

Abdul Baha on Divine Philosophy

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Abdul Baha - on - Divine Philosophy

At the suggestion of Abdul Baha these notes on Divine Philosophy, together with a short introductory history, have been compiled and published by

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INTRODUCTION

Why this great unrest -- wars and the rumors of wars, changing of dynasties, earthquakes, cataclysms? The people cry "Peace, peace; when there is no peace!" Are not these the outer sign that man has lost the inner truth? Students in every land who have stepped out of the stream of humanity remind us of the holy books of history -- all of which fortell the coming of a great Messiah or world teacher. Once again the wheel has turned and brought man face to face with truth. Truth is the handmaid of the prophet. Can there be a handmaid without the prophet?

A movement comes from the East which claims to be the divine instrument for bringing unity into the world. For this reason, if for no other, it deserves attention. Its claims are too <p5> vital and important to be overlooked. The wonderful lives of its founders command interest. The courageous lives of its followers and their uncompromising sacrifice for this cause form a chapter that has no parallel in history.

During the last century three great seers or supermen have appeared in Persia -- the Bab, BAHA'O'LLAH and Abdul Baha.

The Bab was born in Shiraz, in the month of October, 1819. At the age of twenty-four he heralded the advent of a universal teacher whom God would manifest, and through whom the unity of all nations would be established. The Bab (door or gate) effected a reformation of Islam, opening the way for a broader movement -- for always with earnestness and zeal he cried of one who was to come after him to illumine not only Islam, but the whole world. The young reformer made his declaration in 1844 at Shiraz and afterward at Mecca, where one hundred thousand people had congregated.

His teachings met with instant opposition on the part of the orthodox religionists of the day. After two years he was imprisoned and held a prisoner until 1850 when he was shot in the public square of Tabriz.

But physical torture and death were ineffectual to stop the on sweep of the reformation inaugurated by the Bab. When, some years later, BAHA'O'LLAH arose as the one who was expected, thousands accepted him and at once came under his banner. BAHA'O'LLAH was not personally <p6> related to the Bab, nor had he ever

seen him, though he became one of the first disciples of the Bab's teachings.

Dreadful persecution ensued and more than twenty thousand martyrs joyfully gave up property and life rather than renounce the faith which they recognized as divine truth. At such variance were his teachings with the creed-bound world about him that BAHA'O'LLAH, with his family and followers, was banished to Bagdad, to Constantinople, to Adrianople and finally to the penal colony of Acca in Syria.

Few people of the western world were fortunate enough to see BAHA'O'LLAH, who was born in Teheran November 12, 1817. One who had journeyed afar, and who was finally ushered into his presence, described him thus: "The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow...No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!"

One of his followers in describing his power declares: "His proclamation was made with the certainty of immediate knowledge and a divine understanding of the needs of humanity for 'this gloomy and disastrous age!' Brilliant, spontaneous, mighty -- he was like a conscious sun bursting on a dark, dead world. Verily, in the future these rays will be used 'for the healing of the nations.'" <p7>

The prison officials of Acca ultimately granted him the liberty of the fortified city and he pitched his tent upon the Mount of Carmel in the land of Sharon, the very spot where, according to the ancient prophecies, the Glory of God would be manifested in the latter days. The name of BAHA'O'LLAH means the Glory of God, Baha -- Glory, and Allah -- God.

It will be noted that the divine teachers of all ages in their efforts to direct man's attention to God have assumed a spiritual title symbolic of their teachings.

BAHA'O'LLAH unsealed the holy books and revealed laws through which mankind can attain to a high state of spiritual civilization. These new laws will go into effect after the great readjustment, when wars, cataclysms, famine, labor troubles, etc., have done their work of equalization!

From the prison of Acca, BAHA'O'LLAH issued proclamations to the crowned heads of Europe, and to the Pope, exhorting them to cease from their injustice and oppression and hasten to the tent of unity and consultation -- that the reality of each matter might become disclosed. These epistles (copies of which are to be found in the British Museum) were dispatched by personal messengers, volunteers from his little band of exiles.

His commands, like a resonant call upraised from a land of oppression to the confused and sorrowful world -- stern, irrefutable, immutable -- stand out against the bloody background of Europe. Those who are following this call <p8> declare that the soundless voice will be heard throughout the ages, for they

believe the words to be creative, and affirm that, notwithstanding this banishment and incarceration, BAHĀ'O'LLĀH has been able to impress every nation on earth with a glory and universality of thought that promises the loosening of the shackles which have held mankind in the political, ecclesiastical and financial slavery of the times.

When a great force is liberated by the entrance of a divine being into the world arena, it must of necessity express itself through the vehicle of a human temple, and the objective expression of this force manifests itself in thoughts of different grades and degrees according to the capacity of the people. The master-teachers are the expounders of divine common sense which is the pathway to a knowledge of universal law, the result of which will be a harmonious humanity. Man confines his consciousness to this material plane. This new force will liberate him and he will become conscious of many planes and of the ultimate oneness of them all.

Tolstoi in one of his books says that we spend our lives attempting to unravel the mystery of life, but adds, "There is a Persian, a Turkish prisoner, who knows the secret." Tolstoi was one of those who was in communication with BAHĀ'O'LLĀH. With him he held that a life uncompromisingly sacrificed to the ideals is the life of the superman.

BAHĀ'O'LLĀH continually urges man to free <p9> himself from the superstitions and traditions of the past and become an investigator of reality, for it will then be seen that God has revealed his light many times in order to illumine mankind in the path of evolution, in various countries and through many different prophets, masters and sages.

Life must hold as its primary foundation the opportunity of a knowledge of the divine law. The great ones come, primarily, to remind man of this law which remains the same in all ages -- immutable, unchangeable, eternal, and which deals with man attaining immortality. The mundane laws, these governing human conduct and regulating the Sabbath, divorce, capital punishment, etc., vary with each age according to the capacity of the people. "These diversities are established out of regard for the times, seasons, ages and epochs."

Before his ascension from the prison of Acca, in 1892, BAHĀ'O'LLĀH commanded his followers to look to his eldest son, Abbas Effendi, whose spiritual title is Abdul Baha (Servant of God), as the expounder of his teachings and the one through whom the new kingdom on earth would eventually be established. The mantle of glory descended upon this beloved son in order that the divine decrees might be fulfilled. BAHĀ'O'LLĀH was the great lawgiver. Abdul Baha is the law establisher, as he was the first to live these laws. He was born in the city of Teheran, Persia, May 23, 1844.

A year after the departure of BAHĀ'O'LLĀH, <p10> mention was made of this cause at the Chicago World's Fair, in 1893, by Dr. Harvey Harris Jessup, President of the American College of Beirut, Syria, who sent a paper to be read before the congress of religions. This address was read during the afternoon session of the thirteenth day of the congress, September 23, 1893. Dr. Jessup closed his

address thus: --

"In the place of Behje', or Delight, just outside the fortress of Acca, on the Syrian Coast, there died, a few months since, a famous Persian sage named BAHHA'O'LLAH -- the Glory of God.

"Three years ago he was visited by a Cambridge scholar to whom he uttered sentiments so noble, so Christ-like that we repeat them as our closing words -- 'We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations -- that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that all bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of race be annulled -- and so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the most great peace shall come. Is not this that which Christ foretold? Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.'"

Interest was enkindled in America and as there was no English literature on the subject at that time, a party was formed to journey to the Syrian city to get information of BAHHA'O'LLAH at first hand from his son. They brought back graphic accounts from the prison philosopher. Meetings were held and a correspondence was begun with Abdul Baha.

Soon from all parts of the world people journeyed to Acca. They wrote accounts of their visits and these, with the letters or tablets from Abdul Baha, were widely distributed. The city of Acca became a center of pilgrimage. Around the board of Abdul Baha gathered all races and creeds -- it was the only place on earth where Christians, Moslems, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists and Hindus met and ate together in perfect harmony and understanding.

The above are mere facts of history, but present history without the setting of the background of time has no perspective to our clay-laden eyes. We are ever looking for some miracle, some proof -- for the Christ life as viewed from the outside seems so simple; yet could there be anything more dramatically miraculous than this: to establish peace in the hearts in the midst of a warring world? This kind of peace BAHHA'O'LLAH calls the "most great peace." To establish this kingdom in the hearts -- verily, it is the unrealized dream of the planet!

After his liberation, in 1908, at the earnest solicitation of friends, Abdul Baha made an extensive tour of Europe and America, bringing the message of the new creational day from shore to shore; speaking in churches of every denomination, in the synagogues, before many clubs, societies, universities and congresses. So swiftly has this cause spread that it has encircled the globe within a few years.

In America will be reared a material symbol standing for unity between the races, unity between the classes and equality between the sexes. In Chicago an imposing temple is to be erected by the voluntary contributions from all the people of the earth. Every race, creed and color will be represented.

The temple wherein each may worship God in his own way is to be surrounded by such accessories as a hospital, pilgrim-house, school for orphans and university for the study of higher sciences.

The people of universal mind recognize in this plan the symbol of assurance that we are at the beginning of the golden age that prophets and poets have depicted in song and fable. The people who have come in contact with this spirit of the age hold that the time has come when the highest concepts of man are to be realized and become part and parcel of every nation's fabric. With glowing faces these people tell of future ideals based on justice. They speak of international laws as yet untranslated into our language which are to govern the world after wars have ceased.

A new chapter in the life of the planet has been opened. Humanity has attained its maturity, and the race consciousness has awakened to the fact that it must put away the childish things which seemed necessary in the day of the <p13> "survival of the fittest." This day "wherein the feet of the people deviate" is to be followed by a glorious to-morrow; for -- "This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes.

"The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between the nations and by the will of God the most great peace shall come; the world will be seen as a new world and all men will live as brothers."

The hour has struck -- soon the vibrations will be felt on this material plane; for as Abdul Baha so beautifully puts it -- "Does not the dawn of a new day arouse the sleeping ones from their couches of negligence and awaken all those who are not dead?" Speaking of the temple of the future, Abdul Baha says -- "Every country has a hundred thousand gigantic temples, but what results have they yielded? The important point is this -- from a temple of worship must go forth not only the spiritual but the material needs. Verily, the founding of this temple will mark the inception of the Kingdom of God on earth. It is the evident standard waving in the center of the great continent of America.

"The doors will be open to all sects -- no <p14> differentiation; and by God's help this temple will prove to be to the body of human society what the soul is to the body of man. For when these colleges for the study of higher sciences, the hospital, the orphanage and the hospice are built, its doors will be opened to all nations, races and religions, with no line of demarkation and its charities will be dispensed without regard to race or color. Its gates will be flung wide to mankind; prejudice toward none, love for all. The central building will be dedicated to prayer and worship and thus for the first time religion will become harmonized with science and science will be the handmaid of religion -- both showering their spiritual gifts on all humanity. In this way the people will be lifted out of the quagmires of slothfulness and bigotry."

All of which would seem to verify the prediction of the great world thinkers of our time, one of whom says: "Abdul Baha will surely unite the East and West, for he treads the mystic way with practical feet."

It was while Abdul Baha was in Paris that a group composed of different sects awaited an audience to argue their various faiths. Suddenly this divine teacher of men swept into the room and pointing out of the window, exclaimed: "The sun of truth rises in each season from a different point of the horizon -- to-day it is here, yesterday it was there, and to-morrow it will appear from another direction. Why do you keep your eyes eternally fixed on the same point? Why <p15> do you call yourselves Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Bahais? You must learn to distinguish the sun of truth from whichever point of the horizon it is shining! People think religion is confined in an edifice, to be worshipped at an altar. In reality it is an attitude toward divinity which is reflected through life.

"This movement eludes organization -- it is the realization of a new spirit. The foundation of that spirit is the love of God; and its method, the love and service of mankind. Many who have never heard of this revelation teach its laws and spiritual truths. These people are performing what BAH'A'O'LLAH hath commanded though they never heard of him. The power of BAH'A'O'LLAH'S words is compelling -- therefore, you must know and love them. For instance, in the spring season trees burst forth into verdure, though they are not conscious of the sunshine, of the falling rain or the gentle breeze -- nevertheless, the power of nature urges them on to yield forth their fruits."

Soon after his release as a prisoner of the Turkish Government, Abdul Baha journeyed from the little fortified town of Acca to Egypt and thence to London. While in London he gave the following interview to the writer. It was published in one of the leading journals, under date of September 23, 1911.
<p16>

THE WORLD'S GREATEST PRISONER

Some Experiences of Abdul Baha's Forty Years'
Imprisonment in a Turkish Fortress

In an apartment in Cadogan Gardens sits a Persian sage, Abdul Baha, whose recent advent in London marks the latest link between the East and West.

The teachings of Abdul Baha have already brought about a community of thought between the Orient and the Occident. Upon the basis of mutual help and friendship the people have joined hands with an earnestness and brotherly love contrary to the theories of certain cynical poets and philosophers.

In his reception room one found a constantly augmented group representing many languages and nationalities. There were turbaned people from the East, a member of the English House of Lords, smartly dressed women from the continent, two tramps, who, having read of Abdul Baha in the papers, sought his presence; an arch-deacon of the Church of England, and several Americans.

Abdul Baha entered. With one impulse we arose, paying unconscious homage to the

majesty of the station of servitude. Surely there can be no greater station than this! Instantly one felt an intangible something that stamped him as one apart. Try as one would it could not be defined. <p17> All that was tangible was the dome-like head with its patriarchal beard and eyes that suggested eternity. After greeting us he waved us to our seats and inquired if there were any questions we would like to ask. When informed that my editor had sent me to ascertain if he would speak of his prison life, Abdul Baha began at once to tell his story in a simple, impersonal way:

"At nine years of age, I was banished with my father, BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, on his journey of exile to Bagdad, Arabia; seventy of his followers accompanying us. This decree of exile after persistent persecution was intended to effectively stamp out of Persia what the authorities considered a dangerous movement. BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, his family and followers were driven from place to place.

"When I was about twenty-five years old, we were moved from Constantinople to Adrianople and from there went with a guard of soldiers to the fortified city of Acca where we were imprisoned and closely guarded.

"There was no communication whatever with the outside world. Each loaf of bread was cut open by the guard to see that it contained no message. All who believed in the universal precepts of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, children, men and women, were imprisoned with us. At one time there were one hundred and fifty of us together in two rooms and no one was allowed to leave the place except four people who went to the bazaar to market each morning under guard. <p18>

"Acca was a fever-ridden town in Palestine. It was said that a bird attempting to fly over it would drop dead. The food was poor and insufficient, the water was drawn from a fever-infected well and the climate and conditions were such that even the natives of the town fell ill. Many soldiers succumbed and eight out of ten of our guard died. During the intense heat of that first summer, malaria, typhoid, and dysentery attacked the prisoners, so that all the men, women and children were sick at one time. There were no doctors, no medicine, no proper food and no medical treatment of any kind. I used to make broth for the people and as I had much practice, I made good broth," said Abdul Baha, laughingly.

At this point one of the Persians explained to me that it was on account of Abdul Baha's untiring patience, resource and endurance that he was termed "The Master of Acca." I felt a mastership in his complete severance from time and place and from all that even a Turkish prison could inflict. "The Master" continued:

"After two years of the strictest confinement, permission was granted me to find a house, so that we could live outside the prison walls but still within the fortifications. Many believers came from Persia to join us, but were not allowed to do so. Nine years passed. Sometimes we were better off and sometimes very much worse. It depended on the governor, who if he happened to be a kind and lenient ruler, would grant us permission to leave the fortification and would <p19> allow the people free access to visit the house; but when the

governor was more rigorous, extra guards were placed around us and often pilgrims who had come from afar were turned away."

Again my Persian friend, who, during these troublous times was a member of Abdul Baha's household, explained that the Turkish Government could not credit the fact that the interest of the English and American visitors was spiritual and not political. Finally, pilgrims were refused permission to see him and the whole trip from America would be rewarded merely by a glimpse of Abdul Baha from his prison window. The government suspected that the tomb of the Bab, an imposing building on Mount Carmel, was a fortification erected with the aid of American money and that it was being armed and garrisoned secretly. Suspicion grew with each new arrival, resulting in extra spies and guards.

Abdul Baha continued: "One year before Abdul Hamid was dethroned, he sent an extremely overbearing, treacherous and insulting committee of investigation. The chairman was one of the governor's staff, Arif Bey, and with him were three army commanders of varying rank.

"Immediately upon his arrival, Arif Bey proceeded to try to get proof strong enough to denounce me to the Sultan and warrant sending me to Fezan, or throwing me into the sea. Fezan is a caravan station on the boundary of Tripoli, where there are no houses and no water. It is a month's journey by camel route from Acca. <p20>

"The committee, after denouncing me in their report, sent word that they wanted to see me, but I declined. I assured them that I had no desire to meet them. This infuriated them and when they sent for me again I sent this word back: 'I know your purpose. You wish to incriminate me. Very well, write in your report just what you like; send me a copy with instructions as to what you want me to write, and I will seal it myself and give it to you.'

"A ship came into port reputed to be the one that was to take me to Fezan or drop me into the sea. The people used to stand on the wall of the city and look at this ship; but Arif Bey, rising in supreme wrath, declared that he would return to Constantinople and bring back an order from the Sultan to have me hanged at the gate of Acca.

"About this time another ship appeared in the harbor, an Italian vessel sent by order of the Italian consul. On it I was to escape by night. The friends implored me to go, but I sent this message to the captain: 'The Bab did not run away; BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH did not run away; I shall not run away' -- so the ship sailed away after waiting three days and three nights.

"It was while the Sultan's committee of investigation was homeward bound that the first historic shell was dropped into Abdul Hamid's camp and the first gun of freedom was into the home of despotism. That was God's gun," said Abdul Baha, with one of his wonderful smiles.

"When the committee reached Constantinople <p21> they had more urgent things to think of. The capital was in a state of uproar and rebellion and the committee, as members of the government staff, were delegated to investigate the

insurrection. Meanwhile the people established a constitutional government and Abdul Hamid was deposed.

"With the advent of the Young Turk's supremacy, realized through the Society of Union and Progress, in 1898, all the political and religious prisoners of the Ottoman Empire were freed. Events took the chains from my neck and placed them about Hamid's. Abdul Baha came out of prison and Abdul Hamid went in!"

"What became of the committee?" was asked.

"Arif Bey," answered Abdul Baha, "was shot with three bullets; the general was exiled; the next in rank died suddenly and the third ran away to Cairo where he sought and received help from some of the friends there."

"We are glad you are free," I said.

Again the wondrous smile. "Freedom is not a matter of place. It is a condition. I was thankful for the prison and the lack of liberty was very pleasing to me, for those days were passed in the path of service under the utmost difficulties and trials, bearing fruits and results.

"Unless one accepts dire vicissitudes he will not attain. To me prison is freedom; troubles rest me; incarceration is an open court; death is life and to be despised is honor. Therefore, I was happy all that time in prison. When one <p22> is released from the prison of self, that is indeed freedom, for self is the greater prison. When this release takes place, one can never be imprisoned. They used to put my feet in stocks so," and he put out his feet before him to illustrate and laughed as though it were a joke he enjoyed.

"I would say to the guard 'You cannot imprison me, for here I have light and air and bread and water. There will come a time when my body will be in the ground and I shall have neither light nor air nor food nor water, but even then I shall not be imprisoned.' The afflictions which come to humanity sometimes tend to center the consciousness upon the limitations. This is a veritable prison. Release comes by making of the will a door through which the confirmations of the spirit come."

This sounded so like the old theology that the modern within me rebelled doubting if the discipline really compensated for the effort.

"What do you mean by the confirmations of the spirit?" I asked.

"The confirmations of the spirit are all those powers and gifts with which some are born and which men sometimes call genius, but for which others have to strive with infinite pains. They come to that man or woman who accepts his life with radiant acquiescence."

Radiant acquiescence -- that was the quality with which we suddenly seemed inspired as Abdul Baha bade us good-bye.

It was a remarkable experience, hearing one <p23> who had passed along the prison path for forty years declare, "There is no prison save the prison of self"; and it drove conviction to the heart as this white-robed messenger from

the East pointed the way out; not by renunciation, but by radiant acquiescence -- the shining pathway out of the "greater prison of self." <p24>

PRINCIPLES OF BAHA'O'LLAH AS EXPOUNDED BY ABDUL BAHA

The sun of reality has risen from the eastern horizon. Its light and heat are being felt in all regions.

Just as the rays of the phenomenal sun are infinite, likewise the rays of the sun of reality are infinite. The following summary contains but a few of the rays which may be likened unto great principles shining into the consciousness of man.

1. The first is the independent investigation of reality.
2. The second is the banishment of all prejudice.
3. The third is the oneness of the world of humanity.
4. The fourth is the oneness of the foundation of all religions.
5. The fifth is the unity of science and religion.
6. The sixth is the universal auxiliary language.
7. The seventh is universal education.
8. The eighth is the equality of the sexes.
9. The ninth is the parliament of man.
10. The tenth is universal peace. <p25>

1. INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION OF REALITY

Discover for yourselves the reality of things, and strive to assimilate the methods by which noble-mindedness and glory are attained among the nations and people of the world.

No man should follow blindly his ancestors and forefathers. Nay, each must see with his own eyes, hear with his own ears and investigate independently in order that he may find the truth. The religion of forefathers and ancestors is based upon blind imitation. Man should investigate reality. 2. ABANDONMENT OF ALL PREJUDICE

O people, make firm the girdle of endeavor, that perchance religious prejudice may be annulled. For love of God and his servants engage in this great and mighty matter. Religious hatred and rancor is a world-consuming fire, and the quenching thereof most arduous, unless the hand of divine might give men deliverance from this unfruitful calamity.

Beware of prejudice; light is good in whatsoever lamp it is burning. A rose is beautiful in whatsoever garden it may bloom. A star has the same radiance if it shines from the east or the west.

All the prophets of God have come to unite the children of men and not to disperse them; to put in action the law of love and not enmity.

We must banish prejudice. Religious, patriotic, racial prejudices must disappear, for they are the destroyers of human society.

We must become the cause of the unity of the human race.

3. THE ONENESS OF THE WORLD OF HUMANITY

White doves and gray doves associate with each other in perfect friendship. Man draws imaginary lines on the planet and says, "This is a Frenchman, a Musselman, an Italian!" Upon these differences wars are waged. Men are fighting for the possession of the earth. They fight for that which becomes their graves, their cemeteries, their tombs.

In reality all are members of one human family -- children of one Heavenly Father. Humanity may be likened <p26> unto the vari-colored flowers of one garden. There is unity in diversity. Each sets off and enhances the other's beauty.

4. THE FOUNDATION OF ALL RELIGIONS IS ONE

The foundation underlying all the divine precepts is one reality. It must needs be reality and reality is one. Therefore the foundation of the divine religions is one. But we can see that certain forms and ceremonies have crept in. They are heretical, they are accidental, because they differ, hence they cause differences among religions. If we set aside all superstitions and see the reality of the foundation we shall all agree, because religion is one and not multiple.

5. RELIGION MUST BE IN ACCORD WITH

SCIENCE AND REASON

Religion must agree with science, so that science shall sustain religion and religion explain science. The two must be brought together, indissolubly, in reality. Down to the present day it has been customary for man to accept blindly what was called religion, even though it were not in accord with human reason.

6. A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

A universal language shall be adopted and taught in the schools and academies of the world. A committee appointed by the national bodies shall select a suitable language to be used as a means of international communication.

Every one will need but two languages, his national tongue and the universal language. All will acquire the international language.

7. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION

Partaking of knowledge and education is one of the requisites of religion. The education of each child is obligatory. If there are no parents, the community must look after the child. It is suggested that the childless educate a child.

It is incumbent on every one to engage in some occupation, such as arts, trades, and the like. We have made <p27> this -- your occupation -- identical with the worship of God, the true one. Reflect, O people, upon the mercy of God and upon his favors, then thank him in mornings and evenings.

8. EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

This is peculiar to the teachings of BAHÁ'OLLAH. Former religious systems placed men above women. Daughters and sons must follow the same form of study and acquire a uniform education. One course of education promotes unity among mankind.

9. AN INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNAL

The true civilization will raise its banner when some noble kings of big ambitions, the bright suns of the world of humanitarian enthusiasm, shall, for the good and happiness of all the human race, step forth with firm resolution and keen mind and hold a conference on the question of universal peace; when keeping fast hold of the means of enforcing their views they shall establish a union of the states of the world, and conclude a definite treaty and strict alliance between them upon conditions not to be evaded. When the whole human race has been consulted through their representatives and invited to corroborate this treaty which verily will be accounted sacred by all the peoples of the earth, it will be the duty of the united powers of the world to see that this great treaty shall endure.

A reflection of this parliament of man will be established in each community and called the "house of justice." Its members will be chosen for their attribute of justice, and all matters pertaining to the community interests will be brought here for consultation.

10. UNIVERSAL PEACE

All men and nations shall make peace. There shall be universal peace amongst governments, universal peace amongst religions, universal peace amongst races, universal peace amongst the denizens of all regions. Today in the world of humanity the most important matter is the question of universal peace. <p28>

PRELUDE

The following words of Abdul Baha were uttered after his American sojourn on the occasion of his second visit to Europe, in 1913, when he stopped for some months on his way to the Orient.

During his stay in Paris Abdul Baha gave five public addresses (see Chapters 4,5,6,7 and 8).

Each morning a group assembled at his apartment, 30 rue St. Didier, where he spoke informally; sometimes answering questions, or on request, explaining points touched on in public addresses. In this way, although there are seeming repetitions, many abstruse subjects are elucidated in these informal conferences, which are to be found in the first few chapters of the book. (See chapters 1,2 and 3.)

On these occasions Abdul Baha would sometimes sit by the window over-looking Paris and anon the majestic white-robed figure would pace the room as he discoursed.

Every Friday evening he addressed an assemblage at M. and Mme. Dreyfus-Barney's, 15 rue Greuze and every Monday afternoon he visited a group at the studio of Mr. Scott (an American artist), in the Latin quarter, 17 rue Boissonade. <p29>

His time in Paris was completely occupied. In the afternoons and evenings one found him surrounded by French savants and lovers of truth who sought an audience with this master of wisdom. Of a sudden he would sweep majestically forth, and should an attendant make as though to follow, he would wave him aside -- "I walk alone!" Many an hour did this man of mystery wander the streets of Paris dispelling the fogs of ignorance.

After Abdul Baha had returned to Egypt, the writer visited him at Ramleh. Speaking of America one day, he said, "I have great hopes for the American people, but alas! as yet they do not understand the teachings of BAHHA'O'LLAH.

"One of the veils is literal interpretation. To penetrate the inner significances a mighty effort is needed."

When one in reading substitutes the symbolic or spiritual title of the great ones, the human temple fades and only reality remains.

The spirit of faith, the beloved, the spiritual ego, the friend, the adored, one, the desired one, the rays of the sun of truth, the flame of reality, the radiations of the celestial world, the lord, the nightingale, etc., are all synonyms of the one reality of man.

"This," says Abdul Baha, "has been the mission of all the divine messengers -- to make man conscious of his eternal part.

"By God, who is the only God and there is no God but he, this servant swears the masters did not come that man should adore them, or worship <p30> them or acknowledge their prophethood. Nay, rather, the masters of all time have suffered for none other than this -- the fleshly veils might be rent asunder and reality become manifest.

"Once again the dove of eternity hath descended from the rizwan* of nearness to sing the long-forgotten melody in this gloomy and disastrous age. O, when will one arise and while listening to this song don the garment of selflessness and hasten to the precinct of the friend!"

*Rizwan -- a Persian word which means garden or paradise and symbolizes a heavenly condition. <p31> <p32>

He is concealed by the intensity of manifestation, and he is hidden by the ardor of emanation. -- (BAHA'O'LLAH IN SEVEN VALLEYS)

CHAPTER I

THE DIVINE REVELATORS

EACH religion teaches that a mediator is necessary between man and the Creator -- one who receives the full light of the divine splendor and radiates it over

the human world, as the earth's atmosphere receives and diffuses the warmth of the sun's rays. This mediator between God and humanity has different designations though he always brings the same spiritual command.

In one era he is called Abraham, at another time Moses, again he is called Buddha, another time Jesus, and yet another time Mohammad. All turned to the divine reality for their strength. Those who followed Moses accepted him as their mediator; those who followed Zoroaster accepted him as their mediator; but all the Israelites deny Zoroaster, and the Zoroastrians deny Moses. They fail to see in both the one light. Had the Zoroastrians comprehended the reality of Zoroaster, they would have understood Moses and Jesus. Alas! the majority of men attach themselves <p33> to the name of the mediator and lose sight of the real purport.

Therefore did BAHÁ'O'LLAH cry, "O God, deliver us from the sea of names!"

Man must turn to the light and not think that the form of the lamp is essential, for the lamp may be changed; but he who longs for light welcomes it from whatever source it comes. If the Jews had comprehended Moses, they would have accepted the Christ; but they were occupied with the name and when that name was changed they denied the reality.

It is the same with the Christians. What a pity that they are worshipping a title! They see only the garment. If one recognizes a king by his garments, one would not know him were he to clothe himself differently.

Who is the Christ? When one sees the Christ qualities shining from another source, one must recognize that light. We see this flower is exquisite; we do not see that it is the only beautiful one, for beauty is of the divine effulgence that is universal and unlimited in its manifestations. The marvelous bestowals of God are continuous. Should the outpouring of light be suspended, we would be in darkness. But how could it be withheld? If the divine graces are suspended, then divinity itself would be interrupted. Even men ask for continuity.

We have eyes and we desire eternal sight; blindness is an imperfection. We have ears; deafness is a deficiency. As long as we consider <p34> these as imperfections in the human world, are they not even greater defects in the divine world?

We must be adorers of the sun of reality from whatsoever horizon it may appear, rather than adorers of the horizon; for should we concentrate our attention in one direction, the sun may appear from quite another and leave us deprived of the sun's bestowals which are the wisdom and guidance of God and the favor of God, which constitute spiritual progress.

Praise be to God that the sun of reality of religion hath dawned. From all parts of the world, host after host are coming under its radiance and ere long it will become world-spread. Baha'i International Community

I desire for you a universal patriotism. A high soaring bird attaches not its

heart to its earth nest and abode. At every dawn it sings a new melody and at every eve it warbles the streams of divine mysteries in a new meadow. At one time it rises above the summit of the green mountains and spreads its imperial wings over deserts and plains and anon it breaks into ideal harmonies and chants the secrets of God.

It is not attached to home and comfort nor is it limited to nest and abode. Nay, rather, it is intoxicated with the wine of the love of God, singing at all times the anthems and praises of the Almighty. This is the habit and custom of heavenly birds; this is the manner and conduct of the nightingale of the rose garden of the merciful! <p35>

Today firmness is the covenant of servitude is the means of effectively flinging forth the divine proclamation into all horizons and this firmness is conducive to the power of the word of the teacher; for in this day when one arises to herald the Kingdom of Abha, a magnetic power is produced which attracts the rays of confirmation; the hosts of the supreme concourse will make whosoever is sincere victorious and the power of the Holy Spirit will assist him.

The obstacle which prevents the so-called religious man from accepting the teachings of God is literal interpretation. Moses announced the coming of Christ. The Israelites were awaiting him with the greatest impatience and anxiety, but when he came they called him Beelzebub. "The conditions laid down in the Bible for the coming of the expected one were not fulfilled," they said. They did not understand that the conditions were symbolical.

For instance, it is written -- "He will come from an unknown place." Jesus came from Nazareth. "How can this be the Messiah?" they reasoned. "It is written -- he will carry an iron scepter, that is to say, his shepherd's staff will be a sword. This man has no sword. It was prophesied -- he will be seated on the throne of David; behold this man has not so much as a mat whereon to sit. He was to spread the law <p36> of Moses; this man, on the contrary, seeks to destroy it. How can he be the promulgator of God's law?" they scornfully laughed.

It was prophesied that the east and west would be united under the Jewish law; the animals would be at peace one with another; that the wolf would no longer devour the sheep. They did not see these conditions fulfilled. Roman tyranny enveloped the world and they crucified the Christ.

The Jews were blind to reality. The real Christ came from the city of light in the eternal realms Christ is a king. His shepherd's staff, that is, his tongue, was a sword dividing the true from the false. The throne of David is not a material throne but an eternal kingdom. Christ re-established this kingdom; it has been forgotten. Christ conquered the east and the west. This means a spiritual victory, not a material one.

Animals were to live in peace. This means the Chaldeans, the Syrians, the Romans, the Greeks, who were to make peace among themselves, for Christ spread

the cause of peace. As the Jews did not understand these things, were deprived of the beauty of the Christ. Behold again, the Christians are expecting the stars to fall and Christ to appear in the clouds, yet these are but symbols. They are awaiting a Christ from a heaven that does not exist.

Let us awake! Let us acquire a new intelligence in order to interpret the symbols and <p37> become acquainted with the mysteries. The real Christ's spirit has come again from the supreme apex to illumine the world.

In the Gospel, Jesus said, "I am come from heaven." Physically, he was born of a woman, but the Christ's reality is from the city of eternity, for the heaven is not a place but a state of consciousness.

Man has a sacred power which permits him to discover the inner significances, the reality of invisible things. Ponder over these statements, so that the portals of divine wisdom and infinite knowledge may open before thy face.

I wish to awaken you out of your deep slumber. Do you know in what day you are living? Do you realize in what dispensation you exist? Have you not read in the holy scriptures that at the consummation of the ages there would dawn a day -- the sum total of all past days? This is the day when the Lord of hosts hath come on the clouds of glory. This is the day in which the inhabitants of the world shall enter under the tent of the word of God. This is the day whose real sovereign is His Highness the Almighty. This is the day when the east and the west shall embrace each other like unto two lovers; war and contention shall be forgotten and nations and governments shall enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This century is the fulfillment <p38> of the promised century, the dawn of the appearances of the glorious visions of past prophets and sages.

Now is the early dawn; ere long the effulgent sun shall rise an station itself in the meridian of its majesty. Then ye shall observe the effects -- then ye shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest -- then ye shall comprehend that these are the infinite bestowals of God -- then ye shall realize that this world has become another world and ye shall perceive the divine instructions, universally spread.

The teachings of His Holiness BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the dead body of the world and like unto an artery shall beat through the heart of the five continents.

In the Gospels it is written that the Christ said: "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now! But when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you unto all knowledge." Christ is alluding to a person, because he says, "When he is come, he will not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak." This means by the power of innate knowledge.

Some Christians claim that the Holy Ghost descended after the resurrection of the Christ and that Christ is alluding to this. But as the Holy Ghost was always with the Christ, is this logical? Again he says, "He will guide you unto

truth," he will be better for you than I. He adds, "Until I go, he cannot come." Endeavor to understand the divine words, otherwise difficulties will arise. Had the Jews understood symbology, they would have understood the Christ. The holy books are full of significance and must never be taken literally. Elijah also was expected to come from heaven, and the Christ said, "Elijah is none other than John the Baptist." The reality of John was in the supreme concourse. It is essential to have divine perception in order to see the truth, to hear the call, and obey -- liberating the hearts from all earthly attachment.

The mountains being shaken before the coming of the messenger means that great peoples -- great as mountains -- are shaken and become transplanted.

I hope you will be the cause of opening the eyes and exalting the spirits to follow divine direction. Thus you will assist others to walk in the path of the good pleasure of the Lord. Assuredly it is not to eat, nor to sleep, nor to dress, nor to repose on the couch of negligence. Nay, it is to find one's way to eternity and understand the divine signs; to receive wisdom from the Lord of Lords, and to move steadily forward like a great sea. This is my hope for thee.<p41>

In former times men either became believers, or else they became enemies of the cause of God. For instance, in the time of Moses, all those who believed in him as a prophet and in the unity of God, became of the faithful. In the time of Christ, those who believed in the divinity of the father and that Jesus was the word, became disciples. Faith consisted in the blind acceptance of these truths and those who accepted were considered saved, the rest were doomed to perdition.

But in this day the question is far more important. Faith does not consist in belief, it consists in deeds. It is not sufficient to believe in Baha'o'llah and to say, "I am of the people of El-Abha"; we must act in accordance with the teachings of Baha'o'llah, who commands us to become centers of divine attraction, so that the attributes of God may emanate from us, that we may become wise and well intentioned to all the peoples of the earth in order to better the condition of all.

We must look upon our enemies with a sin-covering eye and act with justice when confronted with any injustice whatsoever, forgive all, consider the whole of humanity as our own family, the whole earth as our own country, be sympathetic with all suffering, nurse the sick, offer a shelter to the exiled, help the poor and those in need, dress all wounds and share the happiness of each one. Be compassionate, so that your actions will shine like unto the light <p42> streaming forth from the lamp. If the whole world should arise to deny this cause, we must not fight. Our only role is to spread the teachings. If it be accepted, all is well; if not, leave the people to God.

If we see a man acting after this manner we can say of him: "Verily, he is a reflector of servitude!" We cannot conceive of a star without light, a tree without seed. If we claim to be followers of light we must diffuse the light

through our actions. To label ourselves will not be sufficient.

There are five hundred million people who call themselves Christians. If you compare their deeds with the text of the Gospels, you will find no likeness thereto. The real Christians are rare. The Christ exhorted men to be kind. The Christians are fighting and killing one another, leading their young men into war, shedding blood, destroying dwellings, causing mothers to lose their sons and children their fathers. What has all this to do with the teachings of Christ? Is a man whose highest aim is bloodshed a Christian? Christ suffered in order to teach kindness. "O Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Thus he pardoned his murderers. How merciful he was!

The advanced men of all time have ever been persecuted and continually in adversity. he who discovered the movement of the earth and the relative immobility of the sun terminated <p43> his days in prison, because his teachings did not please the priests.

One who is wise in the ways of God sees that his words and deeds reflect the glory of God. I hope that the light of this glory may shine forth from each one of you, for this is the decisive proof - for this Baha'o'llah suffered - that he might educate men to become the educators of the world and spread truth abroad.

May ye attain to this station - upon ye be greetings and praise!

When the prophets of God appear upon this earth, their validity is established by means of certain proofs. One of the proofs is through the fulfillment of former prophecies, the second proofs are their creative words and phrases which salute the hearts of humanity, the third are their deeds and the fourth are their teachings.

The prophecies deal with dates and symbols which proclaim the end of each dispensation. In former books the conditions are explained concerning subsequent manifestors of the divine plan. But those who do not follow closely these things will not be convinced by proofs such as these. This then is not a final proof.

Miracles are likewise convincing to a limited number only. For instance, a Buddhist would not be convinced by the miracles of Moses which are proofs only so far as the orthodox Jews are concerned, because they love Moses. On the <p44> other hand the miracles attributed to Jesus Christ are refuted by the Jews as a whole, saying "No one lives today who has seen these miracles performed, therefore, who can bear testimony to them?"

A clear proof of validity lies in the achievements and here we are confronted by certain irrefutable facts. The prophets have come from the lowliest and most humiliated of the nations and in each age the prophet has raised his downtrodden nation to the highest zenith of prosperity and success among the nations of the earth. For instance, His Holiness Christ was quite alone. He was a Jew from among the Jews. He came at a time when the Israelites were under the yoke of the Romans. He revived the people till they were transferred from

one state of existence into a higher state of existence.

At a time when the East was enshrouded with superstition and hatred, Baha'o'llah flooded these regions with his glorious light. Under the chains he unfurled the flag of the oneness of the world of humanity; in the prisons he spread the principles of universal peace and brotherhood; from behind the barracks he wrote his famous epistles to the kings and rulers of the world, arraiging the oppressors of the earth and calling upon them in the name of God the exalted not to place their sovereignty above that of His Highness the Almighty. He admonished them on the part of the wronged ones to listen to the call of the <p45> new day else their kingdoms would pass out of their hands and would fall into the hands of others. "Know that brotherhood hath been proclaimed - even so hath this matter been recorded upon a mighty tablet with the strong pen of God." [1]

[1 Many of the events which Baha'o'llah prophesied are taking place today - and many are yet to come.]

A supreme proof is the teaching. For instance the precepts of Christ were sufficient proof of his validity. There is no greater proof than these teachings. They were the light of that cycle and the spirit of that age. All that he said accorded with the needs of the humanity of that time. They were peerless and unique.

Consider His Holiness Baha'o'llah and his teaching. They are the spirit of this cycle - the light of this age. They illumine the dark places of humanity, for they address themselves to the heart of the race. For instance, the greatest evil of this century is war. In the new age Baha'o'llah has prohibited war. The need of this century is universal peace - Baha'o'llah has instituted it. The most urgent requisite of mankind is the declaration of the oneness of the world of humanity - this is the great principle of Baha'o'llah. That which will leaven the human world is a love that will insure the abandonment of pride, oppression and hatred. The principles of Baha'o'llah are the remedy and balm for the wounded world; and without <p46> their inculcation, reconciliation between the nations will not be reached. These very teachings of Baha'o'llah are the greatest proofs of his claim. Such a power hath appeared from him as will suffice to convince the whole world.

The proof of the sun is its light and heat.

Abdul-Baha arose with hands extended, palms upward, he uttered the following:

SUPPLICATION

O GOD, O GOD, I GLORIFY THEE O MY LORD, MY HOPE, MY BELOVED AND THE OBJECT OF MY LIFE. VERILY THOU KNOWEST MY HUMILITY, MY EVANESCENCE, MY POVERTY, MY AGITATION AND MY SHORTCOMINGS. I CALL ON THEE WITH A HEART OVERFLOWING WITH THY LOVE, A SPIRIT REJOICED BY THE OUTPOURINGS OF THY ONENESS, AND A SOUL RESTING IN THY COMMEMORATION AND PRAISE.

O LORD, O LORD, VERILY THESE ARE SOULS WHO ARE ATTRACTED TO THE KINGDOM OF THY HOLINESS, HEARTS ENKINDLED WITH THE FIRE OF THY LOVE AND SPIRITS SOARING TOWARD

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THY GRACE.

O LORD, O LORD, ILLUMINE OUR EYES WITH THE RAYS OF THE SUN OF THY REALITY, SUFFER OUR EARS TO HEAR, UNDER ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, THE CALL OF THY KINGDOM, THE EL-ABHA. <p47>

O LORD, O LORD, MAKE US FIRM IN THY CAUSE, HUMBLE BEFORE THY MAJESTY, ACKNOWLEDGING THY DOMINION, ARISING IN THY SERVICE AND BEING ENGAGED IN THY ADORATION.

VERILY THOU ART THE CLEMENT; VERILY THOU ART THE OMNIPOTENT; VERILY THOU ART THE MERCIFUL OF THE MOST MERCIFUL.

I pray for your health and happiness. Consider the distance I have traveled and reflect on the great desire I have ever felt to meet you. Praise be to God, through his bounty this meeting has been consummated. Happy are we to be gathered in one assemblage. My greatest happiness is the hope that we may meet one another in the kingdom of Abha, even as we meet here. May the effulgences of the splendor of God shine upon each one of us.

Praise be to God, that through the sufferings of Baha'o'llah souls are educated. Many there are shining from the horizon of eternal glory who sacrificed all, even to their lives and while under the sword cried, "Ya Baha El-Abha!" with radiant joy reflecting the power of Baha'o'llah. For love of him more than twenty thousand have quaffed the cup of martyrdom. While under the sword they danced with exultant joy. European <p48> historians bear witness to these facts and even the enemies of this cause have recorded stories of the martyrdoms, reputed to Baha'o'llah a supernatural power.

I wish to tell you the story of two martyrs; one was a Persian nobleman, a favorite at court, possessed of much wealth and known throughout all the country. When it was discovered that he was a follower of Baha'o'llah, this glorious man was taken into custody and in company with another thrown into prison without food or water. The third day one of them requested the jailer to give him a cup of tea. Struck with his attitude of humility, the jailer did as requested; thanking him the prisoner said: "I am exceedingly sorry to trouble you, but pray have a little patience with our requests tonight, for tomorrow night we shall be the guests of God."

On the fourth day they were taken out of prison and two bears were made to dance before them; also several monkeys were brought, in order to humiliate them. Solomon Kahn and his friend were taken into a room, their breasts lacerated and in the yawning apertures lighted candles were placed. In Persia this is considered the most degrading form of torture.

Then they started on parade through the town. Solomon Kahn looking about him said: "There is no need for this commotion. Why such ado about our death? Verily, this is our wedding feast and we are very happy." Accompanied by a band and followed by many people, <p49> they were paraded through the bazaars and streets of the city. People pricked them with long needles, saying, "Dance for us!" With unflinching courage and exultant joy they walked along; from morn

till eve walked they through the city. When the candles burned down, they were renewed by the jailers.

All the time our heroes were calm and happy and as they marched they smiled at the people on the right and left of them and looking heavenward murmured prayers. Finally they arrived at the outer gates of the city where each was cut into four pieces.

Teheran has four high gates and a section of their bodies adorned either side of the gates. Even while being dismembered, Solomon Kahn was praying and supplicating God. This story will be found in a history compiled by an enemy of this cause, for all has been recorded by the Shah's historians. At the end, the historian says of Solomon Kahn, "This man was possessed by an evil spirit." This account shows how readily the believers of God give their lives, how self-sacrificing they are, eternally firm and steadfast. These illumined souls are the result of the light of Baha'o'llah, who attracted them to the kingdom of God with such reflective power that like fixed stars these martyrs will ever shine from the horizon of El-Abha.

Ponder on this story that you may understand the mystic power of sacrifice, of faithfulness, <p50> how these martyrs were stirred with the good news of the new dawn.

Let us make a comparison with the days of Christ. He had eleven disciples only, for the twelfth was the cause of his crucifixion. The leader of the apostles was Peter and on the night of the crucifixion his faith was shaken and he thrice denied Christ, through afterwards he became firm.

All were shaken but Mary Magdalen. She was a veritable lioness. She gathered the others together and said, "Why do ye mourn? Did not the Christ foretell his crucifixion? Arise, and be assured. They have killed but the body; the reality can never die, for it is supreme, eternal, the word of God, the son of God. Why, therefore, are ye agitated?" Thus this heroine became the cause of re-establishing the faith of the apostles.

My hope is that each one of you may become as Mary Magdalen - for this woman was superior to all the men of her time and her reality is ever shining from the horizon of Christ.

Be pure - to be pure is to be selfless.

THE DAY OF THE DECLARATION

The Bab, the first point of the new creation, declared on May 23, 1844, that he was the precursor of him whom God would manifest. (Baha'o'llah) On this same day, Abdul-Baha was born.

The day of the declaration of the Bab and of <p51> the birth of Abdul Baha - this day of double significance - May 23, is widely celebrated.

On May 23, 1913, the Paris friends had the honor of having Abdul Baha in their midst.

From early morning the friends gathered around him, bringing the sweet-scented flowers he loves with their greetings. Those who were fortunate enough to arrive early were invited to take a glass of Persian tea with him.

