

put into prison for spreading ideas that were more progressive and broad-minded than those of the Sufis, and was resented by

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Baha Ullah was no exception to this rule. I shall not quote

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orthodox Muslims. After his death, his son, the sole heir, be-

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,

the texts to you, you know them as well and better than I do.

came determined to preach his father's religious ideas, and for

How many times Abdul Baha has said: "Do not talk, act; words
this purpose he travelled to many countries of the world. He

• are of no use without actions, we must be an example to the
had an excellent nature. He was as simple as his aspiration was
world."

great. I liked him very much

!~ It is indeed very necessary that each one of us should be

His sincerity and his aspiration for the Divine were simple

an example to the world. For it is only by showing to men how

and very spontaneous. One day, when I went to visit him, he

an inner commerce with the eternal truths transforms disorder

was to give a lecture to his disciples. But he was sick and could

into harmony and suffering into peace, that we shall induce

not get up. Perhaps the meeting would have to be postponed.

them to follow the way which will lead them towards liberation.

When I came near to him, he said, "Go and take my place at

But Abdul Baha is not content to give us this teaching, he is

today's lecture." I was startled, unprepared as I was to hear such

living it, and therein lies all his power of persuasion.

a request. I said to him, "I am not a member of your sect and

Indeed, who has seen Abdul Baha and not felt in his pre-

I know nothing about it, so how can I talk to them about any-

sence this perfect goodness, this sweet serenity, this peace ema-

thing ?" But he insisted, saying, "It does not matter. Say any-

nating from his being ?

thing at all, it will be quite all right. Go and talk Concentrate

And the revelations of Baha Ullah -imparted through the

in the sitting-room and then speak." At last he persuaded me to

mouth of his son are all the more comprehensible and convin-

do it

cing to us since he is living them within himself.

Then one day he asked me to stay in Paris and take the

To some of you, perhaps, this reflection will occur: "If
responsibility for his disciples. But I told him that as I did not

Abdul Baha can realise this beauty, it is because he is the mas-
myself accept the beliefs of his sect, it was out of the question
ter, but for us ... "
for me to do so ... !

Certainly, our indolence could not formulate a better rea-
' Questions and Answers 1950-51 (14 April), pp. 316-17.
son for refusing to make any effort, but thi~ is merely a lazy
' From an unpublished talk.
excuse.

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Words of Long Ago

The Mother and Abdul Baba

There is, without doubt, an almost ineradicable difference as dream
and is very intimately linked with the first, as you
between individuals, the one arising from their special role, will
see. 1
their place, their status in the infinite hierarchy of beings; but
whatever this role or status may be, within it each one can de-
The very ancient traditions, whether Chaldean or Hindu
velop his own qualities to perfection, each one can and must have
taught from all time that thoughts are formations: by hi~
aspire to gain the perfect purity, the perfect sincerity, the deep
thought a human being has the power of giving birth to real, hvmg
harmony which bring us into accord with the laws of order in
and active entities.
the universe.
And it should not be thought that this can be done only
I knew an old sage who used to compare men to minerals thro~gh
some extraordinary and dangerous practice known as
that were more or less crude, more or less rich, but all contain- magic.
Nothing of the kind.
ing gold. Let this ore undergo the purifying flames of spiritual- ~y
thought that is at all strong and persistent, any desire
isation and at the bottom of the crucible will be found an ingot that
is at all mte~e - which is again a way of thinking_
which is more or less heavy, but always of pure gold.
determine mechanically, so to say, in their own medium, a for-
We must therefore seek to release from its matrix the pure mation whose
duration and power of action will depend on the
gold that is within us. force
and intensity of the thought or desire which has given
How many methods have been recommended for this ! birth to it.
á
They are all excellent, but each one applies to a special cate- To make
myself understood more clearly, I have brought

gory of mentality and character, and each individual must find you a few passages from an as yet unpublished philosophical volume. the one that best suits his temperament.

That is why, unless I am mistaken, Miss Sanderson asks one person or another to set forth here his own special view of "All that lives is substantial, but all that is substantial is the question or else the method which he finds most effective. living. Every state of substance is a world of living forces of real forms.

I do not intend today to expound any one of these methods to you in its entirety. "I would like - since we are taught that our first duty is to restrict the universal intelligence to its physical manifestation alone, all light to the one field of our vision. powerful agents of transformation - I would like only to draw "However, no space exists where there is no vibration of your attention to two categories of action which, in my opinion, light, no depth exists where the essence of the intelligible does are not always accorded the full importance they have with not assume appropriate forms."

regard to others and to ourselves. They are purely mental actions, but nonetheless, very much "So long as we imagine that the whole universal reality is confined alive, very powerful and consequently very beneficial or very to the one order of substance, to the one state of matter-harmful according to the direction imparted to them. reality perceived by our senses, we know nothing and can explain nothing.

The first is our faculty of mental formation, thought; the 1 This introduction seems originally to have preceded the third talk on second is our activity in states of sleep, which is usually known thought (pp. 83-92) and the talk on dreams (pp. 30-37).

