shall sooner or later have other ailments and finally he will die and depart from this life.

"But real pleasure is this that a hundred thousand bullets may be fired at a person from all directions by those who seek to destroy him, and none of these should touch him. Or that enemies try to drown him in the Sea and their efforts fail in so doing." By these and similar utterances, He referred to His own calamities and to the efforts of His many enemies who had quite recently exerted themselves to bring about His exile unto the burning deserts of Arabia or Africa, or to effect His total destruction. While speaking these words, His joy was so great that one could not help feeling that real faith is the only source of real joy and that Truth makes one invulnerable and immune to all attacks and oppositions.

Mrs. Cowle and Mrs. Jackson; on sorrow and happiness

I spoke of Mrs. Cowle's (* Later Mme. de Lagnielle *) love and devotion.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "She came here with Mrs. Jackson and remained for sometime. Though she was poor, she was always happy, I had her stay with us in the Household. Here she labored very hard in cooking certain dishes. She said she wished to learn how to cook Persian dishes in order to make them for the Bahá'ís in America. Her only son had died and this had given her great sorrow. She continued sad until she became a Believer in the Cause of God. This brought her true happiness. If she had not become a Believer in this Manifestation, sorrow would have destroyed her; for she had no other attachment or hope in the world."

On true joy

Then He spoke at length of the "Composure of Heart," or "Tranquility of the Soul." "This", He said, "is a state of true faith which gives man such assurance and conviction of God's bounty, that all the trials and sufferings of this earth cannot affect him."

Speaking of true joy and happiness. He said in part: "If a man is not happy in his life, death is better than such a life. True joy comes from the tranquility of heart, and this state comes from faith! Praise be to God who gave us tranquility of heart! This is why we are always happy. I pray and supplicate to the Beauty of Abha to bless all the servants and maid-servants with true happiness resulting from the tranquility of heart."

Steadfastness of a believer; opposition in America

Speaking of a Believer He said: "She is a courageous woman, and she is firm. In a recent letter she said how happy she was, for while traveling in different districts to teach the Truth, children had pursued her in the streets, and had insulted, ridiculed, and reviled her. As all this was in the path of God, it gave her great joy."

In this connection He said in part: "In America certain men of religious influence will arise against the Cause, and will try to prevent people from this Truth. When this comes to pass, the Cause will progress, and joy and fragrance will increase in the Believers."

Mrs. Coles' death; her purity

The second day at luncheon in the small room beside ours, opening to the Sea, (* A room attached to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's reception room, a room which was memorable to me as my work and living room during many months of my last long stay in Akka in 1899 to 1900! *) I took occasion to mention our departed sister Mrs. Coles, and to say how I was grieved at her death, and how I had been often thinking of her and praying for her since reaching Akka. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "I was very much grieved at Mrs. Coles' death. She was very pure in spirit, and she was very devoted and firm. She never fell short in serving the Cause, for she exerted her utmost in assisting the friends. She was therefore

an esteemed maid-servant of God and a child of the Kingdom."

At the table; little Rahim; thanks for rest

While we were at table, little Rahim came tripping into the room. 'Abdu'l-Bahá most lovingly greeted him. Then He gave him a piece of bread with His blessing. My wife thanked Him for the restful sleep she had enjoyed in the Holy Household. He said she had not yet had sufficient rest but that she shall enjoy real rest during her visit.

News from America; Mrs Goodall and daughter in Oakland

In the afternoon, He summoned me and enquired concerning the news of the Cause in the leading cities of America, and at San Francisco. I spoke of the untiring devotion of Mrs. Goodall and her daughter in the great work they do in Oakland. This rejoiced Him greatly. He then inquired concerning certain Bahá'ís, and spoke to the Bahá'í Publishing Society of Chicago (* Whose message I had already given Him. *) in part:

Harmony in printing and publication; benefits of Indian trip together of Harris and MacNutt

"The assemblies of Chicago, Washington and New York must be in harmony with each other in the matter of printing and publications. The publication of any matter by any one of these Assemblies must be at first reported to the respective publishing societies of the other cities,- thus removing all causes for inharmony." Speaking of the then prospective trip of Mr. Harris to India, He said in part: "If Harris and MacNutt travel to India in company, this will be very useful for the Cause."

On large appetites and the spirituality of eating; Tahirih

As a nursing mother, my wife apologized to 'Abdu'l-Bahá for what she spoke of as her "great appetite." He however referred to her duties as a mother and the labors which make part of that calling, and to the need therefore for more than usual nourishment. Speaking of appetite and taking food, He said further in part: "Virtue and excellence consist in true faith in God, not in having a small or a large appetite for food, or in similar matters. Jinabi Tahirih (* Qurrat-ul-Ayn *) had a good appetite. When asked concerning it, she would answer, 'It is recorded in the Holy traditions that one of the recorded attributes of the people of paradise is "partaking of food, continually."' (Whatever may be the outward meanings of this tradition, in its spiritual sense it means that when man is brought into the Paradise of Divine Nearness, through faith, he perennially and perpetually partakes of the food of Divine Bounties and Favors.)

"To be brief; when man takes food, it strengthens him in whatever mood or state of mind or condition he may be in at the time of eating. For instance, if a man is full of love, eating food increases his love; on the contrary, when a man is angry and eats food it intensities his anger. Thus it is necessary that man think only of the Love of God. Then if he eats a little more food than may seem

usual, it does no harm. But otherwise, that is, if he does not possess the Love of God, to eat little or much food is all the same."

Joy as medicine

Then turning to Haji Khurasani (* Who was just recovering from a long period of mental and physical indisposition. *) He said in part: Joy is the best cure for your illness. Joy is better than a hundred thousand medicines for a sick person. If there is a sick person and one wishes to cure him, let one cause joy and happiness in his heart."

Persecution progresses the Cause; St Peter and St Paul

Concerning the fact that blows, suffering and tribulations and trials endured by true believers are conducive to the progress and advancement of the Cause of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: [see Acts 17:15++] "Paul and Peter, the Apostles, once went into one of the cities of the Greeks and engaged in teaching the Truth. In that city, there was a temple which bore the inscription, 'To the Name of the Unknown God.' Paul arose and, addressing himself to the multitude, said: 'We bring you tidings from the same "Unknown God,"' thus preaching to them the message of Christ. A great number of the Greeks became interested in the Cause. This aroused jealousy in the Jews who began to make trouble. The multitude, aroused by these seditions, attacked the Apostles and beat them until they fell unconscious. Then their bodies were dragged along the road and thrown outside the city. Paul and Peter continued in a death-like unconsciousness all night. Early in the morning, Paul, who was brought to himself, said to Peter: 'There is a fair today in a place in this neighborhood, at which many people will be present. Let us move along to preach the Gospel in that place.' Peter celled attention to their wounded and bruised bodies; and although at first too weak to move, they finally arose and betook themselves to the fair and preached. Briefly, these persecutions caused a further spread of the Cause of Christ, in that they caused them to be removed into a new place and preach to a new multitude."

Abdu'l-Bahá's imprisonment and its advantage; MacNutt in America

On June 11, 1906, 'Abdu'l-Bahá summoned me into the garden within the house-walls where He was walking alone. As the time seemed opportune, I spoke of my great sorrow in finding Him a close prisoner within the walls of Akka, and I remarked that His imprisonment had already lasted for a long time. To console me, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "We have wished it to be such. For many reasons, this incarceration is useful for me. One is that this is conducive to protection; for our enemies, finding us imprisoned, would not think of further steps (to harm the Cause). Moreover, after the Blessed Perfection (who died a Prisoner), we must delight in being a prisoner; and no other state is good for us and no freedom can give us rest. Our purpose is to serve the Threshold of the Almighty, whether imprisoned or free. If we dwell in a royal palace surrounded by delectable meadows and gardens and have every means for rest and composure at our disposal, but news comes to us that the believers are not filled with the fire of faith and do not act in accord with the laws and

exhortations of God,- what good could all the luxury of a palace do to comfort us? Nay, such news would make a palace seem to us darker then a dungeon and our hardships increase. But now that I am in prison and you have come here from America and tell me that since his return from Akka Mr. MacNutt continually spoke at the Bahá'í Meetings with great enthusiasm and love and attracted the hearts of the believers,- this good news transforms this prison into a paradise. Therefore, imprisonment gives us no pain; for our purpose is to act in accord with the commandments and exhortations of God."

Gifts of white jasmines and apricots

Aqa Mihdi, the Gardener of Bahji, came in and brought a bunch of white jasmine. 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave me one-half of the flowers to share with my wife, and we walked back to the court-yard. There was brought a basket of apricots into His presence. He took the fruit and distributed it to the pilgrims and the believers. He also gave several to me, and several others "to take to Florence Khanum." He then especially gave me an extra one which He said was "For Rahim Khan."

Visit to Bahjí; vision of the future Bahjí; fragrance of author's previous meeting

On Tuesday, June 12, 1906, after partaking of the midday meal with Him, 'Abdu'l-Bahá commanded me to go to visit the Holy Tomb at Bahji in company with my wife. She donned the Persian chader and veil (* As she did all through our visit to Akka and then during the entire length of our stay in Persia, in accord with the Command of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *), and we took the baby with us. While my joy was great in revisiting the Holy Tomb, after years of separation, and in presenting Wife and Child at the Holy Threshold, the memory of the past years when I often visited the Tomb and Bahji with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as well as the thought of the present changed conditions due to His imprisonment, weighed heavily upon my heart.

Upon our return to the town, I went to 'Abdu'l-Bahá who was in the tent in His little garden outside the house. He inquired of our visit to the tomb. I answered that by referring to the visits of years before when He would lead large gatherings of believers of all lands and nations to that Holy Threshold, and saying that because those days are no more makes me disconsolate and dejected. He lovingly spoke words of comfort to me. Among other things He said in part: "In the end, all will be well and happy times will come. 'Once again a time will come as sweet as sugar.' The time will come when the procession of pilgrims of all lands will be densely extended from the gate of Akka to the Holy Tomb without any interruption. Thus men of all nations and districts will come to visit this Sacred Spot." "O Khan, do you remember the days of Haifa? (* Referring to my first visit during 1900, when I had the blessed privilege to be His amanuensis and translator and enjoyed His presence night and day. We remained for long months in Haifa where visitors, formerly of all creeds and of all nationalities and races, successively came and partook of physical and spiritual food at His Holy Table. *) What happy times were those! Do you

remember that night in Haifa when people of many lands and nationalities were present at dinner,- Americans, Persians, Europeans, Persian Turks in huge sheep-skin head-gears, and European and American ladies in their wonderful hats, made part of the same meeting, which was also attended by Qayim Maqam (Governor of Haifa) and the turbaned Turkish Judge? How words and explanations were continuous? Great joy and fragrance indeed predominated in that gathering. Indeed, all those present were sincere and deeply impressed and even the Governor and the Judge were fully possessed with joy and fragrance! What a wonderful night it was!"

On the Gospel's 'To him that hath shall be given...': On faith, progress and decline

On Wednesday, June 13, 1906, while at luncheon, my wife asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the interpretation of the following verse of the Gospel: "To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath." [Mt 13:12, 25:29; Mk 4:25; Lk 8:18, 19:26]

In answer 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "This is the exposition of one of the great questions of Divine Wisdom which Christ has couched in this brief and simple utterance. The great question is this: In the world of existence, pause (or discontinuation of progress) marks the beginning of fall and decadence. For instance, as long as the bird soars or moves upward in the air, it is in progress. But no sooner it pauses than it begins to descend. Or, as long as a merchant lives on the interest or income produced by his capital his business is successful and in progress. But no sooner he begins to consume his capital than the beginning of his decadence is reached and he inclines toward bankruptcy. Hence it is customary amongst men of trade and business to say of one who draws on his capital for self-sustenance, 'It is all over with him.' Now by the word of Christ, To him that hath shall be given,' is meant briefly: To him that hath the capital of Truth and Faith shell be given an increase of such when he employs this capital by living up to the requirements of Faith, and by communicating them to others in word and deed. Thus he who is endowed with any degree of capacity and ability must constantly exert himself in order to increase them, or he will see the beginning of failure and decadence. For this pause is like unto consuming ones capital, or allowing his capacity to decrease and thus fulfilling in himself the verdict, 'And from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath.'"

On the impermanence of healing physical illness and the origin of good deeds from the Prophets

Florence Khanum spoke concerning a certain sect which is interested in healing physical ailments and devoted to what is called a better life than that of the usual sects. She then asked, "Are these people who claim to surpass the other Christian sects in charity and good deeds to be considered possessors of a special excellence or are they one of the new sects of Christianity?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá answered in words to the following effect: "Whatever good deeds man performs in this world have originally inculcated by the Prophets and

Manifestations of God. Were it not for the Prophets' teachings, man would remain ignorant and heedless like unto the brute beasts. For instance, if out of one thousand sheep nine hundred and ninety-nine be slaughtered before the eyes of each other, the last sheep would remain unmindful and continue heedless, diligently engaged in grazing. Material Philosophers say that they perform good deeds and therefore need no religion; not knowing that the very 'Good Deeds' they claim to perform have originally been taught by Divine Prophets. Hence true excellence consists in acknowledging the Manifestations of God and living up to their teachings. (For they set the standard of a truly good life and enable men to perform Good Deeds.)"

"As to healing the ills of the body and caring for the sick and the poor. This is very good, but its effect or result is not a permanent one. For when man is healed of one physical pain, another will sooner or later affect him; and finally as a result, bodily death will overtake him. But the healing performed by the Manifestation of God is of the Soul and is permanent, and the Life conferred by them is spiritual and therefore keeps man alive forever."

