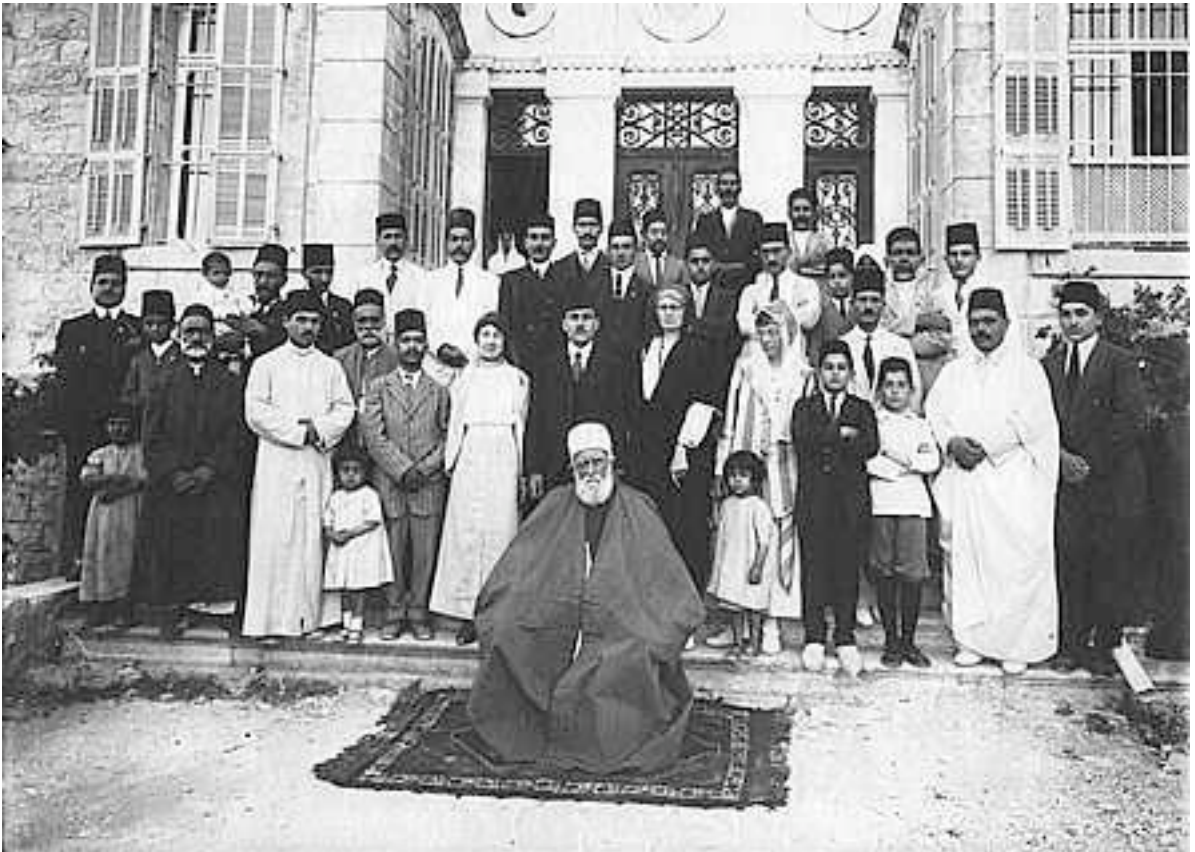


THE TWIN PILGRIMAGES OF NÚRU'D-DÍN MUMTÁZÍ



Haifa, May 1920. A photograph of a group of pilgrims, long-term visitors, and Haifa residents, arrayed on the entrance steps of the House of the Master, where many such photos were taken. Núru d-Dín Mumtází, on his first pilgrimage, is standing immediately behind Abdu l-Bahá.

Saichiro Fujita, who was the second Japanese to accept the Faith and who would make the journey from Japan to Haifa with Mr. Mumtází on his second pilgrimage in 1955, is in the middle of the uppermost row wearing a greyish coat.

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FOREWORD

Brief bio

Núru'd-Dín Mumtází was born in 1898 in Káshán, Írán to Jewish parents who embraced the Bahá'í Faith. He himself declared his faith in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh at age nine. Mr. Mumtází lived for some years in the city of Hamadán, where he had a business and married Bihjat Muraffah. Among his services to the Faith while living there were teaching at the Bahá'í Tá'íd School for Boys and travel-teaching in surrounding areas. He pioneered in 1953 to Japan and was joined the following year by his family. He established a trading company but left its running mostly to his eldest son and concentrated on activities of the Cause. Membership of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia from its inaugural formation in 1957, generous contributions of funds and property, support of the Publishing Committee, and numerous teaching trips were some of the ways he served the Faith in Japan. He passed away in 1960.

The pilgrimages and memoirs

Firstly, the title given this document—"Twin Pilgrimages"—is the editor's, not the pilgrim's. While it could possibly be imagined to refer to a set of pilgrimages to the holy Houses in Baghdád and Shíráz, in fact "twin" here is just a fancy way to say "two" and refers to two visits to the Holy Land.

Núru'd-Dín Mumtází had the bounty of performing one pilgrimage to

the Holy Land during the ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in May of 1920 with his elder brother and the brother’s wife, and one pilgrimage during the ministry of the Guardian, in late 1955 and early ’56 with his wife (and accompanied on the journey by Saichiro Fujita). His memoir of the earlier pilgrimage was written up in 1959 (presumably from notes taken in 1920), printed in 1995 in the form of a slim book in the original Persian as *Khá irát-i-Nuh Rúzih* (“Memories of Nine Days”), and recently translated into English. This account includes mention of meetings with Shoghi Effendi in Paris prior to the pilgrimage and an epilogue describing the visit of Martha Root to Shíráz in 1930. The record of the later pilgrimage was dictated by Mr. Mumtází in English to his secretary in the late 1950s, under the title “Excerpts from notes taken by Momtazis while visiting Haifa, Jan. 1956”, and preserved in typescript form. Mr. Mumtází was living in Japan at the time of the later pilgrimage and therefore parts of the second account focus on the affairs of the Faith in that country.

Permission to make these English-language pilgrimage memoirs available publicly comes from Mr. Mumtází’s late eldest son, Rúḥu’lláh Mumtází (or Rouhollah Momtazi, a member for over two decades of the Asian Board of Counsellors), who was responsible for having the original first account published. The translation into English of the Persian text of the first account was kindly accomplished by Dr. Ardeshir Khodadad Forudi, editorially assisted by his daughter Shomays Forudi Dadfar. As a young man in Írán Dr. Forudi attended firesides given by Núru’d-Dín Mumtází. Dr. Forudi is a relative of one of Rouhollah Momtazi’s sons-in-

law, Bijan Dadfar, who contributed a number of clarifications of the translation done by his relative. The English text of both accounts was edited, and this foreword written, by another of Rouhollah Momtazi's sons-in-law, Sheridan A. Sims. A friend, Daryoush Yazdani (and his correspondent as well), generously explained certain passages from the original Persian text and sourced several quotations; another friend, Zafar Moghbel, gave insights to passages in the second account. The editorial work on the memoirs was begun, regrettably, after Rouhollah Momtazi had passed away, and special thanks are due his wife, Poursan (née Manouchehri), and his youngest brother, Abbas Momtazi, who both helpfully answered questions about his father. Also, the youngest brother (i.e., Núru'd-Dín Mumtází's youngest son) was kind enough to offer corrections and suggestions for the edited first account.

Something is usually lost in translation, and some things are not amenable to translation, and so the literary qualities and perhaps even the meaning of the original Persian of the first account may not always be entirely apparent in the English version. Núru'd-Dín Mumtází had facility in Arabic, French, and English to go with his native Persian, but he did not speak English at a native level, and the language of the second account is thus quite readable, and even eloquent in places, but also somewhat awkward in other places. It should be understood that much of the second account, too, is a translation, as the Guardian spoke to Mr. Mumtází in Persian, which remarks Mr. Mumtází later rendered into English himself, from his memory and/or notes.

The structure given by Mr. Mumtází to both accounts is numerous sections, some long and some short, each with a heading. He gives only one date pertaining to his pilgrimage in each account—May 10, 1920 and December 27, 1955 (although the title of the second account specifies January 1956 as the time of the pilgrimage)—and aside from the first part of the first account, covering the journey from Írán via Europe to the Holy Land, chronological sequence is often not clear in the two accounts, with the sections organized mostly by subject. The title of the second account says “excerpts from notes taken by Momtazis”, but if there is a fuller version of the notes, including any record left by Mr. Mumtází’s wife, it has not been found.

Editorial matters

Parts of the first account were not translated, and the finished translation has been abridged and edited for style, while the original language of the second account has been left almost entirely as Mr. Mumtází dictated it. The only significant editorial alteration of the content of the second account is the deletion of two sections where the subject matter is rather sensitive; it was felt to be prudent to remove them from this public version of the account.

The headings of a few sections in the second account have been reworded in order to more clearly reflect their subjects. Several sections in the second account have been moved around so that sections with similar subjects or themes are closer. A few new sections have been created in

both accounts where the original has thematically diverse content packed into one long section. This re-wording of headings and creation and rearrangement of sections has had no effect on content or on chronological sequence (insofar as such order is discernible in the original); an exception is the section on Hiroshima in the second account, in which remarks made at the first two meetings with the Guardian and originally recorded separately have been fused.

Both original accounts employ quotation marks to set off speech, although the second account leaves the marks out beyond the second page. While Mr. Mumtází indirectly quotes remarks or summarizes them in some instances in the second account, mostly he seems to be quoting speech directly, in the form of dialogues or talks; as such, the absence of quotation marks after the second page probably represents simply a typographical choice made to save time and trouble. The decision has thus been made to add quotation marks to talks and conversations in the rest of the second account for the sake of consistency. (The use of the marks is further addressed several paragraphs below.)

The titles of works by the Central Figures are not italicized unless published editions of those works are being cited (e.g., *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, but *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* page 117). Where reference page numbers are given, these are usually to the most recent edition of the publication being cited.

The system of transliteration for Persian and Arabic names and terms adhered to in Bahá'í publications is followed; certain personal and

place names are given in their common anglicized form. As in Bahá'í publications, pronouns referring to Manifestations of God and to the Center of the Covenant are capitalized. Another practice of Bahá'í publications followed editorially in the first account and by Mr. Mumtází himself in the second account is the use of the singular form for Arabic terms—e.g., “Ḥazíratu'l-Quds”—where the grammatical number is plural, with the English -s indicating the plural in certain instances. Also as in Bahá'í publications, some geminate consonants are not doubled (e.g., “Ḥájí” rather than “Ḥájjí”). Unlike in some Bahá'í publications, Qur'án verses are given the Egyptian, not Rodwell's, numbering. Long vowel sounds are not distinguished from short in the transliteration of Japanese names in the second account. Idiosyncratic punctuation and capitalization in the second account—such as “THOU” and “THEE” addressing the Guardian, or “SOLOMONS FEET” (found in the final section)—has been normalized.

Here and there in the original first account Mr. Mumtází illustratively or epigrammatically cites verses from Persian and Arabic poetry as well as from passages from the Bahá'í Writings that do not yet have authorized translations; most of these verses have been paraphrased or have not been retained at all in this translation, however, for what might be called technical reasons. Honorific expressions recurring in the first account—such as “the Blessed Beauty” (referring to Bahá'u'lláh) and “the Blessed Temple” (referring to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the young Shoghi Effendi)—have not been retained in the translation in most instances and have

been replaced by the familiar proper nouns or by personal pronouns; also the pre-nominal “His Holiness” (indispensable in Persian usage) has been dropped in most instances.