In the evening the usual Friday meeting was held at Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus' home - the occasion affording a special note of joy.

The meeting was opened by Mirza Mohamet chanting a Monajotte which Mr. Dreyfus explained was the prayer always chanted in Persia on this day.

Mr. Dreyfus then spoke of the profound mystery of these two great events falling on the same day and of the great joy of having Abdul Baha at such a time living amongst us quietly and without apparent activity, but sending out a spiritual force that was strengthening all the world.

Abdul Baha then sent word from the room where he was resting, requesting Mme. Bernard to speak a few moments. She said, "The greatest proof of the Master's station is his intimate perception of the need and capacity of each one who comes to him. The note which distinguishes his teaching from the religious precepts of the past is this: the former teachers said, 'Go out into the world and teach men to be brothers.' whereas this revelation commands - 'Go and be a brother to every man.' Tonight we have with us a master who has lived this precept."

Abdul Baha entered. We all arose. He said:

"Today is the anniversary of the declaration of the Bab - Peace be upon thee! Today the Bab declared this cause in Shirza, Persia. The appearance of the Bab resembles the dawn, for the dawn holds the promise of the sun. The dawn of the Bab promised the rising of the sun of truth that is to envelop the whole world."

He said, "O my glorious Lord, I sacrifice myself entirely to thee. My only desire is to be martyred for thy love. Thou dost suffice me!" The Bab's desire was to be realized, for the glorious crown of martyrdom was placed upon his head. The gems light the whole world.

He was imprisoned at Shiraz, then went to Isfahan, was afterward confined in a fortress at Makow and finally executed in a public square of Tabriz. This supreme martyrdom raised his banner yet higher and heightened the power of divine manifestation on earth, for the reality which is reflected is the same from the beginning. The Christ was the word of God from the beginning - in the same way Mohammed says, "I was a prophet before the existence of Adam," and Baha'o'llah says, "In the beginning which has no beginning I loved thee."

The sun is always the sun; if at a certain period it gave no light it would not at that period be called the sun, for the characteristics of the sun are light and heat. The great ones are from all time in their glorious station, their reality is luminous from the beginning, the reality that causes the qualities of God to appear, but the day of their manifestation is the day when they proclaim themselves of this earth.

The Bab in his writings heralded the advent of Baha'o'llah. He declared to his followers "You will attain the perfect well-being at your <p53> meeting with God; the horizon will be illumined; the infinite spirit will send forth its breezes - the divine proclamation will make itself heard."

When, some years later, Baha'o'llah declared himself to be the "glory of God," the Bab's followers with few exceptions believed in him. His brilliancy shone forth like a sun. His power had already been recognized before his proclamation and on the day of his declaration all became aware and were amazed at his wisdom.

Behold how in a few years, although exiled and imprisoned, he enunciated his purpose. Two kings were planning his death and still his power grew stronger day unto day! In the darkness of the dungeons he shone like a star! The more his followers were killed, the more the number grew; for each man killed, a hundred men arose. No one entered his presence without becoming awe-stricken by his might. The learned men who approached him were astounded at his knowledge, yet he never attended school nor learned of men. His friends and his family all testify to this, yet his teachings are the soul of this age.

The sun emanates from itself and does not draw its light from other sources. The divine teachers have the innate light; they have knowledge and understanding of all things in the universe; the rest of the world receives its light from them and through them the arts and sciences are revived in each age.

Abraham and Moses went to no school; Jesus <p54> had neither school nor master; Mohammed never had a lesson; the Bab and Baha'o'llah had no professors. Read the books written by Baha'o'llah - the philosophers and savants in the Orient will bear witness to his eloquence and learning. In the Orient this is considered a proof of his divinity. There they say, "If some one can write a letter like Baha'o'llah, Baha'o'llah's divinity can be denied." No one has yet competed.

How can those who depend on mortals be divine messengers? How can a lamp which has to be lighted be eternal? The divine teacher does not come to acquire knowledge, for this tree of life is a fruit tree by birth and not through grafting. Behold the sacred tree which spreads its shade over the whole world! This is the mission of Baha'o'llah - for under this tree all questions are solved!

I congratulate you on this sacred day, the anniversary of the declaration of the Bab - the day when for the first time on this earth Baha'o'llah's name was mentioned and in the world the dawn appeared on the horizon. May all of you become the cause of joy and of renewing the fire of the love of God in all hearts.

The following was uttered during carnival week in Paris. Mirza Ali Akbar of Teheran had just arrived from Persia to join the group that gathered about Abdul Baha each morning. At the request of Abdul Baha, the newcomer chanted a beautiful prayer in his native tongue after which Abdul Baha said: <p55>

In this Monajotte that we have just listened to, Baha'o'llah declares that all eyes are asleep; that all men are resting on beds of ease and negligence while he alone is prostrate on the earth watching and praying. It is midnight and he is waiting for the heedless world to awake. It is the same here in Paris during these days of carnival. People go to the theatre, amuse themselves with sight-seeing, each intent on his own occupation; they dance, they sing, they play, they make music, they walk they talk, they are plunged in earthly thoughts, immersed in materiality, neglectful of God.

Thanks be to God, this meeting has a divine meaning. While others are attracted to material things, praise be to God, you are attracted to the spiritual. All the inhabitants here amuse themselves with dreams of the earth and disguise themselves with fantastic dress during these days; but you are occupied with God. In all the theatres one hears songs of the earth, but our song is the divine mention. Let us thank God for having led us to this point, to be chosen for the mention of his name. He has thrown upon us the light of the kingdom; let us have no thought save this glorification, that our entire happiness may consist in serving him. Let us thank God and implore him continually to make us more illumined each day, that we may have more spiritual attraction and render greater service to his mention.

May our actions so characterize us that it may <p56> be said of each one of us, "There is a friend of God."

Let us implore at the divine threshold that the pure fragrances of El-Abha may perfume the earth and the breeze of the rosebud of divine favor and waft upon the hearts, that we may be united at the court of God, even as we are united here, by the love which cannot die.

Humanity is submerged in materialism; occupied in everything save the mention of God; speaking of everything save the heavenly kingdom; hearing of everything save the call of God. As far as knowledge of things divine were interred in the earth, going more and more into the blind darkness, completely buried from the knowledge of things above.

I hope the few gathered here will make a great effort, working day and night, that some result may be accomplished. Perhaps Europe may become weary of the dull materiality of the world and seek refreshment in a share of the heavenly glory.

Europe has made extraordinary material progress, but if the qualities partake of the dust, what lasting result can accrue? The ideal to strive for is that which is in the supreme horizon - that is eternal! The underground is for worms and moles. That which is a cause for joy is a nest on the highest branch.

Strive day and night and do whatever is <p57> possible that perchance you may awaken the heedless, give sight to the blind, bring life to the dead, refresh the weary, and bring those in despair and darkness to light and splendor. If the hope of man be limited to the material world, what ultimate result is he working for? A man with even a little understanding must realize that he should

not emulate the worm that holds to the earth in which it is finally buried. How can man be satisfied with this low degree? How can he find happiness there? My hope is that you may become free from the material world and strive to understand the meaning of the heavenly world, the world of lasting qualities, the world of truth, the world of eternal kingliness, so that your life may not be barren of results, for the life of the material man has no fruit of reality. Lasting results are produced by reflecting the heavenly existence.

If a man become touched with the divine spark, even though he be an outcast and oppressed, he will be happy and his happiness cannot die.

Whatever man undertakes he achieves some result, whether through statesmanship, commerce, agriculture, science, etc., he receives a compensation for his efforts. Consider what will be the result of those who work in the universal cause!

He who has the consciousness of reality has eternal life - that lamp which can never be extinguished. The humble peasant girl, Mary <p58> Magdalene, - to what splendor she attained! A wise man sees no satisfaction in the material world; he is not content to be one of the creatures. In the world of divine effulgence he finds eternal life and becomes aflame with the fire of the love of God, the great source of life of the immortal kingdom and his head is adorned with a crown of eternal jewels.

With power and might will the proclamation of the kingdom of El-Abha found a new civilization, transforming humanity; dead bodies will become alive; the dark sky will become luminous; blind eyes will see; deaf ears will hear; the dumb will speak and the indifferent will be decorated with the flowers of a divine civilization.

May the luminous clouds of this divine civilization descend upon us - this is my hope!

As there is no one who has not his designated place in the world, for there is nothing useless on this earth, we must treat each individual with respect and affection, for each is a sign of the divine favor and power - that power which has been able to draw such a being out of matter, make of him a creature with sensorial faculties and endow him with intellectual and spiritual potentiality. This is one of the visible proofs of the divine power. Let us respect these living proofs. <p59>

The centers of progress for each age are the manifestations of God as seen in his prophets. In whatever country or at whatever time they appear, they are the focus of the creational day - for as the sun in the material heaven develops the material beings, so do these spiritual suns develop the world of minds and souls.

Let us turn toward the spiritual sun and acquire a light which will render the world luminous, so that we may be freed from matter and acquire celestial qualities, that this limited life may merge into the eternal.

When man thus adorns himself, he will progress every day with new vigor; his soul will become more and more sensitized and the laws and morals of the world will be reconstructed with divine conviction. Then man will make real discoveries, penetrate the mysteries and so reflect them that he will become the image of God.

Christ said, "Many are called, but few are chosen." The chosen have heard and understood the call from the divine assembly.

Man has two planes: the physical and the intellectual. The divine revelators have three: their physical condition, which is shared by all mankind - they eat, they sleep, they are sometimes ill, they become well again, they become <p60> fatigued, they undergo all that man can undergo; their intellectual degree and their holy reality which surrounds all beings and comprehends secrets. Their horizons enfold the universe, for they are the suns of real truth illuminating all the regions of thought, dispersing the darkness, uplifting the world of mankind and making the material world heavenly. Were it not for these divine messengers there would be no consciousness of continuity.

They are the focal points of all the human and divine attainments, for they bring eternal life and the promise of its fulfillment.

Other men, although able to evolve to a high degree, are still in the second condition; this third state is alone partaken of by the divine messengers although great saints have attained extraordinary pre-eminence and reflect the splendor of the sun.

May you be of those who have believed and obeyed; may you be of the few that are chosen rather than of the many that are called!

History is a record of incessant wars. There is not a spot on the globe that has not been crimsoned with the blood of men; the whole <p61> earth is blood-drenched. The basic reason for this slaughter is the division between religions - each sect considering the religion of others as barbarous and each deeming it a most sacred trust to shed the blood of the infidels. The environs of Acca have been stained many times with the blood of thousands.

But now Baha'o'llah has come with incomparable glory like the glow of the sun at midday, the moment of its greatest heat and light. The glory of God has proclaimed a cause that until now none had heard. He addresses himself to the whole of humanity, saying: "O people of the world, ye are all the branches of one tree, the leaves of one branch, the drops of one sea." Thus he announces human unity, strikes the universal chord of harmony between the races, nations and tribes and makes of the earth one native land. The world was in the darkness of indifference and Baha'o'llah is the light of unity.

One sees a reflected light in the thoughts of all, signs of the desire for this unity. Through Baha'o'llah hearts have been attracted. All are agreed that to establish justice between the members of the human family is the most stupendous task of the ages.

The cause spread first in Persia and from there through other countries. Many of those who speak of these ideals of unity are slow to realize that they emanate from Baha'o'llah - they <p62> talk as though the ideals emanate from themselves. The earth will receive the perfect sunrise when the teachings of Baha'o'llah are world-spread. When he says, "Ye are all the leaves of one branch," he infers the inherent differences between men, differences like unto the leaves. Nature manifests in various forms, but the basic element is the same. There is unity of essence and variety of expression.

Such differences as between the wolf and the sheep, for instance, between light and darkness, water and fire, are the cause of enmity. Water extinguishes fire in the same way that religious differences cause annihilation. Reflect on what is taking place today. men have forgotten the divine principles.

I hope you will become manifest lights.

Many divine messengers have appeared in Persia, the land of many sects. One of these sects occupies itself with ceremonies and forms and considers relations with other sects quite impossible. Its followers blindly accept the sacred writings. Another sect among the Shuhites attempts religious research and weighs theological questions and metaphysics and the Sufis have their own special dogmas. These groups spend their lives in useless arguments and wrangles and are continually at war with another. <p63>

In such a country as this, Baha'o'llah appeared following the Bab, and so widespread was the interest centering around these great ones that all forgot their animosities and in the mosques and religious gatherings spoke only of this revelation.

Then, when they saw hundreds from their own rank with fire and zeal adopting the banner of Baha'o'llah, all the sects with one accord united to suppress this spirit which grew stronger with opposition. Driven to desperation they exhorted their followers thus: "Let us arise and kill these people, imprison their women and children and destroy them to the root. They seek to change the old, well-established order of things and nothing of us will remain." The mandate went forth and reached even to the smallest village - nevertheless this cause continues to grow; no restriction or opposition could arrest its progress.

When Baha'o'llah left Teheran, he camped, with those of his disciples who followed him, in a square outside the city. Among his followers was the famous Kurrat-ul-Ayn, who, being a woman, was not allowed to camp with the others, but must seclude herself; so she had her tent pitched by a stream in one of the adjacent gardens, the walls of which bordered the square on three sides. You see how they honored customs thinking they reflected truth.

Up to this time the religion of the Koran <p64> was strictly adhered to and nothing had been changed in the laws of Islam. The women were completely hidden from the eyes of men, covering themselves with veils on going out, speaking to no man and living in their houses like prisoners.

During his sojourn in the rizwan, Baha'o'llah fell ill and ordered his bed to be brought and his tent to be placed near a stream. He was sleeping in his tent and three hundred followers were camped about. Kurrat-ul-Ayn sought Baha'o'llah's permission to come and see him in his garden. They replied that he was ill and could not go out. Kurrat-ul-Ayn answered "Then it is I who will go to him. Behold, I seek his presence!" This was the first instance in the history of this cause that traditions were changed. It was the visible sign of the new creation. Up to that time no one knew Baha'o'llah was the one of whom the Bab spoke when he admonished his disciples to look for the advent of - "him whom God would manifest." The people thought of Baha'o'llah as one of the followers of the Bab.

Kurrat-ul-Ayn, throwing back her veil, cried aloud, "Verily, that trumpet that you were expecting in the last day - it is I; that bell that you were listening for - it is I. I am sounding that bugle. The old customs are obsolete - the truth has appeared!" She arrived at the tent of Baha'o'llah, who had commanded he thus to summon the people. She addressed the <p65> men, "Why do you sleep? Awake from your beds of negligence! The sun hath arisen from the day-spring of pre-existence. Why do you drown yourselves in the sea of materialism? The king of might hath appeared! Behold the resplendent light! Listen to the songs of the new age! A new life is breathed into all existing things. The zephyrs of the divine favors are wafting upon you." Then she told them to read the chapter of the Koran, entitled, "The Resurrection." This chapter speaks of the last judgment for the Mussulman. They prostrated themselves. Some began to cry out; one cut his throat and another cursed this woman. To understand this scene one must know the Oriental mentality.

The Baha'o'llah stepped forth from his tent and explained the birth of a new cycle - that the horizons were flooded with new ideals - the antiquated laws were no longer valid - that a new revelation, a new light had come. He exhorted them to sacrifice themselves for it. From that moment the cause of Baha'o'llah leaped into a flaming torch.

These are the conditions under which this great universal movement began. Persia was in revolt. The government set itself against the movement, the ulema supporting the government. Terrible massacres ensued. They seized the body of Baha'o'llah and imprisoned him in Teheran where the ulema met and summoned him to appear before them in the mosque that <p66> they might question him and refute his statements. They searched one of his disciples and found on him a paper containing teachings in the Bab's handwriting in which there were inaccuracies from their orthodox Mohammedan viewpoint. Baha'o'llah showed them with incontrovertible proof that the mistakes lay in their limited interpretations - that the reality of truth is one. They became enraged and put him to the torture of the bastinado, inflicting sixty strokes. They condemned him to death and ordered the executioner to come with his instruments of torture to martyr their majestic prisoner. The governor, fearful lest the people should arise to vindicate Baha'o'llah, caused an opening to be made in the wall for the mosque through which Baha'o'llah was taken by night to the

governor's house and after a time the order came to liberate him.

Such was the confusion reigning in Persia at this time - a people in revolt! For years murder and martyrdom were everyday occurrences. Up to the time when Baha'o'llah was exiled to Bagdad, every means conceivable was used to annihilate his teachings' but for one man killed, a hundred have come forward; for one family destroyed, a hundred have arisen and in this proportion are the friends of justice increasing in Persia and throughout the world.

Should you spend all your time in praising God, you could never be sufficiently grateful for <p67> having brought you to this great day of fruition when the tree of reality is bearing its fruit.

When we read ancient history, the history of the middle ages and the history of contemporaneous times, we realize how little the world of yesterday resembles the world of today. The scientific beliefs of the middle ages are disproved and of that which was credited by the ancients, few traces remain. In the same way laws outside of science have evolved and arts and even morals have changes. We can no longer live according to the laws and customs of former times.

Everything is transformed. The existing government of France cannot adapt itself to the requirements of the middle ages. As everything evolves, so also does religion - as witness the doctrines that are losing their influence today. All religious rites and ceremonies, when adhered to, become the cause of destruction and struggle. Look at the war in the Balkans. Can you imagine anything more terrible? Men have arisen against their brothers and both armies think they act in accordance with principle. If each side would put into practice the true principles of its own religion, there could be no further strife.

This is the day when dogmas must be sacrificed in our search for truth. We must leave behind all save what is necessary for the needs <p68> of today, nor attach ourselves to any form or ritual which is in opposition to moral evolution.

Search untiringly for truth and reiterate the teachings which harmonize with the crying needs of the hour. This will be the cause of the progress of man, the illumination of the Orient and the Occident. The important thing is to spread the teachings of Baha'o'llah in our own century. Whoever listens to these teachings properly expounded will say, "Here is the truth - that which will render life a greater thing!"

In the whole world there is hardly one who is conscious of reality. Baha'o'llah in appearing has brought the force to rend the veils. He has spread the teachings which are the soul of our time, opened the doors to the seekers of the great law, breathed into the hearts a great love, united those who were at enmity and given victory to saints and pure spirits. After many tribulations he has shown man the kingdom, freed him from chains of prejudice and attached him to the world of truth. The light of divine favor is shining and will shine from century to century.

With the door of such splendor open, will you continue to be negligent? Let us prepare to sacrifice our lives, so that the divine conflagration may blaze in the east and the west. May it become a holocaust that will attract the entire race!

I have been asked this question: In the <p69> Gospels one finds only spiritual directions, not particular directions for conduct as in the old testament. How is this?

The teachings of Christ covered a period of three years; the dispensation of Moses lasted forty years. After Moses led the people of Israel from the land of bondage, he found it necessary to inaugurate certain physical rules to show them how to live. In the lifetime of Christ only a small group gathered around him. After his declaration, his mission lasted but three years; there was neither time nor occasion for a complete code of laws. The essential thing is the spiritual law - the outer material law is of small moment, because material life has natural laws to protect it, but humanity lacks spiritual education and needs instruction on the divine qualities. Christ gave this great foundation, as did Mohammed, the Bab and Baha'o'llah. They are all one. There is no difference in their teachings. When we come to kind actions and to striving for the highest ideals of humanity, these things remain the same in all ages, in all countries and in all tongues.

The sun is always the sun. According to the position of the earth we receive its radiation differently.

To see the joy of divine gladness on your faces is the cause of my happiness, for when I see you happy, I am happy also. The divine <p70> messengers come to bring joy to this earth, for this is the planet of tribulation and torment and the mission of the great masters is to turn men away from these anxieties and to infuse life with infinite joy.

When the divine message is understood, all troubles will vanish. Shadows disappear when the universal lamp is lighted, for whosoever becomes illumined thereby no longer knows grief; he realizes that his stay on this planet is temporary and that life is eternal. When once he has found reality he will no longer retreat into darkness.

Reflect on the tribulations the divine messengers endure in each age - exile, prison, the cross, decapitation; yet they ever remain tranquil.

Behold the apostles of Christ! They had many trials. The friends of Baha'ollah in Persia have undergone unspeakable calamities; their possessions were seized and destroyed, their children captured, their lives sacrificed; yet at the hour of martyrdom they danced with joy, for they were completely detached from the life of this world. Trials have never prevented men from knowing the happiness of the beyond. Nay, rather, this is the path.

Consider what fiery ordeals Baha'o'llah was called to endure! After a long incarceration he was exiled; yet day and night he diffused the light and guided men to truth. Baha'o'llah was imprisoned in an underground cell where he <p71>

was chained for four months, then exiled to Bagdad, Constantinople, Adrianople and finally to Acca. One knows the prison there. For two years he lived in a dark cell and for seven years in one room. A number of pilgrims from Persia came to Acca expecting to see him liberated. They arrived at the very moment when he was being conducted from his cell to the fortress where he lived seven years. After these nine years he was allowed more liberty, and, on parole, lived in a house in the fortified town.

Yet in spite of all difficulties, he was ever in an exalted state; his face shone continually. He had the presence of a king. One cannot imagine such majesty. One never thought of him as a prisoner - on the contrary, one would have said that he was enjoying the greatest triumph, for he drew his strength from divine power. Minds were exalted on beholding him, and Baha'o'llah never hid himself. He spoke courageously before all. "He is incomparable," declared the people, "but he is setting himself against Islam. Such a one is an honor to humanity," they said, "but a detriment to our religion; therefore, we must declare ourselves against him."

When Baha'o'llah wrote to the Shah of Persia, he called for a volunteer to take the letter. A young Persian by the name of Badi stepped forth. On the envelope Baha'o'llah inscribed certain words. <p72>

This inscription [1] attracted Badi. His face shone. He delivered the letter and was martyred by the order of the Shah's ministers. In this letter Baha'o'llah had written, "O thou Shah, send for this servant to come to Teheran, gather together an assembly of the doctors and philosophers and he will discuss with them whatever subject thou desireth."

[1 The following is an excerpt from this inscription: - "We ask God to send one of his servants and to detach him from contingent being and to adorn his heart with the decoration of strength and composure that he may help his lord among the

concourse of creatures and go with speed to the abode of the throne, let him hold converse with none till he goeth forth one day and standeth where he, the Shah, shall pass by. Then let him raise aloft the letter and with the utmost humility and courtesy, say, 'It hath been sent on the part of the prisoner.'

It is incumbent upon him to be in such a mood, that should the Shah decree his death, he shall not be troubled within himself and shall hasten to the place of sacrifice saying, 'O Lord, praise be to thee that thou hast made me a helper.

By thy glory I would not exchange this cup for all the cups in the world - neither is it rivaled by Kwather and Salsabil.'" (The names of two rivers in paradise.) (Letters to the Kings)]

Then the disciples of Baha'o'llah addressed themselves to the Shah and said, "O thou just ruler, assemble the judges and priests that they may put a question to Baha'o'llah." But the ministers of the Shah replied, "Nay, rather, we must sound the alarm that all may beware of such a man." A learned philosopher said, "Verily, one <p73> cannot speak in his presence!" They criticized his disciples, denied his teachings, but never his power!

Baha'o'llah proclaimed the cause of human brotherhood. In the midst of calamities he waved aloft the standard of universal peace; from captivity he summoned the kings of the earth to the cause of unity and world-wide love. The more they tried to stifle the proclamation the more it resounded throughout the world. Today it has reached from east to the west. Baha'o'llah was banished, but his dominion prevailed and spread. Oppression and despotism were unable to check it. How many Christians, how many doctors in Islam have sung his praises! Read the "Extracts of El Farhad," by Abul Fazl. One Christian wrote, "I am not a follower of Baha'o'llah, but his miracles are incontestable." A learned Mussulman said: "I cannot understand this man. His wisdom is infinite, but I am not a disciple." The ignorance of all these men veiled their understanding.