On how long to offer assistance that is declined; intentions superior to acts

Florence Khanum asked: "If one is situated with a family or a number of people who are in need of help and assistance, and one should have tried his best to assist them with, however, no cooperation or encouragement on their part,- until one feels utterly impotent to render them any further assistance,- should he still remain with them and endeavor to offer them help, or should he leave them and go after his own business?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "Man is responsible to the degree of his power and capacity." (That is, man should do his best to help his fellowmen as much as it is possible for him.)

He was further asked: "If one feels grieved at his failure to help others much more than one actually could, while one had the desire and intention of rendering them greater help, what should he do?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "In this case, the fact that one had the desire and the intention of helping is enough for him. For 'God judges man's deeds according to the intention which actuated them.' This authentic tradition has come down from the Prophet, to wit: 'A man's intention or will is better than his act.' This means that when a man has a good intention, that is, cherishes the desire In his heart for a righteous act, it is impossible that such an intention be anything but pure. Whereas, in acting, it is possible that selfish reasons may have prompted it. For instance, it is possible that a man performs a good deed with a view to personal interest; such a good deed done is not separated from hypocrisy and insincerity. But when a man cherishes a good intention, it is impossible that it be prompted by any prejudice or be intended for anything but good. In this sense, 'A man's intention is better than his act.'"

He further said in part: "It is possible that men may have a good intention to perform a worthy deed, but be without the means to execute it. For instance, a man may have the intention to succor the poor and assist the orphan, but be without the necessary means with which to carry it out. Such an intention will

have its effect in the world of Existence, and will be accepted in the Kingdom of God. And if a man be enabled to put it into deeds it will be 'light upon light' (i.e. doubly acceptable, as is commonly expressed)."

On Sagicity and Intellect (Zikavat and Aql)

We asked as to the difference between Sagacity and Intelligence (or intellect). 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered in part: "Sagacity is a power which enables one to become cognizant of the existence of a thing by means of the outward senses, or to feel the presence of a thing through certain outward signs. For instance, the slightest motion felt in a room makes one conscious of the presence of some one upon the roof, without, however, knowing who or what or which he or it may be. This Is the limit of the knowing power of

Sagacity. (* The term "Zikavat" used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá which is here translated "Sagacity" better corresponds to the terms "Quickness of parts" or "The power of instinct," as differentiated from "Intellect" or "Conscious intelligence" which I give as equivalent to the word "Aql" used here by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *) This 'sagacity' or 'Quickness of parts' is to be met with in most animals, while in man this is found in a much less degree. For instance, if, during the night, some one enters your house clandestinely, the man of the house may not feel conscious of such presence, while the dog of the house will instantly become aware or it. Thus a dog is more sagacious than his master in the matter of the power of the instinct, but the dog has no intellect which is a gift particular to man. But the intellect is a power by which man ponders over things and secures tangible results from them. (* Or, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said elsewhere, "The intellect is a power by which man comprehends the realities of things. Or, it is a power by which man reasons from the part to the whole, or is consciously led from premises to the conclusion." *) Among children, some comprehend things quickly, while others take time to reach a conclusion. The former are called intelligent and are praised by some as being superior to the latter who are laughed at and considered stupid. But often the child of the latter class, who seems slow, is endowed with superior intellect, and he therefore needs to ponder over things before pronouncing a judgment upon them. While having less sagacity and quickness of parts as possessed by the other, he surpasses him in real intellect."

On intuition and the four kinds of light, and its duplication in others

We asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning Intuition, or what is called "The Sixth Sense" (Or inner perception or insight. I translate it "inner perception" as this is nearer the sense of the word used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá). He said in part: "Intuition (or inner perception) is a power or a light by which man comprehends and perceives the realities of things without the mediumship of the outward senses. To illustrate: There are four kinds of light: 1- The outward (or phenomenal) light, which makes things manifest or visible, but which does not discover them. 2- The light of the eye or Eye-sight. This makes things manifest and also discovers them, but it does not comprehend them. 3- The light of the Intellect (or reason). This light makes things manifest, discovers them,

comprehends them, but things pre-exist it, (i.e., its existence is posterior to the creation of things). 4- The Light of God. It is the revealer of things (i.e., by it things are made manifest), the discoverer of things, the comprehender of things, and it precedes the creation of all things and follows the existence of all things, as it is said, 'God is the Light of the Heaven and Earth' (Quran).

"To be brief: The light which is the manifestor of things makes things manifest; the light which is the discoverer of things discovers them; the light which is the comprehender of things comprehends things. Likewise, the outward faculties and senses of man discover and perceive the appearance of things. But the light of Intuition (or Inner Perception) is a light which comprehends the realities and the core of things. Intuition (or Inner Perception) means the Divine Universal Reason, and it comprehends and grasps supernatural things and conditions which cannot be grasped by the outward senses.

The Prophets and Divine Manifestations have taught that this sense of Intuition, Inner Perception, or Innate Reason exists in man. Philosophers are also in accord with the Prophets in this matter, that is, to the degree of believing it possible that such a power may exist in man. For Philosophers do not deny the existence of powers which are supernatural. But Prophets demonstrate the existence of this Inner Perception and Intuition in man in a practical way. They show forth this power first in themselves by inspiring men with the faculty of comprehending the realities of things and grasping things supernatural." (That is, the Prophets prove the existence of Intuition or Inner Reason, by showing forth themselves such a comprehension which is beyond the power of any man. They also inspire their disciples with, and develop in them, the same power. This is illustrated in the life, prophetic vision and deeds the Prophets and their true followers.

Greatest Holy Leaf gives a most precious gold ring to a child

One morning, the Greatest Holy Leaf [Bahiyyih Khanum] gave Rahim a gold ring in which the Greatest Name engraved on a pretty black agate was mounted. This made my wife very happy. At luncheon she spoke of this to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and thanked Him for this great favor shown to our Baby. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "This Greatest Name ring was the dearest of possessions to my sister. This is why she gave it to your son." Then my wife thanked Him for His kindness to her for the rest she was enjoying in the Household. He lovingly answered: "We have done nothing for you and we have been able to do nothing worth mention, but we have heart-felt love and this is the principle thing and of great importance."

A Turkish official's loss through indulgence; the endurance of sacrifice

One morning, I was in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the other pilgrims. A believer from one of the towns in the vicinity of Akka was also present. 'Abdu'l-Bahá inquired of him concerning a certain Turkish official. He said that this official was now imprisoned and closely guarded by four soldiers; that he was not allowed to see or converse with anyone. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, turning to us, said: "See, how for the sake of a trifling gain, people subject

themselves to terrible difficulties and suffering and trial, though it gives them no result or benefit whatever. This is the consequence of exerting one's self to gain the things of the world. But such is not the case in the Cause of God: for whoever takes a single step or endures the least hardship for the sake of God, it will never be lost or prove fruitless. Consider, how many people in this world have given life and property and sacrificed their families to bondage and captivity! But as they did not suffer this in the path of God, they profited nothing, nor were their names highly spoken of or even mentioned among them. But consider Husayn whoa suffered martyrdom for the sake of God. He was refused water by his enemies. His family were made captives. But his very cry for water at the time of death was so far reaching that it still dings in the ears of the multitudes,- for he suffered martyrdom for the sake of God. On the other hand, consider the war between Japan and Russia: How about one million people perished during that war, either in actual battle, or from disease, or from fatigue in the deserts and mountains! Yet no one hears any mention of them, although there were many men of fame and glory among them. But when a single person suffers martyrdom in the Cause of God and gives up family and property, his name and mention continue forever. For he suffered this for an immortal Cause and endured trials for a Divine purpose."

The Prime Ministers of Persia and transience; a prophecy for the current one

Speaking on the same theme 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued: "When we were in Tihran, Mirza Aqa Khan of Nur was the Prime Minister, and the Nuri family held official honors and positions, and had a great distinction among men. A little while, and that court of glory was closed and it became the turn of Amin-id-Dawlih of Kashan to be the appointed Prime Minister. His carpet was also folded up and his time ended. Then Mirza Husayn Khan "The Commander in Chief" was given the rein of affairs. He too passes away and was no more. Then Mustawfi-ul-Mamalik became the Premier. He too went by and his time changed. Finally Amin-us-Sultan became Prime Minister. He too went by, his carpet of fame was folded up. (* At the time 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke these words, Amin-us-Sultan was in Europe. A year hence, 1906-1907, he was recalled to Tihran and reappointed Prime Minister, but he was assassinated in the same year. Hence the prophetic words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *)

Uniform conditions in prison; the Turkish official's indulgence

"To be brief: All these events transpired. Men come and men went by. But during all these transformations and changes in Persia, we have continued here in a uniform condition, occupied with our own affairs without suffering any change of position. All this, because our whole interest is confined to the Cause of God, and we have no attachment to the things of this world." Then reverting to the Turkish official, He said: This official suffered such hardships and imprisonment for the mere reason that he had a salary of one thousand piastres, and he wished to raise it to fifteen hundred."

Mr Harris; Covenant-breakers and specifics of their falsehoods; 'Abdu'l-Bahá's appointment; petitions

In the evening at dinner, 'Abdu'l-Bahá inquired of Mr. Harris. I spoke of him highly and praised him because of his eloquence and service to the Cause. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was rejoiced and, referring to the false statements of the Naqidin, He said to us in part: "See how Mirza Muhammad Ali has said that 'Aqa (i.e., 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself) has abolished and effaced the Cause of God!" By the life God, see you whether I,- who have caused the Cause of the Blessed Perfection to reach the East and the West until numerous devoted and eloquent souls like Mr. Harris have appeared therein,- have effaced the Cause, or Mirza Muhammad Ali who has done so much harm by arising against me!" On the same subject He said in part: "That Bahá'u'lláh appointed me as the Center of His Covenant was not because I was His Son. Nay, I swear by His Holy Spirit, that had He found a negro of Zanzibar more capable than I am, He would have appointed him preferably to me!..."

"Mirza Muhammad Ali exerted his utmost to bring about my exile from Akka, in the vain hope that in my absence the believers would obey him, or that he would be protected! But he is too heedless to know that in case my life is destroyed, he too shall be afflicted with a great calamity.... Mirza Muhammad Ali went even so far as to occasion the shedding of my blood. That is, he sent Jamal (* One of the Chief Naqichin. *) directly from here to Tihran. The latter went to the Ottoman Ambassador and said that he 'had lived for years in the Turkish countries and enjoyed the blessings of peace and freedom under that government; that he had thereby become such a well-wisher of Turkey that in order to express his gratitude to the authorities, he deemed it his duty to inform them of a matter which is vital to the protection of Turkey,' etc. Then he said to the Ambassador of that 'vital matter' to wit:

"'Abbas Effendi has brought the British people into Akka and is considering turning over Syria to Britain, that he is in cooperation with the young Turk party, the Sultan's enemies,' etc...

"To be brief, by stating such falsehoods, Jamal stirred up such sedition and made such misrepresentations it seemed very difficult to explain or remedy them! Finally to prove the utter falsity of such assertations, Jinabi Adilih (one of the venerable Bahá'í teachers in Tihran) gave a copy of the "Book of Aqdas" to the Turkish Ambassador to see for himself. We too sent directly to the confidants of the Sultan two hundred and fifty petitions, letters received by us from the American Bahá'ís, for his consideration. Thus it was made known to him that our work is wholly of a spiritual nature and that our mission is entirely removed from such accusations; and that by the Command of the Blessed Perfection we are obedient to governments and are far from seditious."

Muhammad Ali in India

Referring to the two trips to India taken by Muhammad Ali for seditious purposes during the life-time of Bahá'u'lláh, and to the fact that he even tried to set up a party by the help of Nazir (who became a Naqiz) against the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "I swear by His Holy Spirit that one day Bahá'u'lláh called me to Him saying, 'Aqa! 'Aqa! (* i.e., Master, Master!,

the term by which Bahá'u'lláh addressed 'Abdu'l-Bahá *) See how limited is your brother's intelligence, for a man like this Nazir has succeeded in leading him twice to India and bringing him back.'" (* This refers to the plots in which Muhammad Ali and Nazir were engaged to prepare the way for supremacy and become the leader of the Cause after the Departure of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh knew of these too well, as is testified by many Tablets and incidents, especially by the Revelation of the "Book of His Covenant" prior to His departure, in which He clearly appoints 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the One to whom all, including the Branches, are to turn for light and guidance. *)

On voting

One morning while speaking on various topics, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "Voting is a practical means for the settlement of any matters under consideration, especially because those who deliberate may naturally advance various opinions pertaining to it."

On the House of Justice, its power, rule and divine confirmation

He then dwelt at length upon the subject of the House of Justice, and spoke words to the following effect: "The House of Justice is so mighty an organization that no one shall have the right to resist or oppose it. By that is meant the Universal House of Justice. That is, when all the local Houses of Justice of the different countries will be represented in the organization of a General House of Justice, that House will rule over all. For such a House of Justice shall be under the protection and infallibility of the Blessed Perfection and favored by His confirmation."

On the infallability of the House

In this connection I asked concerning infallibility, whether by this is intended the Power of the House of Justice to do and order that which it willeth, or whether it refers to another state. (* In the Tablet of Infallibility preceding the Tablet of Ishraqat - my translation - Bahá'u'lláh speaks of the Infallibility of the Manifestations of God to be their unquestioned authority to do that which they will or desire, for they are Manifestations of the Almighty, who is the possessor of Omnipotence and unquestioned authority. Bahá'u'lláh has conferred such absolute authority upon the House of Justice. For it is a foundation which safe-guards the order and unity of the world and the peace of society, and it would fall short of this vital accomplishment were its authority to be questioned by any one. *)

On infallibility; decrees of the House

'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "Infallibility is of two kinds; (1) Intrinsic or immediate Infallibility, (2) conferred, extrinsic or mediate Infallibility. Intrinsic or immediate Infallibility means that God, exalted is His Glory, and none else save Him has any portion thereof. He is the doer of that which He willeth. And His Infallibility is especialized to His Universal Manifestations who appear at the head of each great Cycle.