As touched upon earlier, the second account was dictated by Mr. Mumtází in English, and although parts are quite fluent and articulate some passages are unstylish or ungrammatical or have other mistakes. To avoid editor and reader tedium, not all of these passages have been “siced”. Mr. Mumtází’s translation into English of Shoghi Effendi’s remarks is often not eloquent, whereas in actuality Shoghi Effendi’s use of English, both spoken and written, was highly so. However, inasmuch as Mr. Mumtází’s second account is largely in dialogue or conversation form, and editorially rendering it in summary form or substantially editing it for style would involve re-writing it, Mr. Mumtází’s translation has been left intact. Shoghi Effendi quotes a few times from the works of the Central Figures in his conversations with Mr. Mumtází, and in those instances the formal translations of those passages done by the Guardian have been included in the Notes for contrast.

A few editorial interpolations are embedded in the main text in brackets [], but editorial commentary has been placed in endnotes, gathered in the Notes section, and indicated in the main text by numerals enclosed in brackets. Numerals in italics following the endnote numbers are the PDF document page numbers of the relevant endnotes. In the Notes section the page number of the passage in the main text to which a note relates has also been given in italics. Thus, in the main text [9;177]

would mean see note no. 9, found on page 177; in the Notes section 9;26 would mean note no. 9, relating to text on page 26. To scroll down to a note and back to the main text, type the page number into the “Page” space at the top of the document and press the “Enter” or “Return” key. The “Drawer” function will display the pages in seriatim.

For those interested, the editorial comments give some perspective or context, offer relevant asides and tangential tidbits, and explain expressions like “9 Urdíbihisht 1309” and “Hyogo ken”. Editorial information has been gleaned from various Bahá’í and other sources, mostly print publications or online versions of originally printed material, but also some exclusively online. In a few places the editorial comments stray into opinion: in these instances the above-mentioned helpful friends have had no input and should thus be thought absolved of aiding and abetting the editor in expressing any naff notions the reader runs across.

A single set of editorial eyes scanning a literary work is unlikely to perceive every one of the faults of typography, grammar, style, or information that the text and commentary will inevitably contain, and an apology is offered for all such defects herein.

Canon and hearsay

So as to distinguish between quotations from the Bahá’í canonical corpus and from literary hearsay—i.e., talks and conversations of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi recorded in the notes of the pilgrim, translated by the pilgrim or someone else, and constituting much of the text of the

present accounts—the canonical matter has been treated as follows in the main text and in the Notes: the words of the Central Figures have been put in italics and the words of the Guardian and the Universal House of Justice have been enclosed by double guillemets «» rather than quotation marks.

For the above-mentioned purpose, the English-language canon of the Bahá'í Faith is reckoned to be:

1} translations of the afflatus of the Central Figures, either

i} those done by Shoghi Effendi in his capacity as Guardian (and thus absolutely authoritative), or

ii} those done by various individuals or by committees and authorized at the World Center, or

iii} those done by various individuals and issued by Bahá'í publishers before authorization at the World Center was instituted (this category can be problematic), and

2} the messages and the letters of the Guardian and those of the Universal House of Justice.

See the Wikipedia page entitled “Bahá'í literature” for more relating to this topic.

Pilgrims' notes in quotes and online

As mentioned earlier, the talks of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi recorded by Mr. Mumtází have been enclosed in quotation marks herein. The use of quotation marks for the “table talks” of the authorities of the Faith may seem a bit reckless, inasmuch as notes of such talks are not

necessarily reliable transcriptions. Indeed, a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a Bahá'í publisher (see *Lights of Guidance* no. 1435) discourages publication of works in which quotation marks are used for the “reported sayings” of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as this practice may give an air of authenticity to such sayings.

It is a fact that some well-circulated pilgrims’ notes use quotation marks, and leading Bahá'í publishers (the British Bahá'í Publishing Trust and George Ronald, for example) have issued biographies and memoirs (*The Priceless Pearl* by Amatu’l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum and *Arches of the Years* by Marzieh Gail, respectively, for instance) in which the marks are used for conversational remarks of Shoghi Effendi. And even in reminiscences in which quotation marks are not used, the comments of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi are often presented in dialogue or conversation form (such as: ABC, I asked the Guardian; XYZ, replied the Guardian), rather than in summary or paraphrase form. The intent of the writers in such cases clearly has been to record the spoken word as they heard it—or thought they heard it, or recalled hearing it—and the presence or absence of quotation marks seems no more than a matter of typographical formality. Altering all pilgrims’ notes of such form into summaries before making them available publicly would amount to re-writing them, which for the purposes of historiography would be a questionable act. (Whether they ought to be made available publicly at all is another issue . . .)

Concerning pilgrims’ notes online specifically, a letter written on

behalf of the Universal House of Justice (see www.bahai-library.com/uhj_pilgrims_notes_online) states, “While wisdom should continue to be used in publishing and disseminating pilgrims’ notes, the Universal House of Justice has not formulated any guidelines or policies specifically addressed to the content of World Wide Web sites.”

These issues lead to the following notice:

Caveat lector

Implicit in the editorial commentary is the assumption that Mr. Mumtází has more or less accurately conveyed the remarks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. Of course, the veracity of any pilgrim’s record of the remarks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá or Shoghi Effendi depends on the accuracy of the pilgrim’s understanding, memory, note-taking, and transcription; the competency of any translation, editing, and further transcription that follows; and any conscious or unconscious biases the pilgrim may have expressed. But regardless of the degree of care that goes into them, pilgrims’ notes have inherent limitations—as both ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi themselves have affirmed—and the usual advisory should be reiterated here: The utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi recorded by pilgrims do not have the authority of the writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the messages of Shoghi Effendi, nor should such notes be considered a verbatim record.

**THE TWIN PILGRIMAGES OF NÚRU'D-DÍN MUMTÁZÍ:
FIRST PILGRIMAGE (1920) —**

"MEMORIES OF NINE DAYS"

Preface

He is God.

I have written this memoir while calling to mind the late Dr. Yúnis Khán Afrúkhtih. He was the author of *Memories of Nine Years in 'Akká*, a memoir which is far greater in every respect than the present one. Yet accounts such as these all have the sign of quaffing from the same bountiful cup.[1;176]

A brother's favor

To begin with my story, it was 1920 and I was in my early twenties. One day my elder brother, Mírzá Yúsuf Munfarid, said to me that he intended to travel to countries in Europe on business and that, because he did not know any of the Western languages, he wanted me to accompany him as a translator and assistant. I replied that I would do so on one condition—to go on pilgrimage to the Holy

Land prior to doing anything else—and my brother gladly agreed. With utmost happiness and excitement I made preparations. I bought two ‘abás of very good quality, called “Ná’íní”, that we might each present one to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. This act was to receive blessings. [2;176]

Applying for a passport

In those days it was, generally speaking, a fairly simple matter to get a passport. When we arrived at the port of Bandar-i-Pahlaví I went to a government office to apply. There was a noble clerk who was in charge of the application forms. He was so nice that he filled in the forms, and when he asked me what he should enter in the “religion” column I replied “Bahá’í”. Without asking any further questions he wrote “Bahá’í” and said to return the following day to pick up my passport.

I went the next day, but was informed by the clerk that regrettably my application was not approved. When I asked him why, he replied that it was because I had specified “Bahá’í” on my application form. He asked me to accompany him to

the office of the head of the department, which I did. I humbly stood before his desk, but the official looked at me and asked angrily, "What did you write on your form?"

I asked, "Do you mean 'Bahá'í'?"

He shouted angrily not to repeat that word. I said, "Sir, I am a Bahá'í and I have told the truth."

The official seemed to realize that I was truthful and firm in my conviction and he said softly, "My son, we will never be able to issue you a passport if you insist on using that word. What is your previous religion?"

I replied, "I was born into a Bahá'í family."

He continued, "What is the former religion of your parents?"

I answered, "The religion of my forebears is Judaism."

He concluded, "That is acceptable."

I asked the official, "Sir, is it justifiable to write the religion of my forebears on my application form instead of my own religion?"

He again spoke in an angry tone, "That's enough."

You have no choice but to leave everything in our hands." The noble clerk, who was witness to this conversation, asked me to return the next day for my passport.

While I was outside I overheard the official berating the clerk, "Why did you ask him to come tomorrow? You have to harass such people and tell them they will have to return after ten days or more, so they might be discouraged from using the word 'Bahá'í' on forms."

The next day the kind clerk gave me my passport. Now that I had it we decided to leave Írán on the first steamer for Bádkúbih.[3;176]

Steamer to Bádkúbih

This was my first time on a steamer. On this particular day the weather was pleasant and calm. We were so happy to finally be on our way to the Holy Land. It took our steamer almost twenty-four hours to reach our destination. We were privileged to meet some of the Bahá'ís on the day of our arrival, among them Siyyid Jalál Síná. Later we met Jináb Javád Fayyázuf and Jináb 'Alí Ḥassanuf.[4;176]

Train to Tiflís

After an enjoyable meeting with the Bahá'í friends in Bádkúbih we left that city by train and traveled to Tiflís. In those days this city was a beautiful place and had many tourists. For good reason was it known as the Paris of the Caucasus. We toured Tiflís and then departed for the city of Báṭúm. [5;177]

Bringing my sister-in-law to Báṭúm

From Báṭúm we had intended to proceed to Istanbul, but my brother said to me that he was having second thoughts about going on pilgrimage without his wife, Munavvar Khánum. I told my brother that if he felt this way I would return to Írán and arrange to bring his respected wife to Báṭúm. He agreed and I immediately took the necessary steps and brought my sister-in-law within five days to join us in the nice hotel which faced the ocean. We then made contact with the Bahá'ís of the city.

**Seeing Jináb Zargarpúr and Jináb Tawfíq—
exactly as in my dream**

I was asleep in my room in the hotel and I dreamed that Mírzá Yúsuf Zargarpúr and Mírzá Sulaymán Tawfíq had arrived in Báṭúm. In my dream I asked them what had brought them here and they mentioned that they were voyaging to Haifa to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I told them to be grateful that they were visiting the lord of the worlds in this day. I also told them to take heed, that He knew all that was in their hearts. I asked them to be grateful to God, and then I begged them to hold the hem of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's robe and beseech Him to aid me to attain His holy presence. I was crying so much in my dream that my pillow was wet with tears.

The next morning I felt so sad that I went for a stroll on the beach by our hotel. Suddenly I noticed from a distance two individuals approaching our hotel. When they got near I was shocked to see the same friends that I had dreamed about the previous night. I embraced them and asked them the same question that I had asked in my dream. They spoke the same words as in the dream. I started weeping

uncontrollably and told them about my dream. They promised that they would beg 'Abdu'l-Bahá to aid me in my longing desire to have the bounty of visiting Him. [6;177]

**With the flame of the fire of His love in our hearts
we continued on to Istanbul**

We boarded the steamer for Istanbul and gradually forgot Báṭúm and its beauty. [7;177] We arrived in Istanbul after sailing for two days and nights. This was an old city with many historical sites. We respected Istanbul more than the other cities because it was blessed by the presence of Bahá'u'lláh, after He was exiled from Baghdád. During those days the holy places associated with Bahá'u'lláh were not specifically marked or identified, but later most of the holy places were purchased by the Guardian of the Cause. We are all indebted to the efforts and sacrifices of the Guardian in behalf of the Bahá'ís of the world. We were happy to meet with a few of the friends, such as Ḥájí Ḥusayn Shaydá'í, Mírzá Ḥusayn Mu'allim, and Mírzá Ḥusayn Tútí. [8;177]

We were lucky to arrive in Istanbul in early springtime, as the climate was pleasant and there were Naw-Rúz festivities in progress. We were amazed to see one of the most beautiful structures, known as the Ayá-Sufyá mosque. It is remarkable that this mosque was originally a Christian church, which was captured during the reign of Constantine.[9;177] The dates for our pilgrimage to Haifa were fast approaching and I was immersed in the ocean of happiness.