Baha'o'llah states that Mohammed was a prophet of God, that Christ was the word of God and Moses the friend of God. he affirms the principles, the spirit, the reality of each religion, giving lordly and abiding arguments and never indulging in vague sentiments.

The messenger of God is often sad, but his sadness does not come from causes relating to <p74> himself. He longs that a soul become illumined, but the soul prefers darkness; he yearns to change the ignorance of the people into knowledge, their error into guidance, their insincerity into truth, their faithlessness into firmness; but people prefer their own shadows and he who manifests God becomes sad over the negligence of these sleeping ones. Are they not of the heedless?

When I am sad, I always pray.

A TALK ON NAU ROOZ (NEW YEAR'S DAY)

Given by Abdul Baha, Friday evening, March 21st., 1913, at 15 rue Greuze, Paris. In the east this date is celebrated as New Year's day.

I am extremely glad to see you on this Nau Rooz occasion. This day is the anniversary of many historical events, among them the victory of the Persians over the Arabs who invaded Persia and were successfully repulsed.

This day in Persia inaugurates a feast which continues for thirteen days and in which all take part, rich and poor alike. They adorn themselves with new clothes and their houses are open to all. Money is distributed, music is played and the houses are decorated with flowers, for it is a festive; work is put aside and enjoyment invited. Travelers in Persia feel this transformation, for the country is in a state of complete renewal. A town which seemed dead yesterday comes to life today. People who looked anxious <p75> yesterday, today have faces shining with gladness. The poor man of yesterday, with sordid garments, is well dressed today and the whole national life is infused with joy. From time immemorial this day has been consecrated, for in this there is a symbol.

At this moment the sun appears at the meridian and the day and night are equal. Until today the north pole has been in darkness. This sacred day when the sun illumines equally the whole earth is called the equinox and the equinox is the

symbol of the divine messenger. The sun of truth rises on the horizon of divine mercy and sends forth its rays on all. This is the beginning of the spring. When the sun appears at the equinox it causes a movement in all living things. The mineral world is set in motion,, plants begin to sprout, the desert is changed into a prairie, trees bud and every living thing responds, including the bodies of animals and men.

The rising of the sun at the equinox is the symbol of life and the human reality is revived; our thoughts are transformed and our intelligence is quickened. The sun of truth bestows eternal life, just as the solar sun is the cause of terrestrial life.

The day of the appearance of God's messenger on earth is ever a sacred day, a day when man commemorates his lord.

Among the ancient Persians this day was <p76> looked upon as the holy day of the year - a day when hospitals and charitable institutions were founded, collections for the poor were made and every effort put forth that it might not be allowed to pass without leaving some divine trace and throughout Persia one sees these historical traces.

I am spending this New Year's day in Paris. I hope for considerable results from this fact. May a powerful influence remain in your hearts, signs of eternal joy and happiness that will illumine the kingdom in this city. May the breezes of the Holy Spirit waft upon you, that your intelligence may progress and your souls rejoice in your lord. Thus will you become eternal beings shining in the divine kingdom.

Abdul Baha seated himself in his usual chair by the window. A band of street singers just below struck up noisily. A girl in the flat above was practicing on the piano. Abdul Baha sat

quietly till the noise ceased and still looking out of the window gave the following talk on the celestial music of the spheres:

Last night a Hindu professor of music came to see me. He brought with him a musical instrument called the vina and sang for us certain Oriental verses, accompanying himself on the vina. Overhead, our neighbor was playing the piano, but as soon as the professor began, the piano became silent till the Hindu finished. This teaches us a lesson - whenever we hear <p77> superb music we must listen; then we will forget all inferior music. For instance, when a lover of music hearkens once to the entrancing notes of a great master, his love for music will no longer be satisfied by the playing of a pupil. If he listen with equal pleasure to the pupil, it shows a lack of artistic appreciation.

Let us suppose that the most accomplished artist of Paris is playing for us in this room, inspiring the hearts by immortal songs and charming us with celestial harmonies - is it possible that any one of us could leave this room and going through the streets stop to enjoy the crude notes of a hurdy-gurdy?

Today there are many melodies; from every studio divers strains are floated to

our ears, but these tunes have become antiquated and covered with the rust of time. For thousands of years the same notes have been heard. They lack their original charm and purity, for the singers have grown old and decrepit and lost their voices. The song of life has lost its virility. From every direction melodies are sounded and we must needs have discriminating ears.

Let us seek the song with the sweetest strains, so that it may be taken up by the angles and carried to the supreme concourse. Let us hearken to the melody which will stir the world of humanity, so that the people may be transformed with joy.

Let us listen to a symphony which will confer <p78> life on man; then we can obtain universal results; then we shall receive a new spirit; then we shall become illumined. Let us investigate a song which is above all songs; one which will develop the spirit and produce harmony and exhilaration, unfolding the inner potentialities of life.

Whenever the sun of reality dawns, the lower sphere expresses the virtues of the highest world.

Why does not man harken to the soul-stirring music of the supreme concourse and not run wild with joy over the jarring notes of a street organ!

Strive day and night; perchance these sleeping ones may be awakened by the celestial strains of the city of melody and hear the soft, delicate music which is streaming down from the kingdom of El-Abha. <p79>

Knowledge is one of the greatest benefits of God. To acquire knowledge is incumbent on all. These visible arts and present implements are from the results of his knowledge and wisdom, which have been revealed from the supreme pen. In this day the mysteries of this earth are unfolded and have become visible before the eyes. --

(BAHA'O'LLAH)

CHAPTER II

EDUCATION

This is my second visit to Paris and I meet you with great joy. On a third visit to Europe I hope to see a brilliant flame -- the signal of the paradise of El-Abha. That this continent be flooded with rays streaming from veritable sons of light -- this is my hope.

There was a time when the light of Christ shone in the world; when the proclamation of the kingdom was widespread and many spirits and hearts were drawn heavenward; but the law of this world is evanescent. That lamp is lighted and again it is extinguished. This flower starts with a sprout which day by day becomes more verdant, finally bursting into leaves and blossoms. But flowers fad and fruitage yields its seed which is kept and planted again, for the dead tree bears no more fruit. New seed must be sown and again trees and flowers will bloom. <p80>

The great splendor of the day of Christ has gradually merged into the night, so that in this age there is hardly a ray of that great spiritual luminary lighting the world; but after the drought of summer and the cold of winter comes the new life of spring. After each sunset comes a sunrise.

The spiritual light of the world has risen again from the eastern horizon. The night is finished; the day is come and the first rays of the dawn are destroying the shadows, dispersing the clouds, making the plants to grow, the trees to become verdant and ornamenting the flower-beds with roses. The sun of reality hath reappeared with tremendous power and soon the light of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH will be diffused throughout the world. See how the light of Christ's shining star took three hundred years to shed its rays on the world, whereas the light of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH has permeated all regions in less than half a century. His cause has been spread in every country and the mention of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH made in every tongue. In nearly every country there is an assembly of friends from Teheran to Paris, to San Francisco, to Japan. This is a different age and light is spreading with great rapidity.

In every language we find favorable criticisms except from those who have personal animosity against BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, and these cases are rare. Even those newspapers that are not universal in policy, have been favorable in criticism. In the universities, professors and students have listened while I expounded the principles of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH. <p81> Observe and realize the power of this cause. During the time of former prophets, have you ever heard of praise from those who were not disciples? The immediate followers of Christ spoke and wrote to the glorification of the Christ spirit, but others did not occupy themselves with the subject. Verily, what is happening in this day is an unheard-of thing! The like is not recorded in Greek, Roman or Egyptian history. Behold the sovereignty and brilliancy of this truth. Jews and Gentiles alike acknowledge its vitality and are astonished at the radiance of its light. A rabbi of America although he did not claim to be a follower of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, nevertheless praised the precept of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, and said, "We have been wrong in thinking that the light in the East is extinguished." Even those who deny the divinity of this cause do not context BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH'S greatness, his extraordinary power, his universal wisdom; in a word, that he was a super-man.

Those who set themselves against him contended thus: "He refutes our religious customs, therefore we will have none of him -- yet his teachings express the truth of the age."

Certain of the clergy in America said, "Many of the truth in our religion have been forgotten. BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH has come to remind us of them." One clergyman said before a large congregation, "BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH revises the old beliefs but he has brought us nothing new. These truth are already found in the sacred books." <p82>

Then I arose and said, "I am going to quote you some of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH'S instructions for this day and you will show me in which sacred book they are to be found.

"BAHA'O'LLAH exhorts men to free their minds from the superstitions of the past and to seek independently for truth putting aside all dogmas. Religions are one. Let us banish creeds that the reality may become unveiled. In which sacred book do you find this?

"He heralds the hour of unity which has dawned on all mankind. All are the children of one Father; all the inheritors of that future peace on earth. He admonishes men to banish prejudice; religious, patriotic, racial preconceptions must disappear, for they are the destroyers of human society. Where is this written? In which part of the Bible, Old or New Testament?

"Religion must be the cause of affection. It must be a joy-bringer. If it become the cause of difference, it were better to banish it. Should it become the source of hatred, or warfare, it were better that it should not exist. If a remedy produce added illness, it were far better to discard the remedy. A religion which does not conform with the postulates of science is merely superstition. In which sacred book do you find this thought? Tell me!

"BAHA'O'LLAH declares the absolute equality of the sexes. The male and female in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms share alike the material bestowals. Why should there be a difference in the human kingdom? Verily, they are equal before God, for so he created them. Why should woman be deprived of exercising the fullest opportunities offered by life? Whosoever serves humanity most is nearest God -- for God is no respecter of gender. The male and female are like the two wings of a bird and when both wings are reinforced with the same impulse the bird of humanity will be enabled to soar heaven-ward to the summit of progress. In which sacred book is this written?

"Education holds an important place in the new order of things. The education of each child is compulsory. If there is not money enough in a family to educate both the girl and the boy the money must be dedicated to the girl's education, for she is the potential mother. If there are no parents the community must educate the child. In addition to this widespread education each child must be taught a profession, art, or trade, so that every member of the community will be enabled to earn his own livelihood. Work done in the spirit of service is the highest form of worship. Where do you find this statement?

"BAHA'O'LLAH'S solution of the social question provides for new laws, but the different social classes are preserved. An artisan remains an artisan; a merchant, a merchant; a banker, a banker; a ruler, a ruler; the different degrees must persist, so that each can render service to the community. Nevertheless, every one has the right to a happy, comfortable life. Work is to be provided for all and there will be no needy ones to be seen in the streets. The vocational labor adjustment provided by BAHA'O'LLAH precludes there being people too poor to have the necessaries of life on the one hand, nor the idle rich on the other. In which sacred book do you find this provided for? Show me!

"In order to facilitate complete understanding between all people, a universal auxiliary language will be adopted and in the schools of the future two

languages will be taught -- the mother tongue and this international auxiliary tongue which will be either one of the existing language or a new language made up of words from all the languages -- the matter is to be determined by a confederation met for the purpose which shall represent all tribes and nations. This international tongue will be used in the work of the parliament of man -- a supreme tribunal of the world which will be permanently established in order to arbitrate international questions. The members of this arbitral court of justice will be representatives of all the countries. It is incumbent upon the nations to obey the commands of this tribunal, for such a tribunal will be under the power of God and for the protection of all men. In all the sacred books where do you find such a statement?

"The purpose of these new laws is to destroy antagonism by finding a point of agreement. We cannot induce men to lay down their arms by <p85> fighting with them. If two individuals dispute about religion both are wrong. The Protestants and Catholics, the Mohammedans and Christians war over religion. The Nestorians claim that Christ was merely a slave, a man like the rest, but God put his spirit upon him. The Catholics say that he was one of the persons of the trinity. Both are wrong."

These precepts were proclaimed by BAHÁ'O'LLÁH many years ago. He was the first to create them in the hearts as moral laws. Alone and unaided he spread them. Writing to the sovereigns of the world he summoned that the hour for unity had struck -- unity between countries, unity between religions.

In this period of its evolution the world of humanity is in danger. Every war is against the good pleasure of the Lord of mankind, for man is the edifice of God and war destroys the divine edifice. If an active, actual peace is brought about, the human world will attain to the utmost serenity and composure; wolves will be transformed into lambs, devils into angels, and terrors into divine splendors in less than the twinkling of an eye.

BAHÁ'O'LLÁH is the divine physician who diagnoses the world's malady; for the whole planet is ill and needs the power of a great specialist.

BAHÁ'O'LLÁH'S teachings are the health of the world. They represent the spirit of this age, <p86> the light of this age, the well-being of this age, the soul of this cycle. The world will be at rest when they are put into practice, for they are reality.

Praise be to God, the doors of divine knowledge are flung wide, the infinite light is shining, and to such as believe and obey the divine mysteries are revealed.

The woman of the East has progressed. Formerly in India, Persia and throughout the Orient, she was not considered a human being. Certain Arab tribes counted their women in with the live stock. In their language the noun for woman also meant donkey; that is, the same name applied to both and a man's wealth was accounted by the number of these beasts of burden he possessed. The worst insult one could hurl at a man was to cry out, "Thou woman!"

From the moment BAHA'O'LLAH appeared, this changed. He did away with the idea of distinction between the sexes, proclaiming them equal in every capacity.

In former times it was considered wiser that woman should not know how to read or write; she should occupy herself only with drudgery. She was very ignorant. BAHA'O'LLAH declares the education of woman to be of more importance than that of man. If the mother be ignorant, even if the father have great knowledge, the child's education will be at fault, for education <p87> begins with the milk. A child at the breast is like a tender branch that the gardener can train as he wills.

The East has begun to educate its women. Some there are in Persia who have become liberated through this cause, whose cleverness and eloquence the ulema cannot refute. Many of them are poets. They are absolutely fearless.

The mother-in-law of Sultanu'sh Shuhada (sultan of the martyrs) was at Isfahan when the Bab declared himself. She was in the company of that famous woman, the poet Kurrat-ul-Ayn, and together they were stoned in the streets. When her son-in-law was imprisoned, she was living with her brother and the day they martyred him she passed her time in prayer, crying, "O God, help him to remain firm!"

This noble woman witnessed his martyrdom and that of her husband. She passed through great trials. They pillaged her husband's belongings and left her without support. In deference to her brother who was highly respected they did not again attack her openly; but the prince, governor of Isfahan, when he heard that she was at her brother's house sent for her. She entered his presence alone and hardly had he set eyes on her than he fell upon her with blows and kicked her till she became unconscious. Calling to his wife he said, "Come and see to what a state I have reduced this woman"; then he threw her out into the street. <p88>

Later, when her brother found her, she was half dead. In spite of this, as with a new impulse, she spread the cause everywhere. Her brother said to her, "Are all these troubles not sufficient for you, that you being again?" "I cannot help it," she replied. "I must go forward; if, however, my actions are a source of danger to you I will go away," -- but he would not allow this and they remained together at Isfahan.

Years afterward she came to Acca where she died. She was one of the those women to whom I refer -- one of the most eloquent and cultured. She knew the text of the Koran and of the Gospels by heart. She understood them. She was free and unafraid. Wherever she went she spoke of what she knew. By this I wish to illustrate the influence of BAHA'O'LLAH on the women. You of the West can hardly understand the extent of this progress.

I hope for a like degree of progress among the women of Europe -- that each may shine like unto a lamp; that they may cry out the proclamation of the kingdom; that they may truly assist the men; nay, that they may be even superior to the men, versed in sciences and yet detached, so that the whole world may bear

witness to the fact that men and women have absolutely the same rights. It would be a cause of great joy for me to see such women. This is useful work; by it woman will enter into the kingdom. Otherwise, there will be no results.<p89>

Although a man may progress in science and philosophy, if he does not take advantage of the power of the spirit, he is incomplete.

Moses was neither a philosopher nor a scientist. Outwardly he was but a simple shepherd, but he was able to instruct and develop a whole nation which had been in a state of demoralization; but which through his influence reached a very enlightened civilization. Jesus Christ did not come from the world of princes or scientists. Outwardly he was but an humble artisan, his disciples simple fishermen. Why were these disciples able to do what philosophers and scientists failed to accomplish? You have the example in Peter who was assisted by the Holy Spirit, as have been all those who have enlightened humanity -- for universal education can be accomplished only through the Holy Spirit.

Mohammed through his power was enabled to elevate a nation, for on his teachings a mighty civilization was constructed in the Arabian peninsula, the influence of which, as recorded in history, extended as far west as Spain. Let us be just. When a being, alone, in the midst of a savage tribe begins by teaching them and finally succeeds in raising them to a high degree of civilization, we must admit that he has an extraordinary power. What I mean is this -- philosophy and science will not suffice to elevate and civilize a people who are in a bestial condition.

What philosophy has ever elevated a whole nation and influenced humanity? Philosophy <p90> of necessity is restricted to a small school and cannot have an essentially moral influence.

The following letter was written by the compiler of these notes and narrates the unique incident of Abdul Baha blessing an unborn babe. The letter was written to the baby upon receiving news of its birth some months later, in the Isle of Corsica. The beautiful and simple incident of the blessing is one of the many personal episodes that happened during Abdul Baha's stay in Paris, that came under the observation of the writer.

The mother of this baby, an American girl, an old-time friend of the writer, had gone abroad to study and had married the Count d'Ornano of Corsica. This letter is published at the request of a number of the friends among the mothers and is of great significance showing the effect of the new creation on the new race.

New York, June 19, 1913.

Dear Baby Ursula: I am glad you arrived in due time and had a safe journey into this world. Wasn't it strange that I heard the fairy flutter of the wings of your arrival? I was in London that night and I suddenly took my pen in hand and wrote your mother that I had a feeling that you were about to make your appearance in the arena of existence. A letter from her, received today, assures me that I was right -- you were born that very night. This makes us

very good friends, don't you think so, Baby Ursula? But there, how foolish of me to expect you to answer in the crude jargon of words. We will speak in a language of the spirit -- the language in which you saluted me that night in London when you were on your way to Corsica. <p91>

But how you did surprise us! We were all expecting a boy. In fact, we constantly referred to you a Napoleon IV, on account of your island home being the birthplace of the great general. But my heart leaped with joy when I read this at the end of your mother's letter: "Baby Ursula sends caresses to Aunt Isabel and says you will see her at the head of a greater army than Napoleon ever led."

Ah, how I wish I could look at the world through your eyes! What a blessed privilege is yours. You are the Joan of Arc of a new era, for you were blessed by the prince of peace.

It was about five or six months after your mother first dreamed of you when I met her in Paris whither she had journeyed from Corsica to arrange for your little wardrobe. I had been longing to see her for many years and especially did I desire to meet her at that particular time, for Abdul Baha was there and I longed to take her to him. I knew your mother in the old San Francisco days and my mother loved your mother. The very day she died she spoke of this love.

In Paris I was yearning more than I can tell you to see her, when one day God led me to the American Express and there she sat. The next day we went together to Abdul Baha and he blessed you both.

I wish I could give you a picture of him as he sat in the inner chamber, with his head thrown back, the world-weary look kindling a fire <p92> as we acquainted him with our purpose. He smiled a welcome and seated your mother opposite him.

I do not remember exactly what she said, but it was something to this effect -- that she hadn't much hope of the present generation, but that she represented the future generation and she craved a blessing. I copied down what Abdul Baha said, so that you could keep it always. He was so happy when he spoke of you that his face fairly rippled with smiles.

"Your child," he said, "will have extraordinary capacity. It will be a friend of God. Rear it in the teachings of Baha'o'llah. Rest assured your child will be assisted by the divine concourse and through this assistance it will exhibit a universal consciousness -- for this cause encompasses the west and the east and children born under these conditions in this day will have the advantages of the universal illumination. Today some children are called prodigies, but the inheritors of this cause will attain to a degree that the others, even though educated in the best schools and with every advantage, know nothing of.

"Children blessed in this way before they are born are of the new race. I was born in Persia and while I nursed with my mother's milk I received truth. When a little child my first words were, 'Ya Baha El-Abha!'"

When the master said this, though distanced from him by the veils of flesh and immaturity you heard him, for your mother told me afterwards that you leaped as though in answer to his voice. <p93>

With one of his divine smiles the beloved of the worlds raised his hands in blessing. His parting words were:

"I will pray for you and your child always, of this rest assured!"

Both in Europe and America I have spoken in churches of all denominations, in the Jewish synagogues and universities, even addressing a club of agnostics in San Francisco. Thanks be to God, to BAHA'O'LLAH, I have nowhere encountered obstacles. Everywhere I affirmed the message of Christ and to the free thinkers I demonstrated the existence of God. Speaking to them, I said:

There are four means of knowledge. Among scientists and philosophers a method of attaining knowledge is through the senses, principally through observation. Light shows us that light exists. Reality is limited to the perceptible thing; all that is not perceptible is subject to doubt.

Among the ancient philosophers the infallible way to knowledge was through logic. The different schools of logic weighed everything in the scales of cold scholasticism. As to religious people their criterion has ever been the sacred text which must be accepted as final. One is not allowed the slightest reflection. "The word of God," they say, "is truth." Inspiration is the fourth criterion. Occultists say, "I have had a revelation. This truth has been revealed to me." <p94> For them everything outside direct revelation is viewed with doubt. So we have indicated the four criterions: the senses, reason, the sacred text, inspirations. There is no fifth.

Let us speak of the first criterion -- that of the senses. Contemporary philosophers say, "We have spent our time in universities and laboratories analyzing composition. We have not encountered the spirituality of God, or any sign of the soul's existence. We are people of truth, intelligent, learned men, but we can find no proof of the existence of a divine being."

The senses mistake a mirage for water; the eyes see the sun move; your train or boat seems immobile and the landscape seems to pass by, planets look like fixed points of light; but they have measurable dimensions. A lighted point set in rotation appears like a circle. These examples show the senses subject to error. How can we put our trust in them?

The test of logic is just as imperfect, for were this criterion perfect there would never have been the continual clash of opinion as to the sacred texts. How can they be interpreted by logic if the means be at fault?

Inspiration, what is it? Whence comes it? Is that which reaches our heart divine or satanic? How can we judge?

It is no proof of intelligence to reject everything which does not strike the senses. Nay, rather, such a one is brother to the animal. The cow has no idea of God; she does not know the <p95> soul. So the only difference between her

highness the cow and a materialistic philosopher is that the latter takes a great deal of trouble! It is not a special or exclusive privilege to be the prisoner of one's senses; the cow is the example of this theory.

Man has a sacred power beyond the confines of the senses. The power of the rational mind is the power of the soul over the senses. This cycle is radiating love and the bestowals of God are descending like unto rain. Man's glory lies in the difference between him and the animals. In Persia a small child who has been taught to think universally can talk with the learned. The religious people no longer question the followers of BAHA'O'LLAH, being unable to reply to their arguments. The priests and rulers call them necromancers, persecuting and martyring them; and with great joy these disciples give all their worldly goods and gladly lay down their lives for the cause of BAHA'O'LLAH. They go to death crying aloud, "Ya Baha El-Abha!"

I supplicate to God that you may become inspired with a like spirituality. In the West you have not the same prejudices; you have not that fire of oppression, but have complete liberty of belief. Work, pray, day and night, and you will see the splendors of the kingdom of El-Abha descending upon you.