"The conferred, extrinsic or mediate Infallibility is that of those Holy Souls who are under the protection of the Divine Manifestations, for preservation from error is conferred upon souls as a pure gift of God. God's Infallibility is intrinsic, whereas that of the Holy Souls under the protection of His Manifestations is extrinsic, for it is acquired as a gift or quality from them. For instance, the light of the Sun is intrinsic or immediate, but the light of the planets is acquired from the Sun and is therefore extrinsic. The light of the Sun is independent of the planet, while that of the planet is dependent upon the light of the Sun. To be brief, God will raise pure, righteous and sincere beings for the House of Justice who will be under His protection and the decrees of the House of Justice shall be effective in all matters not especially 'provided for in the Book.'"

Sex and number of membership of the House

Being asked as to the sex of its membership, 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "The membership of the House of Justice shall be all men." Being asked if the members of the General House of Justice will be nine in number, He answered: "The membership is not limited to nine. Nay, nine is the minimum number and it will gradually be increased nine by nine. For instance, it will be raised to numbers which are multiples of the number nine, such as eighty-one which is equal to nine times nine, and so forth." Supplementary to the above utterances, I hereby translate an important Tablet, concerning the House of Justice, revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, for a Persian believer in the early years of this century:

Tablet concerning the House of Justice and its enactments of laws

He Is Al-Abha!

O thou who art holding fast unto the hem of the Covenant!

Thy letter came and the questions mentioned therein were considered. ... Thou hast asked as to the wisdom of the formulation of certain important laws having been (in this Manifestation) relegated to the care of the House of Justice. It is to be known primarily that this Divine Dispensation is a purely spiritual and merciful one dealing with the things of the soul. It has hardly any direct relation with the physical and temporal affairs or with the worldly concerns. Similarly, the Dispensation of Christ was a purely spiritual one. In the whole of the Gospel, excepting the law prohibiting divorce and the reference made to the Abolition of the (Jewish) Sabbath, all laws were spiritual ones and directed to the cultivation of divine morals. Thus it was said, "The Son of Man has not come to judge the world."

Now this Most Great Cycle is also purely spiritual and confers the Life Eternal. For the basic principle of the Cause of God is to purify morals, to beautify attributes and to moderate and adjust (Human) manners. And by this it is intended that beings veiled from the Truth may attain the station of Meeting, and darkened and imperfect souls may be illumined.

As to other laws (than those which concern the spiritual side of man), these

are secondary to Certitude, Faith, Inner conviction, and Knowledge. Nevertheless, because this blessed Cycle is the greatest of All Divine Cycles, (laws concerning) all temporal as well as spiritual matters are laid down therein with the utmost power and authority. Consequently principle questions which constitute the chief foundation of the Law of God have been enacted and written (in the Book); but secondary questions (or those of less importance than the principal laws), have been referred to the House of Justice, The wisdom of the latter case is this that times do not always continue the same, and that change and vicissitudes are among the essential characteristics of the world of time and place. Therefore the House of Justice will act and order (those non-principal cases) in accord with the requirement of the times.

Moreover, let it not be supposed that the House of Justice will settle any matter in accord with its own thought and opinion. I ask forgiveness from God! (* This expression means, "No! Far from it!" *) Nay, the House of Justice will execute laws and settlements through the Confirmation and Inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For this House of Justice is under the protection, preservation and keeping of the Pre-existent Beauty (i.e., Bahá'u'lláh), and whatever it may decide must be followed by all as a fixed necessity and as a decreed obligatory duty, and there is no other refuge (or choice) for any one.

Say, O people! Verily the greatest (or universal) House of Justice is under the wings of Our Lord the Clement, the Merciful, that is, under His protection, supervision, preservation and guardianship. For verily He hath commanded the assured believers to obey that pure and sanctified Body and that Holy and Mighty Gathering. Its dominion is heavenly and divine, and its ordinances are spiritual and inspired.

To be brief, this is the purpose and wisdom of committing such civil laws (or secular, administrative ordinances) to the care of the House of Justice.

Similarly in the Religion of the Quran, all laws were not revealed as Sacred Texts; nay, even the tenth of the tenth of a tenth of them was not revealed (by the Prophet). Although the principal questions of importance were revealed, yet most assuredly some half a million of its laws were not put down (in the Book). Subsequently, these were legislated through the "Method of .Analogy". (* Or rules of deducting new laws from essential roots as revealed in the Text. *) During the early legislations, various individuals among the legislators advanced different opinions through their various applications of the method of Analogy, and these were enforced as laws.

No such legislation is entrusted to the body of the House of Justice and any deduction and selection (of laws by the "Method of Analogy") by any individual doctor of laws Is of no importance, unless it is submitted for approval to the House of Justice. The difference (* Between this system and that of legislation through analogical deduction by individual doctors as was the case with subsequent legislation in Islam. *) is this that by submitting such analogical deduction for the approval of the House of Justice, no disagreement will arise among different legislators; for the members of the House of Justice are

elected and trusted by the whole community; while legislation based on individual doctors' analogical deductions will necessarily result in discordant opinions and conduce to indecision, inharmony and dissension, destroying the oneness of the Word and the unity of the Religion of God and shaking the foundation of the Law of God.

As to the matter of Matrimony: This is entirely one of the laws of civil society, and yet its conditions have been revealed and its essentials explained in the Law of God (Book of Aqdas, etc.). But the marriage of kinsfolk has not been revealed in its details, and this matter has been referred to the House of Justice to settle according to the rules of Civilization and in keeping with wisdom and medical science and with the requirements of the human nature. There is no doubt that in accord with the rules of Civilization, medical science and human nature, the marriage of remote individuals (or non-relative or distant relatives) is better than the marriage of near kin. Although in the Law of Christianity the marriage of kinsfolk is in reality allowable, for a law prohibiting it has not been revealed in the Book,- yet due to the above consideration, the early Christian Councils prohibited the marriage of relations. Otherwise, this would be in force in all the sects of Christianity even at present, for this question is a purely civil (or secular) one.

In short, whatever decision the House of Justice may make in this matter, it will be a conclusive and inviolable Divine Law, and no one shall depart therefrom. With due consideration, you will clearly see how this matter of relegating civil (or secular) legislation to the House of Justice is in accord with a great wisdom. For whenever a new difficulty may arise, and an unexpected phase may come up in a question already decided by the House or Justice, a special session of the House can again be called to decide upon the new case under consideration, and remove the unforeseen difficulty. For the House of Justice has also the authority to abolish a decision that it itself has already made.

Such special phase in legislature was also allowed in the Quran, for it was referred to the Judgment (or will) of the Man of Authority (i.e., a ruler, chief, or head). No rules were revealed in the Quran concerning the different degrees or the limit of its application, but it was relegated to and made dependent upon the opinion of the "Chief Executive", whose authority in the matter included the pronouncing of verdicts and even the death sentence; for the administration of affairs in the Islam community mostly revolve around this axis.

To be brief, the foundation of this Most Great Dispensation has been laid in such a comprehensive manner that its laws and ordinances are agreeable to and in accord with all future cycles and ages. It is not like unto the laws of the former Religions, the application of which is impossible and impracticable at the present time. For instance, consider the laws of the Torah (the Old Testament) which it is impossible to execute in this day; for they contain ten death sentences. Likewise in accord with the Law of the Quran, the hand of a man who may steal ten Dirhams is to be amputated. It is now impossible to

execute such. No, by the Life of God!

But this Holy and Divine Law (The Bahá'í Revelation) is in accord with all times, ages end cycles. ... etc.

Upon thee be Al-Baha!

(Sig.) 'A. 'A.

Ego in American Bahá'ís; qualities become manifest to all

One day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, speaking of the early stages of the Cause in America, said in part: "That which is always the cause of inharmony and delays the progress of the Cause of God is love for leadership and self-interest. Those who cherish such tendencies imagine that these will be concealed from others. But they know not that if anyone possess a quality, whether praiseworthy or objectionable, it is impossible that it may not become known to others, sooner or later. If it remain concealed today, it will be exposed tomorrow. And if a man do not possess a certain quality, he cannot persuade others of his possession thereof by dint of proclaiming it.

On humility and meekness; Mulla Husayn's submission to Quddus

"That which is conducive to the progress of souls, is humility and meekness, gentleness and evanescence. Every individual must suppose another to be the possessor of a gift of which he himself is deprived. This will cause every one to be humble and meek before another. One must not think of becoming leader. If anyone imagines himself the possessor of this or that high quality, and of certain superior powers not possessed by others, this will fill him with pride and haughtiness. But when each one supposes the other to be the possessor of a high gift, and therefore humbles himself before him, by this means all men will become humble before one another and love for leadership will wholly vanish. This then will conduce to the progress of individuals and to the advancement of the Cause of God. But he who entertains the desire to live for leadership will in the end be deprived. He will never succeed to serve the Cause of God. For instance, everyone in Persia praises Haji Mirza Haydar Ali in writing to us. But everyone used to complain of Jamal in their letters. (* Jamal was the Bahá'í teacher who always posed a leader and tried to exact homage from all. He became a Naqidh after the departure of Bahá'u'lláh. *) The reason was that Haji was humble and meek before all. He has been highly successful in the service of the Cause, and all believers love him. But Jamal was disliked by all because of his haughtiness, and you see what he came to in the end.

"To be brief: each one of the believers in mentioning the other must praise and speak highly of him. On a certain occasion some of the believers inquired of Haji Siyyid Yahya or Darab (* One of the martyred nineteen Letters of the Living. *) concerning Jinabi-Bab-ul-Bab (* Bab'u'l-Bab was Mulla Husayn Boshroui, the first believer in the Bab's Message. *) and his character. He answered, 'O that I were as worthy as a single hair of his body.' This was the degree of his meekness, though he - Aqa Siyyid Yahya - was of so high and lofty a rank (while a pontiff) that whenever he went to Tihran over thirty thousand

Mullas, grandees and other city people would go out of town to meet him and show him the utmost respect.

"Upon another occasion Bab-ul-Bab was asked concerning Aqa Siyyid Yahya, and he answered, 'I can not be counted as worthy as the dust of his feet.' To be brief, this is the meaning of meekness and humbleness, and this is the highest attribute of the people of faith.

"One evening Hazrati Quddus (* The great soul who led the Babis in the Shaykha Tabarsi fortress. *) went to the house of the Bab-ul-Bab. In those days, Hazrati Quddus was not recognized as a man of high rank and authority. He was only accounted as a religious scholar. Bab-ul-Bab occupied the highest seat, and Jinabi Quddus occupied a place near the door. During that night various conversations and explanations took place between the two. This acquainted Bab-ul-Bab with the lofty degree of knowledge possessed by the young scholar, as a consequence of which he made himself humble before him. On the following morning, when the party of the preceding day went again into the presence of Bab-ul-Bab, they discovered a great change:

They found the young scholar occupying the highest seat, while in his presence stood Bab-ul-Bab with the utmost humility and meekness.

"To be brief: the principal thing in the Cause of God is humility, meekness and service to the Cause, and not leadership. I remember once when I was a child, I was in the arms of Jinabi Tahirih (Qurrat-ul-Ayn), and while Aqa Siyyid Yahya of Darab was outside the room. He possessed great learning and was a man of high endowments. Among other things, he knew thirty thousand traditions and quoted verses of the Quran in demonstration of the Bab's Manifestation. Jinabi Tahirih, addressing herself to him said: 'Oh, Jinabi Siyyid! Bring forth a deed if thou art a man of mighty action.' (Quran) Hearing this, Aqa Siyyid Yahya was suddenly so impressed that he became submissive and humble. It then dawned upon him that the matter is a different matter, and that it is not only to prove the claim of the Bab, but to sacrifice one's life in spreading His Teachings. He traveled and taught the Truth in various cities until he finally suffered martyrdom."

Mrs Watson; being undeterred by physical ailment

One day, while in His Holy presence, I spoke of Mrs. Watson and certain other American believers who, notwithstanding physical ailments and paucity of worldly means, are so devotedly active in the service of the Cause that it is a matter of astonishment to all. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "This is one of the conditions of the teachers of the Truth; he must possess pure severance, so that his words may produce such an effect on /the/ hearers that even if they do not become believers and approve the Truth, yet they will be impressed by his sincerity and devotion, and testify that he has no attachment whatsoever to the world, and his only purpose is Truth." Then He gave the following illustration:

Story of a pilgrimage during Bahá'u'lláh's time in Baghdad and consulting the Qur'an

"During the years of (Bahá'u'lláh's residence at) Baghdad, word was brought that Mirza Yahya Khan, the Governor of Mazindaran, a nephew of Mirza Aqa Khan of Nur, the Prime Minister, had come to perform the pilgrimage of the Shrines (at Karbila and Najaf, etc.), and that he was now in Kazimayn. (* A city within three miles of Baghdad, where two of the twelve Imams are buried. *) Because of former acquaintance the Blessed Perfection bade me go and call upon him. On arriving at his house, I found Siyyid Ibrahim, a Muhammadan Mujtahid, was calling on the Persian Grandee, and was engaged in various conversations. Among other things, he asked the Khan as to the destination of his journey. In answer he named it to be Najaf (where the Tomb of Ali is situated). The Siyyid said, 'Oh no! Now that you have come this far, it is well that you go also to Mecca and have me also in your company to the pilgrimage of that Sacred Spot.' The Khan answered, that as manifold occupations awaited him in Persia, he was bound to be back in that country within three or four months, but that after returning thither and transacting his business, he hoped, God willing, he would start for the pilgrimage of Mecca in the following year, etc. The Mujtahid again persisted in his attempt to persuade the Khan by saying how many people had come this far and returned In hope of coming back at a future time and proceeding toward Mecca, and how they either had died or were unable to return and were finally deprived of visiting the House of God! etc etc.