My happiness turned to sorrow, however, as I was presented with a big test. My brother changed his plan and said he wanted to go to Europe before, rather than after, the Holy Land. He explained that we should first go to Europe, engage in business and earn some money, and immediately pay Ҳуқуқу'ллаh. I tried to convince him that God is the supreme ruler and He does not necessarily need to receive our payment right now, but my brother insisted on his plan. Because he was twenty years older I was obliged to accede, although I felt deflated.

In those bygone years Europe was the center of the world and the most civilized continent. People

longed to visit its beautiful countries and anyone returning from Europe was very much respected by others. But it was different in my case; although I was a youth, I could not barter my love for 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the riches and wonders of this world. The change of plan and further separation from the goal of my desire caused me to fall ill and feel deprived of everything. But I somehow knew a test like this would happen, since it always did with those who had the love of the Beloved in their hearts.

Entering Europe through Italy

Our steamer passed over the Mediterranean Sea and we viewed from a distance the remains of the city of Messina, which was destroyed by an earthquake. It seemed as if the city was trying to teach us a lesson on the mortality of this world. After a few days we reached port in Italy. We visited a few cities in that country and realized the glory and greatness of Christ in this world. We were unable to contact any Bahá'ís in Italy during that time. We crossed the border and proceeded to Paris.[10;177]

Arriving in Paris and seeing its beauty

While it had not yet fully recovered from the effects of the Great War, Paris was a beautiful city with much hustle and bustle.[11;178] But because my thoughts were always centered on 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I could not enjoy this experience—physically I was in Paris with the friends, yet my soul was wandering, detached from Paris and inflamed from separation from the beloved of the worlds, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The bounty and privilege of meeting and visiting Shoghi Effendi in Paris

During my business rounds in Paris I was visiting a large factory which was outside the city. Suddenly by His grace I remembered that the Bahá'ís would be having a gathering at four o'clock at the residence of Madame Mathews in one of the hotels on the Champs-Élysées. I hailed a cab and headed there directly to meet all the friends.

On entering the residence I went to hang my hat when I noticed a dark-colored kuláh on the stand. I presumed any Persians visiting Paris would change the hat they wore to a Western kind, and I asked

Madame Mathews if she could tell me to whom the hat belonged. She answered that it belonged to Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and that I would have the pleasure of meeting him! As soon as I heard the name of Shoghi Effendi I was overjoyed to such an extent that all my pain vanished. At that moment I realized that my brother had been divinely guided to change his mind. From this moment on, I felt, I must always trust in God.[12;178]

The room was filled with Bahá'ís. I had never seen Shoghi Effendi, and I tried to recognize the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Indeed I did, by his unique eyes. Initially all seats seemed taken but somehow one right next to Shoghi Effendi opened up and I rushed there. I bowed and looked into his eyes, which were the miracle of miracles. As soon as I sat down next to him he said, "We were waiting for you to come on pilgrimage. Your permission was given." I was shocked to hear those words and wondered how he recognized me and how he could single me out from among so many of the friends to convey such glad-tidings. From that day onward I was certain that he was a great personage with a great

station. At that moment I promised in my heart to be his obedient servant.

Shoghi Effendi spoke for a long time in Persian with Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím translating. He mentioned the troubles which surrounded 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa, about which all the friends were aware. He said it was through God's confirmation, mercy, and assistance that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was able to look after the affairs of the entire world single-handedly. No one else could handle even the slightest load, by comparison. Shoghi Effendi further said, "I wished to assist Him for longer, but because of the enormous demands of the work I suffered a nervous ailment. 'Abdu'l-Bahá—may my life be a sacrifice for Him!—is a true physician for humankind. He told me that I should go to Paris, that I should refer to a proficient doctor, that I must stay in the Bois de Boulogne Park, and that I should limit my contact with the friends. He asked me to take complete bed rest. I followed His instructions and found a doctor. When I visited the doctor he said exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said. The doctor explained his reasons, saying the only climate that could cure my

condition was the climate of Paris and especially that park. The doctor added that if I met with the friends it would not be conducive to rest and recovery. He also said that there was no other treatment for my condition." Those were among the words Shoghi Effendi spoke that day.

I longed to see Shoghi Effendi again. After a few days I told my brother and the other friends that I yearned for the presence of Shoghi Effendi and wished to visit him. They objected and said, "Do you not remember Shoghi Effendi telling us in the meeting that 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his doctor advised him to limit his contact with the friends?" I answered that I could not wait, that I did not know the reason, but I knew that my heart was impelling me to go and see him whether they accompanied me or not. After a while they all said they would accompany me.

We made our way to Bois de Boulogne Park, which truly had a pleasant atmosphere. Shoghi Effendi was staying in one of the rooms in the only hotel in that park. A security guard came to us and asked who we wanted to see. As soon as he heard the name "Shoghi Effendi" his attitude toward us changed, and

he behaved as if he had been in the presence of royalty. He at once closed the buttons of his coat and said softly that he would inform His Excellency, and that if he approved we would be permitted a visit. Luckily we were allowed to pass.

We saw Shoghi Effendi while he was resting in bed, and we thanked God for the precious bounty He had granted us. His face shone like moonlight out of the bed covers. Although he was not feeling well, he never stopped showing love and kindness toward us. I can tell the reader now that Shoghi Effendi—as well as the Center of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—has been the guiding light of all my teaching trips and the source of the blaze of God's love burning in my heart.[13;178]

The graciousness of Shoghi Effendi

After speaking to us, Shoghi Effendi said that he would like to return our visit. I was very much ashamed and begged him not to take such trouble to come to our hotel, but he insisted. He took out his diary and said, "Does Wednesday at four o'clock p.m. suit you?" We replied that his visit would be an

honor and that he was welcome at any time.

On Wednesday at exactly 4:00 p.m. Shoghi Effendi arrived. It indeed felt such an honor to be in his presence again. We humbly offered some grapes and a cup of tea. O God, how his conversation transformed our souls! Before he left I most humbly begged him and said, "O Shoghi Effendi, we consider you as one of the chosen ones of God. Would you chant a prayer, that we may be successful in our pilgrimage and visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá?" He responded, "Of course. I will pray with all my heart," and with arms folded he chanted a soul-stirring prayer in Arabic.

Shoghi Effendi asked us if we knew which prayer he had chanted, and answered himself saying it was that which Bahá'u'lláh had often chanted before His Declaration. Over a year later, upon the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I realized the significance of that prayer. As the reader knows, following the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi became Guardian of the Cause of God.

This precious moment with Shoghi Effendi passed very quickly and, alas, we were deprived of his presence. But after a few minutes he returned to our

hotel and asked for me. He told me that he had forgotten his umbrella in our room and would be grateful to have it. I brought the umbrella and thought to myself how such a great personage of the Faith—the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá—could possess such an old, plain umbrella.

Shoghi Effendi said lovingly to us that upon arrival of our ship at port in Italy, on the way to the Holy Land, a man would come and receive us. Sure enough, when we arrived a man came on board the ship, welcomed us, and treated us very kindly—which was all the more amazing as Shoghi Effendi never did ask us when we would depart for Italy and when and where we would arrive.

The story of Ḥájí Akhúnd's son

In Paris we met a man who was well known as Monsieur Albert, but whose original name was Akbar. He was the son of Ḥájí Akhúnd.[14;179] He showed courtesy to us and recounted the vicissitudes of his life. He said, "As you all are aware, my father was one of the important persons in the Faith. He used to hold firesides and deepening classes in our

house, but as a youth I did not like to attend such functions. I wanted to be free and have an enjoyable life. People assumed that I was like my father—honest and trustworthy. One day, one of the Bahá'í friends came to see me and gave me a large sum in gold coins and requested me to give these valuable coins to his relative in the city of Qum. Instead of going to Qum, however, I traveled to Russia and spent the money on enjoyment. I then came to Paris and enjoyed life as a young man and eventually was overwhelmed by worldly cares and bad habits which I could not control. I was forced to sell all my belongings—even my suits and shirts—to survive. But my condition became worse and I could not even afford a roof over my head. I became desperately needy and thought I would die under such hardships.

“Then I remembered the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh and the Center of the Covenant. With much difficulty I procured a piece of paper and a pen and while weeping bitterly I wrote to the Master: ‘O ‘Abdu'l-Bahá! Thou art the only One aware of all my failings and the secrets of my heart. If Thou wilt not come to my aid, then who will? I beg Thee to forgive me.’

I could barely afford the postage. After some time I received a tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in which He wrote that He was praying for me and that He wished I would make amends for what had slipped from my grasp and follow in my father's footsteps. He also assured me of His confirmation and assistance.

"On that same day I came upon the owner of a paper factory. He told me, 'Albert, you are a young man and doing nothing. You collect this waste paper that is scattered everywhere and I will pay you well.' I did not even have a loaf of bread and was in dire straits, and so I at once accepted his proposal and collected all the scrap paper. He was a just man and paid me well. After a few days he called me to his office and told me that he had found me to be hard-working, that picking up waste paper was beneath my dignity, and that he wanted me to work in his factory and shop. I accepted and worked hard and honestly. After some time, having taken note of my perseverance, he told me that he was pleased with my work and wanted me to be the manager, and later a partner, in the shop. I agreed and became his partner. After a few months he said,

'I have tested you in many ways and have found you to be a reliable and capable individual. I have a beautiful daughter whom I love dearly; I suggest you marry her'—to which suggestion I proudly agreed."

Monsieur Albert took us to his house, which was clean and nicely furnished. He told us that his father-in-law had given him the house. But, he said, all these bounties were due to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who hears and answers the desperate person in need.

Meeting Mr. Scott

Mr. Scott was a very devoted and loving person, with a white beard and a radiant face. The mention of the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought tears to his eyes. He said with a sigh that he was longing to see Him and added, "When you visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá you will be detached from this world and whatever is therein, save Him. When I had the bounty of meeting Him I forgot this world and all its luxuries. When He arrived at my house it was like Christ had entered my home, and I have preserved the chair on which He sat. Every time He asked for a glass of water I would give Him a different glass; hence I have

several glasses blessed by Him. When I saw Him inhaling the fragrance of a flower in my garden I felt some ethereal connection between Him and Nature." Mr. Scott narrated many stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which my pen cannot describe.[15;179]

Proceeding to London

We voyaged to London over the English Channel, which was quite dangerous in those days. Upon arrival we went directly to the Bahá'í Center, where coincidentally there was a gathering. I can never forget the respect and dedication to the Holy Writings shown by the friends. They were so absorbed in the prayerful atmosphere that they did not move. But at the end of the meeting they greeted us warmly.