Materially, man is the prisoner of nature; the least wind disturbs him, the cold hurts him, the heat incommodes him, a mosquito irritates him; <p96> but when we consider the intelligence of man, an elephant is powerless before him, a lion is his prisoner, and a boy of twelve can lead twelve hundred animals. Man dries up the sea, inundates the desert, circumnavigates the globe, discovers what is under the earth, rides upon the air and creates new sciences. These are the signs of the crowning spiritual power of man, -- that power which can make nature his prisoner.

Reflect on the divine forces. What has assembled us together? It is not a material but a spiritual force which has created this bond between our hearts, this attraction and affection for one another, -- a power stronger than reason, a power which founds nations, creates human unity and makes us renounce the world to discover sciences and organize laws which work through all creatures. Man, the victim of a mosquito, by his spiritual intelligence is conqueror, for by spirit he is completed; he stands upright and gives well-being to humanity. We must care for man's two natures; for as the material man makes certain demands for food and raiment and if not looked after suffers, even so his spiritual reality suffers without care. This is why the divine messengers come to the rescue -- to care for the reality, that man's thoughts may unfold and his aims become realized, that he may inherit a new field of progress, for the spiritual side should be cared for as much as the corporeal; the help that comes is through the resuscitating breath of the Holy Spirit. <p97>

Each power is localized. Reason has its seat in the brain, sight in the eye, hearing in the ears, speech in the tongue. The force of gravity is localized in the center of the earth. Everything on the surface of the earth is attracted toward the center. Our light is localized in the sun. The heat of the sun transforms minerals, vegetables, animals, and man.

In the world of beings, some have specialized in statesmanship, some in morals, others in commerce, agriculture, art, politics, laboratory work, or industrial activities, for these are the outer expression of spiritual, philosophical and scientific faculties. In brief, each individual expresses himself through some special occupation; but one does not hold the others in condemnation.

Certain religious teachers, however, think only of their creeds. They believe a holy war can conquer the world. They reason thus: "All the other religious teachers are in error and I am obliged to chastise them and show them their mistakes for their own salvation."

The belief of the friends of God is quite different. They believe that one must affiliate with all, love all humanity and seek ever to better its condition. God is one, the true shepherd of all creation. Let us be kind to every one in order to unify the world and spread affection abroad.

Let us be ready to give our lives, our fortunes, positions, achievements, in order that a new state of existence may be diffused throughout the earth. <p98> There are fellow-beings who are weaker than we are, let us strengthen them; there are those who are more ignorant, we must teach them; some are as children, help them to develop; many are asleep, awaken them; others are ill, heal them; never despise them. Be kinder to them than to the stronger ones. One must always be kinder to the weak and ill and to the children. Never seek to humiliate your brother.

BAHA'O'LLAH is the sun of truth; all humanity will be illumined under his protection and whosoever follows his instructions in this day will feel the potency of his protection.

Man has different ways of approaching God. One man thinks he must make extraordinary efforts in science to arrive at the knowledge of the divine and another thinks that he must train his morals. The prophets teach us that the only way to approach God is by characterizing ourselves with the attributes of divinity.

Some people lay stress on fasting. They affirm that in augmenting the weakness of the body they develop a spiritual sensibility and thus they think to approach God.

Weakening one's self physically does not necessarily contribute to spiritual progress. Humility, kindness, resignation, and all these spiritual attributes emanating from great physical strength are acceptable to God. That an <p99> enfeebled man cannot fight is not accounted a virtue. Were physical weakness a virtue the dead would be perfect, for they can do nothing.

If a man be just, kind, humble and merciful and his qualities are acquired through the will-power -- this is Godlike. A child cannot kill a man; but a Bonaparte can abstain from war, from shedding blood, from devastating countries. A dumb person will not speak ill of any one, a paralyzed hand cannot strike; but a strong arm can refrain from striking. Justice, love and kindness must be the instruments of strength, not of weakness.

Exaggerated fasting destroys the divine forces. God has created man in a way that cannot be surpassed; we must not try to change his creation. Strive to attain nearness to reality through the acquisition of strength of character, through morality, through good works and helping the poor, through being consumed with the fire of the love of God and in discovering each day new spiritual mysteries. This is the path of intimate approach.

Any soul that enters the kingdom of BAHÁ'OLLAH will enjoy an eternal communion with God. It is my hope that each of you may enter this kingdom. May you become thirsty for the water of reality. May you become hungry for the bread of the kingdom; for as His Holiness <p100> the Christ said, "He that drinketh the water that I shall give him shall never thirst." This means the apprehension of the ideals of the human world and of the heavenly realm. Day by day may you receive these concepts; day by day may you inherit this new state of consciousness till you become immersed in the sea of divine light.

This station is the ultimate result of human life; this station is the true fruit of existence; this station is the pearl of human consummation, the shining star toward which human destiny points. Practice the teachings of BAHÁ'OLLAH, and day unto day you will draw nearer the supreme horizon.

In this cause we have many principles to which we adhere, the most important is to avoid that which creates discord. We must have the same aspirations and become as one nation. Humanity must feel entirely united. Until this glorious century the power of unity has been ineffectual and the forces of discord have augmented. Men never reflect that they are brothers.

The divine power alone is potent enough to triumph over these religious, racial and patriotic prejudices. Alas! they have lost sight of the divine principles and are in a way to forget them entirely. Had the principles of unity, taught by the Christ, remained in the hearts, men would have refrained from war. Universalism must be <p101> retaught. BAHÁ'OLLAH has brought the force to unite the most antagonistic sects and bring all nations under one flag.

From the beginning the followers of all religions have believed in two seas, -- one salt and one fresh; in two trees -- the tree of good and the tree of evil. For this men have called one another heretics. Misinterpreting the divine commands, men have acquired prejudices and on these prejudices they have waged religious wars and caused bloodshed. Behold what is happening to-day! Men are killing their brothers, believing this to be the cause of salvation, believing that such work is approved by God, believing that those whom they kill will be sent to hell.

BAHÁ'OLLAH speaks to humanity in a different tone, declaring humanity to be like the leaves of a single branch, the branches of a single trunk.

For the new day hath dawned -- awaken the sleeping ones! Thanks be to God, you are the beloved of the universe that love the whole world. Praise be to God your affection is for all, you are the enemies of none, lovers of humanity, a precious mine for the souls.

Thus will you disperse the heavy clouds of prejudice. The doors of the kingdom are open to you, the divine good news of the ages has come to you. Go further into the teaching and you will arrive at the splendors of divine mysteries.

<p102>

The teachings of BAHÁ'OLLAH will give to the hearts the necessary impulse for bestowing eternal life and will cause the breeze of the Holy Spirit to waft upon you, so that with a single heart you will turn toward God.

Until now it has been said that all religions were composed of tenets that had to be accepted, even if they seem contrary to science. Thanks be to God, that in this new cycle the admonition of BAHÁ'OLLAH is that in the search for truth man must weigh religious questions in the balance of science and reason. God has given us rational minds for this purpose, to penetrate all things, to find truth. If one renounce reason, what remains? The sacred texts? How can we understand God's commands and to what use can we put them without the balance of reason?

The priests are attached to ancient superstitions and when these are not in keeping with science, the priests denounce science. When religion is upheld by science and reason we can believe with assurance and act with conviction, for this rational faculty is the greatest power in the world. Through it industries are established. The past and present are laid bare and the underlying realities are brought to light. Let us make nature our captive, break through all laws of limitation and with deep penetration bring to light that which is hidden. The power to do this <p103> is the greatest of divine benefits. Why treat with indifference such a divine spark? Why ignore a faculty so beneficial, a sun so powerful?

I have been asked a question: "How can we know when our actions meet with the approval of God?" Sometimes passion incites us to action; the laws of nature attract us, we obey our senses; the other incentive is the comprehension of the direction of God. We must find out if our actions are divinely inspired and if they do not conform, then it is our sensations which speak. Let us ever weigh our deeds in the scales of the divine teaching.

When we speak let our speech be an outward evidence of the inner light, for we must speak the truth, otherwise we shall not act wisely.

I hope that you will all become eloquent. The greatest gifts of man are reason and eloquence of expression. The perfect man is both intelligent and eloquent. He has knowledge and knows how to express it. Unless man express himself in this day he will remain like a closed casket and one cannot know whether it contain jewels or glass. I desire that all of you may speak on the material and divine sciences with clear and convincing words.

Some one has asked this question, "What are the proofs through which one can establish the existence of God?" <p104>

Humanity is divided into two classes: -- one is satisfied with the knowledge of divinity through its attributes and the other strives to understand the

mysteries of divinity and be informed of the fundamental principles of divine philosophy. I will speak to you of the scientific proofs which establish the existence of God and I will not quote the scriptural proofs from the Old and New Testaments, or the Koran, with which you are more or less familiar.

Science teaches us that all forms of creation are the result of composition; for example, certain single atoms are brought together through the inherent law of affinity and the result is the human being. A number of primordial atoms have gone into the make-up of a plant, the result of which is this flower. Again, looking into the mineral kingdom, we observe that this law of attraction is working in the same manner. Many atoms go into the composition of a piece of stone which through purification may reach to the station of a mirror.

When the particles of a given composition are disintegrated, this may be called non-existence in that kingdom; but the original simple elements go back to their primary atoms and are ever existent. When the body of man becomes the subject of decomposition we call that death. That the existence of phenomena depends upon composition, and mortality upon decomposition, is a scientific fact and there is a great difference between facts sustained by science and theories <p105> upheld by blind belief which is the result of traditional susceptibility of conscience.

The materialistic state that inasmuch as it is proved by science that the life of phenomena depends upon composition and its destruction upon disintegration, they question the necessity of a creator, the self-subsistent Lord. "For," argue the materialists, "we see with our own eyes that these infinite beings go through myriads of forms of composition and in every combination they bring about certain distinctive characteristics, so we are independent of any divine maker."

Those informed with divine philosophy answer that there are three theories of composition: first, accidental composition; second, involuntary composition; third, voluntary composition.

If we declare that construction is accidental, this is logically a false theory, because then we have to believe in an effect without a cause; our reason refuses to think of an effect without a primal cause.

The second, involuntary composition, means that each element has within it an innate function of this power of composition - certain elements have flowed toward each other, their union being an inherent necessity of their being. But as long as we reason that it is the inherent necessity of those elements to enter into composition there should not be any necessity for decomposition; and inasmuch as we observe that there is a process of decomposition, we conclude that the constituent elements of life enter neither involuntarily nor <p106> accidentally, but voluntarily into composition - and this means that the infinite forms of organisms are composed through the superior will, the eternal will, the will of the living and self-subsistent Lord.

This is a rational proof that the will of the Creator is effected through the

process of composition. Ponder over this and strive to comprehend its significance, that you may be enabled to convey it to others; the more you think it over, the greater will be your degree of comprehension. Praise be to God that he has endowed you with a power through which you can penetrate mysteries. Verily, as you reflect deeply, ponder deliberately and think continually, the doors of knowledge will be opened unto you.

I have been asked to speak of that which is eternal and that which is contingent. Is creation a manifestation or an emanation of God? There are two kinds of eternities. There is an eternity of essence, that which is without first cause, and an eternity of time, that which has no beginning. When you will understand these subjects all will become clear. Know of a certainty that every visible thing has a cause. For instance, this table is made by a carpenter; its originator is the carpenter.

Therefore as such objects are not self created, they are not in the nature of things eternal; but need an auxiliary-transforming force, although in <p107> their essence they are very ancient in time; but their ancient and eternal existence is not due to the temporary form.

For instance, the world of elements cannot be annihilated, because pure existence cannot be annihilated; and what we observe are but transformative modifications in the composition of the essence. The combination of different elements has formed physical man; when the composition is destroyed the elements will return to their component parts. Complete annihilation cannot take place.

The universe has never had a beginning. From the point of view of essence it transforms itself. God is eternal in essence and in time. He is his own existence and cause. This is why the material world is eternal in essence, for the power of God is eternal.

A power is like a kingdom; it needs subjects and armies, for the constituents of a kingdom are rulers and subjects. The power of God is eternal and there have always been beings to manifest it; that is why we say that the worlds of God are infinite - there has never been a time when they did not exist. One can bring nothing forth from nothing, in the same way that which exists is never destroyed; the apparent annihilation is merely transmutation.

A mineral compared to us may be said to be non-existent, but in its own sphere it lives. When we die our bodies return to the mineral and vegetable world. This example shows the <p108> inter-relationship of the different kingdoms which is erroneously called annihilation.

All the wealth of contingencies is misery. If we know not the eternal, we are nothing, and as God is eternal, knowing God is a link to eternity. I pray you to reflect deeply upon this, that you may understand clearly. Many people think that creation is a manifestation of God, that the divine reality like unto the embryo in a seed, has come forth out of the seed and become a trunk, branches, leaves, flowers.

The prophets teach differently. Creation is an emanation from the creator. It is impossible that the eternal should become limited. A tree never becomes a creature: it never acquires sight nor smell; yet both are creations of God - creations in emanation.

Creation is like the sunlight; God is the sun. This light comes forth from the sun; that does not mean that the sun has become the light. The light emanates from the sun. Seek always to prove mysteries in the light of the rational mind. We must all become the light of this sun which is God; the light of the sun, the heat of the sun, the brilliancy of the sun, the bestowals of this sun.

There is a point on which the philosophers and the prophets differ. The philosophers make education the test of knowledge, holding that any man who receives sufficient education can attain a state of perfection. That is to say man possesses the potentiality for every kind of <p109> progress and education enables him to bring this into the court of objectivity.

The prophets say that something else is necessary. It is true that education transforms the desert into a rose garden, the virgin forest into an orchard, saplings into trees, and single flowers into double and treble flowers, but there is a fundamental difference in men. You may know ten children of one country, in the same school, under the same master, treated and fed in the same way. One of these children may make great progress, others may remain stationary. In the innate nature there are differences of memory, perception and intelligence. There is a superior, a middle and an inferior degree which corresponds to the difference in the fundamental estates of creation. While recognizing the influence of education we must also become acquainted with the innate disposition.

The prophets are sent to educate this innate quality in humanity. They are like gardeners who sow the grain which afterward springs up in a thousand forms of advancement. The prophets are therefore the first educators of the world, the head masters of the world. However much man may advance in material civilization, if he remain ignorant of the spiritual civilization, his soul is still defaced.

The prophets are sent to refresh the dead body of the world, to render the dumb, eloquent, to give peace to the troubled, to make illumined the indifferent and to set free from the material <p110> world all beings who are its captives. Leave a child to himself and he becomes ill-mannered and thoughtless. He must be shown the path, so that he may become acquainted with the world of the soul - the world of divine gifts.

Existence is like a tree, and man is the fruit. If the fruit be sweet and agreeable, all is well, but if it be bitter it were far better there were none. Every man who has known the celestial bestowals is verily a treasury; if he remain ignorant of them, his non-existence were better than his existence. The tree which does not bring forth fruit is fit only for the fire. Strive night and day to change men into fruitful trees, virgin forests into divine orchards and deserts into rose gardens of significance. Light these lamps, that the dark

world may become illumined.

This is why I am come to Paris.

God in his wisdom has created all things. Nothing has been created without a special destiny, for every creature has an innate station of attainment. This flower has been created to mirror forth a harmonious ensemble of color and perfume. Each kingdom of nature holds potentialities and each must be cultivated in order to reach its fulfillment. The divine teachers desire man to be educated that he may attain to the high rank of his own reality, the deprivation of which is the rank of perdition. The flower needs light that it may achieve its fruitage; <p111> man needs the light of the Holy Spirit, and the measure of illumination throughout creation is proportionate to the different kingdoms.

When we come to the estate of man, we find his kingdom is vested with a divine superiority. Compared to the animal, his perfection or his imperfection is superior. In comparison with man the perfection of a flower is insignificant. Yet if man remain content in an undeveloped state viewed from the point of capacity he is the lowest of creatures. If he attains unto his heritage through divine wisdom, then he becomes a clear mirror in which the beauty of God is reflected; he has eternal life and becomes a participator of the sun of truth. This is to show you how considerable are the degrees of human achievement.

The aim of the prophet of God is to raise man to the degree of knowledge of his potentiality and to illumine him through the light of the kingdom, to transform ignorance into wisdom, injustice into justice, error into knowledge, cruelty into affection and incapability into progress. In short, to make all the attainments of existence resplendent in him.

The greatest gift of man is universal love - that magnet which renders existence eternal. It attracts realities and diffuses life with infinite joy. If this love penetrate the heart of man, all the forces of the universe will be realized in him, for it is a divine power which transports him to a divine station and he will make no <p112> progress until he is illumined thereby. Strive to increase the love-power of reality, to make your hearts greater centers of attraction and to create new ideals and relationships.

First of all, be ready to sacrifice your lives for one another, to prefer the general well-being to your personal well-being. Create relationships that nothing can shake; form an assembly that nothing can break up; have a mind that never ceases acquiring riches that nothing can destroy. If love did not exist, what of reality would remain? It is the fire of the love of God which renders man superior to the animal. Strengthen this superior force through which is attained all the progress in the world.

May the light of divine advancement shine upon you. This is the glory and progress of man. This is eternal life.

Brotherhood and sisterhood that is founded on a universal love is precious. It is not like the material kind which is soon forgotten and, perhaps, changed to

hatred before this life is over. Material brothers and sisters seldom have lasting affection for each other, but this divine relationship is eternal. In the world of God it will become more clear and manifest.

Here we comprehend according to environment and adaptation. This world is not much of a place for the realization of truth. This world is but the womb of the world of reality. Twins <p113> in the matrix may even embrace each other without knowing what they do. They are in darkness and cannot know their relationship to their mother who nourishes them, or their father who cares for them and provides for them. However, when they are born out of the world of darkness and live in this world, they realize each other and become assured that they have a father and a mother. So will you become assured when you enter the world of light and then you will realize how great is my fatherhood for you.

Some one has asked a question on astronomy.

In past ages astronomers accepted the Ptolemaic system. Ptolemy was a philosopher and astronomer of Greek origin and a lecturer in the University of Alexandria which was celebrated as one of the great universities of those times. He wrote a book called the Almagest in which he gathered together the theories held by ancient astronomers, systematizing these laws in a way that represents the knowledge of astronomy of that time. The book became an authority and eastern and western students used it in their colleges as a text-book. Ptolemy founded an observatory and his observations of the heavens were accepted by all the astronomers of the time.

According to his calculations the heavens were divided into nine circles, because he observed seven planets, calculating seven distant orbits through which they moved. The circle outside of <p114> he seventh was thought to be studded with the fixed stars. In order to make this theory clear the ancient astronomers used as an illustration the different layers of an onion - thus the curving surface of each layer adheres to the curve of each succeeding layer. Outside the eighth circle there was thought to be a ninth through which these colossal bodies were given the power to march in their destined course. They further believed this ninth sphere of action to be devoid of any solar bodies and that it moved through an invisible power, thus causing the motion of all the other stars within its radius. A motion of the outward layer of the onion moves all the inside layers with it. This, in brief, was the system of ancient astronomy.

After centuries of scientific deduction it is proved that there is no fixed heaven; that which we see is an infinite space; these stars are hung like luminous lamps in this immeasurable atmosphere. There are neither eight nor nine nor ninety spheres and the stars are numberless. Later astronomers like Kepler and Newton discovered the law of attraction and repulsion there is a universal law of interdependence between the stars.

The earth has its inhabitants, the water and the air contain many living beings and all the elements have their nature spirits, then how is it possible to

conceive that these stupendous stellar <p115> bodies are not inhabited? Verily, they are peopled, but let it be known that the dwellers accord with the elements of their respective spheres. These living beings do not have states of consciousness like unto those who live on the surface of this globe: the power of adaptation and environment moulds their bodies and states of consciousness, just as our bodies and minds are suited to our planet.

For example, we have birds that live in the air, those that live on the earth and those that live in the sea. The sea birds are adapted to their elements, likewise the birds which soar in the air, and those which hover about the earth's surface. Many animals living on the land have their counterparts in the sea. The domestic horse has his counterpart in the sea-horse which is half horse and half fish.

The components of the sun differ from those of this earth, for there are certain light and life-giving elements radiating from the sun. Exactly the same elements may exist in two bodies, but in varying quantities. For instance, there is fire and air in water, but the allotted measure is small in proportion.

They have discovered that there is a great quantity of radium in the sun; the same element is found on the earth, but in a much smaller degree. Beings who inhabit those distant luminous bodies are attuned to the elements that have gone into the composition of their respective spheres. <p116>

May God, the exalted, illumine thy sight and insight!

Although outwardly cataclysms are hard to understand and to endure, yet there lies a great wisdom behind them which appears later. All the visible material events are inter-related with invisible spiritual forces. The infinite phenomena of creation are as interdependent as the links of a chain.

When certain links become rusty, they are broken by unseen forces, to be replaced by newer and better ones. There are certain colossal events which transpire in the world of humanity which are required by the nature of the times. For example, the requirements of winter are cold, snow, hail and rain - but the birds and animals who live for six months, enjoying a short span of life, not realizing the wisdom of winter, chide and make lament and are discontent, saying, "Why this awful frost? Why this hail and storm? Why not the balmy weather? Why not the eternal springtime? Why this injustice on the part of the creator? Why this suffering? What have we done to be meted out with this catastrophe?"

However, those souls who have lived many years and have acquired much experience and have weathered many severe winters realize that in order to enjoy the coming spring they must pass through the cold of winter. <p117>

Dost thou think thy body a small thing, while in thee is enfolded the universe?
- (BAHA'O'LLAH IN SEVEN VALLEYS)

CHAPTER III

SOUL, MIND AND SPIRIT

A MEDITATION OF ABDUL BAHA

I walked in the Trocadero Gardens near the Eiffel Tower this morning. The grass was so green, the weather so delicious, I began thinking and became amazed at all the material wonders - amazed at how men deprive and limit themselves. I thought of how the spirit radiates in all the realms of nature according to the receptive degree. In the mineral world the spirit shows itself, but limited to that mineral condition. It is proved through science that the mineral has the power of attraction, the vegetable has the power of growth; life is according to capacity.

Man's spirit comprehends the realities of kingdoms which have no knowledge of him, even as the child in the womb has no knowledge of exterior existence; nevertheless, the mother comprehends the child's existence. The superior kingdom understands the inferior, but that the inferior comprehends it is no proof of the non-existence of the superior kingdom. In the human world, if we do not understand the divine world, is that a proof that the world of God does not exist? When we view the universe we see it as endless space, for we cannot restrict the universe to the lower kingdoms and to man who is here for a few days only, then vanishes.

This physical universe is infinite, and if material existence is endless, how much more so are the worlds of God! When we think of the visible worlds as infinite, how can we think that the worlds of God are limited? There is no beginning and no end to the material or spiritual worlds. Man passes through different phases and when in a lower consciousness he cannot comprehend the consciousness above. When we were in the state of the unborn child we had no knowledge of the world of man. If the vegetable kingdom could speak it would cry out, "Where is the world of man?" We cry out, "Where is the kingdom of the spirit?"

My hope for you is that as you travel through the universe of existence you will ever become acquainted with new and wonderful significances; that your knowledge will ever be increased - knowledge without limitation; then you will understand the realities existing in all kingdoms. Capacity is in accordance with striving and sincerity.