"To be brief: He finally succeeded to the point of persuading the Khan to 'Consult the Quran' and then to act accordingly. (* This means taking omen from the verse appearing at the top of the page, when opened at random. This form of taking omen is frequently practised by Muslims in Persia. *)

The Khan consented and ordered the Quran to be brought. The Mujtahid, himself performing the ablution of the face and hands, took the Quran and opened it for consultation. But to the utter amazement of the Siyyid, the verse at the top of the page, on which depended the whole decision, was a prohibitive verse, that is, a verse which seriously advised against the proposed undertaking. For a whole quarter of an hour, the Siyyid was lost in meditation, wondering what to say and what to do. Finally he said the verse was subject also to a different interpretation and he explained it in such a way as to mean a decisive command. Nevertheless, the Khan protested while astonished at the liberty taken by the Siyyid in controverting the meaning of the verse. In reply, the Siyyid, intent upon proving his own position, offered to cite an illustration. He began by saying: 'When Siyyid Ali Muhammad the Bab...' No sooner had he mentioned the name Bab than Mirza Yahya Khan realized that the Siyyid did not know me, and that he might offend me if allowed to continue talking against the Cause. In order to avoid such an awkward dilemma, the Khan seemed determined to make a sign to the Siyyid in order to stop him. As I wished to hear what the Siyyid would say in regard to the Bab, I so fastened my eyes upon the Khan that he found it impossible to use a gesture to the Siyyid without my noticing it. So he was obliged to remain silent, and the Siyyid continued: 'When the Bab appeared, and his followers were on their way to the fortress of Shaykh Tabarsi, there was a man in Karbila (* In Iraq. *) called Haji Muhammad Taqi of Kirman who was also one of the Bab's followers. He was, however, a man of lofty

character, and showed forth all the high attributes of the people of faith. That is, he was well known for faithfulness, rectitude, trustworthiness, sincerity, generosity, charity and obedience to the Divine Laws. As he was also a man of means, he greatly assisted poor religious students with funds. In short, he was so perfect in his life and deeds, that no one could find the least flaw or defect in his character. But alas! such a noble soul was a Babi, and was intent upon traveling to the fortress of Shaykh Tabarsi to join the rank of his co-religionists. The Muslem Doctors and the Mullas in Karbila who knew him to be such a good man, did their utmost to prevent him from the error of following the Cause of the Bab and traveling to Persia. But he would bring many proofs as the truth of the Bab's claim and persisted in going to Persia to help His followers. The Mullas who were extremely anxious for his salvation, vainly endeavoured to prove to him his ignorance and his error. Finally they persuaded him to accompany them to the Shrine of Husayn and stand with all humility before the Imam's Tomb, and after earnest prayer, to open the Sacred Volume and ask for guidance in the matter. They agreed, that if the verse should contain a command, the Haji would be convinced of the righteousness of the Cause and proceed on his journey, without any further interference on their part.

"To be brief: At dawn a body of the Mullas, accompanied by the Haji, proceeded to the Holy Shrine, and after chanting the visiting Tablet, and performing the morning prayer, they made the following wish: "O Holy Imam: We pray that thou make clear to us through the verse in the Sacred Volume that we are about to consult, if this Bab is in error or his claim is true and sanctioned by God."

"'Then they took the Quran and opened it with all reverence, when, lo! the verse in their answer was the following: "Whoever turns aside from my Admonition, verily, he shall lead a miserable life." (K. 8. 20) This verse astounded all the Mullas present. For they had all heard that in those days the Bab had already declared himself to be "The Admonition (i.e., Dhikr) of God." (* The above verse is pronounced by many of the past commentators of the Quran to be a clear reference to the Manifestation of Qa'im. *) Great uproar and agitation arose among them, and they knew not what course to pursue. At last, they attempted to offer an explanation. They said: "The Quranic verses are of two kinds: 'Perspicuous Verses' and 'Ambiguous Verses.' And now this verse is not to be taken in its literal sense. Nay, we should interpret the word, 'Admonition', to be the 'Holy Religion of Muhammad' and not a reference to the Bab.'" The Siyyid resumed: 'To be brief, Haji Muhammad Taqi would not listen to any further explanation, for the verse had added to his conviction. He, therefore, started for Persia to join the Babis at Shaykh Tabarsi. He, however, did not reach his destination, for upon his arrival in Tihran he was arrested and put to death as a Babi!'"

Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued: "I turned to the Siyyid and said, 'O, eminent Sir! What is your authority in considering the above verse as being "an ambiguous verse," needing an allegorical interpretation? Do you not know that all authoritative commentators of both the Shi'ah and Suni Schools have

considered this a "perspicuous verse?"' The Siyyid answered haughtily, "We have the authority and the right to interpret the last verse as an ambiguous one, and we also have the right to interpret the present verse dealing with the Khan's pilgrimage to Mecca, in a similar way ' I answered: 'You are plainly wrong in your interpretation of both verses. For by ambiguous verses is meant those whose literal sense is not in accord with the fundamental principles of the Law. Such verses are therefore liable to an allegorical interpretation. By perspicuous verses is meant those whose literal sense is plainly in accord with the general laws and fundamental rules of Faith. Such verses are therefore taken literally.' This explanation admonished the Siyyid to some extent.

"Sometime after, this Siyyid Ibrahim attained to the Presence of the Blessed Perfection. During subsequent years, I heard Siyyid Muhammad of Isfahan say that this Siyyid finally became devoted to the Cause of Karbela. For when Siyyid Muhammad had called on him, he had returned the call and expressed his love for the Truth. This story was cited to illustrate the fact that although Siyyid Ibrahim considered Hoji Mirza Muhammad Taqi of Kirman a man of error religiously, yet he fully testified to his lofty character and noble life. Thus the Bahá'ís must live such a perfect life among men, that even those who will not see this Truth or believe in it, would not fail to be impressed by the noble life they live as Bahá'ís."

The faith and assurance of the author's wife, and in those accompanying Bahá'u'lláh's exile, and those that complained

One night at dinner, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke joyfully of my wife as one endowed with great Faith. He testified to her sincerity, faithfulness and assurance in the most impressive tone of voice. He ended by saying: "This is the meaning of Faith! This is but true Faith. She is indeed possessed with perfect assurance. She shall indeed rest, she shall enjoy perfect peace."

Speaking at length concerning true faith, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke thus: "When man has faith, even the mountains of the world can not oppose him, nay, he bears every trial and calamity, and nothing can conduce to his weakness. But one who is not a true believer, and does not possess real faith will lament over the least disappointment and complain of the slightest thing which may mar his peace and pleasure. When in company with the Blessed Perfection we arrived in Constantinople as exiles, we were all filled with joy and gladness and enjoyed great peace of mind. Then when we were removed to Adrianople we still continued in the same spirit in our new place of exile. None among us offered any complaint, except three persons: Mirza Yahya (Azal) who was extremely downhearted and confused: Siyyid Muhammad of Isfahan; and Haji Mirza Ahmad of Kashan. (* The latter two also finally denied Bahá'u'lláh and became Azalis. *) These three constantly complained of the hardships and bothered and troubled the believers. At least Mirza Yahya and Haji Siyyid Muhammad of Isfahan appeared morbid and sullen without complaining openly to others; they only seemed dissatisfied and lost in melancholy. But Haji Mirza Ahmad, though a brother of Jinabi Zabih (one of the great Bahá'í Martyrs) constantly troubled the believers with fits of impatience, complained of the violence of the cold

weather, and the severity of the snow and frost, often saying sarcastically: 'Though I often said at Baghdad that this Shaykh Abdul Husayn Mujtahid is busily engaged in making trouble for us, in company with the Persian Consul, working for our exile, no one listened or headed my warnings. Now you all see how they brought about our exile to this wretched place, and afflicted us with great calamities in these cold countries. And now we are God's faithful servants and must need suffer these trials! etc.

"To be brief, He so constantly found fault with everything and showed impatience, that on several occasions the believers were provoked to the point of beating him, so that he might perhaps abandon us and leave the place. But each time I prevented them from so doing. But the rest of us, who were over fifteen in number and yet were obliged to live in one single room, were nevertheless filled with joy and composure, for we were blessed with exile for the sake of the Cause of God. And in order to pass the time, each day one of us cooked a certain dish for the rest to enjoy. So the severe winter went by and in the course of a few months the snow and cold passed away and the famous delectable spring-time of Rumelia came on. Then the weather was so delightful, that even the above Haji Mirza Ahmed began to praise the glorious air of Rumelia.

"To be brief; as he had no faith, he could not endure the winter or restrain himself from complaining and remain patient until the cold weather would be superseded by fine weather.

"Now this is the difference between a man of Faith and one without Faith. A man of Faith endures every hardship and suffering with patience and self-restraint. But one without Faith bewails and mourns, and utters complaint. He has no power to endure hardships and fails to think of the future when better times will come as a substitute for present hardships. (* In these utterances we later saw a prophetic vision into the suffering my wife was to endure in Persia, during her long illness, the perfect patience she showed during that period and the coming of spring-time which brought on sufficient change for the better in the invalid, to allow our return to this country, where once again she was restored to perfect health. These words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá proved my chief stand-by during the many weeks when I was in constant attendance in my wife's sick-room. For nothing but the prophetic nature of these words spoken months before, could convince me that my wife would survive what seemed to be unfailing signs of an imminent death! *)

On joys from trials; a Zoroastrian Bahá'í from India, Mihrdban, and the fortune his broken leg brought him; the army officer

During our visit there was in Akka a Zoroastrian Bahá'í from India, named Mihrdban, who was a strong athletic young man. One day on his way to the Ridhvan in company with other pilgrims, he and a Bahá'í Siyyid from Persia started to wrestle together. The Zoroastrian, believing in his superior strength, underestimated his opponent's physical ability. So, the wrestling which started in a pleasantry ended by giving the Zoroastrian youth a broken

leg. He was obliged to remain in Akka and treat his leg for a number of weeks before he was able to return to his country. On our arrival he was beginning to go on crutches to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's house daily with the other pilgrims. He was, however, extremely happy over his broken leg which had allowed him such a long stay in Akka. Besides, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had visited him often at Musafir Khanih to inquire after his health.

One evening I was in the Holy Presence with other pilgrims including the Zoroastrian young man. 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of Mirraban and how a broken leg which was a great physical suffering became the means for the great joy the Zoroastrian's long stay in the Holy City gave him. He then continued in part: "Many a time, a calamity becomes the means to a bounty. Not until man has endured hardship because of a thing will he appreciate the full value of the thing. The more one suffers on account of an object, the greater he realizes its worth. It is said in the Quran: 'They will never attain (unto Divine Bounty) except through severe trials.' The more you search the earth and the deeper you dig into its bosom with the plough, the more fertile it becomes. For the people of Faith, calamities, trials and tribulations are conducive to spiritual progress; provided one endures them patiently and with severance for all else save God. It is said in the Quran: 'Did ye suppose that ye will enter the Paradise, but when trials, similar unto those suffered by men before you, come upon you, you were overcome with grief and afflictions?' Man cannot find intoxication without drinking from his cup. Man cannot take part in the hilarity of those drunk from the wine of the love of God without quaffing the cup of calamity. The more you beat the iron, the sharper it becomes; the longer you subject gold to red-hot fire, the purer and clearer it becomes.

"Even among the people of the world, and even in worldly pursuits, trials and tests play a similar part. The more a man endures hardship in a matter and the more trials one meets in learning a handicraft, the more experienced and skillful he becomes therein. But a man who spends his days in quiet and ease never attains a high degree in any matter. Once a great general told us the following story: 'While still a novice and a youth inexperienced in the art of war, I led an army corps to battle in company with other young officers. As soon as we encountered the enemy who gave us battle, we became wholly confused, and knowing of naught else, we turned our back to the battle and set to flight. While running for our lives, we were met by some veteran soldiers, who bore the scars of many wars. They asked,

"O ye our officers! Where are you fleeing? Ye are our generals and leaders. Return and command us to repel the enemy and we will obey you, and the day will end in our favor!" We were encouraged, returned, led our troops and won the battle.' Now you see how tried and experienced soldiers could strengthen and inspire their generals with courage. This is the worth of tests and trials, and the benefit of hardships and suffering! Trials and tribulations cause a true believer to ascend unto high stations.

One must therefore, know their value and wish for whatever suffering may befall us in the path of God. His Holiness the Supreme (The Bab) has said in one of

His supplications: 'Were it not to suffer calamities in the path of Love (* Addressing Himself to Him whom God shall Manifest. *) I would never have accepted to be born into this world.' This is the worth of trials in the path of God!"