Regarding Yuḥanná Dávúd

In London I conducted some business with one of the Bahá'ís, Yuḥanná Dávúd, and much of the time we were together. I respected him because the Master sometimes sent him tablets to be translated. Yet, honestly speaking, I could not bring myself to like

this man. He was Persian but pretended to be European. He never mentioned Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá with reverence, as all other believers did. Gradually his selfish motives led him astray and eventually he joined his brother, who was one of the strongest Covenant-breakers.[16;179]

Leaving London and stopping in Italy

We made reservations for a steamer from Italy to Haifa, returned to Paris, proceeded to a port, and embarked for Italy. We had a few days to spare in Italy so we stopped at one of the beautiful cities with the best climate. This city presented a fine environment for prayers and meditation.[17;179]

Arriving in Trieste and writing to Shoghi Effendi

We proceeded to Trieste, where I wrote to Shoghi Effendi expressing my gratitude for his granting us a new life. I requested him to kindly pray for me that I might be able to serve the Cause of God. I asked him not to reply to my correspondence because, firstly, the spiritual connection I felt with him was more than sufficient, and secondly, it would be

too much trouble.[18;179]

Departing for Alexandria

We left the port of Trieste on the huge Ḥilwán ship and reached Alexandria in fifteen days. Upon arrival there many Bahá'ís were present to welcome us. We participated in their meetings, where they chanted in the Ḥijází style from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. After some time we managed to book a steamer to the goal of our desire, the Holy Land. The ship stopped at Yáfá and then headed for Haifa. [19;179]

Entering the port of Haifa

It was the tenth of May, 1920, and our steamer was sailing very nicely and comfortably in beautiful weather. It felt as if the captain of the ship was inspired to guide it into the port of Haifa with utmost gracefulness. The cool breeze added to our pleasure. Although we were enjoying this unique atmosphere, our hearts were counting the moments when we would fall at the blessed feet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My brother, Ḥájí Mírzá Yúsuf Munfarid[20;179],

and his loving wife, Munavvar Khánum, together with this humble self—we were all so thrilled that our pilgrimage was now truly to begin.

Gradually Mount Carmel came into view. The mountain was rocky and uneven. The Shrine of the Báb, a simple construction at that time, could be seen. The view reminded us of the hardships which Bahá'u'lláh and His companions endured reaching here. We thought back to fifty-two years earlier, when a ship carried Bahá'u'lláh here as a prisoner of the cruel Ottoman Empire. And as I write this forty years after my pilgrimage I am struck by how different things are now, with pilgrims arriving in the Holy Land from all over the world by airplane and viewing a mountain adorned with beautiful gardens.

A conversation with a Christian priest

While we were counting the minutes till we could meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we encountered a priest who spoke Arabic. I asked him respectfully what was his destination. He answered that he had heard 'Abbás Effendí[21;179] was a prophet of the East and that

he was going to defeat him. My brother, who could not understand Arabic, asked me what the priest was talking about and I told him the priest's intention. My brother advised me to convey the Message of Bahá'u'lláh to him. I replied that this man acted like a pharaoh and was filled with pride in himself and his own knowledge and authority; he would not listen to us. Surely 'Abdu'l-Bahá would deal justly with him and make him humble, and if it was God's Will we would see him again.

Arrival in Haifa

Upon reaching the port of Haifa and entering Customs we were surprised by the fact that the authorities did not examine our luggage and let us through, on the basis that we were visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá. A number of horse-carriages approached us, their drivers saying, "If you are going to the house of 'Abbás Effendí we will take you there." We hired one of them and asked the driver to take us to the House of the Master. As we neared it, a wonderful believer, Mírzá 'Azízu'lláh Khán Varqá, came to us and guided our carriage driver to the Pilgrim House

on Mount Carmel. We unloaded our luggage and returned to the residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.[22;179]

**The dawn of our pilgrimage and our meeting
with 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

After returning from the Pilgrim House we entered the waiting room of the Master's House. We met there the priest who wished to defeat 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The caretaker was Mírzá Muḥsin Afnán[23;180], and the priest asked Mírzá Muḥsin for an appointment. As soon as 'Abdu'l-Bahá was informed, He told the caretaker to send the priest up. Although we had arrived before him, 'Abdu'l-Bahá called him first. We were a bit annoyed at being preceded by this priest, of all people, but we trusted in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wisdom. After nearly twenty minutes we saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá signaling to the caretaker to come upstairs. Soon after, we saw Mírzá Muḥsin supporting the priest—who had nearly fainted and was wobbly—and helping him go on his way.

Next we were given permission to go upstairs. We climbed, kissing each stair, until we reached His blessed threshold. No pen can describe our condition

as we bowed before Him. His Holiness 'Abdu'l-Bahá was at His desk, busy as usual writing tablets and letters. He asked us to sit down facing His desk and then looked at us and said, "I am viewing this sea and I am sure that in the future all the kings and heads of state will come to visit this place and will carry bouquets of beautiful flowers in their hands. In the future this place will be illuminated all the way to 'Akká." We were thunderstruck by His words. In His holy presence we felt we were always under His loving care, protection, kindness, bounty, and grace.

After some time 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked us, "How are you?" We were dumbfounded and could not say anything. Then He asked us if we had enjoyed our voyage. I sat quietly. My brother, who was older, summoned his courage and was able to speak a few words in fragmentary language, replying, "The Bahá'ís are well and active." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "What you have witnessed in some of these places is like a small flame, which may be extinguished, but when the time comes the whole world will be set on fire."

'Abdu'l-Bahá then related that one day two men saw Caliph Hárúnu'r-Rashíd walking, and one asked the other about this man who strode like an almighty king. The other said, "He is the mighty king of earthly kings, but a humble subject of the heavenly King." [24;180]

After 'Abdu'l-Bahá told us this anecdote my brother and I thought of the condition of that priest, who had acted proudly like a pharaoh but had been utterly humbled by his meeting with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We ourselves could hardly bear to be in the presence of this overwhelming spirituality. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, "Fí amáni'lláh". When we rose to leave He added, "I will see you again in the evening." [25;180]

Later my brother and I were discussing the meaning of the above matter, because we had talked on the ship about the priest who wanted to defeat 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He must have been aware of our discussion about that priest. We thought, "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá! May our lives be sacrificed for Thee! We are certain that these mortal eyes cannot truly see Thee. Thou art knowing and wise and able to read

whatsoever is in our hearts."

**He was the Mystery of God, the exemplar of ‹‹He
doeth as He pleaseth››, yet He demonstrated
perfect servitude**

After leaving the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá we were in different states of mind which cannot be expressed in words. In some moments we condemned ourselves and thought about our neglect of His commands and wishes in the past, and we despaired. In other moments we looked to the future and hoped to serve through His blessings, and upon this realization we were comforted.

Soon we were all in His holy presence once again, until late in the evening. After a moving talk 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited all of us pilgrims for dinner and asked us to be seated. He Himself went around the table and served us with His blessed hands. We were saying in our hearts, "O God, how great a bounty!" We were aware of the fact that 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been conferred with all divine powers by Bahá'u'lláh. I cannot adequately write and express how His bounties showered upon us for nine consecutive days.

How busy was 'Abdu'l-Bahá replying to numerous letters from around the world

No one can comprehend how deeply 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who was laying the foundation of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, was immersed in the ocean of responsibilities and difficulties. He was so busy with His work that many nights He had no rest at all. From time to time He would bring the tiniest sample from his innumerable adversities to our attention.

Once He made us aware of His travail through a lesson. He had an enormous mailbox into which the mailman deposited all the letters that were received from abroad. A porter would then carry the mail to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room. Included in the mail were many registered letters for which 'Abdu'l-Bahá's signature was required. One day Mírzá Badí' Bushrú'í brought all the registered letters to His presence and asked Him to sign every receipt one by one. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had His head bent on His hand and was signing them; there were so many letters and it took a long time. Suddenly 'Abdu'l-Bahá stopped, lifted up His head, and with a loving smile and in a joking

manner addressed Mírzá Badí', "O man, what do you want from me?" He looked at the pilgrims and said, "This man is like a Qájár sword." Then He explained, "I remember that when I was a child in Ṭihrán they referred to a Qájár soldier as a 'sword of Qájár'." [26;180]

'Abdu'l-Bahá next showed a sample letter to the pilgrims. This particular letter comprised twenty pages in very small handwriting. He said, "Just look and ponder that the writers of these letters are too many. Find a person to reply to all these letters! It is thirty years that I have borne all this correspondence." He added meekly, "It is no longer possible for me to undergo such hardship day and night. I beseech God that the answers to these letters be transmitted directly from the Abhá Kingdom into the writers' hearts."

Early one morning He called all the pilgrims to the room of one of His daughters. There we saw a long bench piled with letters. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was sitting on folded legs replying to them, and He asked us to sit down on the floor. We tried to imitate and sit like Him, but He was so

compassionate that He told us not to sit as He did because we could not bear it, but rather to sit with crossed legs, and we did so.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Look at all these letters, on so many different matters—and I must reply to every one of them." For example, one of the letters asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá to explain how this world came into being. Another asked Him to solve a difficult science problem, and yet another letter, which He showed us, asked Him to kindly bless the writer's business. Another person wrote to Him that His confirmation and assistance were awaited. Another requested 'Abdu'l-Bahá interpret his dream. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, "I need one month just to read these letters. When do you think I will be able to reply to all of them?" Then He showed us another letter and said, "I received this letter four months ago and I was able to read it only today."

'Abdu'l-Bahá repeated the theme and said that He had shouldered various hardships for a period of thirty years but that it was not possible to bear them any longer. He remarked, "If the friends would detach themselves from the cares of this world and

with sincere hearts arise to serve the Cause of God, then all their problems, no matter how difficult, would be eased."

My humble pen cannot write any further about the hardships which 'Abdu'l-Bahá faced, as He burned like a candle in the darkness of this world. I saw Him on one occasion walking in the garden and talking to the pilgrims on different subjects while simultaneously dictating replies to each of the letters that had come.[27;180]

Visions of victory and prophecies of progress

One evening we were in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's holy presence as He spoke about many subjects. Suddenly He looked directly at us and said, "Soon wonderful and great events will occur and the Cause of God will be widely known." Then He narrated a story from the days of the Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet commanded His followers to dig a defensive trench. While digging they came upon a large rock, which none of them could remove. Muḥammad was informed and He came immediately and struck the rock with His staff. Then He declared that they had conquered the

Persian and Roman empires. His followers were shocked by His statement and amazed at how He could say such a thing when they were in such dire straits, besieged by their enemies. But eventually, of course, they did indeed conquer those places and their celebrated monuments, such as the Arch of Kisrá. At their triumph the Muslims exclaimed, "This was promised by the Prophet!" We were moved by the above story and were confident that we would also see victories in this Cause.[28;181]

Every Sunday 'Abdu'l-Bahá held a gathering of the believers at the Shrine of the Báb. In those meetings He was very happy and joyful. There was a garden attached to the Shrine and everyone enjoyed the heavenly fragrance of its flowers. On one occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, "At present rocks and thornbushes surround the Shrine of the Báb, but in the future this place will be encompassed by an abundance of trees and flowers and will be visited by all the peoples of the world. This Shrine you are viewing now will soon be expanded and its construction completed. In the future a kind of electrical power will be discovered which gives

light from stone, and eventually the walls of the Shrine will be composed of such stone."

Again in His talk 'Abdu'l-Bahá emphasized that the Cause will develop and progress tremendously in the future and I thought to myself, "O God! What a bounty and privilege I am enjoying, sitting in the presence of a holy Person whose majesty kings would envy!" I wondered what the people of the world are trying to achieve in their lives. If they attained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and were sincere, they would surely have whatever they wished.

While I was pondering the prophecies that the Master spoke of, and in awe of His divine power, an old beggar approached 'Abdu'l-Bahá and requested alms from Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá with the utmost kindness greeted him and inquired about his health. Then He took out a silver coin from His pocket and gave it to the beggar saying, "This is my last coin, and here is half a cup of tea," also handing him what remained of His tea. The beggar accepted the cup with much gratitude. I envied him as he drank from that blessed cup.