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Words of Long Ago

The Mother and Abdul Baba

"When science endeavoured to understand what light is, it And yet we must kindle the stars that one by one will come to had to break out of the too narrow space and too limited area illumine this night. This is, from the mental point of view, of perceptible phenomena, and it postulated, under the name of what Abdul Baha expects from us all. This is the way to be ether, a subtle state of reality. But, in reaching this state, it has intellectually an example to the world. For taken only its first steps on the path of infinite transcendence

such an action more than for any other, perhaps, the
 "Thus, we can now become aware that the realm of being usefulness
 of meetings such as this one becomes clearly visible.
 which we know is merely the field of manifestation, of a more By
 uniting our thoughts for one or two hours around a very
 complete materialisation of its own distant and anterior modes, pure
 and lofty idea, in a common will for disinterested progress,
 the last among the fields of life." we
 create a mental atmosphere that is ever more luminous and
 strong. But this is not enough; it would even be very little if,
 "If we could perceive the living images which thoughts pro- when
 leaving these meetings, we were to plunge back defence-
 duce around us at each moment, if we could measure the force less
 into this coarse and heavy atmosphere. For in the mental
 of their power of formation, we would understand what can be as in
 the physical domain we are in a state of perpetual inter-
 created by the concourse of our converging wills and the for- change
 with the corresponding environment. 1
 midable concert of the collective ideas and beliefs of a people,
 10 March 1912
 a civilisation, a race."

"Certainly, all ideas are not creative to the same degree. In
 fact, few minds are capable of thinking real thoughts; and most NOTES
 FOR A MEETING

individual mental formations are no more than distortions,
 malformations of stereotypes formed by some anonymous thinker
 What a true meeting should be.

which have become common property. The forms they assume Mr.
 Ber. talked to us last Friday about mantras.
 in the intellectual substance are usually crude and stupid; be- 2
 kinds of masters according to Ramakrishna:

sides, they do not last long. The
 master who gives the mantra and who is thus an indirect
 "But as soon as an idea becomes an idea-force, a true men- means of
 spiritualisation.

tal dynamism, it tends to produce and maintain its plastic re- . The
 master who has had the deep experience of divine
 presentation in á a more stable and precise form. And great union
 and who by his presence alone transmits spirituality -
 thoughts, co-ordinated syntheses of intellectual force, are in Abdul
 Baha. -

actual fact, in the substance they have assumed, living creations
 What a single man can do by his spiritual power can be
 and active entities."

achieved by a group if it unites in a thought of goodwill:
 Chaldean initiation:

(At this point, in this talk of 10 March, the Mother pre- "When

you are twelve united in righteousness, you will
sented again some material already given in the third talk on manifest
the Ineffable."

thought, including the "description of the mental atmosphere Groups
are subject to the same laws as individuals.

of a city like Paris" (p. 83)- the "night" referred to in the 1
This talk continues with passages which have come already in On
sentence which follows.) Thought -
Jll, etc.

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Words of Long Ago

The Mother and Abdul Baba

More favourable moments due to collective suggestions. To
think of someone is to be near him, and wherever two
Renewals: the beginning of each new year, whatever date is beings may
find themselves, even if they are physically separa-
chosen as a starting-point. ted by
thousands of kilometres, if they think of each other they
An opportunity is given to awaken in oneself the idea that are
together in a very real way. If we are able to concentrate
all things can be new and the resolution to make them so. our
thought sufficiently and to concentrate sufficiently in our
Consequently, the usefulness of meeting at fixed times to thought, we
can become integrally conscious of what we are
make favourable resolutions together.
thinking of, and if it is a man, sometimes see or hear him -
Reading. in any
case know his thought.

3January1913 Thus separation no longer exists, it is an illusory
appearance.

And in France, in America, in Persia or in China, we are always
near the one we love and think of.

THE DEPARTURE OF ABDUL BARA

But this fact is all the more real in a case such as ours,
where we want to come into contact with an especially active
Last Monday, Abdul Baha took leave of us; in a very few and
conscious thought, a thought which assumes and manifests
days he will have left Paris, and I know many hearts which will an
infinite love, a thought which enfolds the whole earth with
feel a great void and will grieve. a
loving and fatherly solicitude that is only too glad to come to
Yet only the body is leaving us, and what is the body if not the help
of those who entrust themselves to it.
precisely that in which men are most alike, be they great or
Experience this mental communion and you will see that
small, wise or ignorant, terrestrial or divine? Yes, you may rest there

is no room for sorrow.

assured that only his body is leaving us; his thought will remain

Each morning when you get up, before you begin your day,

faithfully with us, and his unchanging affection will enfold us,

and his spiritual influence will always be the same, absolutely

(with love and admiration and gratefulness hail this great family,

these saviours of mankind who, ever the same, have come,

the same. Whether materially he is near or far matters little, for come

and will come until the end of time, as guides and instruc-

the divine forces elude completely the laws of the material tors,

as humble and marvellous servants of their brothers, in

world: they are omnipresent, always at work to satisfy every order

to help them to scale the steep slope of perfection. Thus

receptivity, every sincere aspiration. when

you wake up, concentrate on them your thought full of

So although it may be pleasant for our outer being to see trust and

gratitude and you will soon experience the beneficial

his physical appearance or hear his voice, to dwell in his pre-

effects of this concentration. You will feel their presence res-

sence, we must truly tell ourselves that, inasmuch as it seems

ponding to your call, you will be surrounded, imbued with their

indispensable to us, this shows that we are still little conscious light

and love. Then the daily effort to understand a little better,

of the inner life, the true life. to

love a little more, to serve more, will be more fruitful and

Even if we do not attain to the marvellous depths of the easier at

the same time. The help you give to others will be-

divine life, of which only very rare individuals are constantly come

more effective and your heart will be filled with an unwa-

conscious, already in the domain of thought we escape the laws

vering joy.

of time and space.

9 June 1913

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— Words of Long Ago (Used by permission of the curator)