Barren ground made green and projects during the times of great danger; persecutions; repairing the Báb's House; weddings

One evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in the little garden outside the house. A number of us pilgrims were present. Calling attention to trees and flowers he had planted, He said in part: "This was a place of dirt and refuse and loathsome to look upon. During the days when Akka was in confusion (* Referring to the troubles of the previous year. *) and the whirl-wind or tests was violent, and a rumor persisted that they were about to banish us to a remote place, we were engaged in planting these trees and flowers, and laying out this garden. Now this has become such a delightful place. How surprising indeed is the assertion made by some people that existence needs no trainer! Were it not for the direct result of care and training, this place would have ever remained a heap of dirt and refuse." Then He walked toward the house, followed by us all. In the sitting-room downstairs, He resumed the above conversation to the following effect: "While numerous obstacles were pending from all directions and great calamities surrounded us, we took up the building of the Bab's Holy Tomb on Mt. Carmel. We also attended to the much needed repairing of other places. The Sacred House of the Holy Bab at Shiraz needed much repairing; and yet the people were so violently aroused against the Cause in the City and made so much trouble, that the believers could not even pass through the street in which the House is situated,- how much less to be allowed to work at it. The populace revolted against the Bahá'ís to such an extent, that even the Governor was made incapable of checking them. He finally said that nothing could be done, and that the Bahá'ís should quit the city in order to save themselves. Such was the news we received at the time from Shiraz. But we notified them not to mind the words at all, but to engage in repairing the Sacred House immediately. We wrote them: 'Go and build, and let them come and destroy it directly!'

"To be brief: They began to work in repairing the House, and by God's providence no one interrupted them, nor said a word against the undertaking, whereas the believers had at first thought that naturally no sooner they laid down one brick than the people would remove it. Thus all such repairing was completed. Moreover during those days of confusion and excitement at Akka, we ordered the marriage of certain Bahá'í couples in the city, and spread feasts of rejoicing. All concerned shed tears and wept, saying, 'Now is not the time for a wedding.' But we insisted that it was essential for such weddings to be celebrated during times of confusion and trouble. Indeed God worked great wonders, and showed mighty munificence. For the times were very hard. What a colossal wave it was! and what an astounding storm raged! God does His work of protecting when it is most needed. Such events are all the means by which God executes His plans. Sometimes a stupendous, unforeseen calamity results from the means intended for peace and quiet; and sometimes calamity leads to

tranquility and rest, confusion precedes composure, and a destruction results in rebuilding.

Stories of Abdu'l-Bahá's kindness to enemies

"When Aqa Ali Akbar was on his way to embark from Haifa, the Governor ordered his effects to be brought back and himself prevented from leaving! This was indeed very strange. The Governor then had his effects minutely examined, and the only 'objectionable thing' they could find was a page bearing, 'Ya Baha-ul-Abha!' They took this away, as if he should not be allowed to possess such an article! The Consul protested to the Governor for such treatment of foreign subjects, stating the Bahá'ís to be Persian subjects and entitled to equally good treatment with other foreigners. The Governor answered that the Bahá'ís were not to be classed with other foreign subjects; that they were hated by the Persian Government and it was not advisable for him, the Consul, to make a plea for their favor.

"But see God's power! Some time after, this very Governor fell into a strange plight and was found in a helpless position; but overlooking his behavior towards the Bahá'ís, I treated him with kindness during his troubles. I even made him the present of an Aba (robe). I showed him so much affection that he began to doubt my having the least knowledge of his ill-treatment of the Bahá'ís during the days of his authority. He imagined himself to have used such diplomacy by which his acts of sedition against us had remained unknown to us. For how could he, other-wise, think it possible that we would treat him as a friend and show him kindness in the days of his trials?

"To be brief; When he was for personal reasons arrested and imprisoned by the order of the government, and no one dared associate with him, I expressed sympathy for him by sending him word that I would have even called on him in person had I not thought it probable that, at this juncture, this might give his enemies further occasion to do him harm. In truth nothing is sweeter in man's taste than to do good toward those who have done him ill. For, whenever one remembers such kindness to one's enemies, one feels highly rejoiced. In short, I showed kindness to each one of the officials who, during those days of trouble, had ill-treated the friends. They found my kindness to them so unexpected that they imagined me ignorant of their former deeds. And I never displayed the slightest sign of my knowledge thereof, lest they might be confused and feel ashamed.

Persecution increases the Cause

"Were men endowed with a sense of justice, when they realize that even during such times of great troubles and with so many obstacles against it, nevertheless the Cause of God continued in steady progress,- they would acknowledge this Truth. Praise be to God, in the very midst of great persecution and troubles, the Cause of God was in progress in Persia. But I did not mention this lest it might create an uproar! Thus it is clear that had this not been the Cause of Truth, such events and obstacles would have already extinguished it. But, as this is the Cause of God, it grows in spite of

obstacles, and torrents of opposition but intensify its fire. But if they had exiled us to a remote place, this would have created a greater fire of enthusiasm, and the Cause would have made sudden and greater progress progress everywhere!"

Necessity of a holy life; Bahá'ís appearance in scrutinising eyes

Concerning the necessity of a holy life for every Bahá'í, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "Today the world's gaze is extended to the lives of the Bahá'ís: when they find a believer committing an evil deed, they may imagine such to be the deed of all the Bahá'ís or permitted by the Founder of the Cause. Thus they may judge the whole community by the misdeeds of one of its members. He whose deeds do not accord with his words is not a true Bahá'í. That is, a non-Bahá'í who leads a good life does less harm to the Cause than a Bahá'í whose life is not righteous."

On alcohol

In condemning drinking, He said in part: "Man should be intoxicated with the wine of Knowledge and drink from the Chalice of Wisdom. For this joy and exhilaration continues to Eternity. Man should be intoxicated by gaining increased intelligence, not by that which quenches reason and decreases consciousness."

Bahá'í Holy Days; Declaration of the Bab

In celebrating the Feast Day [Holy Day] of the Bab's Declaration, a Banquet was spread at which all the Bahá'í pilgrims and Bahá'í residents of Akka were present. In the morning 'Abdu'l-Bahá took tea, with the believers, and the Tablet of the Feast, revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, was chanted. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had a copy of this Tablet given to me to translate to be sent to the West. This I did with great joy. While at tea 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke words the gist of which is the following:

"These Bahá'í Feasts are celebrated in the East according to the lunar calendar. We also celebrate them here in accord with the lunar reckoning. For this was the custom during the days of the

[NOTE: page 50 missing]

On celebrating the Declaration of the Báb; ignoring 'Abdu'l-Bahá's birthday and making no other special days

then at its purest.

"The beloved of God must therefore consider this Day highly blessed, and glorify and praise it greatly. They must bring this Day to a close with the utmost joy and happiness and gather together in the spirit of infinite love and affection. If a sad feeling should have existed between two individuals, it should be cast away with the dawn of this Day: Great joy and happiness must be the common bond of all who come together at this feast. By chance my birth has also taken place on this Day. But all must celebrate this Day as the

Anniversary of the Bab's Declaration. And because my birth also happened on this day, they must not consider it of importance. Let the Declaration of the Bab be the significance of this Day, and not my birth. In America the believers have celebrated this as my birthday; but this Day is the beginning of the Voice, the beginning of the spirit, the beginning of the Effulgence (of the Manifestations of Bahá'u'lláh). It must be celebrated out of regard for these facts, and for the dawn of Unity which has taken place on this day, and because the Blessed Perfection has celebrated it and has revealed many Tablets in its commemoration. The believers must commemorate this Day with all joy and gladness. To celebrate this for other purposes is against the Law of God. No feast days can be set aside or created except [i.e. which are not the] Feasts which concern the Blessed Beauty and His Highness the Supreme (the Bab)." Then turning to all of us present at table, He said with great emphasis and earnestness: "Do you understand what I am saying? For if contrary to this be acted upon, it would become like unto the numerous feasts and holidays of certain sects which, out of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year, have some hundred and eighty feast days. To sum up, The purpose is that this day is the anniversary of the Bab's Declaration, and it must be celebrated as such. Not only my birth, but the birth of hundreds of thousands of people has coincided with this Day. So, this mere coincidence must not be used for celebrating a feast for my birth."

Refusal to seek his own release from prison; the importance of sacrifice

One evening while I was in the Holy Presence with other pilgrims, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "Certain officials in the City have requested me to write a petition for them to use before the higher authorities to bring about my release from incarceration. I have answered, 'God forbid that I write such a thing! This is far from being my wont [=custom; or want?]'." He then continued: "This imprisonment is a rest for me. There is no hardship in it. God willing, by the Grace of the Blessed Perfection, I must suffer great hardships and persecutions." Then He quoted a verse from Bahá'u'lláh's great poem (entitled Warkai-yeh) in which Bahá'u'lláh says: "The sign of irons is still manifest on my neck; the scar of fetters is still visible on my limbs." Then He added, "While Bahá'u'lláh has suffered such persecutions, God forbid that we seek anything but suffering, hardships and pains." Referring to what He called "the rest" occasioned by His imprisonment, and to the many responsibilities that afflicted Him before being confined within the walls or Akka, He said: "When we were in Haifa, we suffered great troubles. That is, compulsory responsibilities, such as those of intercourse with outsiders, occupied our time considerably. But now I am at rest, and my outside occupations are not even one-half what they were then. How can I call this a prison? Here are roses, trees, plants, the sea view. Moreover, it behooves man to endure hardships. For hardships train man for higher efficiency. Ease and pleasure are becoming to the basest of the multitude. No one who has the least particle of Faith in God seeks the least degree of ease and indolence. Were ease and pleasure and freedom from hardships to be considered the highest result of human life, no man could equal in this the cattle. For even when a man becomes

the master of great wealth and attains the loftiest honor in the world, a mere cow grazing on the hill-side will by far surpass him in ease and contentment. For the cow enjoys the whole pasture as her sole property, while a man of wealth wrestles with obstacles and hardships and his labors benefit others. For a little bird perched upon the loftiest branch of a tree on a hill-top commands a view and occupies a height that Kings might envy. He has no troubles or trials. But such freedom and loftiness are of no consequence; while a man who endures trials, and sacrifices ease and comfort to great achievements, is endowed with true independence."

Farewells to a pilgrim party as His 'letters' and 'books'

In bidding farewell to a party of departing pilgrims He said: "Though I had not time to answer all the letters you brought from your cities, you are the true letters that I send unto them as answer. For there are two kinds of letters: Written and creative. Creative letters are the beloved of God, for they are the manifest book in which the mysteries of creation are read. Those who act in accord with the Exhortations of the Blessed Perfection are as eloquent books which no reading can ever exhaust."

On developing talents to their perfection

"Bahá'u'lláh has said that whoever has an art or handicraft, it is incumbent upon him to endeavor to develop it to the point of perfection - even though that art be as humble as that of weaving straw matting. For it is said by His Holiness the Bab that the degree of Perfection reached by a thing is its Paradise. That is, when a thing is developed to the highest point possible for it, it has reached its paradise; while its failure is its hell."

On being calm and firm and not being shaken by worrying news

On Friday, July 6, 1906, in the evening, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seated in the reception room downstairs, surrounded by believers. He sent for me and gave me a letter to translate. When we were all seated, He spoke concerning the necessity of continuing firm, and steadfast in the Cause of God under all circumstances. He said in part: 'The believers must not be influenced by the conditions in Akka, be Akka in a state of calm or confusion. No matter what happens in Akka, the believers in every country must look upon the Cause of God which is increasingly Calm and Mighty - even if Akka is in turmoil. Last year when Akka was disturbed, the believers became agitated everywhere. The only place where the believers kept their poise was Tihran, where they attended to teaching the Truth and to their duties in the Cause as usual. Akka is the Most Great Prison of the Blessed Perfection; it is therefore bound to experience sudden changes and various conditions,- to be calm and cheering for a time, then to be in trouble, now to be in peace and quiet and again fall into turmoil and agitation. But the Beloved of God must look to the Cause of God which is unchanging in its general aspect; that is, they must be in great enthusiasm and devotion, and act in accord with the Laws and Exhortations of Bahá'u'lláh.

Unimportance of numbers; the importance of purity and adherence; story of Mary

Magdalene

"The main purpose is that all should be wholly attached to the Cause of God. They should not suppose that the greatness of number is necessary to accomplish the Mission of the Cause. Nay, I swear by God, than whom there is no other God, that if five persons arise and act wholly and literally in accord with the laws and commandments of the Blessed Perfection, they would equal five million souls in efficiency, Thus, the believers must adorn themselves with good deeds and pure actions, and obey the Law." Then pointing to the lamp in the room, He said: "This lamp is efficient through its light, so the light of men is their deeds. To be brief: Whatever may happen in Akka, the believers throughout the world must not become lax in their duties; nay, they must serve the Cause which is of the utmost importance. When His Holiness the Spirit (Christ) was martyred, the only one who was not disturbed at all was Mary Magdalene. For the rest of the disciples were confused and discouraged. When Mary became a believer, and fell upon the feet of Christ, although she was a villager of no good repute, Christ did not withhold His feet from her. This caused many of His followers, as well as many among the Jews, to turn away from Him. But Christ heeded them not, and said to Mary: 'Arise, thy sins are forgiven.' Then Mary arose and repented; and from that time on devoted herself to the service the Cause. Mary had a friend among the Roman officers (who at that time were Masters of the Holy Lands). He was the one who protected her from enemies after the death of Christ. When she had brought the disciples together and confirmed them in the service and inspired them with courage after the Crucifixion, she herself went to Rome into the presence of the Emperor. How marvellous indeed were the words she spoke to him! She said to the Emperor: 'I have come in behalf of the Christians to bring to your notice the fact that Herod and Pilate martyred the Christ at the instigation of the Jews. But now they have both repented of their deed. For they were Roman Governors and to them Jews and Christians made no difference. For, indeed it was not the Romans, but the Jews who were the chief antagonists of Christ. Now that they have realized the wrong they have done and have repented, they are engaged in punishing and suppressing the Jews for instigating them to commit this act. But I have come to appeal to the Emperor to prevent Herod and Pilate from punishing the Jews. For neither Christ nor we Christians are pleased that the Romans punish the Jews because of their condemnation of Christ!' The Emperor was greatly impressed by these words, and he praised Mary highly. This was why in those days the Christians did not suffer persecutions in those lands, and engaged in spreading the Gospel.