**Whatever happens, it will lead to
the exaltation of the Cause**

One day we were in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence along with other pilgrims. He addressed every one of us with compassion and then asked, "Did you read today's newspaper? What is the news?" I thought to myself that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is aware of everything that takes place in the world and nothing can happen without His will. One of the believers, Mírzá 'Alí Muḥammad Khán Dihqán, said to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "I have read the newspaper and the important headline is that Herbert Samuel has arrived in Jerusalem." [29;182] 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded, "There are many matters which are mysteries now and will unfold in the future, but I cannot tell you more. If I were to tell you about all the events that will occur in clear tones, then you would understand that whatever is happening now in this world must eventually redound to the progress of the Faith."

Another evening in the gathering of the friends He said, "You, dear ones, must remember that whatever happens is for the progress of the Cause of God." Then He gave the example of the martyrdom of

the Báb. The friends were distraught while the enemies of the Báb rejoiced. But we should consider that if the Báb had not been martyred, how could Bahá'u'lláh have appeared and declared His Faith? He added that later, as is recorded in history, powerful rulers exiled Bahá'u'lláh. At such times the Bahá'ís were disheartened while the enemies of the Cause were joyous. But if they had not exiled Bahá'u'lláh, the Cause of God would not have been firmly established and propagated and the tablets addressed to the most powerful rulers on earth would not have been revealed. And so we have to conclude that, indeed, whatever happens in this world is for the good of the Faith and nothing else. Some mysterious power is constantly at work.

Many tablets were revealed by Bahá'u'lláh on many subjects and to the rulers of the world

One late evening the Center of the Covenant was sitting like a bright candle with the pilgrims like moths circling round Him. He said that in past religions the holy scriptures had been in one style of revelation but in this Faith the Writings were of

many styles and kinds, revealed as tablets, prayers, treatises, etc. Then He lifted up His hands and said that these Writings were complete and contained such content as was perfectly suited to the exigencies and requirements of this world.[30;182]

Bahá'u'lláh revealed tablets that even prophesied the end of their reign for such rulers as the Sháh of Írán, the Ottoman Sultán, and Napoleon III.

Visitation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí, and protection from Covenant-breakers

It was nightfall and we were in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence. After showering His bounties upon us He said, "We shall all visit the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh tomorrow. I have instructed the members of the household to prepare and bring your lunch." We were so happy to know that 'Abdu'l-Bahá would accompany us to Bahjí that we were sleepless all night.

The next morning we had tea and rushed to the Master's House and waited outside under the grapevine for some time. It was a little later than usual that 'Abdu'l-Bahá came out through the back

door and said, "Praise be to God. I was eager to be with you all at the Shrine, but I developed a fever last night and I am unable to go." We were speechless and motionless as He left us. But although He was ill He reappeared and said, "When you are privileged to go to Bahjí, kindly visit the Most Holy Shrine twice—once for yourself and once on my behalf." Then He said "Marḥabá" and left us.

[31;183]

We felt like a regiment without a commanding officer and did not know what to do next. We were also worried about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's health. How could we proceed without Him? We were perplexed. 'Abdu'l-Bahá came out of His home for the third time and sat down in a chair. He expressed His loving greetings to all of us and said, "Now you must start toward the Most Holy Shrine. When you put your foreheads on the holy threshold, beseech the Blessed Beauty to remember His servant, who is forbearing under all circumstances and is imprisoned in this mortal world and must communicate with all the friends in the East and the West and see to the well-being of each and every one of them. Also beg Him to send His

assistance and confirmations that His servant will be successful." He added, "Say to Him that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is immersed in the ocean of cruelty and injustice because of the misdeeds of the Covenant-breakers and the enemies of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is undergoing these injustices so that the world may be free of the bondage of suffering." These poignant words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá reminded me of His suffering and the hardships of His life.

In order not to make us unhappy any further the Master changed His tone and recounted an anecdote to teach us a lesson. He said that once an influential Muslim cleric made an appointment to visit Bahá'u'lláh in private. The man arrived, kissed His threshold with respect, and sat on the floor at Bahá'u'lláh's feet and kissed them. Then the man lifted up his head and requested in a soft voice that all the mysteries be explained. Bahá'u'lláh raised His hands and responded that He had proclaimed the divine mysteries aloud to the world; it was strange the visitor was requesting to hear them whispered privily.

The purpose of the above story was clear to me.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was indicating to us that we should not be deceived by the whisperings of the Covenant-breakers. During this time, as is recorded in Bahá'í history, the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh was in the possession of the Covenant-breakers, who had forcibly gained control of it. They were like a nest of wasps stuck to a house, and we believers had to be very careful not to be stung. The important "mysteries" were clearly revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd. [32;183]

'Abdu'l-Bahá showered His blessings upon us and ordered His own carriage to come and take us to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. As soon as we reached our destination a loud greeting of "Alláh-u-Abhá" drew our attention to a man in his early twenties. He started walking with us, as if considering himself a member of our group. I asked him how it was that I had not seen him at any of the gatherings and he answered that he resided in 'Akká. As we were walking toward the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh he talked about how important this Mansion was, since it had been occupied by Bahá'u'lláh. He said that he would like to see the inside of the Mansion with his own

eyes but, alas, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had forbidden the Bahá'is to tour it. I could see that his warm conversation was deceitful and he hoped that I would go inside the Mansion with him. Through this action the Covenant-breakers would be able to inject their poisonous venom into me. I realized that he was one of those products of Satan that wanted to make me like himself, one of the mischief-makers. I was unable to tolerate him any longer and asked him to leave. I told him that I did not wish to associate with him or visit the Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh, which his ilk had polluted. When he perceived I was serious he vanished.

Some thirty-five years after this incident I was on pilgrimage again, during the time of the Guardian. The atmosphere had completely changed. The Mansion looked quite different: repaired, appointed in a dignified manner, well-maintained, and purified of Covenant-breakers. The Guardian had triumphed over adversity and re-created the Mansion. He hung in it the certificates of recognition of the Faith from many countries of the world. How beautiful and appropriately decorated were the rooms in which

Bahá'u'lláh revealed the Word of God! There was also the very simple room of the Guardian, but filled with a magnetic power and spirit. This room attracted the Bahá'ís to supplicate Bahá'u'lláh for His confirmations and assistance. The Guardian had converted the surrounding barren lands into wonderful gardens.[33;183]

Coming back to the story, after that youth left us alone we rested awhile and then visited the Holy Shrine and put our foreheads on its threshold and prayed for the friends in the East and the West. After praying and meditating we were refreshed and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. Our group members spread out and were walking through different parts of the grounds. I sat down under an old tree and was thinking of the future of this holy Shrine, which will be the point of adoration for the entire world. I was thinking that in the future surely a glorious and befitting edifice would be built around the Shrine.

While I was immersed in the glory of Bahá'u'lláh and the Center of His Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, a person approached me and disturbed my thoughts. He

said to me, "You have become crazy and have lost your senses. Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá is a great man, a lovely soul, and a respected person, you imagine Him as wise to such an extent that you think He is aware of what is going on in our hearts. Do you not remember that He said 'Marḥabá' to whomever came into His presence, even if that person had committed wrongdoings prior to gaining His presence?" I asked this person to leave me alone. I was confident of divine confirmations, and even if someone tried to cut me to pieces I could never let go of the hem of the robe of His divine compassion. When the man realized that I was steadfast in my faith and that my belief in 'Abdu'l-Bahá was quite different from his notions, he left me alone and went away.

I was seated in the same spot with my head on my knees when I saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá with all His glory and greatness walking nearby. A feeling of joy overcame me and I awoke from my deep thoughts and ran after Him, but I could not catch up with Him. I encountered the dear friend, 'Azízu'lláh Khán Varqá, and I asked if he had seen 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He asked if I remembered that the Master was suffering from a

fever and had not come to 'Akká; surely He was in Haifa. I said, "What do you mean? I just saw Him with my own eyes. He was walking over there." He gently responded, "It is possible you saw Him in the spiritual world, not in this world."

**Returning to Haifa and receiving 'Abdu'l-Bahá's
infinite bestowals**

We returned to Haifa the same evening in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's carriage, reaching the Master's House and entering the garden. We saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá walking very slowly. This humble self lost all his senses because he was immersed in the spiritual world and thinking of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and repeating in his heart, "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thou art aware of everything in this world. I wonder how Thou couldst be in Bahjí and Haifa at the same time watching over everyone with some means other than physical eyes." After a few minutes He inquired of our visitation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. All of us bowed our heads and expressed our gratitude to Him for His kindness and bounties. Then He told us to stay in His guest room where we would be served dinner.

During the previous days I would stand behind all the other friends because I was of relatively young age, but this night was quite amazing. However much I tried to position myself behind the others, some magnetic force would pull me to the fore. I felt that there was some unseen power at work and whether I wanted to or not I must stand in front of the others. I saw the king of kings seated at the head of the table and as soon as I saw that light I felt I was losing consciousness.

I heard 'Abdu'l-Bahá say, "In the name of God, please sit down." I came out of my reverie and heard Him ask me again to be seated. I sat three chairs away from where 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seated, but He asked me to come closer and I sat one chair closer. Again He asked me to come closer. I felt myself unworthy to sit next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá but He insisted and I obeyed. I was thinking, "O God! What a bounty that my clothes are touching 'Abdu'l-Bahá's coat!" As I sat next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, with our sleeves touching, I prayed that He would assist me to be successful in serving Him and the Cause of God. I was so thankful to the Almighty that I said to

myself, "O God! I bear witness that no one on this earth hath had such a privilege as this—to be seated next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá!" I asked myself if I was right in having these selfish thoughts.

Dinner was served. I took a small helping but 'Abdu'l-Bahá told me that it was not enough and I should take more. I said to myself, "O Master, there must be a hidden purpose that Thou hast seated me next to Thyself. I am certain that Thou wast present when the youth tried to misguide me, and because of Thee I could recognize him for what he was and tell him to be gone." At the moment I had this thought 'Abdu'l-Bahá put His hand on my shoulder and said, "Marḥabá, marḥabá." Again I thought, "Someone tried to distract me from Thee and tried to prevent my spiritual flight in the heavenly kingdom, yet Thou didst protect me. Through Thine assistance I did not succumb to his misleading talk." Again, 'Abdu'l-Bahá tapped me gently on my back and said, "Marḥabá, marḥabá." Then I recalled the vision I had of 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Bahjí. Again, 'Abdu'l-Bahá at this moment tapped my shoulder and said, "Marḥabá, marḥabá." I took this as a confirmation—'Abdu'l-Bahá

had affirmed the thoughts of this humble self, thereby clearing any confusion in my heart.

It was a long evening filled with unforgettable bounties. We pilgrims took wonderful memories like these back with us, and they will remain with us forever.

**The spirit of the faithful servant . . .
He also mentions some deeds of the Covenant-breakers**

One day it was morning and we were all seated in the small garden in front of the flowers. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was speaking about faithfulness. He mentioned that those who served the Faith sincerely were praiseworthy but that there were also some unfaithful people. He pointed and said, "Look at these flowers. They are beautiful and rich in fragrance. I can sense their aroma and say that our Ismá'íl Áqá has tended these flowers well. I am pleased with him, as with Siyyid Abu'l-Qásim, caretaker of the Most Holy Shrine. But a former gardener, named Mihdí, was not sincere. He served in this garden and used to pretend in different ways to be its protector. One day, he said that animals were

coming at night and destroying the flowers and requested that someone keep guard all night. I knew very well that he was lying but did not disclose it. On another occasion he complained that our water supply had been cut and uttered other such falsehoods. I knew that he had had a direct connection with the Covenant-breakers for many years but I concealed his lies, shortcomings, and mischief. And that was not all: other mischief-makers would approach the pilgrims and claim that they [the mischief-makers] had been in my presence and I had given them my greetings and blessings. They think I am unaware of their indecency, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá is well-informed of the secrets of their hearts."