I pray that your inner sight may become clear, that you may be able to perceive things the heedless do not see, that you may understand the infinite worlds of God. A man who has no knowledge of the heavenly universe has missed a portion of his heritage and is like unto a stone which knows nothing of humanity. May God open your inner sight, so that you may know his secrets, attain to the highest degree of existence, become manifestors of a spiritual humanity and have your share of the heavenly wisdom that BAHÁ'ÓLLAH bestows. These divine effulgences have enveloped the Orient and Occident, but the eyes know not how to perceive, the intelligences are weak and so men are deprived and are in manifest loss. I commend you to turn towards the kingdom of El-Abha, so that the divine mysteries may be revealed.

I have the greatest desire to speak with you, but if I do not talk with my

tongue I commune with my heart and my soul is with you. Without the medium of words it speak to you of mysteries. Those who understand can converse with me thus for night and day I cry, "Ya Baha El-Abha," and I proclaim the kingdom of BAH'A'O'LLAH so that intelligent hearts can understand the significance. Those turned toward the kingdom perceive the light of BAH'A'O'LLAH; but if they are not turned, even should I address them in eloquent and resonant words, it would be like playing a marvelous instrument for the deaf. Thanks be to God, your hearts and intelligence are awakened, so that you hear the divine mention night and day, I hope that you understand what I say, that you comprehend the praises of BAH'A'O'LLAH, for I <p120> have no aim save to proclaim the kingdom of El-Abha; I have no occupation save to explain the book of BAH'A'O'LLAH. My hope in you is great, that the song may penetrate.

Some one desires an explanation of the terms soul, mind and spirit. The terminology of ancient and modern philosophers differs. According to the great ancient philosophers the words soul, mind and spirit implied the underlying principles of life; the essence was expressed under different names and these three terms designated the various functions of the absolute reality, or the operations of the one single essence; for instance, when they dealt with the sensations of emotion they called it the soul; when they desired to express that power which discovers the reality of phenomena they gave it the appellation of mind and when they discussed the consciousness which pervades the world of creation they gave it the title of spirit.

A man sees, hears, or speaks - seeing, hearing and speaking being the different functions of the same power or reality which animates him; the eye being the organ of sight, the ear of hearing and the tongue of speech. The one invisible primal essence had various names, but this in brief is the synopsis of the ancient philosophy.

We make a differentiation in these subjects. When we speak of the soul we mean the motive <p121> power of this physical body which lives under its entire control in accordance with its dictates. If the soul identifies itself with the material world it remains dark, for in the natural world there is corruption, aggression, struggles for existence, greed, darkness, transgression and vice. If the soul remains in this station and moves along these paths it will be the recipient of this darkness; but if it becomes the recipient of the graces of the world of mind, its darkness will be transformed into light, its tyranny into justice, its ignorance into wisdom, its aggression into loving kindness; until it reach the apex. Then there will not remain any struggle for existence. Man will become free from egotism; he will be released from the material world; he will become the personification of justice and virtue, for a sanctified soul illumines humanity and is an honor to mankind, conferring life upon the children of men and suffering all nations to attain to the station of perfect unity. Therefore, we can apply the name "holy soul" to such a one.

There is, however, a faculty in man which unfolds to his vision the secrets of existence. It gives him a power whereby he may investigate the reality of every object. It leads man on and on to the luminous station of divine sublimity and

frees him from all the fetters of self, causing him to ascend to the pure heaven of sanctity. This is the power of the mind, for the soul is not, of itself, capable of unrolling the mysteries of phenomena; but the mind can accomplish <p122> this and therefore it is a power superior to the soul.

There is still another power which is differentiated from that of the soul and mind. This third power is the spirit which is an emanation from the divine bestower; it is the effulgence of the sun of reality, the radiation of the celestial world, the spirit of faith, the spirit His Holiness the Christ refers to when he says, "Those that are born of the flesh are flesh, and those that are born of the spirit are spirit." The spirit is the axis round which the eternal life revolves. It is conducive to everlasting glory and is the cause of the exaltation of humanity.

In another instance His Holiness the Christ says, "Whosoever has not received a portion of the spirit is as dead. Let the dead bury their dead." This means that although the souls of humanity are living, yet if they are deprived of contact with the spirit they are as dead. In another place Christ says, "You must be baptized with the spirit." This spirit of faith is the flame of reality, the life of humanity and the cause of eternal illumination. It inspires man to attain the virtues and perfections of the divine world.

It is my hope that each one of you may become conscious of this flame.

Regard this globe. Its divisions are mineral, vegetable and animal. Man is the result of all these; therefore man is the result of all existence here. He stays five days on this earth in great <p123> trouble and hardship. One day he is ill, the next day he is poor, another day he is sad, one day his father dies, the next his son dies. He has not one moment of peace. Think you the whole earth life culminates in one who spends but five days on its surface - days encompassed with difficulties? Those who think thus - verily, are they not the children of error?

But praise be to God, the world of existence does not culminate here. If this were so, existence itself would be sterile. There are many worlds of light. For even as the plant imagines life ends with itself and has no knowledge of our existence, so the materially-minded man has no knowledge of other worlds of consciousness.

But some there are who have found divine intelligence and have obtained spiritual understanding. They have the real sight. They know of the other worlds. That is why the prophets of God forfeited this world, renounced everything material and gave their hearts to the heavenly world. Were there nothing after death, Christ would not have accepted the cross; the prophets of all time would not have sacrificed their lives. They were in touch with the celestial world and they overlooked this transitory life. This is the fruit of the tree of creation - to be freed from the darkness of the planet in order to enter the worlds of light. This is the object of existence; this is the fruit of the tree of humanity.

If not for this fruition, what is the purpose of the tree? For this world is like unto a tree, <p124> and the fruits thereof are the divine worlds; assuredly the tree of creation is adorned with luscious fruits. Were it not for the existence of the divine worlds, the kingdom of being would be fruitless. Were it not for the inspiration of the breath of the Holy Spirit, this life would be a farce.

May the radiant sea of reality become clear and unveiled of its clouds; may people become freed from the quagmires of the world of matter and soar upward to the city of light.

The test of existence is motion. An object which has in itself the power of motion lives. If motion is withheld growth ceases. That is mortality.

There are different degrees of motion. There is a motion of transit, that is from place to place. For example, the revolution of the earth around the sun; a bird flies from branch to branch. Another kind is the motion of inherent growth, like that of man from the condition of childhood to the estate of manhood, or the development of a tree from the seedling to its full fruition. The third is the motion of condition - the sick man passes from the stage of sickness to the state of health. The fourth motion is that of the spirit. For instance, the child while in the mother's womb has all the potential qualities of the spirit, but those qualities begin to unfold little by little <p125> as the child is born and grows and develops, finally manifesting all the attributes and qualities of the spirit. The fifth is the motion of the intellect whereby the ignorant become wise; the indifferent, alert; the dark, illuminated and the carnally-minded, spiritual.

In this century a great impelling stream is manifest in the world of intellect. Minds have been stirred by this impulse and have made marvelous progress. The sixth motion is that of the eternal essence. That is to say, all phenomena either step forth from the arena of non-existence into non-existence. Just as being in motion is the test of life, so being stationary is the test of death and when a moving object stops it retrogrades. To stop means to fall. When a tree stops giving fruit it decays.

In other words, man must throughout all the degrees of life evolve and progress day unto day, for life is continuous. The manifestors of divine law have appeared so that they may confer upon man an ideal power which will enable him to advance along all the degrees of human attainment. The power of the world of existence is limited, while the power of God is unlimited. If the reality of man should not be confirmed by a divine power human progress would terminate.

On the other hand, the divine reality is unlimited and immeasurable and can never stop or deteriorate, therefore the holy souls who are confirmed with this divine power are likewise <p126> endowed with eternal motion. Their progress becomes unlimited. Day unto day their lives are strengthened, the circle of their comprehension becomes wider, the sphere of their intellects becomes more effectual and their capacities are increased.

I desire for you that ideal power, so that you may come into the stream of uninterrupted motion and never cease progressing.

Day unto day may you inherit eternal qualities, so that you may continue to travel along all the infinite degrees of human and divine attainments.

The spirit of man has two means of action. Sometimes it acts through an intermediary. For instance, the spirit of man sees through the intermediary of the eye, hears through the ear, walks with the help of the legs and smells with the nose.

In order to seize the actions of the rational soul, we need the mediation of the body; but the soul can act directly without this intermediary. Thus, when we sleep the soul sees without the help of the eyes. The auditory nerves are inactive, but the soul hears. Our members are in repose, but the soul is in movement. Our body is in the room, our soul is traveling through all horizons. It is clear, therefore, that the soul evolves with and without the intervention of the material body. In the same way when we study an object, sometimes we observe it with the help of some optical instrument and sometimes with the naked eye. Sometimes we move by ourselves, sometimes with the help of a machine of locomotion.

The soul acts in the physical world with the help of the body. When it is freed from the body it acts without an intermediary. We see with our physical eyes, but with the help of our thoughts we can see other lands. America was discovered through the mind. The day the soul becomes detached from the body it has but this second means of action - without intermediary.

It is the same with the holy messengers when they have left the earth. Christ acts to-day without an intermediary. His expressions in the world are numerous. The sun shines once through the medium of the mirror and again without it. Now we are looking at the sun which is reflected in the mirror and when the mirror is broken we look at the sun itself. The body is the horse, the soul is the rider and sometimes the rider moves without a mount. But people who do not reflect say that when the soul has left the body it can no longer act. The divine teachers act more powerfully after the detachment of their souls from the body. In his time the Christ was not able to influence many people. Afterward his influence became widespread. Spirit has no body. Reflect on this subject.

What becomes of the soul after its separation from the body? The question concerns that which has a place and that which is placeless. The human body is in space; the soul has no place in space. Space is a quality of material things and that which is not material does not partake of space. The soul, like the intellect, is an abstraction. Intelligence does not partake of the quality of space, though it is related to man's brain. The intellect resides there, but not materially. Search in the brain you will not find the intellect. In the same way though the soul is a resident of the body it is not to be found in the body.

When man dies, his relation with the body ceases. The sun is reflected in the mirror; the mirror reflects the light and brilliancy of the sun, but the sun does not reside in the mirror. It does not enter nor come out of the mirror, nevertheless one sees it in the mirror, so the soul reflects itself in the body. If the mirror be broken the sun does not die. The body is the temporary mirror; the spiritual soul suffers no change, no more than the sun does remaining eternally in its own station. Even as in the world of dreams when all the physical faculties are in abeyance and the soul travels in all realms seeing, hearing, speaking, so when the physical body decomposes, the soul is not affected.

People who know the truth say that the physical body of man is put into motion by the soul and in the same way man is the vital spark of this world. If man had not been put upon this earth the world would be dead. I do not speak of the physical man, but the human attainments <p129> which are the adornment of existence. If man did not exist, this world would have no beauty, no eternity, no object. In the same way that the essence of man is the soul, the soul of this world is the subtle growth of spirituality, heavenly morals, divine favors and sacred powers. Were the physical world not accompanied by this spirit, it could not exist. A beautiful creature without a soul signifies nothing. A most sumptuous habitation set in darkness is non-existent. The most wonderfully wrought lamp, if it give no light, is useless. Europe, the most adorned of the continents, has progressed to the apex of refined material civilization. It is a beautifully formed body, - alas, that it has no soul! It is one of the most polished mirrors, - alas, that the sun of truth is not reflected in it! It is an orchard without fruit, - alas, it has no spiritual fragrance.

Arise! Put forth a supreme effort, secure some new and heavenly attraction - that this Europe may be set in motion, for it is lamentable that it should be deprived of the heavenly wisdom; lamentable that it knows nothing of the heavenly rays; that it has not the health of the Holy Spirit; that a being of such great beauty should have no soul; that so exquisite a flower should have no scent; that so magnificent a structure should have no light. Do not remain inactive for one moment, perchance you may shed light in this darkness.

I beg of God to illumine you with the light of his love so that you may enter into the kingdom <p130> and draw nigh unto the threshold. His bounties are inexhaustible and this world is very dark. It shows forth no attributes save that of animal characteristics, for the world of nature is an emanation of the animal kingdom, not an emanation of the world of humanity. The human world is a spiritual emanation, but if it become devoid of its distinguishing virtue it retrogrades and becomes akin to the animal.

I desire for you such a spiritual effulgence as will give you power to make ideal advancement and enter the kingdom of El-Abha, so that you may become superior to the whole of creation and find an illumination which is eternal. May you become assisted with confirmations that are enduring and attain to an enjoyment of life that is without interruption, without beginning and without end.

I will pray for you.

Some one has asked a question on personality. From what source does it come? What are its attributes? What are its characteristic features or aspects?

Personality is of two kinds. One is the natural or God-given personality which the western thinkers call individuality, the inner aspect of man which is not subject to change; and the other personality is the result of acquired arts, sciences and virtues with which man is decorated. When the God-given virtues are thus adorned, we have character. When the infinite effulgences of <p131> God are revealed in the individuality of man, then divine attributes, invisible in the rest of creation, become manifest through him and one man becomes the manifestor of knowledge, that is, divine knowledge is revealed to him; another is the dawning place of power; a third is trustworthy; again, one is faithful, and another is merciful. All these attributes are the characteristics of the unchangeable individuality and are divine in origin. These qualifications are loved by all, for they are emanations of the father. They are the significance of his name and attributes, the direct ray of which illuminate the very essence of these qualifications.

As regards the personality which is the result of acquired virtues, let us take this mirror as an example: In the beginning it was a piece of black stone; now, through the process of purification, it has become a mirror and has reflecting power and displays its innate perfections so that they are clearly visible to all. The rock was endowed with a distinct individuality which acquired a personality through the process of education.

The individuality of each created thing is based upon divine wisdom, for in the creation of God there is no defect. However, personality has no element of permanence. It is a slightly changeable quality in man which can be turned in either direction. For if he acquire praiseworthy virtues, these strengthen the individuality of man and call forth his hidden forces; but if he acquire defects, the beauty and simplicity of the individuality <p132> will be lost to him and its God-given qualities will be stifled in the foul atmosphere of self.

It is evident that every human being is primarily pure, for God-created qualities are deposited in him. If man extend his individuality by acquiring sciences, he will become a wise man; if he be engaged in praiseworthy deeds and strive for real knowledge, he will become godlike. If, on the other hand, when God has created him to be just and he practices injustice, he denies his God-given attribute. Man was created to be merciful, he becomes a tyrant; he was created to be kind to all the children of men and given the capacity to confer life, but he becomes the destroyer of life.

Personality is obtained through the conscious effort of man by training and education. A fruitless tree under the influence of a wise gardener becomes fruitful; a slab of marble under the hand of a sculptor becomes a beautiful statue. The ruined places are built up by captains of industry; the ignorant children learn the secrets of phenomena under the tutelage of a wise teacher. The crooked branch becomes straight through cultivation.

It is evident that we have two modes for the expression of life, - individuality and personality, - the former becomes as the son of God and the latter the son of man. As we have shown, the personality of some is illumined, that of others is dark; the personality of some is seen in the manifestation of divine justice, while that of <p133> others is the embodiment of tyranny. The personality of some is divine guidance made visible, while that of others is choked in the veils of self and desire. That which was hidden in the capability of these souls has been made manifest; just as, for instance, when you sow a seed, that which is hidden in the reality of that seed becomes revealed and unfolded - the trunk, the branches, the leaves, the blossoms and the fruits, which are in the seeds as potentialities. A teacher brings out the potentialities of the pupils. The clouds pour down rain, the sun shines, and that which was hidden in the bosom of the earth springs forth.

The personality of man is developed through education, while his individuality which is divine and heavenly should be his guide.

Poison is harmful to man. It is the nature of man to find enjoyment in that which is gratifying to his senses; if he pursue this path he subverts his individuality to such a degree that the poison of darkness which was the means of death becomes the means of his existence and his nature becomes so degraded and his individuality so deflected that his one purpose in life will be to obtain the death-dealing drug.

What causes the change in the individuality? It comes through the acquirement of evil habits. God originally endowed man with an individuality which enjoyed that which was beneficial and shunned the drug; but man through his evil habits changes this creation and transforms the divine illumination into satanic darkness. <p134>

As long as man is a captive of habit, pursuing the dictates of self and desire, he is vanquished and defeated. This passionate personal ego takes the reins from his hands, crowds out the qualities of the divine ego and changes him into an animal, a creature unable to judge good from evil, or to distinguish light from darkness. He becomes blind to divine attributes, for this acquired individuality, the result of an evil routine of thought becomes the dominant note of his life.

May all of you be freed from these dangers and delivered from the world of desires that you may enter into the realm of light and become divine, radiant, merciful, Godlike.

All that has been created is for man who is at the apex of creation and who must be thankful for the divine bestowals, so that through his gratitude he may learn to understand life as a divine benefit. If we hold enmity with life, we are ingrates, for our material and spiritual existence is the outward evidences of the divine mercy. Therefore we must be happy and pass our time in praises, appreciating all things. But there is something else: detachment. We can appreciate without attaching ourselves to the things of this world. It sometimes happens that if a man loses his fortune he is so disheartened that he

dies or becomes insane. While enjoying the things of this world <p135> we must remember that one day we shall have to do without them.

Attach not thyself to anything unless in it thou seest the reality of God - this is the first step into the court of eternity. The earth life lasts but a short time, even its benefits are transitory; that which is temporary does not deserve our heart's attachment.

Material favors sometimes deprive us of spiritual favors and material rest of spiritual rest. A rich man said to Christ, "I would fain be thy disciple." "Go and put into practice the ten commandments," replied the Christ. "But I know them by heart and have always practiced them." "Then sell what thou hast and take up thy cross and follow me." The man returned to his home. But the rich who are attracted through their hearts have the spark and are like unto brilliant torches. BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH has spoken of the importance of their station. Certain rich ones have sacrificed their possessions and even their lives for this cause. Riches did not prove an obstacle for them and they are like unto stars in the heaven of both worlds - flames of reality.

Detachment does not consist in setting fire to one's house, or becoming bankrupt or throwing one's fortune out of the window, or even giving away all of one's possessions. Detachment consists in refraining from letting our possessions possess us. A prosperous merchant who is not absorbed in his business knows severance. A banker whose <p136> occupation does not prevent him from serving humanity is severed. A poor man can be attached to a small thing.

A rich man and a poor man lived in the same town. One day the poor man said to the rich man, "I want to go to the Holy Land." The rich man replied, "Very good, I will go also," and they started from the town and began their pilgrimage. But night fell and the poor man said, "Let us return to our houses to pass the night." The rich man replied, "We have started for the Holy Land and must not now return." The poor man said, "The Holy Land is a long distance to travel on foot. I have a donkey, I will go and fetch it." "What?" replied the rich man, "are you not ashamed? I leave all my possessions to go on this pilgrimage and you wish to return to get your donkey! I have abandoned with joy my whole fortune. Your whole wealth consists of a donkey and you cannot leave it!" You see that fortune is not necessarily an impediment. The rich man who is thus detached is near to reality. There are many rich people who are severed and many poor who are not.

May our spirit be at rest!

God has given man a heart and the heart must have some attachment. We have proved that nothing is completely worthy of our heart's devotion save reality, for all else is destined to perish. Therefore the heart is never at rest and never <p137> finds real joy and happiness until it attaches itself to the eternal. How foolish the bird that builds its nest in a tree that may perish when it could build its nest in an ever-verdant garden of paradise.

Man must attach himself to an infinite reality, so that his glory, his joy, and

his progress may be infinite. Only the spirit is real; everything else is as shadow. All bodies are disintegrated in the end; only reality subsists. All physical perfections come to an end; but the divine virtues are infinite. How many kings have flourished in luxury and in a brief moment all has disappeared! Their glory and their honor are forgotten. Where are all these sovereigns now? But those who have been servants of the divine beauty are never forgotten. The result of their works is everywhere visible. What king is there of two thousand years ago whose kingdom has lived in the hearts? But those disciples who were devoted to God - poor people who had neither fortune nor position - are to-day trees bearing fruit. Their banner is raised higher every day.

When they imprisoned Peter, in the time of Nero, the Roman empire was very powerful, extending from Europe to Asia. Few empires can be compared to what Rome was. Peter and another disciple arrived in Rome a chain around their necks and reduced to the last extremity. But they have triumphed over Nero. His banner is now in the dust whereas theirs is on the summit. <p138>

These two beings were severed from all else save God, and Nero was attached to temporal power. Nothing has remained of him save the mention of his iniquities, but the works of the disciples eternally prevail!

Therefore let us yearn for the kingdom of God, so that our works may bear eternal fruit. Otherwise the flower will be lost. Attach your hearts to BAHÁ'ÓLLÁH. He is the eternal glory. Then from day to day you will become more enlightened; day by day your efforts will increase; day by day your work will become universal, and day by day your horizons will broaden until the end they will embrace the universe.

Glory be upon the people of glory.

My fatigue does not matter - as long as I find loving souls like yourselves, my heart is happy. My hope is that this city may become illumined and pulsate with the health of the Holy Spirit.

The sea of materialism is at flood time and all the nations of the world are immersed in it. It is my hope that the fish will rise to the surface, so that they may behold other wondrous aspects of creation; for the people are like unto the fish swimming in the deep - ignorant of the rest of the universe. May they be transformed into birds of the air and soar in the nether atmosphere! May they break all bonds of limitation, so that they can observe from the height the lordly <p139> processions of infinite creatures; they will see the blue heavens studded with luminous stars, rivers flowing with salubrious water, gardens bedecked with fragrant flowers, trees adorned with blossoms and fruits, birds singing songs of light, humanity ever striving forward, every atom of existence breathing life and force - the universe of God a wonderful theatre upon the stage of which every created thing plays its part.

If you strive unceasingly, if you make a great effort, if you put forward extraordinary exertion, then these people will be awakened, their eyes will be opened and their ears unstopped, so that they can hear the melodious music

which streams down from the supreme concourse, the notes and strains of which have been played from all eternity ever enrapturing with the thousand harmonious accompaniments the pure in the heart.

It is my hope that you may be the means of changing this wild jungle of materialism into a fruitful orchard, this thorny thicket into a rose garden. May Europe become the divine university wherein heavenly sciences and divine arts are taught and learned!

By heavenly sciences I mean divine philosophy and spiritual teachings; by the songs and fragrances of the rose garden I mean the mysteries of the kingdom of kingdoms, the secrets of the degrees of existence and the knowledge of the results of human life. <p140>

This universe is not created through the fortuitous concurrences of atoms; it is created by a great law which decrees that the tree bring forth certain definite fruit. Verily, this universe contains many worlds of which we know nothing.

Is the materialistic philosophy of this Europe, so much praised by contemporary agnostics and atheists, a philosophy to be admired? Are these people woovers of the spirit? Nay, they have drowned that capacity and are out of touch with the kingdom of reality. Is this an enviable goal to which humanity may aspire? Is this a system of philosophy through which people may become glorified? No, by God, the philosophy of glory needs no scholastic curriculum.

Strive so that these people may be released from their nature worship and become like sons of wisdom from the city of light. <p141> We speak one word and by it we intend one and seventy meanings. - (BAHA'O'LLAH IN THE IGHAN)

CHAPTER IV

ABDUL BAHA ON THE VALUE OF A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

His Excellency ABDUL BAHA, addressed the Paris Esperanto group on February 12, 1913, at a banquet which was accorded him at the Hotel Moderne in that city. M. Bourlet, President of the Paris Esperanto Society, in introducing Abdul Baha, said that one of the principles of the great world religion which he was promulgating, was the establishment of a universal language.