"Later the Roman officer who protected Mary asked her to marry him. She answered that, as a follower of Christ, she would not marry him unless he believed in Christ also. Thus he was converted and then joined to Mary according to the ceremonies of a Christian marriage. By relating this, it was meant to illustrate the steadfastness and firmness which was manifested by Mary after Christ's Crucifixion. Now the beloved of God must live up to their own duties and serve the Cause, and they must continue firm and steadfast no matter what may happen in Akka. They must gaze toward the horizon of the Cause and

obey the Laws or Bahá'u'lláh."

On St Peter and St Paul's martyrdoms

One evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that "both Peter and Paul suffered martyrdom with all steadfastness by the order of Nero." He said, "This is a clear and indisputable fact." This statement proved of great benefit to me; for I had not yet seen any text in the revealed words of this Manifestation in regard to the martyrdom of St. Paul.

On suffering, hardships and wants

Concerning sufferings and hardships, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "Men are trained and developed through these; that is, through poverty, vicissitudes and want. Otherwise, God would have ordered that His friends and Saints become endowed with great wealth and every material means. All must beg of God for real severance and detachment from the world. For this is of the utmost importance."

Persecutors now seeking reconciliation; prohibition of conflict

One evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed the pilgrims in part: "Those who first arose to persecute us and plotted against us are now seeking a means for reconciliation. We have no quarrel with anyone, nor have ever had any. Praise be to God, the Blessed Perfection made us free and blessed us with peace. He forbade us all conflict and strife and commanded us to show love and kindness to all the world. Strife is to be shunned as the worst of things, for it diminishes man's spiritual powers and ruins the soul; and it keeps one subjected to constant torture."

On food that is prepared with love - story of the poor couple in a desert hut

We spoke of the Feasts and how the food served was delicious. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "A food that is prepared in love and partaken of in love gives one great delight. Nay, whatever is done with love imparts great delight. When we were in Baghdad, there was a poor man living in the desert who used to earn a scanty living by digging up thorns and selling them in the city. He was a very devoted believer. Often he had invited me to take a meal with him at his house. Finally we agreed to go with some of the believers. He lived about twenty miles away from Baghdad. The day was hot and we walked the whole distance until we reached his dwelling. It was a very small humble hut made with reeds put together in a triangular shape with a small entrance to it. He was alone with his wife - a very old woman - located in a lonely desert. He asked us to enter the hut. We found it so narrow and the heat there was so excessive that all decided to leave the hut for the open; but having no shelter from the darting rays of the hot sun, we were all obliged to reenter it and make the best of the shelter. Then the man dug a little hole in the ground and set fire to a few thorn bushes. Having made the fire, he threw upon it some lumps of dough which he made before us with no yeast to raise it. This was his bread which he threw upon the fire to bake by covering it with ashes! After a few minutes he took the lumps out of the fire. The outside was burnt while the inside was plain dough. Then he brought some dates and served us with the

bread. Because he was a true believer and had a great love, that plain coarse food tasted so delicious that we all enjoyed it. He had great faith and our presence filled him with joy. The food in that humble hut gave such a good taste that I can still relish it in memory.

"To be brief: The world is full of delicious foods and rich meats. But that which is taken in love and served through love gives the most delicious taste. We spent the night with him, and next morning we returned to the city. He was very happy to entertain us and we were delighted to visit him, for he had a great love."

Specifics of the recent troubles and Bahá'u'lláh's protection; the importance of love to all

'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of the troubles in Akka in the preceding year, and how Bahá'u'lláh protected him and the believers against the terrible seditions of their enemies. He said part: "Our shelter is strong; our protector is a Mighty One. He protected us last year when the enemies made such false representations which might have resulted in our destruction. They accused us before the government of such deeds which if any one had committed he should deserve to be condemned to death. For instance, they asserted that we had founded a new dynasty and established a new religion. The enemies even made a banner on which they displayed the Holy Words 'Ya-Baha-ul-Abha!', and sent it to The Porte [Constantinople], saying that we had hoisted that banner and carried it through the city among the tribes of the Arabs and incited the Arabs to rally around us to raise a revolt. They even said the Arabs had responded to our summons, had all become Bahá'ís and were ready for action against the government! They even sent the absurd report that we had created a new Mecca, i.e., the Holy Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh, and a new Medina, i.e., the Tomb of the Bab on Mt. Carmel! They had represented us as men of revolt and sedition and as enemies of law and order; while it is known clearly throughout the world that we seek for peace and unity. While Bahá'u'lláh has commanded us to love all mankind and work for universal peace, and has forbidden us corruption and sedition, how can we ever have committed such evil deeds? I take refuge in God from such false accusations! We wish for the good of all. The Blessed Perfection has forbidden all to bear rancor, hatred or enmity towards anyone. He has purged our hearts from animosity and hatred. He has blessed us with love toward all men." ... Then in a gentle tone of voice, addressing Himself to Bahá'u'lláh, He chanted a few lines of poetry, the translation of one or two of which is the following:

"O Lord! Let friendship exist between Thee and me. I have no fear if the whole world is my foe. Let the whole earth abandon me, if Thou abide with me as my Protector." etc. ...

The power of Truth to shine - stories from previous Manifestations

On Friday, June 29, 1906, in the evening, 'Abdu'l-Bahá addressed us (the pilgrims) in the following words. Pointing to the stars in the Heavens, He said in part:

"Were the whole world to act together in order to prevent these stars from giving light - verily they will fail to do so. Now, see how unwise are the enemies of the Cause - who are endeavoring to resist this Truth and quench this Light. How senseless are they! They do not see the Power of Bahá'u'lláh who proves the Truth of Christ to unbelievers after nineteen centuries, the Truth of Islam after thirteen centuries and the Truth of Abraham after four thousand years! They do not realize the Bounty of this Manifestation in that it upholds the Truth of all the Religions and unifies mankind upon the basis of faith in one God. When Sultan Muhammad II besieged Constantinople and was bombarding the walls of the city to enter it with his triumphant army, one of the Ministers of State rushed to the residence of the Christian Patriarch to report the critical condition and ask for advice. He found the Patriarch calmly seated at his desk engaged in writing. The Minister asked: 'What is your Eminence writing?' 'A book disproving the mission of Muhammad,' answered the Patriarch. The Minister rejoined with great emotion: 'Now is not the time to write against a Prophet, the army of whose followers has already entered the city, and will in a little while control everything.'

"Today the opposers of this Cause show the same heedlessness. While the Cause is spreading with the swiftness of lightning, and its great light Is blessing nations, its enemies attempt to resist its strength and prevent its beneficent effects. When Christ was crucified He left only eleven Disciples, and yet see how Christianity encompassed the world! Bahá'u'lláh at the time of His Departure had from one to two hundred thousand followers. While they have already filled the world with His light, see how marvellous will be its effects in the future! When we were exiled to Constantinople from Baghdad, the Persian Ambassador at the former city did his best to bring about our total destruction. Supposing he had succeeded in destroying us,- could he destroy the Cause of God? They said they would wholly annihilate the Cause by destroying the Bab. Could they do so? No, the very martyrdom of the Bab strengthened His Cause a thousand-fold. Now some people imagine the Cause of God depends upon my existence; and that by destroying me they could destroy the Cause! Verily, this is far from reality. Nay, when I go, the Cause will make great progress after me. Remember this, Ye can [not] destroy and finish the Cause of God."

Departing pilgrims should scatter love, good deeds and faith across the world

In bidding farewell to some departing pilgrims, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said in part: "Ye came and visited the Holy Place and associated with the Beloved of God. It is hoped ye will carry with you the effect and result of this contact as a present to your countrymen. The result of this association is good deeds, the glad tidings of the Love of God, devotion, enthusiasm, love towards mankind, rectitude, honesty, harmony, gentleness and benevolence. Do not look to the world, their deeds and words, their enmity or unkindness. Look to the Blessed Perfection, and show love to all men for His sake.

Radiance in the face of the persecutor; to say only good for all people and governments; Shah Mozaffar

"If a man does you harm with his tongue or his hands, be not grieved; but smile and be rejoiced, and treat him in turn with utmost love and sincerity. It in your hearing anyone reviles and execrates you, heed him not. Say unto him that you are commanded by the Blessed Perfection to wish good to those who hate you, to love those who wish you evil, to consider the stranger as a friend, and to have your gaze purified and sanctified from all that men do and extended toward God whose Bounty comprehends all. Say, ye are commanded to speak not a single word of evil against any one nor against the Government.

"In reality, Shah Mozaffar is very gentle in his action and it is not indeed possible for him to show you more consideration than he does. Besides, God has now brought it about that the administration of affairs be in the hands of both the Government and the people. (* This refers to the new Constitutional Regime in Persia. *) To be brief: God willing, ye will be assisted by the Confirmations of the Blessed Perfection and will be favored by His Protection and will attain to His Good Pleasure." etc. ...

On discerning the future vocation of children

Florence Khanum asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá concerning the training of children. She asked: "Should parents train their children according to their own wish and judgment, or should the children be trained along lines for which they show a natural ability?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "Parents must find out as to that calling or profession for the acquisition of which their children show the most aptitude and natural desire,- and then they must train them in the same, by engaging their attention in that direction. For a child will sooner or later make manifest his natural abilities and gifts. To train his natural abilities in a manner different from this is not right. For it has often been found that certain parents forced their child to study a certain line desired by them for which, however, the child had no natural aptitude. Thus the child lavished years of his life in that line, with no progress whatever. This shows that the child's abilities were adapted to some other line of study.

On punishment and discipline of children

Then it was asked as to the early training of small children, as for instance if it were allowable to punish children? 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered: "If by punishing is meant striking, No, this is very bad for the child. Children should be trained through love. But if parents show them the utmost love without requiring of them good behavior, and thus make them feel that in any case the parents will treat them with love, such a feeling will lead the child to rebellion and disobedience. For he will see that, whether he behave well or ill, the parents will love him. A child must be so treated that even though he is convinced of the parents' great love towards him, he may still be more convinced that the parents have a greater love for lofty human qualities and perfections. That is, they love the child because of the virtues of faithfulness, godliness, truthfulness and devotion which he should show forth in order to justify their love for him. When the child see that the parents

love him more for his good qualities than purely for his own self, then he will endeavor to obey his parents by characterizing himself with noble qualities. For he will know that by this means, his parents' love for him will increase, and that to neglect this, he shall forfeit their greater love and affection. If this course in training the child be overlooked, he will be raised discourteous, disobedient and untrained. These Arabs do not give their children good training. For when their children show no regard for good human qualities and persist in disobedience, not only the parents fail to reprimand or correct them but they will even feel displeased or resent it if other people speak of their children's unenviable qualities. Thus the Arab children grow up disobedient and untrained. To be brief; parents should so conduct themselves that the child shall know that they love good character and noble qualities in him more than they love the child himself.

"But by no manner of means should the child be beaten. For if by beating, it is meant to correct and threaten the child no fear is greater to the child than the feeling that he will offend the parents and forfeit their love through disobedience and evil conduct. This feeling should be developed in children."

On discerning and undiscerning children

It was asked, "How should little children, such as ours (then one year old), be treated in order to be trained?" 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

"Children are of two kinds: Those capable of distinguishing and those incapable of distinguishing (right and wrong). Now, this child is too young to have the power of distinguishing and his sense or feeling has not yet developed. He should therefore be allowed to remain as he is until he grows older and develops capability and adaptability to training.

On always speaking the truth to children

"In training children, it is essential that the parents never speak to them anything but the truth, and never try to cheat or appease the child through untrue words or promises. For instance, when the parents wish to go to the garden and prefer that the child remain at home, they should not try to cheat him by saying that they are not going to the garden but to the bath or to any other place not loved by him. No, if it is not advisable that they take the child with them, they should tell the child the truth that they are going to the garden but that, because of this or other justifiable reason, it is not allowable for him to accompany them. For if the parents start for the garden, and tell the child that they are bound for another place,- then when they return home and may have by chance a rose or a flower in their hand, the child noting it will detect their falsehood and thus learn to disbelieve them.

"Likewise, a child should not be frightened into good behavior by the mention of a wolf (or any improbable object), for when he once noticed that the wolf did not come, he would know that the parents did not tell the truth. This will make him discredit their words, will diminish his respect for them, and finally will lead to his ill-training and bad behavior. To sum up, parents must so

behave before their children that they may be noble examples to them in words and deeds."

Tablet to Miss Farmer; on organisations to achieve ideals: only spiritual ones succeed

In answer to the message which I brought from a believer,

'Abdu'l-Bahá dictated the words which I translate as follows:

"Inquire after Miss Farmer's health on my behalf and convey to her my greeting and say: "Many ideas are conceived by the human mind, some of which are based on the truth and others on untruth. Each one of those ideas which is reflected from the light of truth becomes realized and attains a tangible existence; whereas ideas not based on truth, which haunt the human mind, come and go, producing no tangible result, like unto waves on the sea of imagination. Such ideas are never realized in the world of existence.

"'Similarly, numerous assemblages and gatherings have been organized during past ages and early periods, all of which however produced no result or fruit. Only such assemblages which render unmixed service to the Light of Truth flourished and conferred great results upon the world.