The next day 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, "The Mansion of Bahá'u'lláh belongs to the Bahá'ís, but it is occupied by the Covenant-breakers. I could drive them out with no difficulty, but in my entire life I have never harmed anyone and I do not wish to make trouble for them." [34;183] Another day a Covenant-breaker came to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He seated himself next to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and spoke to Him

about many things. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was quiet and then at last He said to him, "I will come and put an end to these differences." We looked at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's face and He was very sad. 'Abdu'l-Bahá later remarked that these Covenant-breakers were extremely harmful to the Faith of God. He quoted the following verse from the Qur'án [2:14] and said that such people had always existed: "And when they meet those who believe, they say, We believe; but when they are apart with their satans, they say, Verily we are with you, we only mock at those who believe."

During my youth I met with one of these mischief-makers and I thought I would be able to guide him. I asked him, "Do you believe in Bahá'u'lláh—that He is the Promised One of all the religions?"

He answered, "Yes."

"Do you believe in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas?"

"Yes."

"Do you believe in the Kitáb-i-'Ahd?"

"Yes."

I said, "There it is clearly written about 'Abdu'l-Bahá: He is the Center of the Covenant." I

advised him to seek 'Abdu'l-Bahá's forgiveness—but I did not trust him to do so. When he realized his negative talk had no effect on me he said, "Fine, I will do as you suggest", and spoke no more.

We were immersed in the ocean of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence, and the odes of Bahá'u'lláh were chanted

On several occasions 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked one of the believers residing in the Holy Land, Mírzá Muḥammad-'Alí, who had a beautiful voice, to chant a prayer or sing a song. One night 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked him to recite poetry. He chanted the ode of Bahá'u'lláh in which He compares the physical springtime and the spiritual springtime. It was indeed a springtime—in every meaning of the word—for us, and we were intoxicated with its fragrance.

[35;183]

The short woman in Germany who was followed by many tall and hefty people

One evening while we were seated at the dining table 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked an American lady about another friend in the United States. She answered that the friend was active but somewhat limited in

means. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The services that have been rendered to the Cause of God have mostly been by such people. The rich and powerful cannot do as much, and God will win victories through the poor and powerless believers."

Then He said that one day He was walking on a street in Germany when He noticed that a short woman—shorter even than our Fujita—was being followed by many tall and hefty people. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked the woman, "Who are these people following you?" She said, "They are my children." 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked her, "You are such a small person, how could you have such big children?" The woman replied that she had taught them all the Faith; they were her spiritual children. 'Abdu'l-Bahá changed the tone of His voice and exclaimed to us, "Such are the confirmations of Bahá'u'lláh!" [36;184]

**With a glance of the eye He could solve all the
problems of the world**

We would form a line every day at sunset to be under His kind and loving protection and to receive the glance of His eye, a glance that could illumine

the earth at dusk and charge its atmosphere.[37;184] One evening He was absent and we were deprived of seeing Him. We were informed that He had gone the previous evening to Mount Carmel to spend the night in prayer and meditation. After darkness fell, our most precious Greatest Holy Leaf sent a message to us that 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be very late or would not be able to come at all and perhaps it was the Will of God that He would not be with us physically tonight. She requested us to have dinner without Him. But no one moved from his place, as it was not possible for us to sit for a dinner without 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

After some time we saw the lights of a car and presently 'Abdu'l-Bahá exited from it, leaning on the shoulder of Khusraw. [38;184] 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "Marḥabá" and entered the dining room, all of us following Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed happier than on the other nights. I think He must have visited Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb in His vision while praying and meditating on Mount Carmel the previous night. He was moving around the table lightly like a butterfly and providing us with nourishment like a

kind father.

One of the pilgrims, an American lady, rose from her seat and said, "'Abdu'l-Bahá is tired, because He met with many non-Bahá'ís during the day." She begged 'Abdu'l-Bahá to get some rest. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked her to be seated and said, "The Blessed Beauty created me not for taking rest but to serve the friends." He added, "Your souls should be happy and joyful in this place because it is a heavenly place with heavenly food. Walk after the footsteps of Bahá'u'lláh and do not take rest." No one could forget such a glorious night with 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the rest of his life.

At such a wonderful time one of the pilgrims choked on his food from excitement. He was about to lose consciousness and spill out of his chair when 'Abdu'l-Bahá came to his rescue: He put two fingers on the back of the man's neck and he recovered immediately. 'Abdu'l-Bahá told him not to worry and to partake of the heavenly food which had been bountifully granted from the Kingdom of God.

The true holy of holies is 'Abdu'l-Bahá

One day 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that those of us of Jewish background, if we were willing, should visit Jerusalem. Five friends said that they would go, but I decided not to accompany them. They asked me if I did not hear 'Abdu'l-Bahá say that we should go. I replied, "He did say so, but He specified anyone who is willing to go. He said this because He knows I do not want to go. Therefore the five of you should please proceed without me." But they persisted and I explained, "This journey will occupy us for at least four days and I do not want to deprive myself of the bounty of being in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The reality is that the person of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is a kind of shrine for me, and I cannot barter this for structures made of stone. I can see the latter at any time while my stay in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is limited to fixed days and hours."

Thirty-nine years have since passed and I have never visited Jerusalem nor regretted it. The precious moments I had in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are invaluable, as they can never be experienced again.

Teaching the Faith through storytelling

At nightfall 'Abdu'l-Bahá was surrounded by the friends, who were like moths around the candle. Sometimes He would narrate a few stories, tales, and jokes that we might learn through these how to teach and talk with people.

He spoke one night about when He visited San Francisco, where He went to various meetings and gatherings of the friends and others. One day He was surrounded by a group of people who said to Him that He was speaking at all the meetings except theirs. He replied that He would visit them by all means.

'Abdu'l-Bahá made an appointment and when He arrived at the place He noticed a sign which indicated that it was a club for naturalist philosophers and atheists. He met with a large crowd of people. They assumed that inasmuch as He believed in God surely He would speak to them about the existence of God, and they therefore prepared themselves with many questions on this theme.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, being aware of their intention, did not directly address this theme and instead said, "Do you mind if I ask you a question?"

They said, "We do not mind at all."

He asked, "How many means of knowledge does humankind possess?"

They replied by asking Him, "Could you please tell us how many means of knowledge are in existence?"

He explained to them that there are three means of knowing things. One is through the senses, such as vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch. Another means is through traditions; that is, what is handed down from the great teachers of the world. On this point 'Abdu'l-Bahá told us that He deliberately said "great teachers" and not "prophets", because the listeners did not necessarily believe in the latter. He continued that the third means is the intellect and reasoning.

'Abdu'l-Bahá then rhetorically asked the audience, "Would you tell me which of these means of knowledge you think is superior? According to your understanding, unless and until we sense something we do not believe that it has an existence—is that correct?" They all agreed that the physical senses

are supreme.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Would you forgive me if I proved you wrong?"

They unitedly said, "Yes, please tell us."

He said, "I do not wish that you should be hurt."

They said, "Not at all."

Then He told them, "You may think that the sense of vision is supreme; however, imagine a ship which is in motion—to the eye of a passenger on the ship, it seems that the shore is moving." Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked them, "Do you believe that Earth is moving?"

They said "Yes" unitedly.

He continued, "But when you look at the night sky it seems the stars are moving, not Earth."

'Abdu'l-Bahá said to the audience the idea that this means of knowledge is superior was wrong. If sense perception is the highest standard of knowledge, then surely the grazing cow is the greatest philosopher. All of them burst out laughing.

The next day 'Abdu'l-Bahá arrived in Dublin and the Bahá'ís came to receive Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was

walking with them when a few cows appeared. The local Bahá'ís joked, "The philosophers have arrived." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to the Bahá'ís that He had spoken about this in San Francisco and asked how they knew of it, given their town was nearly two hundred kilometers away. They answered that an account of the San Francisco gathering was published in most of the newspapers. I realized how mighty was 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to have addressed the people so clearly and convincingly.

Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to us about the naturalist philosophers of Írán. He said that they were different from the atheists and naturalists of the West. The naturalists of Írán would ask silly things like why mountains are tall or why rain falls in the ocean. But in the West they were more serious inquirers and if you explained matters rationally they would hear you out.[39;184]

Our visit to the public bath, and upsetting a groom

We used to sit down under a vine by the Master's House and wait to see Him as He was going to his work room. Each day we were thereby able to quaff a

share from the cup of bounty, which intoxicated us for the entire day. One morning we intended to have a bath and, because in those days there were not any private bathing places available, someone guided us to a public facility. We found that the owner of the public bath had great respect for the Master and would take the utmost care of anyone who belonged to the same Faith. After having a nice bath we were filled with joy, having seen 'Abdu'l-Bahá earlier.

We shared the premises with the wedding party of a groom. A few of the locals wanted to get money from him, as he was to be married the same day, so they sang and played musical instruments for him and were rewarded accordingly. When they realized that we were tourists in their land they came over to us and sang and played. Their song comprised words of welcome to those who have journeyed to be in the presence of their beloved. We were so happy they sang a song about our Beloved that we contributed more than what the groom's party gave. Moments later the owner of the bath quietly told me that he was glad we were in such a good mood but that the groom was quite upset we had upstaged him. The owner said

to please dress and leave the premises as soon as possible, which we did. Whenever I recall that day my spirit rejoices.

**He was the king of kings, but He associated with us
clothed in a simple garment of servitude**

Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá was the most powerful ruler on the earth, yet He associated with us with utmost kindness and pure love in all respects. He was extraordinarily selfless in character, and I believe He wished for us to learn from His demeanor and the way He treated others. His exemplary selflessness cannot be expressed by words. An editor of the New York Herald newspaper who was privileged to meet Him once wrote that such is the effect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's humility that a person forgets he or she is in the presence of a great personage.

One night He said that He wished to see the Persians, the Westerners, and the members of the Holy Family all dining together at the same table. All the ladies were in attendance except for a few who were serving in the kitchen. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then

said, "All should come." One of the servants went to the kitchen and brought a few others. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá stressed, "All must come." This time there was only one person still in the kitchen and they asked him to join the gathering and then everyone had dinner together. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love surrounded all without exception.

Another night everyone was seated at the dinner table busily eating when 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked, "Is Mírzá Muḥsin here?" Mírzá Muḥsin responded, "Yes, Master, I am sitting here." 'Abdu'l-Bahá's inquiry about Mírzá Muḥsin became a test for one of the pilgrims and he asked me how 'Abdu'l-Bahá could not see Mírzá Muḥsin, who was sitting in the opposite chair. I answered him, "If our Master, out of His compassion for us, did not clothe Himself in a humble human garment, how could an insignificant individual like me be seated in His presence as though with an ordinary person?" I thought to myself, "O God! May my life be a sacrifice for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who is so kind and full of unique and genuine love and humility that it can become the cause of negligence and tests for some people!"

Another night, when Khusraw brought a finger bowl for the Master, He asked him of a mundane matter, "Were plums not available today in the market?" I overheard Him and thought in my heart, "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá! Thou dost ask us questions, yet Thou dost know already the answers. If Thou wert to appear to us with all Thy powers manifested then we could not withstand it!"

'Abdu'l-Bahá entered His private chamber and I could see Him with His hands lifted toward heaven praying. His hair was spread on his shoulders; it seemed as if each hair was also praising God and the Beloved of His heart. I felt His power and it was a confirmation for me of His reality.