There was a deep silence as Abdul Baha arose. His remarks were punctuated by cheers as he walked up and down the banquet hall, stopping to emphasize with frequent gesture. He spoke in Persian, M. Hippolyte Dreyfus of Paris interpreting into French. Here and there one noted that the French translation was undergoing still further interpretation by Esperantists for the benefit of neighbors who did not understand French but knew Esperanto, - the occasion itself offering a noteworthy argument for the imminent need of a universal tongue. ABDUL BAHA said: Human undertakings are divided into two kinds - universal and personal. <p142>

Those efforts which create general interest are universal; their results are

likewise universal for humanity has become interdependent. The international laws of to-day are of vast importance, for as international politics bring nations nearer to one another - and thus promote a bond of oneness which acts as a magnet to attract the divine confirmations - the results and benefits are limitless. Therefore, let us say that every universal cause is divine and every personal matter is human or limited.

The universal light for this planet is from the sun and the special electric ray which to-night illumines this banquet hall appears through the invention of man. In like manner the activities which are trying to establish solidarity between the nations and infuse the spirit of universalism in the hearts of the children of men are like unto divine rays from the sun of reality and the brightest ray is the coming of the universal language. Its achievement is the greatest virtue of the age for such an instrument will remove misunderstandings from amongst the peoples of the earth and will cement their hearts together. This medium will enable each individual member of the human family to be informed of the scientific accomplishments of all.

The basis of knowledge and the excellencies of endeavor in this world are to teach and to be taught. To acquire sciences, and to teach them in turn, depends upon language, and when the <p143> international auxiliary tongue becomes universal it is easily conceivable that the acquirement of knowledge and instruction will likewise become universal.

No doubt you are aware that in the past ages a common language shared by various nations created a spirit of solidarity amongst them. For instance, thirteen hundred years ago there were many divergent nationalities in the Orient. There were Copts in Egypt, Syrians in Syria, Assyrians and Babylonians in Bagdad and along the rivers of Mesopotamia. There existed among these peoples rank hatred; but as they were gradually brought nearer through common protection and common interests, the Arabic language grew to be the means of intercommunication and they became as one nation. They all speak Arabic to this day. In Syria, if you ask any one of them, he will say, "I am an Arab," though he be a Greek, an Egyptian, Syrian or Jew.

We say "this man is a German, the other an Italian, a Frenchman, an Englishman," etc. All belong to the great human family yet language is the barrier between them. The greatest working basis for bringing about unity and harmony amongst the nations is the teaching of a universal tongue. Writing on this subject fifty years ago, His Holiness BAHÁ'U'LLAH declared that complete union between the various nations of the world would remain an unrealized dream until an international language was established. <p144>

Misunderstandings keep people from mutual association and these misunderstandings will not be dispelled except through the medium of a common ground of communication. Every intelligent man will bear testimony to this.

The people of the Orient are not fully informed of the events in the west and the west cannot put itself into sympathetic touch with the east. Their thoughts are enclosed in a casket. The universal language will be the master key to open

it. Western books will be translated into that language and the east will become informed of the contents; likewise eastern lore will become the property of the west. Thus also will those misunderstandings which exist between the different religions be dispersed. Religious prejudices play havoc among the peoples and bring about warfare and strife and it is impossible to remove them without a common medium.

I am an Oriental and on this account I am shut out from your thoughts and you likewise from mine. A mutual language will become the mightiest means toward universal progress, for it will cement the east and the west. It will make the world one home and become the divine impulse for human advancement. It will upraise the standard of oneness of the world of humanity and make the earth a universal commonwealth. It will create love between the children of men and good fellowship between the various creeds. <p145>

Praise be to God, that Dr. Zamenhof has constructed the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort, for in this matter he has served his fellow-man well. He has done a service which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring effort and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it holds a promise of universal acceptance.

Therefore every one of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it, so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments of the world and become a part of the curriculum of all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future international conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto.

In the coming ages, two languages will be taught in the schools, one the native tongue, the other an international auxiliary language. Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study fifty languages and travel through a country and still be at a loss. I myself speak several Oriental languages, but know no western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.

Please send some teachers to Persia so that <p146> they may teach Esperanto to the younger generation. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.

May it be promulgated rapidly; then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the community will be fully informed of the thoughts of all.

I am extremely grateful to you and thank you for these lofty efforts, for you have gathered at this banquet in a selfless endeavor to further this great end. Your hope is to render a mighty service to the world of humanity and for this exalted aim I congratulate you from the depths of my heart. <p147>

Is our power exhausted by our first creation? (BAHA'O'LLAH IN THE IGHAN)

CHAPTER V

ABDUL BAHA ANSWERS QUESTIONS ASKED BY THEOLOGIANS OF PARIS

Sunday Evening, February 17, 1913 - Pasteur Monnier's Theological Seminary,
Paris (The audience was composed of professors, clergy and theological
students)

PASTEUR MONNIER: We are very happy to find amongst us one who has come on the
part of God and has brought to us a divine message.

ABDUL BAHA: One endowed with the gift of hearing gets the mysteries of God from
all things and all creation conveys to him the divine message.

PASTEUR MONNIER: If you will permit us, we want to ask a question: As we are
students of theology and are in the rank of the clergy, we would be interested
to know your belief about Christ - who he was and what he was. <p148>

ABDUL BAHA: Our belief in regard to Christ is exactly what is recorded in the
New Testament; however, we elucidate this matter and do not speak literally or
in a manner based merely on blind belief. For instance, it is recorded in the
Gospel of St. John, "In the beginning was the word, the word was with God and
the word was God." The majority of Christians accept this matter literally, but
we give a logical explanation that no one need find occasion to reject.

The Christians have made this statement about "the word," the foundation of the
trinity; but philosophers state that the trinity as regards the identity of
divinity is impossible.

We explain this subject as follows: By the "word" we mean that creation with
its infinite forms is like unto letters and the individual members of humanity
are likewise like unto letters. A letter individually has no meaning, no
independent significance, but the station of Christ is the station of the word.
That is why we say Christ is the "word" - a complete significance. The
universal bestowal of divinity is manifest in Christ. It is obvious that the
evolution of other souls is approximate, or only a part of the whole, but the
perfections of the Christ are universal, or the whole. The reality of Christ is
the collective center of all the independent virtues and infinite
significances.

For example, this lamp sheds light and the moon illumines the night with its
silvery beams, but neither light is self created. <p149>

His Holiness the Christ is like unto the sun; his light issued forth from his
own identity. He received it not from another person - therefore we give him
the comprehensive title of the "word." By this we mean the all-comprehending
reality and the depository of the infinite divine characteristics. This "word"
has an honorary beginning and not a beginning of time. For instance, we say
this person has precedence over all. This precedence comes to him through the
station and honor which he now holds in life, but it is not a precedence of

time. In reality the "word" has neither beginning nor ending. The letters of the "word" are those qualities which appeared in Christ and not his physical body. These attributes were from God - like unto the rays of the sun reflected in a clear mirror. The rays, the light and the heat of the sun are its qualities which have become manifest in the mirror. It is evident that these qualities were ever with God, even at this time they are with hi, they are inseparable from him because divinity is not subject to division. Division is a sign of imperfection and God is the perfect one.

It is clear that the attributes of divinity are co-equal and co-existent with the essence. In that station there is absolute unity. This is brief is the exposition of the station of the Christ.

PASTEUR MONNIER: What is the similarity of the cause of Christ to that of BAHÁ'ÓLLÁH, or - what relation do they hold toward each other? <p150>

ABDUL BAHÁ: The foundation of the religion of God is one. The same basis which was laid by Christ and later on was forgotten, has been renewed by His Holiness BAHÁ'ÓLLÁH. Each divine revelation is divided into two parts. The first part is essential and belongs to the eternal world. It is the expression of the love of God, the knowledge of God. This is one in all the religions, unchangeable and immutable. The second part is not eternal; it deals with practical life, transactions and business and changes according to the evolution of man and the requirements of the time of each prophet.

These laws are the reflex on this plane of the divine law and symbolize a medium for turning the thoughts of humanity toward justice. The mundane laws change as the horizon of man extends, till it encompass the universe.

For example, during the days of His Holiness Moses, the foundation and the origin of the religion of God spelled morality and that was not changed in the Christian dispensation, but certain differences crept in through the change of the second part of the religion. During the Mosaic period the hand of a person was cut off in punishment of a small theft; there was the law of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This was according to the spirit of the age, but as these laws were not expedient in the time of Christ, they were abrogated. Likewise divorce <p151> had become so universal that there remained no fixed laws of marriage, therefore His Holiness Christ forbade divorce.

According to the exigencies of the time, His Holiness Moses revealed ten laws for capital punishment. It was impossible at that time to protect the community and preserve social security without these severe measures, for the children of Israel lived in the wilderness of Tah, where there were no established courts of justice and no penitentiaries. But this code of conduct was not needed in the time of Christ. The history of the second part of religion is unimportant, because it belongs to the customs of this life only; but the foundation of the religion of God is one and His Holiness BAHÁ'ÓLLÁH has renewed that foundation.

The cause of Christ was wholly spiritual. He changed nothing save the Sabbath

day, certain laws of conduct and the law of divorce.

All the precepts of Christ deal with the knowledge of God, with the oneness of the world of humanity, the moral relations between the hearts and spiritual susceptibilities. His Holiness BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH created these merciful sentiments in the most complete form and deposited them in the hearts of men. This is in keeping with the teaching of Christ, because it is the reality and reality changes not. Is it possible to say that divine unity is divisible, or the knowledge of God, the oneness of the world of <p152> humanity, universal justice, the solidarity of the human race - are they ever subject to transformation?

No, I declare by God they are immutable, for they are the reality.

PASTEUR MONNIER: What is the relationship of Christ and BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH with God?

ABDUL BAHÁ: His Holiness Christ said: "The Father is in me." This we must understand through logical and scientific evidences, for if religious principles do not accord with science and reason, they do not inspire the heart with confidence and assurance.

It is said that once John of Chrysostom was walking along the seashore thinking over the question of the trinity and trying to reconcile it with finite reason; his attention was attracted to a boy sitting on the shore putting water into a cup. Approaching him, he said, "My child, what art thou doing?" "I am trying to put the sea into this cup," was the answer. "How foolish art thou," said John, "in trying to do the impossible." The child replied, "Thy work is stranger than mine, for thou art laboring to bring within the grasp of human intellect the conception of the trinity."

Let us, free from past tradition, investigate the reality of this matter. What is the meaning of the father and the son?

This fatherhood and sonship are allegorical and symbolical. The Messianic reality is like <p153> unto a mirror through which the sun of divinity has become resplendent. If this mirror expresses "The light is in me" - it is sincere in its claim; therefore Jesus was truthful when he said, "The Father is in me."

The sun in the sky and the sun in the mirror are one, are they not? - and yet we see there are apparently two suns.

The Jews were expecting the coming of the Messiah, lamenting day and night, saying: "O God, send to us our deliverer!" But as they walked in the path of dogmas, rather than reality, when the Messiah appeared they denied him. Had they been investigators of reality, they would not have crucified - but would have recognized him instantly.

PASTEUR MONNIER: Is the unification of religion possible? If so, when and how and through what channel will it be realized?

ABDUL BAHÁ: When the devotees of religion cast aside their dogmas and

ritualism, the unification of religion will appear on the horizon and the verities of the holy books will become unveiled. In these days superstitions and misunderstandings are rife; when these are relinquished the sun of unity shall dawn.

When in San Francisco I was invited to speak in a Jewish synagogue. I said, "For about two thousand years, between you and the Christians, there has ever existed dark superstitions and misunderstandings which have blinded the eyes. <p154> You conceive that His Holiness the Christ was the enemy of Moses, the destroyer of the laws of the Pentateuch, the abrogator of the commandments of the Bible. Investigate and observe that Christ appeared at a time when according to your own historians the laws of the Torah were forgotten; the foundation of religion and faith was shaken. Nebuchadnezzar had come, burning the context of the whole Bible and taking into captivity many Jewish tribes. Alexander the Great came for the second time, and Titus, the Roman general, devastated the land for the third time, killed the Jews, pillaged their property and imprisoned their children.

"At such an hour and under such gloomy clouds, His Holiness the Christ appeared and said, 'The Torah is the divine book; Moses is the man of God; Aaron, Solomon, Isaiah, Zechariah and all the Israelitish prophets are valid and true.' Throughout all regions he spread the Old Testament which for fifteen hundred years had not been seen out of Palestine. Were it not for Christ the name of Moses and his book would not have reached America; for during fifteen hundred years the Torah had been translated but once. It was Christ's seal of approval which caused it to be translated into six hundred languages. Now be just, was Christ the friend or the enemy of Moses?"

"You say that he abrogated the Torah, but I say he promulgated the Torah, the ten commandments and all the questions which belong to <p155> its moral world. He changed but the following: that the punishment for a small theft should not be to cut off the hand of the offender; if a person blind another, he must not be blinded, or if he break another's teeth, his teeth must not be broken. Is it justice nowadays to establish the archaic laws of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth? Christ changed only that part of the Mosaic religion which did not accord with the spirit of his time. He had no desire to abolish the Torah.

"Is it not true that the Christians believe that Moses was the prophet of God and all the Israelitish seers were the messengers of God and the Bible the book of God? Has this belief of theirs harmed their religion? If you say from your heart that Christ is the word of God, then all these differences will cease. The persecutions of the last two thousand years have been on account of the fact that you were not willing to proclaim these few words. I hope that it is proven to you that Moses had no better friend than His Holiness the Christ."

Today the enmity and rivalry existing between the religions are over mere words. It is an established fact that the followers of all the religions believe in a reality, the benefits of which are universal; which reality is a medium between God and man. The Jews call that reality Moses, the Christians

Christ, the Mussulmans Mohammed, the Buddhists Buddha and the Zoroastrians <p156> Zoroaster. Now mark well that none of these religionists have ever seen the founders; they have only heard his name. Could they overlook these names they would at once realize that all believe in a perfect reality which is an intermediary between the Almighty and the creatures.

Should you speak to a Jew about the medium or channel between God and man, without referring to any particular name or person, he would say, "Yes, this is right, but I say the name of this mediator is Moses." If you give the exposition of the divine philosophy to the followers of each religion they will agree with you in the abstract, but they will stick to the names of their own prophets and arise in contention and strife over these names. The Jew believes in Christ, though he knows it not, and is quibbling over the mere name.

There have been wars and rumors of war amongst the people of the world for many thousand years; much innocent blood has been shed, many kingdoms and empires have been laid waste. Is it not enough?

Religion should be the means of good fellowship and love. It must upraise the standard of harmony and solidarity. If religion is conducive to hatred and enmity, its existence is harmful to the welfare of the community.

His Holiness the Christ sacrificed his life, not that people might believe the doctrine that he is the word of God; nay, rather, he yearned to <p157> bestow the consciousness of continued existence. That is why he said, "Jesus, the son of man, is come to give life to the world."

His aim has been entirely obliterated and the doctrine of the father, son and Holy Spirit has been fabricated. Christ said, "If one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Is there any relation between this commandment and the bloody events of the nations of today?

The religious dissension between the Catholics and Protestants has caused a deluge of bloodshed. Has this any bearing on the statement of Christ when he addressed Peter: "Put thy sword into the scabbard"? When we hold fast to the foundation of religion, differences will disappear.

PASTEUR MONNIER: Is your aim to found a new religion?

ABDUL BAHA: Our aim is to free the foundation of religion from its moss grown dogmas; to dispel the black impenetrable fog of creed so that the religions may be flooded and illumined. May these foul clouds never return; may the rays of the eternal sun encircle all countries, for verily the resplendent sun of reality shines from age to age. (Abdul Baha arose.)

PASTEUR MONNIER: Our hope is likewise the spread of such ideals of unity, peace and concord. We hope to be your co-workers and co-laborers in this field.

ABDUL BAHA: May that unity be established between us that is not ended by separation. <p158>

(Abdul Baha went into the library where several members of the clergy and professors sought his presence.) One of them said:

"I desire to express the deepest gratitude and pleasure on the part of those present. What you have said is in truth our aim which is the establishment of universal peace and brotherhood."

ABDUL BAHA: Praise be to God that our aims and hopes are one, but we must strive to make this purpose realized.

A PROFESSOR: The International Congress of Religions will be opened in Paris during the month of July. We invite you to take part in the proceedings of that congress.

ABDUL BAHA: It is nearly two years since I left Haifa. I must return. After forty years of confinement and two years of continuous travel my powers are exhausted.

PROFESSOR: The invitation of the congress will be sent to you and we hope you will write a message to be read during the session.

ABDUL BAHA: God willing. <p159>

Blessed is he who is free from the sea of names. - (BAHA'O'LLAH IN THE IGHAN)

CHAPTER VI

A LETTER FROM ABDUL BAHA ABBAS

Written from Port Said, Egypt, to the Honorable Secretary of the Sixth International Congress of Free and Progressive Christians and other Religious Liberals (Held in Paris, France, July 16-22, 1913)

HE IS GOD!

My honorable and dear friend: Your kind letter was received and its contents became the means of happiness, for it indicated the fact that a number of the well-wishers of humanity have put forth a mighty effort to organize the Sixth International Congress of Free and Progressive Christians and other Religious Liberals, so that they may establish good-fellowship among the various sects and unveil the reality of religion, investigate the foundation of divine faith and remove the present misunderstandings rampant among the nations. This is a <p160> most noble intention, for it means service to human kind. This effort belongs to the realm of merciful susceptibilities. I hope that the noble congress may become assisted in the affiliation of the hearts of the peoples of the world and create a compact of eternal peace among the adherents of religion; so that the world may become free from strangeness and all the followers of religions may be ushered into the tent of amity which is the universal tabernacle of the oneness of the world of humanity.

I entertain the greatest longing to present myself before this august International Congress and I regret exceedingly that at this time I am living in Egypt and the condition of my health prevents my journey. Apologizing for my inability to attend in person, I send this letter on the subject of religion.

It is evident and clear to the wise men of nations - those wise men who are the woovers of absolute reality - that the purpose of the divine messengers and the revelation of the heavenly books and the establishment of the religion of God has been none other than to create amity and justice between the children of the races. True religion is the foundation of spiritual union, the union of thought, the union of susceptibilities, the unity of customs and the ideal chain binding together all the children of men. Through its practical realization, the minds and souls will receive development by divine instruction; <p161> they will become assisted to investigate reality, attain to a lofty station of wisdom and establish the basis of a divine civilization.

There are two kinds of civilization, - material civilization which serves the physical world and divine civilization which renders service to the world of morality. The founders of the material, practical civilization are the scientists and investigators and the establishers of divine civilization are the celestial universal teachers.

True religion is the basis of divine civilization. Material civilization is like unto the body; divine civilization is like unto the spirit. A body without the spirit is dead, although it may be clothed in the utmost beauty and comeliness.

In short, by religion we mean those necessary bonds which have power to unify. This has ever been the essence of the religion of God. This is the eternal bestowal of God! This is the object of divine teachings and laws! This is the light of the everlasting life! Alas! A thousand times alas! that this solid foundation is abandoned and forgotten and the leaders of religions have fabricated a set of superstitions and rituals which are at complete variance with the underlying thought. As these man-made ideas differ from each other they cause dissension which breeds strife and ends in war and bloodshed; the blood of innocent people is spilled, their possessions are pillaged and their children become captives and orphans.

Thus religion which was destined to become <p162> the cause of friendship has become the cause of enmity. Religion, which was meant to be sweet honey, is changed into bitter poison. Religion, the function of which was to illumine humanity, has become the factor of obscuration and gloom. Religion, which was to confer the consciousness of everlasting life, has become the fiendish instrument of death. As long as these superstitions are in the hands and these nets of dissimulation and hypocrisy in the fingers, religion will be the most harmful agency on this planet. These superannuated traditions, which are inherited unto the present day, must be abandoned, and thus free from past superstitions we must investigate the original intention. The basis on which they have fabricated the superstructures will be seen to be one, and that one, absolute reality; and as reality is indivisible, complete unity and amity will be instituted and the true religion of God will become unveiled in all its beauty and sublimity in the assemblage of the world.

Hence, to this honorable congress I say, "Tear asunder the veils and curtains

of these dogmas, remove these accumulated, suffocating increments, dispel these dark impenetrable clouds, that the sun of reality may shine from the horizon of eternity."

Praise be to God that this century is the century of sciences! This cycle is the cycle of reality! The minds have developed; the thoughts <p163> have taken a wider range of vision; the intellects have become keener; the emotions have become more sensitized; the invention have transformed the face of the earth, and this age has acquired a glorious capacity for the majestic revelation of the oneness of the world of humanity.

If the members of this honorable congress engage their deliberations upon the elucidation of the world of reality and disperse the darkness of doctrines which overshadow the devotees of the various shrines and which are contrary to the divine plan, undoubtedly this world will become another world; the earthly sphere will become the sphere of the kingdom; the world of humanity an arena for the display of truth; the rays of the sun of the realm on high will shine upon it; the east and west will become enlightened; all the various cults and sects become truth-seekers and speakers of reality; eternal institutions will be established in the human world, and day unto day the superstructure of the palace of the solidarity and the oneness of mankind will be raised to the loftiest pinnacle of heaven!

This is the hope of this exiled one! From the throne of the Almighty I beg for you assistance and confirmation, so that you may become strengthened to accomplish such a work, the feasibility of which has been considered impossible and utopian since the dawn of creation. May this work be accomplished through you, in <p164> this radiant century, with the utmost brilliancy and grandeur.

Upon ye be greeting and praise!
ABDUL BAHA ABBAS. <p165>

Whosoever hath known himself, hath surely known his Lord. -- (BAHA'O'LLAH IN THE IGHAN)

CHAPTER VII

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY ABDUL BAHA

To the Paris Theosophical Society, at the Theosophical Headquarters, 59 Avenue de la Bourdonnois,

February 13, 1913

According to science, all forms of creation are endowed with life; this element of life and energy depending on environment and adaptations. Life as an attribute of growth is manifest to a minute degree in the mineral kingdom. It is more powerfully manifested in the vegetable kingdom and when we study the animal world we observe that the power of life is expressing itself through more capable mediums, showing manifold attributes. Ascending to the human kingdom we find that life, or what is figuratively called spirit, is declaring itself with knowledge in the utmost power and transcendency.

The more man strives along the degrees of attainment, the greater will be the unfoldment. The child born to the mother manifests this element of life in a more abundant degree than the child in the matrix. The display of the forces of life upon the arena of existence is incomparably greater than that of the dark and narrow world <p166> in which the babe lived for nine months. But when life attains to the summit of maturity, then its manifestations will be along many paths and cover many fields hitherto undreamed of.

Spirit in the human world is the discoverer of the realities of existence. All the inventions, all the sciences, all the hidden mysteries are brought to light through the activity of the spirit on the plane of life. While living in the Orient it organizes affairs in the Occident; while living on the earth it discovers the heavenly constellations. These examples ought to show you that the spirit of life is omnipotent, especially when it establishes a communication with God and becomes the recipient of the eternal light - then it transforms itself into a ray of the effulgence of the eternal sun.

This station is the greatest of all stations, for this connection of the spirit of man with God is like unto a mirror and the sun of reality is reflected in it. Thus it becomes the collective center of all the virtues; its emanation is the bestowal of the king of bestowers; its radiations are the manifold splendors of the infinite luminary; its sanctity is from the highest summit of divine essence. This station is the station of heavenly inspiration and is called the station of the divine grace. It signifies that the rays of the sun of reality are resplendent in the mirror and the attributes of the sun of reality are reflected therein. This is the ultimate degree of human perfection, for the attainment of which the <p167> thinkers and philosophers of all time have longed and poets have dreamed; it is the mystery of mysteries and the light of lights wherein the spirit become eternal, self-subsistent, age-abiding.