"'For instance, consider how thousands of gatherings religious, political and literary, were organized during the past ages in India, Persia, Turkistan, the lands of China, and in short, throughout all Asia. None of these gatherings produced any result, except the little gatherings of the Apostles upon the Mount, fifty days after the Crucifixion of Christ. All that transpired in Christianity through the diffusion of the pure fragrance of Christ and the promotion of His Gospel in uplifting humanity and training and guiding the souls in the pursuit of a noble life - are traceable to the effects of that early reunion of the Disciples. Nay, the results of that gathering have continued even to the present day.

"'Similarly if in this day praiseworthy results and everlasting effects are sought after, it is necessary that Green Acre shall be made a gathering place for the Word of God and an assemblage for heaven-aspiring spiritual souls.

"'The fossilized, two-thousand-years-old superstitions of heedless and ignorant multitudes of Asia or Europe should not be spread in that gathering-place. Otherwise, it must be known for a certainty that that Assemblage will produce no result whatsoever. Nay, it will before long be abandoned and forgotten, even as did the above-mentioned assemblages of the past.

"'I beg of God that that esteemed maid-servant of God may become the cause of spreading the Word of God, so that the Light of Truth may shine forth and the world be illumined. When you consider attentively, you will realize that what has been said here is but the truth, while all else beside this is pure imagination and superstition, which is vanishing and unenduring.

"'A tree must possess roots, in order that it may bear fruit. The trees of the forests of Asia have imparted no fruit for thousands of years. But the Blessed

Trees of the Divine Manifestations have each so flourished and developed that they have fed and trained the whole world with fruit and yields. Upon these be greeting and praise!'"

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

Six Tablets to the author

The following Six Tablets revealed in my name are translated here for the benefit of readers as they contain highly instructive points. These are translated in full or in extracts:

Tablet regarding Hindu beliefs; the inability to transcend the human station; spreading the Cause

I.

He Is God!

O thou intimate companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

I pursued your letter to His Honor Manshadi and noted its contents. You have written concerning the statements of certain Hindus.

Exalted is God! (* Used as a note of exclamation. *) What speech is that and what an idea and supposition whose error is obvious! In the world of humanity, certain personages appeared who became the trainers of the world, shone forth like unto the sun, were adorned by the people of all religions, became recipients of Divine Revelations and dawning places of the light of Truth. Consider, therefore, the human temple, and see to what heights of loftiness and exaltation it has reached!

On the other hand, many exist as human beings who are adorers end worshippers of stone and clay, that is, the mineral, which is the lowest of beings. Consider how base and low are they when their object of worship is the basest of things, such as stone, clay and mineral!

How then can one compare the two above classes of human beings with each other? No, by God, this were a great calamity! The outward is the expression of the inward. In the different species and classes of beings, none that progresses can reach the station of a higher being. For instance, no matter how much the mineral may progress, it will not attain the virtue of growth in its mineral world. Likewise the vegetable, no matter how much it may progress and develop in the vegetable world, it will never attain sense-perception. Similarly the animal, no matter how much training it may receive or make progress, it can not attain the rational faculty.

It has thus become evident that the beings have, each of them, a particular station, and that each progresses in its own station. Similarly, human beings have each an innate station, and each progresses in its own station and grade. A witless person, no matter how intense a discipline he endures and how abundant an exertion it may make to become a new creation, he never can attain the station of the Dawning-places of Revelation and Day-springs of Inspiration.

The "Tree of Zakus" (* Koran - a tree of bitterest fruit. *) will not become a lofty palm tree, and the fell colocynth (i.e., bitter-apple) will never bear a sweet fruit. What imagination is this? What a strange superstition and supposition is this! How astonishing that people listen to such superstition!

To be brief: O, Jenabi Khan, let us refer to that which concerns ourselves. These days (* Referring to the great troubles of those times in Akka. *) a great danger seems imminent. You and the beloved of God must be in such a state that no matter what may happen, even if this Holy Land fall wholly into confusion, or even if greater troubles come up, you should by no means become lax or fail (in your duties). Nay, (in that case) you should wholly forget yourselves and abandoning rest and ease, make yourselves extremely humble and evanescent in the Cause of God, and you should raise your voice and call out and spread the Fragrances of Holiness.

Convey Most Wonderful, Abha greeting to the maid-servant of God, Florence Khanum, and kiss the cheeks of Rahim-Kuli Khan.

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

Tablet on steadfastness and faithfulness as the magnet for divine confirmations

II

He Is God!

"Praise be to God, it has been repeatedly proven that firmness in the Covenant and activity in the service of the Cause is the means by which man is favored with Divine Confirmations both in this world and in the world to come; and Man's eternal felicity is built and dependent upon his attainment to this excellence. I swear by the Light of Truth, that if anyone arise with a sincere heart and sanctified character to serve His Highness the One God in these days, all the existent beings will become his servants and every door will be opened before his face, and he will see success and victory approaching him from every direction. This is but the truth! But this state is conditional upon his showing steadfastness, loftiness of character and exceeding purity and sanctity; in order that all men may testify that such a person is the essence of faithfulness, the reality of guidance and the banner of the Kingdom of Abha." (* From a Tablet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *)

Tablet on sacrificing all things to reach immortality

III

He Is God!

"O Thou Jenabi Khan! Exhort thou all the believers, and say:

"The Beauty of Abha --------- has opened a great door before your faces, and has bestowed a weighty gift upon you. Ye must appreciate its value and sacrifice yourselves. Nay, we must forget ourselves entirely; we must wish for no rest and seek no joy. We must seek no name or fame, no ease nor abundance nor convenience. Nay, we must sacrifice everything, in order that we may enter

the Kingdom of Immortality.'" (* From a Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. *)

Tablet on Bahá'í Teachers; its greatness and the need for strength

IV

Concerning the duties of a Bahá'í Teacher.

He Is God!

"O thou servant of the Holy Threshold of the Beauty of Abha!

I read what you had written to Jenabi H Seyed Taki. Thank thou God who has made thee a teacher of His Truth and assisted thee in encouraging and guiding the seekers. If, God willing, thou arisest in all that is worthy this station, before long thou wilt see great results and gain extended victories. This station (that of teacher) is in this Day the greatest of all stations, and this is acceptable in the Threshold of the Almighty. Every sincere soul who arises in this Day to spread the signs of the Kingdom and engages in guiding the seekers, will be assisted by the Invisible Hosts and rendered successful and victorious by the army of the Kingdom of Abha. But in this path (* I.E., As a Teacher of Truth. *) men must endure every suffering and calamity, and one must by no means become lax; nay troubles and trials must tend to increase his efforts and calamities must strengthen his wishes (for service).

"I hope you will show a firm and steadfast footing in this station, and be so evanescent, humble, detached and resigned, that thou mayest become a sign of the Almighty's Mercy, and the Cause of guiding a great number of souls in that country. .....

Abdu'l-Bahá's sorrow at recent martyrdoms

"O thou my friend! Because of the painful occurances and frightful sufferings inflicted upon the friends in Persia, the shedding of the blood of the Martyrs, (* The Tablet was revealed for the translator at a time when one hundred and fifty Bahá'í men, women and children were destroyed and martyred in Yazd Persia by the mob, about five years ago, i.e., about 1902. *) and the utter helplessness of their survivors,- my condition was like unto that of a shepherd whose sheep have been torn by wolves. I cannot describe my state and my sorrows. In every hour a martyrdom and at every breath an unavoidable hard fate, and at every instant an affliction! Thus both writing and speech have been out of the question. I however, wrote answers for the letters sent by you, in order that no interruption may intervene against the spread of the Fragrances of God; and this was due to my love for you."

(Sig.) A. A.

Tablet on Bahá'í Teachers and Believers - unity, humility and evanescence

Concerning the duties of Bahá'í Teachers and Believers.

V

He Is God!

"O thou intimate companion of 'Abdu'l-Bahá!

You must so hoist the banner of nothingness and utter humility that thou mayest diffuse the pure fragrance of Severance in those lands and regions, and spread the spirit of entire devotion, sacrifice, spiritual nothingness, Merciful Unity, oneness, singleness and the Abha Bounty in that country. This is the essence of the Cause. I beg of God that we may all be assisted end confirmed therein.

The beloved of God must be as one soul, one spirit, one heart, one thought; nay each should be ready to sacrifice life for the other, and each must present himself as an offering for the other in every instant. Not until love and unity, singleness and fellowship have reached this degree will the loved one of confirmation and success become manifest, unveiled in the gathering place of the spiritual ones.

To be brief, guide thou all the friends unto unity:, fellowship, harmony, accord and spiritual oneness. If this gift, which is the eternal Bounty of the Beauty of Oneness, be freely and worthily spread in that country, the mystery of Truth will certainly become manifest, and the Beauty of the Merciful One become unveiled. Otherwise, the tree of being will remain fruitless, and all efforts will be as unproductive as the summer cloud is rainless. This is the truth of the matter! Wherefore exhort the beloved ones in friendship, and urge the chosen ones on to poverty (of all else save God) and evanescence; and encourage the righteous ones in that unity which is the Strongest Handle. (* i.e., chief means for deliverance. *) For the everlasting Bounty of the Beauty of Abha is but pure love, is the attachment of hearts to each other, and is unmixed union, in order that all may thereby become drops of one stream, waves of one sea, rays of one sun, the fragrance of one rose-garden, the flowers of one field, the nightingales of one meadow and the lights of one assemblage. This is the quality of the sincere ones! This is the attribute of the favored ones!"

Upon thee be greeting and praise!

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

Tablet on America - great movement afoot, shortage of teachers, spirituality and equality needed

VI

He Is God!

"O thou servant of the Beauty of Abha!

From the contents of thy letters it has become evident and clear that the standard of the Cause of God is in great motion in those lands, and the musk-scented fragrance is wonderfully diffused in those regions; and that seekers and inquirers are numerous, but that teachers are few, nay fewest in number. This is the Decree of the Mighty and Knowing One!

Up to the present time, favorable conditions have not been available. His Holiness, Mirza Abul-Fadl, has written us that were there one hundred teachers in the land, there would be enough hearers to listen to them. God willing, confirmation and assistance will reach you. ...

Now it is necessary to cultivate lofty attributes in America, so that such souls may be found who will be truly worthy and befitting the Cause of God; who may be wholly humble and meek and quit of self and personal desire; who may abandon their own wish, purpose and personal aims; and be resigned to the will of God; who may shine forth from the horizon of the Love of God like unto the Holy Souls (Bahá'ís) in Persia, and may hasten into the field of sacrifice with the utmost joy and gladness. Not until man reaches this station and acquires such morals and qualities is it possible for him to find (spiritual) success and prosperity. For, man must fly upwards through this power. And without this, (spiritual progress) is impossible. For some may gain an enthusiasm for a few days, which in a short time may be extinguished by a prevailing apathy.

That which is conducive to constancy and steadfastness is severance from all superstitions and grades, and is firmness in a state of humility and meekness and utter separation from all else save God."

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

Tablet on meetings; themes, unity and focus

Portion of a Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"Thou hast written concerning the meetings and the gathering-places of the believers of God. Such assemblies and congregations will greatly aid the promotion of the Word,- and all the audience, whether friends or not friends, become affected. But when the friends have the intention of entering these meetings and assemblies, they must first make their purpose pure, detach the heart from all other reflections, ask ceaseless Divine Confirmation and with the utmost devotion and humility set their feet in the gathering-place.

"Let thee not introduce any topic in the meeting except the mentioning of the True One, neither must they confuse that merciful assembly with perplexing outside questions. They must either teach or open their tongues in propounding argument, either commune or supplicate and pray to God, read Tablets or offer counsel and exhortations.

"Make an effort in every meeting that the Lord's Supper may become realized and the Heavenly Food descend. This Heavenly Food is knowledge, understanding, faith, servitude, love, fellowship, kindness, purity of purpose, attraction of hearts, and the union of souls. It was this state of the Lord's Supper which descended from the Heavenly Kingdom in the Day of Christ. When the meeting is continued after this manner, then 'Abdu'l-Bahá also is present in heart and soul, though His body may not be with you.

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

Tablet on becoming a servant of the Divine Garden

Extract from a Tablet (* Through the translator. *)

"O thou esteemed one: This world is like unto a forest, and its trees are fruitless. Now the Divine Gardener hath come in order to make this unfruitful forest a Divine Garden and increase its trees in fruit and yield, through Divine training. Before long thou shalt see how this Gardener will engage in adorning the avenues of hearts with the flowers of Significances, and make the trees full of blossoms and fruits.

"Accordingly, exert thyself in heart and soul so that thou mayest become a servant in this Divine Garden and be the cause of honoring and exalting the world of humanity. In whatever work thou mayest engage, its results are temporary, except this great Cause, which gives results and imparts Eternal Life.

Upon thee be greeting and praise."

(Sig.) 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas.

On Daniel Chapter 9

Tablet revealed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

He Is God!

O thou sincere servant of the Beauty of Abha!

Thy letter was received and its contents were noted. It is earnestly hoped that, by the Grace of God, thou wilt be assisted with strong Confirmation, wilt open thy lips in praising and glorifying the Ancient Lord, chant the Verses of Guidance, hoist the banners of Righteousness, raise a ringing voice throughout the world, become a personified spirit, an embodied light, a shining lamp and a beaming star. Be thou hopeful in the gifts of the Beauty of Abha, for they make the earth luminous, develop pebbles into gems of exquisite color, change the mere clay into royal pearls and mold the dusky stone into a cup of great price.

You had asked concerning the twenty-sixth verse of the ninth chapter of Daniel, that 'though the meaning of the twenty-fourth Verse is made clear, the reality of the twenty-sixth verse is yet unknown."