Visitation of the Shrine of the Báb in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Every Sunday 'Abdu'l-Bahá visited the Shrine of the Báb along with all the friends. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would request one of the friends, who could sing *Ḥijází* tunes in a beautiful voice, to chant the Tablet of Visitation. The reverence displayed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá was remarkable. He walked with us,

rather than ahead of us, so as not to draw attention to Himself. His movements within the Shrine were very dignified. 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked reverently, almost on tiptoes, over to the man who was to chant the Tablet of Visitation and took his hand and guided him to a wall on which the Tablet was hanging, and then He Himself stood among us in such a manner that no one felt He was different from the others. He showed such humility and reverence to the Shrine and was so kind and compassionate that no pen can describe it—but neither can the bright-burning flame of the holy candle be concealed.

**Begging to extinguish the fire burning in
an American lady**

One day 'Abdu'l-Bahá narrated a story with utmost sweetness and humor. He said that when He visited San Francisco everyone was on fire with the love of God, especially the women. One of the male Bahá'ís came to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá and requested that he be permitted to speak with Him in private, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá accepted his request. When they were alone the man complained that since 'Abdu'l-

Bahá's visit his wife was so on fire with love for the Faith that there was no longer any place in her heart for her husband and the affairs of their home. He implored 'Abdu'l-Bahá to do something to calm her down so she would not entirely forget her husband!

The effect of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's humility on us

My friend, Ustád Muṭallib, and I competed to be more humble and meek than the other and walk after the footsteps of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We shared a small room which only had space for a single bed and required one of us to sleep on the floor. One night after leaving the holy presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá we walked to our room. It was bedtime and each of us wanted the other to sleep on the bed. I said, "I will sleep on the floor tonight", but Ustád Muṭallib objected and said, "No, I will sleep on the floor." We started arguing loudly and Áqá Muḥammad Ḥasan, the caretaker of the Pilgrim House, evidently became worried and entered our room like a policeman to inquire about our quarrel. Upon hearing our explanation he commented that he had never dealt with a case like this before, but after some moments

of silence he said he had found the solution to our problem. He insisted, "Both of you will have to speak the truth." We agreed. He asked us our ages, and luckily my friend was a year older than I. Áqá Muḥammad Ḥasan then told us that the younger should sleep on the floor.

How happy I was and how unhappy my roommate became! It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá's teaching—that we should prefer others to ourselves and be humble—that was the cause of this behavior. I wish such sentiments always existed among humankind. It would make this world a better place and free from selfishness. The world would become a paradise. [But with the occasional loud argument about who can be more selfless.]

"Should a person say sincerely 'My Lord, show Thyself to me', he will hear from the Kingdom the reply 'Behold, and thou shalt see Me'"

'Abdu'l-Bahá always showered kindness and love on the poor pilgrims like me—I who am utterly powerless. He was supreme in generosity, like King Solomon was kind even to an ant. Early one morning I was standing outside the Master's House. It was my

wish and desire to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá alone. I remembered Moses, Who supplicated, "My Lord, show Thyself to me!" and I repeated in my heart, "*Though wicked, sinful, and intemperate, we still seek from Thee a 'seat of truth', and long to behold the countenance of the Omnipotent King. It is Thine to command, and all sovereignty belongeth to Thee . . .*" [40;186]

While I was immersed in my thoughts Mírzá Muḥsin Afnán gave me the glad-tidings that I had been permitted to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As soon as I heard this I became a different person and rushed toward His room, climbing the stairs in a hurry. Finally I entered the room and bowed down before Him. He looked at me and said "Marḥabá" and then told me to be seated. I sat down in front of Him. I could not say anything, however, as there was an important visitor who was discussing a matter with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I thought to myself, "I wish this man would go, so that I could be alone with 'Abdu'l-Bahá." This wish of mine was granted, as He dismissed the man. Then He instructed Khusraw to serve me tea. Khusraw brought us tea, but I did not want him to be

present either. Again, as soon as I had this thought 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked Khusraw to leave.

I was now alone in His presence, but when I tried to drink the tea I was paralyzed and could not feel anything. It seemed as if heaven and earth were spinning around me with great speed. I was losing my sense of balance and the cup of tea was about to fall out of my hands when I heard 'Abdu'l-Bahá ask me to drink my tea. At the moment I heard 'Abdu'l-Bahá's voice I regained control of my senses and drank my tea, but I still felt weak and helpless. Just as Solomon was kind and compassionate even to an ant, in the same manner I saw myself in the hand of a mighty king. Then He addressed me and told me to say whatever I wished. I spoke about my illness during my journey from Istanbul, the illness of separation from His holy presence. I also told Him about all the events in Paris and London. I said to Him that when I reached Haifa and came into His holy presence my illness disappeared.

'Abdu'l-Bahá then said, "What is your desire?" I was sure at that moment that if I had asked Him to grant me all the wealth of the world He would have

fulfilled my desire. But I replied, "I desire to sacrifice my youthfulness in Thy path!" At that time He was perusing a book, which was covering His face. He took the book off His blessed face and stated, "You will certainly be successful in serving His Cause, especially when you depart from this place." After a few moments of silence He said, "Fí amáni'lláh". I intended to obey Him and leave His presence but, for some reason I do not understand, instead of leaving I threw myself on the floor and kissed His feet and cried bitterly. He lifted me up with two fingers under each of my arms and said, "God forbid. Stand up." But it was so difficult for me to get up from such a calm and peaceful place—I felt as if I was in another realm, out of this world of consciousness. I heard the Master address me and say a few times that He would surely and always have me in His thoughts and I would not be forgotten. I then moved backward until I passed through the doorway. As I withdrew He addressed me with the final words, "You will be very successful in a great service to the Cause in the time of your youthfulness." I bowed again and left His holy

presence. I was in a state of numbness which I had never experienced before.

The House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád needed repair

One day, when my friend Ustád Muṭallib and this humble self returned from the town, we heard that the other pilgrims had been in the Master's presence. We were grieved to have lost such a privilege. I asked one of the others if he remembered what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had spoken about. He replied, "Today the utterances of the Master were very sad. He said that He has completed His work in this world and must leave this mortal plane. But the only matter He has been unable to take care of is the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, which is in disrepair. He said that if the Most Great House remained in this state His heart would hurt and He would depart from this world in pain."

That evening I went alone to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence. As I climbed the wooden stairs I kissed every step until I reached His threshold. As soon as I had the bounty of meeting Him I bowed with humbleness. He looked at me and said "Marḥabá." He

was sitting on the bed and the bedding was supporting His back. As He showered His blessings upon me I thought to myself, "O God! O Bahá'u'lláh! What a glorious face, what a gentle smile! How thankful I am for such a bounty."

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "What do you wish to say?" I replied, "I beg Thy pardon for my absence in the morning. I was told that Thou didst express the wish that the Most Great House be repaired." Without any hesitation I quoted from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: *"Were any man to taste the sweetness of the words which the lips of the All-Merciful have willed to utter, he would, though the treasures of the earth be in his possession, renounce them one and all, that he might vindicate the truth of even one of His commandments, shining above the Dayspring of His bountiful care and loving kindness."* I said to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "I intend to contribute all my wealth to the Faith. Please permit me to go to Baghdád and repair the Most Great House and fulfill Thy wish." At that time I reckoned my wealth to be over 10,000 túmáns, which might equal 500,000 túmáns or more today. [41;188]

After I stated my intention and requested 'Abdu'l-Bahá to accept all my wealth He showered His love and blessings on me, accepting my offer but on one condition, which was a mystery: "Very well. Go to Baghdád and get an estimate of the expenditure and determine by how much you are short. Then write and inform me. For instance, if you need five sháhís and you have three, inform me of the difference." [42;188]

I wondered why 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised me to determine what funds I had available and mentioned a shortfall. I could not comprehend it then, but later this mystery was solved: A cargo ship loaded with the results of my business dealings in Europe was seized by the Bolsheviks, and the associated bank account was debited out—there was not a single sháhí left in it. This loss, coupled with the expenses of the journey to Europe and to and from the Holy Land, made a financial commitment to repair the Most Great House unrealistic for me.

O may my life be sacrificed for Him! 'Abdu'l-Bahá was aware of what would happen to me! Meanwhile one of the esteemed friends, Ḥájí Maḥmúd Qaṣṣábchí,

requested permission from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to repair the House of Bahá'u'lláh and was answered in the affirmative. He was able to accomplish it and win the game of service eternally.[43;189]

The future of Írán and coming under the shadow of God, the Most Compassionate

We were in the garden under the vines and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was joyful. After He spoke about many subjects, He turned toward a few of us who had visited London and Paris and asked which city we preferred. I felt tested and kept quiet, inasmuch as He was the creator of Paris and London, and surely He knew much more than we. But Mírzá Mihdí Lálihzárí, whose voice and hands were shaking, said humbly, "May my life be a sacrifice for Thee. In my opinion Paris is very beautiful but London has greater substance."

'Abdu'l-Bahá next asked him, "Did you see the Sháh?" In those days the Sháh would sneak away to Paris in the guise of an ordinary civilian for all sorts of dissipation. Mírzá Mihdí replied that he had seen the Sháh dressed as a civilian and nobody

cared about him. As soon as he said this 'Abdu'l-Bahá became unhappy and remarked, "The affairs of Írán have fallen into the hands of children and those who have no moral compass. Their behavior is such that there is no value or merit in the station of kingship. It will take a long time for Írán to rise up to its true station. They cannot develop Írán, and whatever they accomplish will be short-lived, unless and until that country comes under the shadow of God." Then He pointed to one of the fruit trees and said, "This tree is green because of its firm roots and if you take care of only its branches it cannot survive." [44;189]

**The world is terribly sick
and the physicians incompetent**

It is not possible for me to write about the way 'Abdu'l-Bahá explained various subjects with the utmost sweetness of expression and fatherly love and care, not only for the Bahá'ís but for the whole world. Believe me, if there were a thousand secretaries to record His utterances they would be helpless to do it. And so—please understand—how can

this humble servant write about Him?

Early one morning 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in deep thought when suddenly He became like a father who is concerned about his sick child. He said that the world is suffering from many diseases. There are many physicians, but they are not sincere; all of them only want to sell their own peculiar remedies or cures. The competent physician has yet to be found.

We thought of the verse, "*A single breath from the breezes of the Day of Thy Revelation is enough to adorn all mankind with a fresh attire.*" Yet Bahá'u'lláh stated that the world must suffer punishment for its misdeeds, although for the sake of wisdom this has been delayed.[45;189]

**Ḥájí Muḥammad the cobbler,
and the professional chanter of the Qur'án**

Among the believers living in the Holy Land was Ḥájí Muḥammad, who was a cobbler and from the city of Shúshtar. He was a firm believer and something of a scholar of the Faith, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was pleased with him. One day a man who was a professional

chanter of the Qur'án came into the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and requested to be allowed to chant a verse of the Qur'án for His health. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who was ever kind and forbearing, accepted his offer. All of us were upset with the chanter because we felt he was wasting the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and stopping Him from His talk, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself was happy and joked with him. The man then chanted the verse with an ugly voice which, frankly, got on our nerves.

'Abdu'l-Bahá asked the chanter to interpret the verse he had just chanted and the man spoke nonsense. After he finished his explanation 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked the aforementioned friend, Ḥájí Muḥammad, to interpret the same verse. Ḥájí Muḥammad turned to the chanter and said, "We are in the holy place," but the man could not comprehend. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked the man how Ḥájí's comment was. The man answered that Ḥájí was quite wrong and there was not even any mention of a holy place.