When we look upon the world of creation from another standpoint, the analytic, we observe that everything is the result of composition of many single atoms which through the law of affiliation have adhered and according to the shape, order and positions of these atoms, a given being steps forth into the court of objectivity. Every single atom of these aggregate atoms has its myriad transferences as has been proved by science.

Every single atom has its coursings throughout all the kingdoms of life. For instance, that which has gone into the composition of a human being was at one time in the mineral kingdom. Along the degrees of the mineral kingdom it journeyed, appearing in various forms and reflecting various images, manifesting a peculiar virtue in each. In the vegetable kingdom, it again partook of many experiences and through each experience became adorned with an added attribute. Having perfected its journeyings here, it entered the animal kingdom and was incarnated throughout multitudes of animal forms and finally, in the human kingdom it traversed endless forms of humanity, in each form of composition showing forth a particular aspect of the one power. <p168>

The forms of life are infinite, therefore the transferences of this primordial unit throughout the degrees of creation are infinite.

All phenomena are involved in all phenomena. Consider what a transcendent unity exists, that, from this standpoint, every monad is the expression of all creation; this is the law and order in the world of existence. What wondrous symmetry! What stupendous organization! What divine completeness! What elysian co-ordination! What celestial union!

Every single manifestation of the myriad forms of creation is a reflection of the divine emanations, therefore the divine emanations are infinite, unlimited and illimitable. Gaze upward through immeasurable space to the majestic order of the colossal suns. These luminous bodies are numberless. Behind our solar system there are unfathomable stellar systems and above those stellar systems are the remote aggregations of the milky way. Extend your vision beyond the fixed stars and again you shall behold many spheres of light. In brief, the creation of the Almighty is beyond the grasp of the human intellect. When this objective creation is unlimited and not subject to suspension, is not the subjective creation of His Majesty the Almighty limitless? When the reflection or physical creation is infinite, how is it possible to circumscribe the reality which is the basis of divine creation? The spiritual world is so much greater than the <p169> physical that in comparison with it the physical world is non-existent.

Reflect that every human being is limited through his physical body, but his spirit is free. The body of man may travel for a few miles and become fatigued, but the spirit untrammelled may go throughout the immensity of space. While walking on earth man's thoughts may grasp the motions of the heavenly bodies and define their course. This demonstrates how man's spirit transcends his environment.

The divine grace, whether physical or spiritual, is unlimited, yet certain selfish souls desire to circumscribe to their own ideas the outpouring of this heavenly grace. Oh, the ignorant ones! They have declared that the age of this world, for example, is ten thousand years. By this is meant that the descent of the heavenly bestowals has extended only over that period, while in reality it is omnipresent. We cannot state reasonably that this world is ten thousand or one hundred thousand or one hundred million year old, for the divine rays have ever descended upon man.

The world of creation has had no beginning and will have no end, because it is the arena upon which the attributes and qualities of the spirit are manifested. Can we limit God and his power? In the same manner we cannot limit his creations and attributes. Just as the reality of divinity is limitless, likewise his grace and bounties are limitless. <p170>

The supreme bestowal is the appearance of the heavenly messengers. How can we ever define or circumscribe this bestowal? If the scientists have proven that a molecule is an aggregate of myriads of atoms and the atom in turn is an aggregate of infinite electrons, how can the sun be comprehended? If the drop

is infinite in its particles, how much more the sea! If the material world is infinite with regard to its manifestations of life, can the spiritual world be finite? The prophets of God have ever appeared in the ages of the past and will continue to appear throughout the ages of the future. Where was Adam when God was exercising his divinity? Where was this petty infinitesimal world of ours when God was bestowing his bounties upon this infinite universe? If we limit the number of his appearances through his prophets, it is equal to limiting God himself.

Man has ever longed for a direct means of communication with his Lord and has ever been in a state of anticipation for the unique advent of this earth of a divine being. The followers of all religions have been expecting the coming of a promised one and have longingly prayed for the dawn of the sun of truth. Alas! A thousand times alas! that when he appeared they remained of the heedless, nor turned their faces toward him. Pitiful indeed is their condition! In lamentation, during the darkness of night they prayed for the light of a new day; but when it dawned from the eastern horizon they cried clamorously: "Where <p171> is the sun? We do not see it!" They are of those who are bereft of sight.

Two thousand years ago the Israelites expected the Messiah. Day and night they were praying in the temple, supplicating in the holy of holies, crying, "O God, send to us the true one, our deliverer and redeemer" - thus they lamented the bemoaned his delay. But when His Holiness the Christ appeared they jeeringly turned away; when the orb of reality dawned they could not see it, for their eyes were covered with the veils of traditions and names. These anxious waiting ones did not become the recipients of that bestowal; nor harken to the call of God; nor quaff from the chalice of love; nor behold the rays of the sun of reality. It is now nearly two thousand years since their Messiah appeared and still they await him!

May our eyes be ever awake; may the windows of our minds be flung aside, so that when the messenger appeareth, we may not be deprived of his glory through the veils of preconceived ideas; so that when the heavenly herald shouts the word of God, we may not be deaf; so that when the holy fragrance of the paradise of the Almighty be diffused, our nostrils may not be afflicted with cold. May we be enabled to inhale the perfume, behold the splendor, hearken to the voice and be regenerated with the spirit of the new day.

Then our life will be revived, we shall enjoy eternal existence, be refreshed with the breath of <p172> the Holy Spirit and become informed of the mysteries of creation. Then we shall be inspired to upraise the standard of the oneness of humanity; we shall take a portion of the divine grace and become resplendent with the rays of the heavenly luminary; then the human race will mirror forth the attributes of the eternal kingdom and will move like a peaceful sea and each individual will appear as a wave. As we look upon the sea, we will comprehend it as the sea of God; as we look upon the waves, we will realize that they are the souls of humanity. The sun is one; all light is one; the rays are one; it shines on all.

This century is the century of the oneness of the world of humanity, the century of justice; this century is the century of universal peace, the century of the dawn of the sun or reality; this century is the century of the establishment of the kingdom of God upon this earth; therefore let us grasp every means to promote the federation of the world, that we may become the recipients of the divine outpourings.

Today we observe that various means of unity are being brought forward and this in itself is an evidence that the divine confirmations surround us.

One sign of unity is the construction of an international auxiliary language, Esperanto.

Let us strive untiringly to spread this language.

I am most pleased with you and am very grateful to find myself in such a revered gathering. <p173> I shall remember your spiritual susceptibilities and pray that they may be directed toward the highest, that your love for your Lord and your attraction toward him may increase day unto day. I hope that this revered society may become conducive to the illumination of the city of Paris, in order that the blind may receive sight; the deaf hearing; the dumb the power of speech; and that into these dead bodies the spirit of life may be infused. Then this Paris will become another Paris and this world another world.

After Abdul Baha had taken his seat, at the request of the friends he again mounted the rostrum and offered the following

SUPPLICATION

O GOD, O MY LORD, I SUPPLICATE TO THEE AND IMPLORE IN THY PRESENCE AND INVOKE THEE WITH THE TONGUE OF MY CONSCIENCE, MY SOUL, MY SPIRIT, MY MIND, TO SHOWER DOWN THY MERCIFUL BESTOWALS UPON THESE HOLY SOULS WHO HAVE GATHERED IN THIS GREAT ASSEMBLY. I BEG OF THEE, O MY LORD, TO FAVOR THEM WITH THE GLANCES OF THY POWER. I ENTREAT THEE, O MY BELOVED, TO POUR UPON THEM THE RAIN OF THY FAVOR FROM THE CLOUDS OF THY MERCY. VERILY THESE ARE THY SERVANTS AND THY MAIDSERVANTS. DEPRIVE THEM NOT OF THE SUNBEAMS OF REALITY; MAKE THEM LIKE WAVE OF THY OCEAN AND LEAVE THEM NOT TO THE DARKNESS OF THEMSELVES. O LORD, ENLIGHTEN THEIR HEARTS WITH THE <p174> LIGHT OF UNITY; CHEER THEIR SPIRITS WITH THE MYSTIC TRACES OF THY KNOWLEDGE; ILLUMINE THEIR EYES WITH BEHOLDING THY SIGNS; PURIFY THEIR SOULS WITH THE WONDERS OF THY MAJESTY; INSPIRE THEIR CONSCIENCES WITH THE WORD OF THY SINGLENESS; ENCIRCLE THEM WITH THY HEAVENLY GRACES. VERILY THOU ART THE OMNIPOTENT, THE MIGHTY. O LORD! THOU SEEST THE HEARTS OF HUMBLENESS BEFORE THY DOMINION, THE SOULS REJOICED WITH THY PROCLAMATIONS, THE SPIRITS ATTRACTED BY THEY HOLY FRAGRANCES. O LORD, CONFIRM US IN THY GOOD PLEASURE, ASSIST US IN THY ADORATION AND CAUSE US TO BECOME WORTHY SERVANTS TURNING OUR FACES TOWARD THE HORIZON OF THY SINGLENESS ILLUMINED WITH THE RAYS OF THE SUN OF THY REALITY.

VERILY THOU ART THE CLEMENT, THE BOUNTEOUS AND VERILY THOU ART THE MOST MERCIFUL OF THE MERCIFUL! <p175>

This world is non-existent, adorned in the form of existence. - (BAHA'O'LLAH IN
TABLET TO ZOROASTRIANS)

CHAPTER VIII

ADDRESS GIVEN BY ABDUL BAHA TO THE SPIRITUAL ALLIANCE
14 RUE DE TREVISE, PARIS, FEB. 21st, 1913

We observe that every movement which establishes unity and amity brings in its train life and every cause which promotes differences and enmity carries death in its wake. Every philanthropic movement is born through love and unity and every movement which has produced ruin and devastation has been born through hostility and differences.

We must strive untiringly, perchance we may discover a plan whereby amity and unity will result. Today there are many affiliations inaugurated to bring about more or less unity.

The first link which creates love and justice is the family bond, the second is the patriotic bond, the third is the racial bond, and the fourth is the civic bond. These, although useful in their own limited spheres, are not potent enough to bring about the unification of the entire race. Have we not learned often and with much sorrow that there has been a quarrel between the members <p176> of a family, or the inhabitants of one land, or the denizens of various states, or the individuals of different cities?

A permanent peace in the world of existence can be established only through the power of the spirit. Spirit is the ruler over the body. If the people are emancipated through one spirit, there is not a trace of doubt but that the greatest bond of union and harmony will be established amongst them.

History informs us that every age has its special ties which bind the people together; but the strongest tie of all ages, the unbreakable tie which binds the hearts together, is the tie of true religion. Religion has been the means of uniting contending nations and harmonizing warring tribes. There is no agency on this planet more potent than the power of religion. Consider for a moment that in the era of Christ there were many nations who were thirsty for one another's blood, carrying at intervals fire and sword over the border lines. There were the Romans, the Greeks, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Egyptians. It was impossible to unite these conflicting tribes and peoples; but when the power of religion came into action it swept away all these barriers and cemented these nations that for ages had been waging war.

By the word religion I do not mean the present dogmatic and theological superstitions which are in the hands of the people. By religion I mean the world of celestial attributes. After the moral <p177> aspect of humanity becomes readjusted, then the greatest unity will be realized; but without this moral readjustment it is impossible to establish harmony and concord, for it is a fact that war, conflict, friction and strife are but the visible results of deterioration of morality and corruption of character. But when the morality of humanity is beautified with praiseworthy virtues there will be an end to war.

For example, we observe that certain tribes and nations that are in a state of savagery desire warfare, such as the tribes of Peninsular Arabia and Central Africa. Their moral world is dark. Morality has reached a higher level in the western countries and whenever war is declared between two nations it is not always carried on with the same pitiless methods of torture and is more or less temporary. Many reforms are introduced among civilized nations - such as care of the wounded, non-molestation of the noncombatants and the observance of certain international laws entirely unknown to the savage tribes.

In these days there must needs be a mighty power of accord instilled into the nations. The principles of the oneness of the world of humanity must be proclaimed, understood and put into practice, so that all the nations and religions may again remember the long-forgotten fact - that they are all the progeny of primordial humanity, Adam, and the denizens of one land. Are they not breathing one air? Is not the same sun <p178> shining upon all? Are they not the sheep of one flock? Is not God the universal shepherd? Is he not kind unto all?

Let us banish the phantasmal thoughts of east and west, north and south, European and American, English and German, Persian and French.

Consider the creation of the infinite universe. This globe of ours is one of the smallest planets. Those stupendous bodies revolving in yonder immeasurable space, the infinite blue canopy of God, are many times greater than our small earth. To our eyes this globe appears spacious; yet when we look upon it with divine eyes, it is reduced to the tiniest atom. This small planet is not worthy of division. Is it not one home, one native land? Is not all humanity one race? Creationally there is no difference whatsoever between the peoples.

How short-sighted we would be should we try to divide a room into the eastern and western corners. The geographical division of this world is an exact parallel. Through our ignorance and lack of viewpoint we divide this common home, we divide the members of this family into various races, we divide religion into different sects and then with those suppositional division we wage war against one another; we shed one another's blood and we pillage one another's possessions. Is not this unpardonable ignorance? Is this not the height of injustice? Were we just and could we observe without prejudice we would <p179> realize that there are no fundamental differences. For the last six thousand years there have been wars and contentions between the various nations and in every age we have had some great culminating catastrophe.

Were we given the vision of human brotherhood we could not have engaged in warfare. Consider how humanity has retrograded from its ideals, for it glories in fratricide. If one person kill another he is called a murderer and the civil authority brings him before the law; but if he kill one hundred thousand people on a battlefield, he is hailed as a conqueror. Is not this like unto some blood-thirsty wolf glorying in that he has wantonly strangled a hundred thousand sheep in a night? If a person steal one franc he will be branded as a thief; but if he pillage a whole country will be acclaimed a great hero. How

ignorant is humanity!

From a physiological standpoint human beings differ from carnivorous animals. Their teeth, unlike the lion's, are not made for tearing flesh. All the functions of the human body are created for love and goodfellowship and it is evident that the continuation of this world of humanity depends upon the practice of these attributes and the destruction of the world of humanity lies in war and conflict. But through long custom and usage savagery and blood-thirstiness are kneaded into the very being of man and the Godlike attributes which contribute to the powers of treaty-making and international laws have not been sufficiently strong to stem the tide of warfare.

There must needs be some tremendous force to upraise the standard of eternal friendship between nations and this force must come through self-sacrifice and universal service.

At a time when the Orient was in the dark night of cataclysmic ignorance, His Holiness BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH, like unto a glorious sun, shone forth from the eastern horizon. In the midst of contention and the clashing rivalries of the Oriental peoples he boldly proclaimed the doctrine of the oneness of the world of humanity. Numerous souls who had the courage of their convictions gathered under his banner.

In order to promote universal peace and the confederation of the nations, they were ever ready to give up their possessions and their lives. His Holiness BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH suffered imprisonment, exile and incarceration for fifty years. While under chains he raised his voice and summoned the people to the tent of unity. More than twenty thousand hastened to the arena of sacrifice and while singing songs of joy were martyred at the hands of the executioners.

The governments of the east arose with great determination to exterminate this cause. They held councils and said, "We must uproot the tree of this community and abolish the foundation of this palace of universal peace which these people desire to found"; they said, "We want to carry conquest to other countries, we desire to make other nations captive, we wish to extend the boundary of our dominions and defend our frontiers. How are we going to do all these things except through militarism? And as BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH'S aim is to prevent war we must destroy him and his followers so that his ideals may not take root and flourish."

This illustration proves that those who live in the divine law are self-sacrificing in this path; for they have proven it by their deeds. They are neither visionaries nor utopians. With the greatest might and strength they have arisen to serve their fellow-men. Through their marvellous power they are establishing amity between the various nations and religions; they are working incessantly day and night.

Today in the Orient those souls from amongst the various sects, religions and nations who have accepted the teachings of BAHÁ'Ó'LLÁH are cemented together with the power of affinity and love. Were you to enter any of their conferences

in the Orient you would behold the Mussulmans, Buddhists, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians associating together in a spirit of unity and brotherhood to such degree that no one could differentiate one race from another. It is as though they had previously been opposing forces and were welded into one consciousness.

These souls have reached the highest station of self-sacrifice. Should the occasion arise, all that they possess would be freely given in order to unfurl the banner of the solidarity of the human race over the religions of the east and the west, so that all differences might be annulled and all peoples from one end of the earth to the other might sing in accord the song of life and peace, that it might be borne on the wings of light to the throne of the father, there to be blended with the symphonies of the heavenly angels and thus heaven and earth become harmonized with the golden strains of the music of unity.

Be it known that there is but one foundation to the religion of God. The apparent differences have come through ignorance. Words differ but the purpose is one.

Consider how ignorant and rapacious is man. Domestic animals live with their kind in peace and harmony. If you bring together sheep from various countries, from France, Persia, America, etc., not one would contend: "I am a Persian sheep," or "I am an American sheep." Let us at least live together as these animals would. Is it fitting that we should be more savage than they? Again, if you collect in one room doves from Asia, Europe, Africa, America and Australia, cooingly they will love one another.

Man, who is endowed with intelligence, must not be less than they; for the greatest bounty in the world of existence is the mind which should lead men to love and concord. We must exercise the functions of such a holy power in the path of love and not expend it upon the inventions of Krupp guns, Mauser rifles and Maxim's rapid-firing cannons. God has endowed us with intellects, not for the purpose of making instruments of destruction; but that we might become diffusers of light; create love between the hearts; establish communion between the spirits and bring together the people of the east and the west.

Every cherished effort must extend its powers to other souls. Is there anything more cherished than the mind of man? We must expend this faculty in the cause of human union, for we are the children of one father. A delicate spiritual power is ever exercising an influence over the hearts and minds of men. Why should we abandon the holy power which binds us together and cleave to the barbarous traditions which keep us apart?

The world of existence is like unto an orchard and humanity is like unto the trees. All these trees are planted in the same orchard, reared through the heat of one sun, watered with one rain. We must be the cause of the adornment of this orchard. The world of humanity is like unto a rose garden and the various races, tongues and people are like unto contrasting flowers. The diversity of colors in a rose-garden adds to the charm and beauty of the scene as variety

enhances unity. Why should we not look upon the human world with rose-colored vision?

If this warfare and conflict are not entirely effaced, if the whole world of humanity is not united and in accord, if the various races refuse to associate with one another, how can we ever aspire to the realization of that dream of the <p184> millennium of which it is said, "The earth will be transformed into a delectable paradise and all the children of men will live in the utmost happiness"? If the members of a family are perfectly united it will add to their comfort and joy. If the people of a city are inspired with civic unity the whole community will advance. If the inhabitants of a great continent become one spirit in different bodies marvelous progress will be made and if the people of the entire globe are welded into one great commonwealth the prayer, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as in heaven," will be a reality for each will have the kingdom within himself.

What sublime happiness! What God-inspired progress! What a heavenly ideal! What a divine disposal!

I request that each one of you work for this great end and hold fast to every means of harmony, that this blood-thirstiness may be forever quenched; that the horizons of the world may become illumined by the rays of a divine humanity and the east and the west become radiant with the light of its Lord. <p185>

O ye editors of the world: - It behooves ye to be free from prejudice and adorned with equity and justice in order to mirror forth the facts. -
(BAHA'O'LLAH)

CHAPTER IX

A LOVING FAREWELL
EXTRACT FROM AN INTERVIEW GIVEN TO THE
EDITOR OF "THE LONDON BUDGET:"
S. S. CHAMBERLAIN

For east s east and west is west
And ever (not never) the twain shall meet.

(No rebuke intended to Mr. Kipling)

ABBAS EFFENDI (Abdul Baha, Servant of God, as he prefer to calls himself), son of the Persian prophet, BAHA'O'LLAH, who is at present sojourning in Paris held an interesting farewell conference at his apartment, 30 rue St. Didier.

Abdul Baha willingly endured imprisonment rather than abjure his faith, one of the tenets of which declares for the absolute equality of all souls regardless of such outer differences as sex, race or color. He recognizes no class distinctions except those given by service and in the spirit of brotherly love; for this and other like doctrines he was held prisoner for forty years in the fortified city of Acca in Palestine. With the advent of the Young Turks' supremacy realized through the "Union and Progress" committee, in 1908, he was freed.

Something of the daily life of this advocate of universal brotherhood may be of interest. <p186>

He lives in an apartment almost in the shadow of the Eiffel Tower and one of the striking sights of Paris is to see him walking about in his Oriental attire through the gardens of the Trocadero and of the Champ de Mars, or visiting Notre Dame. His life is of the simplest, his attitude humble, his needs few. He chants at midnight and at dawn and he who would interview this "master" must be up betimes. His secretaries gather about him and papers and magazines are read and discussed in the reception hall where Persian tea is served. It is then that he answers his mail, always a large one from people and assemblies all over the world. Every letter that is sent him is answered and every one that rings his door bell, from the humblest to the most arrogant, receives due consideration.

Speaking of Paris and the French people, "Paris is a city of adornment," he said, standing at the window, looking out on the sleeping city. "I hope that, as this century is a radiant century and this age a merciful age, the human world will become united and the standard of the solidarity of the human race will be hoisted in Paris; for Paris is a center of refined civilization and has advanced marvelously along the path of science. Paris is like unto a lamp and the light will be the realization of the brotherhood of man. I hope that this light will be ignited in the lamp and that like unto a brilliant star it will shed its benign rays of unity on all religions.

"People have a superstitious respect for <p187> certain doctrines which are against science and the wise men of the country have thought that religion is opposed to science. Know thou that the great ethical foundation of knowledge is divine revelation and the basis of religion is reality itself. It is like unto the sun which shines on all things making them clear and luminous, whereas lesser lights as well as superstitious beliefs illumine but one aspect of things leaving room for shade and doubt.

"I have great confidence in the wisdom and understanding of the world leaders of thought that they may discover this reality.

"I hope that the soul of Paris will arise from the city of obscurity and progress steadily forward to the new civilization."

When asked how this new civilization was to be brought about, Abdul Baha said:

"Through solidarity. In some animals mutual co-operation is frequently seen; when in time of danger, each will try to surpass the others in help. One day as I was standing near the border of a little stream on Mt. Carmel, I noticed a number of locusts that had not yet developed full wings.

"These insects wishing to pass from my side of the stream to the other in order to procure some food, threw themselves forward, each one trying to emulate the other in flinging itself into the water, so that a bridge was formed in order that the others might pass over and this was <p188> accomplished; yet those who gave themselves as a bridge finally perished. Consider how much solidarity makes for life as compared to the fighting for self interest which destroys

it."

When the moment came for the patriarch's parting words, he pushed back his white turban and gave one of his smiles that in itself seems like a benediction.

"I am leaving Paris for the Orient though in reality I am always with you. Place does not matter. Two people may be in the same room and yet not attain to a visitation. When I was in prison many people came to see me. They crossed seas and deserts and yet remained in the city of the blind while others in far-distant lands attained the meeting.

"Alas, alas! the world has not discovered the reality of religion hidden beneath the symbolic forms!" <p189>

"May it do good unto me, unto thee, unto whomsoever may ascend to the heaven of knowledge and to him whose heart is fascinated by the zephyr of assurance wafting upon the garden of his innate heart from the sheba [1] of the merciful!
[1 Sheba - A symbol of home or dwelling place.

"Peace be unto those who follow guidance."
(BAHA'O'LLAH IN SEVEN VALLEYS) <p190>

Approved by
Bahai committee
on publications