O thou affectionate friend: Know thou that four proclamations were issued from Kings for the rebuilding of Jerusalem. The first is the order of Cyrus issued in the year five hundred and thirty-six B. C. See the Book of Ezra, Chapter One.

The second proclamation is from Darius, which was made in Five Hundred and Nineteen B. C. See Ezra Chapter Six.

The third is from Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign. This was in Four hundred and fifty-seven B. C. See Ezra Chapter Seven.

The fourth is from Artaxerxes in Four hundred arid forty-four B. C. See

Nehemiah, Chapter Two.

Daniel's reference concerns the third proclamation. His Holiness Christ lived thirty-three years. When we add the figures thirty- three to Four hundred and fifty-seven, the total is four hundred and Ninety; and this is the Seventy weeks complete. (i.e., 70 x 7 = 490.)

Likewise, in the twenty-fifth verse (Ch.9), Daniel speaks of "Seven weeks, and three score and two weeks." Then mention is made of another week which completes the seventy weeks, in the midst of which week the "Sacrifice and the obligation", ceased by the Martyrdom of His Holiness Christ.

This matter in detail is this: There are two dates stated (by Daniel). One of these dates has its start in the decree issued by Artaxerxes for Ezra concerning the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and terminates in the ascension (Martyrdom) of His Holiness Christ. This date comprises seventy weeks.

The second date begins with the finishing and completing of the rebuilding of Jerusalem, and ends in the ascension of Christ.

This date comprises three-score-and-two weeks. For, the rebuilding of Jerusalem took seven weeks,- each day of which weeks is one year. That is, it was completed in the seventh week. And the interval of time beginning with the completion of the building of Jerusalem until the ascension of Christ, is sixty-two weeks; and in the sixty-third week, which immediately follows and is connected with the sixty-two weeks, the ascension of Christ took place. This date of "Seven Weeks" is the period of the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Thus if you take the date to begin with the issuing of the decree of Artaxerxes, it will comprise seventy weeks, and if you take it from the completing and finishing of the construction of Jerusalem, it will be sixty-two weeks; and in the midst of the sixty-third week the sacrifice ended by the martyrdom of His Holiness Christ.

On the wisdom of the author's trials and their future departure

O thou servant of God! I am informed of thy trials and calamities. There is a wisdom in this, of which you shall personally be informed afterward. At present you must bear them in the utmost patience and endurance. These hardships and troubles shall vanish, and happy times shall arrive, and these calamities and afflictions are not due to any shortcoming on your part, but are because of consummate (Divine) wisdoms.

On spiritistic discoveries of the soul

You had written concerning spiritistic discoveries. The human spirit is a power which comprehends the realities of things. A that thou seest such as arts, inventions, traces and discoveries, were once in the realm of the unknown, and were a hidden matter. But the human spirit discovered such hidden mysteries and brought them out of the sphere of the unknown into the visible world.

For instance, the power of steam, photography, phonography, telegraphy and

mathematical problems were all once a hidden mystery and unknown secret; but the human spirit discovered such invisible mysteries and brought them from the hidden into the visible world. Consequently, it is a comprehensive energy, and has control over the realities of things, and discovers the hidden secrets in the domain of the physical world. But the Divine Spirit discovereth Divine realities and cosmic mysteries in the realm of the Divine (Supernal) World. I hope thou mayest attain the Divine Spirit, discover the mysteries of the Divine World and comprehend the secrets of the physical world.

On John 14:30, the Prince of the World

You had asked concerning the thirtieth verse of the fourteenth chapter of the Book of St. John, where His Holiness Christ has said: "I will no more speak much with you, for the Prince of the World cometh, and hath nothing in me." [Jn 14:30] By "The Prince of the World," is meant the Blessed Perfection. And "He hath nothing in me," signifies that after Him (i.e., Jesus), all receive bounty from Him; but that He (Blessed Perfection) is independent of, and does not seek bounty from Him (Jesus), that is, is in no need of bounty from Him.

On the relationship and disclosure of souls after death; the equality and stations of souls

You had asked concerning the disclosure of spirits after the dissolution of the bodies. Undoubtedly the Other World is a world of disclosures and vision, for there the veil will be removed, and the human spirit will witness the souls above it, beneath it, or of an equal rank with it. As an example to this, when man was in the foetal world, he had a veil before the eyes, and all things were therefore covered from him. When he is born out of the womb into this world, because this world in comparison to the foetal world is a world of disclosure and vision, he can witness all things here with his outward eye. Likewise, when he departs from this world into the Other World, whatever was veiled from him in this world will become disclosed unto him in the Other. And in that World he will comprehend and perceive all things with the eye of Insight, and will witness those like him, equal unto him, above him or outside him.

As to the equality of spirits in the Supreme World: By this it is meant that the spirits of the believers, at the time of their appearance in the world of bodies, are equal; and are all pure and unsullied, But in this world, they will find distinction: Some attain to a lofty station, some seek an intermediate grade or stagnate in the early stages. This equality (of the spirits) is in the original state of their being, and this distinction is after their ascension (or departure from this life).

On Seir, a place in the direction of Nazareth

You had written concerning "Seir". Seir is a place in the direction of Nazareth, situated in Galilee.

On Job 19:25, "For I know that my redeemer liveth"

As to the words of Job, spoken of in verses twenty-five and twenty-seven,

chapter nineteen: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth", etc. But in this place, the purpose of these words is that "I (Job) shall not continue abased, and I have a protecting friend, and my helper and Redeemer shall in the end appear. And though, now my body is body is weakened and afflicted with worms, yet I shall again be healed, and shall see Him with this mine eye, that is with mine Insight." These words were spoken by him after he had been blamed, and after he had himself too spoken of the intensity of his afflictions; and after his body was suffering from worms by the violence of disease, he wished to say that he shall be healed from all his diseases and shall see his Redeemer with his own eye in his very body.

On John's Revelation Chapter 12

As to the "Woman" who betook herself to the wilderness, as spoken of in the Twelfth Chapter of the Revelation of St. John, and the great wonder which appeared in heaven, and "the woman who was clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet." By this woman is meant the Religion of God spoken of here under the term "Woman"; and the two orbs of "Sun" and "Moon", that is the two empires of Turkey and Persia, are under the shadow of the Religion of God. The sun is the emblem of the Persian Empire, and the moon, that is, the Crescent, is the sign of the Turkish Empire. And by the "Crowns" (* Though the "Crowns" are mentioned as "Seven", yet they mean the Twelve Imams, because there were five proper names common to the Twelve Imams, whereas Seven different names belonged to the Twelve. Hence "Seven Crowns" (i.e. Twelve Imams). *) is meant the Twelve Imams Who assisted the Religion of God like unto the Apostles. And as to the "Man-child which was brought forth"; This child is the Promised Beauty (i.e. Bahá'u'lláh) which was born out of that Religion of God.

Afterward it is said that the woman fled into the wilderness, that is the Religion of God was transferred from Palestine unto the wilderness of Hijaz, and remained there for One Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Years, that is unto the day of the Manifestation of the Promised "Man-child.". And it is evidently that in the Holy Scriptures each day is given as one year.

Upon thee be greeting and praise!

(Sig.) A. A.

In the following, I translate some Tablets and extracts from Bahá'u'lláh:

Homily during the Wedding Ceremony (Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh)

The Homily to be read during the Wedding Ceremony:

"In His Name, the Giver, the Bounteous!

Praise be to God, the Pre-existent, the Everlasting, the Eternal the Changeless,- to Him who has testified to His Essence by His Own Essence. Verily, He is the One, the Independent, the Lofty!

We testify that there is no God but He, and we acknowledge His Singleness and

Confess His Oneness. He has been everlastingly in the height of His loftiness and in the summit of His Impregnability sanctified beyond the commemoration of all else save Him, and purified, and independent above all commendation by all else beside Him.

And when He desired to accomplish the order of the World and show His Bounty and Beneficence unto nations, He enacted Laws and established Paths, wherein He laid down the Law of Matrimony, and appointed it to be a fortress for prosperity and salvation; and He commanded us to act In that which He revealed from the Holy Kingdom in His "Ketabil-Akdas" (i.e. Book of Bahá'í Laws), and this is His saying, Glorified is His Might, 'O ye people! Engage in matrimony, in order that there may appear from you that which (or those who) may commemorate and praise Me among My servants. This is My command unto you, if ye will take it as a helper unto yourselves!'

And we salute and bless the followers of El-Bayan who are the people of Baha,- those who expended their efforts in promoting this Manifest Religion, and whom the reproaches of blamers did not prevent from following God.

Praise be to God, the Lord of all the Creatures!"

Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh - "In the Name of the Object of the Whole World!..."

"In the Name of the Object of the Whole World!

Praise beloveth and befitteth that Beloved One who has ever been and Who will remain unto all Eternity. His Mercy has encompassed all in existence. This Mercy, in its primary state, is the declaration of proof which becomes manifest from the day-spring of Providence of the Merciful One,- in order that all may thereby attain unto knowing that Sea of Pre-existence which is the Essential Motive for the creation of the world.

"In its secondary state, this Mercy is the Divine Commands, through which mighty and great ladder all may ascend unto the station of Sanctity, of Singleness and unto the summits of Glory of Oneness.

"Blessed are those who in this day arise to assist the Cause of the Lord of Mankind with spiritual attributes and pure deeds. God willing all the beloved ones must be in the utmost love and friendship, and never fall short in helping one another. The meaning of the term "Mowasat" (i.e. fellowship) revealed in the Divine Book is this,- That each one of the believers must consider the others like unto himself, that is, he should not count himself superior to other; that the rich should not withhold their goods from the poor, and that they make equal choice for other believers of whatever benevolent deeds they choose unto themselves. This is the meaning of "Mowasat". And the limit intended for "Mowasat" (in the Book) has been to this degree,- to exceed such limit is accounted before God of selfish grades and egotistical desires. Nay, God forbid that we do so! Beware lest ye commit that which is not loved by God. God willing, all must engage in this commemoration with the utmost sanctity and purity.

"Verily He is the Commander, the Hearer, the Knower!"

The Perfect Word (Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh)

"A word was seen in thy letter which is indeed a "perfect word." If any soul acts (in the spirit of) that word, he will attain to all good, and it is this: 'O my God! O my Master! My wish is Thy Good Pleasure.'

"Ask thou God that thou mayest continue firm in this word. Blessed is whosoever drinks from this Cup and is of those who know! God's munificence is boundless and His Grace is endless; There never is any interruption in the Bounty of the Bounteous One. He has ever granted the wishes of all; In some instances, He has delayed this, as it has been deemed advisable for the person who made the wish. Otherwise, he will attain unto the best of that which he has wished. But for those souls who are indeed holding fast unto God's Good Pleasure, another (loftier) station is ordained. Blessed are they! Blessed are they! ..."

Parents of believers in the next world (Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh)

"You had asked concerning the station of parents in the next life. One of the special bounties of this Manifestation is this that every soul who believes in the Dawning Place of the Cause, the Rays of the Sun of Divine Favor will surround his parents, although they may not have attained to belief in the Manifestation. This is His Bounty unto His beloved Ones. Praise thou God, and be of those who are thankful!"

"I exhort you, O ye my beloved, to show forth the utmost great Trustworthiness among my servants and creatures. For, through trustworthiness the Cause of God will be uplifted in the world, and the sanctity of the Cause will become manifest among men. Be ye trustees among the servants!

"Thus have We exhorted them in the Tablets. Verily, thy Lord is the Knower, the Wise One! Say: Trust ye in all matters in the forgiving True One. Verily He bestoweth that which He willeth upon whomever He willeth and He prevents whomsoever He desireth from that which He desireth. Verily He is the powerful, the Mighty!

"Let not the things of the world grieve you. God has indeed ordained unto you that which naught in creation can equal, were ye of those who Know. Be ye firm in the Cause in such wise that the storms of the misleading ones may not shake you."

Souls and their acquaintanceship after death (Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh)

"As to thy question concerning the souls, and their acquaintance concerning the condition of each other after their ascension (from this life): Know thou, Verily the people of Baha who are established in the "Red Ark" [Crimson Ark] will ever associate, consort and harmonize together and soar and travel and ascend in company with each other, as though they were one soul. Verily, they are of those who are informed, who will perceive and who will have knowledge. Thus has the matter been decreed on the part of the Knowing One, the Wise One!

"The people of Baha who dwell in the Divine Ark are all informed of each other's conditions, and they are in the society and company of each other intimately. This station depends upon the Assurance and the deeds of those souls. Those who dwell upon the same plane are informed of the state, particulars and degrees of each other. Those who are situated on a plane lower than that of these souls are not entirely and duly informed of the degrees and stations of those on a higher plane. Each has his (particular) portion before thy Lord. Blessed is the soul who turns unto God and is steadfast in His Love, until his spirit soars up unto God the Sovereign, the powerful, the Forgiving, the Merciful! As to the souls of those who do not believe (in God); By my life; they will know of their failings, and will cry and lament both at the time of death and after the departure of their souls from their bodies.

"This is very evident and clear that after their death, all will be informed of their own deeds and actions. I swear by the Sun of the horizon of Power that at that time such a joy will come upon the people of Truth which it is impossible to mention. Likewise at that time, such fear and trouble and anxiety will come upon the people of error harder than which can not be imagined.

"Excellent is the condition of whomsoever receives the pure immortal Chalice - wine of Faith from the hand of the Possessors of Religions, and drinks thereof'". ...

About this copy of pilgrim notes (as written in the original)

Notes: This copy of Dr. Khan's notes made by Harriett Bush - during and after - Marzieh Carpenter's October 7th and 10th 1938 Circuit Addresses.

Buffalo New York

They are an exact copy of the notes.

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