'Abdu'l-Bahá then told him, "It is all right. Now you can chant another verse and interpret." The man chanted another verse and gave his

interpretation, but it was filled with his own imagination and superstition. 'Abdu'l-Bahá again asked Ḥájí to interpret. Ḥájí this time made it a little clearer and said, "We are in the holy vale near the seat of God's throne." 'Abdu'l-Bahá concealed His knowledge of the Qur'án and asked the man how he liked Ḥájí's interpretation. The man, unable to comprehend Ḥájí's meaning, exclaimed, "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá, this man does not know the Qur'án at all. His interpretation has no connection with this verse."

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Who could read every heart, again told the man, "It is all right. Chant another verse," but He did not ask Ḥájí Muḥammad to interpret this time and instead said "Fí amáni'lláh", dismissing everyone. Ḥájí later said to us that no man could have explained clearly yet with appropriate tactfulness to the chanter about the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; that He was, by Himself, a master of the Qur'án among so many other things. The chanter simply was not capable of recognizing Him for Who He was. Ḥájí added he felt that was why 'Abdu'l-Bahá did not ask him to comment the third

time.

The next night 'Abdu'l-Bahá showered His love and mercy upon us and said, "Last night the man whose profession is to chant the Qur'án deprived me of talking to you. He thought that we do not understand the meaning of the Qur'án, but marḥabá to Ḥájí Muḥammad, who gave him a glimpse of the reality of this holy place." Then Ḥájí with utmost dedication said to 'Abdu'l-Bahá that if He had asked him to interpret for the third time he would have told the man clearly to Whom he was chanting the verses of God. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded, "No, no. That would have been contrary to wisdom and I would not have permitted it." [46;189]

The honor of being in a photograph with 'Abdu'l-Bahá

The day that had been fixed for taking a photograph with 'Abdu'l-Bahá came. The photographer arrived at the appointed hour and arranged for the pilgrims to pose standing on the stairs of the Master's House. We did one thing which had never happened before: we brought a chair so that 'Abdu'l-Bahá could sit. The photographer said that we might

as well remove the chair, because he knew 'Abbás Effendí: He always sat when the others were seated and always stood when the others were standing. Nevertheless we did not remove the chair. Someone went to inform 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and after 10 minutes had passed He appeared. He had been busy writing in His room for many hours and was very tired, yet He accepted to come and be photographed with us. He was so weary that He could not even greet the pilgrims with his customary "Marḥabá", instead barely saying "Mar" and sitting down. The photographer quickly took the photograph and 'Abdu'l-Bahá immediately rose and left to continue with His writing.

In brief, that day a unique photograph resulted from the chair we thought to prepare for our weary Master. Our wish was fulfilled, as He sat like a king while we stood like His subjects.[47;189]

Riding with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in His carriage

Once during these days I was walking alone in the streets of Haifa. Suddenly I saw the carriage of 'Abdu'l-Bahá approaching. 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked Khusraw

to stop and told me to board the carriage. I did so and seated myself behind the Master. The carriage was drawn by two fine mules. They pulled the carriage so peacefully, and I wanted to somehow convey to them that they were working for a truly holy Person.

All revered His name

One day my friend and I decided to walk the streets of Haifa. We soon lost our way and were forced to ask for directions. We noticed a person riding on a horse and we asked him to guide us to the house of 'Abbás Effendí. As soon as he heard that name he dismounted and his demeanor changed to one of respect, although he was not a Bahá'í. He guided us with utmost kindness and then mounted his horse and was gone.

Another day I was passing by a shop and saw a portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in a glass case. I asked the shopkeeper if he could tell me whose photograph it was. He answered proudly that it was His Honor 'Abbás Effendí—God was first and He was second! Another amazing thing I witnessed in the marketplace

and street was that people would promise or swear to something by the name of 'Abbás Effendí.[48;190]

The Master's treatment of non-Bahá'ís

'Abdu'l-Bahá associated with friend and foe alike with absolute love and kindness. He was filled with love and kindness for people in all walks of life, whether rulers, government officials, the sick, the poor, the wealthy. The poorest and most downtrodden were under the shadow of His protection and care. One day there were so many visitors that He became fatigued. He said to us, "I have met with more than one hundred visitors today and have talked about matters I do not necessarily care to talk about, because I conversed with them according to their liking. If any of them had been a mischief-maker one of you might have been harmed, but I am immune to such effects."

The fall of the Russian Emperor

One day during His talk with us the subject of Russia was raised and 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked Ustád Muṭallib, who was from Bádkúbih, how was the

situation in that city. Ustád Muṭallib replied that the Bolsheviks were in power there. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The Russian consuls in Írán, such as in Qazvín and Rasht, did much disservice to the Bahá'ís. The consul in Qazvín caused difficulties for Jináb Ḥakím Báshí. The consul in Ishfahán invited the Bahá'ís into his offices and then, in reaction to the riots, evicted them. I sent a very serious cable to the Russian Emperor and mentioned all these cruelties to the Bahá'ís." Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá raised His hands toward heaven and said with a special tone, "The Emperor fell from power." [49;191]

**In the Bahá'í Faith there is not absolute equality,
but one should prefer others to oneself**

Another night the mention of communists was made and Dr. D̄iyá Baghdádí asked 'Abdu'l-Bahá what advice should be given to the friends who inquired about communism. He wanted to know if the communists should be praised or their misdeeds mentioned. 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied, "You must neither praise nor speak ill of them. You should say that the Cause of God has no objection specifically concerning them,

but the Faith teaches that each person must prefer others to himself in all respects and that this preference should result from absolute willingness and love and sincerity and not from coercion. Also, the ranks and degrees of the community or nation must be maintained, because the population of the world is like the regiment of an army: a regiment is in need of a commander and officers and soldiers, and it is impracticable that all have the same rank. However, although ranks and functions may differ, all must live comfortably; not some possessing every worldly thing while others have nothing and are in need of a loaf of bread." [50;191]

**How the servitude of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
could solve difficulties**

I had spent two years in Baghdád looking after my import-export business, and during this period I had met Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn Vakíl, the custodian of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád. Although he was a trustworthy person and a firm believer, he could be proud and stubborn and he tended to expect everyone to accept whatever he said. For example, a

person would journey a great distance for the sake of Bahá'u'lláh to His House, but Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn would not permit the visitation to take place. Sometimes a person had to try repeatedly before he would finally give permission. He would claim that he was concerned about the safety and protection of the Most Great House. I had once traveled from Russia to visit the House of Bahá'u'lláh, which is why I knew well of his attitude. Many believers were displeased by Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn's proud behavior, and some complained to 'Abdu'l-Bahá about his attitude. While in Haifa I saw him arrive from Baghdád for pilgrimage, and I was curious to see how 'Abdu'l-Bahá would treat him.

One day Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn told us what happened when he gained the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "I was asked to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá alone. As soon as 'Abdu'l-Bahá looked at me I realized that He could read deep into my heart. He came close to me and took my hat off and kissed my forehead and hair. He said that these had been touched by the dust of the House of Bahá'u'lláh and were thus blessed, and

He had tears in His eyes. He asked me, 'Do you know that I am the servant of Bahá and the slave at His threshold? Would you like to share this servitude with 'Abdu'l-Bahá?'" Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn sighed and said he immediately realized that he had committed mistakes and was the cause of disappointment to so many of the friends. He threw himself at the feet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and begged for forgiveness.

To briefly move forward in time, a number of us pilgrims reached Baghdád on the same day while on our way home from the Holy Land. Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn organized a feast and invited all the friends and asked them to forgive him for his shortcomings. He explained how 'Abdu'l-Bahá had treated him with the utmost love. At that feast the friends embraced one another and an atmosphere of unity was created.

**It was my desire to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá
in the early hours of the morning
and drink from the cup of bounty**

Early one morning I awoke and quietly dressed and slowly opened the door of the Pilgrim House with great care so as not to awaken the others. I walked

to the Master's House and when I reached there I met Ismá'íl Áqá, who was busy irrigating the garden. I asked Ismá'íl Áqá if 'Abdu'l-Bahá was awake, and he looked at me strangely and said, "Do you think there is any rest for 'Abdu'l-Bahá? From the break of dawn He has been busy in His room." I went and sat in the usual place waiting to visit Him. I was thinking of many different things including how I hoped 'Abdu'l-Bahá might open his window and see me and make my spirit happy. Suddenly I fainted and collapsed to the ground. Apparently Ismá'íl Áqá saw me on the ground and carried me to a bed which was down in a kind of basement.

I do not know how long it was before I heard someone calling me. I awoke and saw Ismá'íl Áqá standing by me. I asked him, "May I see 'Abdu'l-Bahá?" Ismá'íl Áqá smiled and replied, "The Greatest Holy Leaf has asked me to bring this breakfast for you, because you left the Pilgrim House without eating anything." I sat up in bed and took the copper tray on which was placed some bread and a few pieces of cheese along with a pot of tea. It was a heavenly repast. I realized how much the Greatest

Holy Leaf was occupied with various cares and troubles.

When I finished my breakfast I saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá passing by and looking at me. I followed after Him and found Him sitting on a chair with all the pilgrims and friends around Him, like moths around the candle, surrounded by the flowers of the garden. He spoke to us on the spirit of service and sacrifice.[51;191]

'Abdu'l-Bahá's way of walking was remarkable

Although 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in His old age in this mortal world, no one could discern any sign of old age in the way He walked. He walked with a special and unique style. As I came down from Mount Carmel I saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá in summer-like heat with a parasol in His hand and walking in that unique and most dignified way. I bowed down before Him and He said "Marḥabá" with His sweet voice. He asked, "Where have you been?" These words uttered by Him—the fact that He showed concern for me personally in the midst of all His cares—were so moving that I wished to fall at His feet and never get up until He

accepted me to be sacrificed for the sake of the Cause. But He said "Marḥabá" again and continued on His way.

**Wishing to sacrifice myself in His Path,
and hiding behind the bushes**

One day on my way to the market I saw some people carrying a bed and other items for a wedding. These items were so attractive that any youth seeing them could hardly resist the idea of getting married. I was a bachelor at that time and thought that these things were nice but that a glance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was far more preferable and precious than any material goods. I thought that I must sacrifice myself for the Cause and beg Him to accept my life in His Path.

That same evening 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke to us about many different subjects, one of which was martyrs. He said that periodically in history God's believers were able to share the bounty of sacrificing their lives for His Cause. I listened to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and was intoxicated. Eventually He dismissed all from His presence. I hid myself behind some bushes and

intended to beg Him to accept my life as a sacrifice. I was sure that no one saw me, but it was not the Will of God: a mighty hand pulled me out of the bushes and promptly dispatched me up Mount Carmel for the night.

No one was disappointed at His threshold

'Abdu'l-Bahá's love and kindness extended to all and through it people achieved their wishes and heart's desire. One day 'Abdu'l-Bahá mentioned that a person once came to Him and requested Him to pray for his son's safe return from war. 'Abdu'l-Bahá prayed for him, and he returned home safely. Another day I was in the Master's House when He called me and told me to sit down next to Him. There were two Indians who, according to their tradition, were massaging the feet of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He said to me, "These men say they are going to war and wish to be victorious. They surely will be." [52;192]

**Joyous times at the Pilgrim House in the presence
of Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alí**

On these days of our pilgrimage we were all

immersed in the ocean of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love and bounties. One could write a book for each visit in His presence. To be at the Pilgrim House in those days was unforgettable, especially because of its simplicity. Our food was soup and pure wheat bread. No one would exchange his simple soup-and-bread lunch for a thousand roasted chickens. Sifting the wheat brought us joy.

We were privileged to be in the presence of Hájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alí, who truly loved and served Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Once I asked him to explain the meaning of the verse in *The Hidden Words* [Persian 19]: *"O My Friends! Have ye forgotten that true and radiant morn when, in those hallowed and blessed surroundings, ye were all gathered in My presence beneath the shade of the tree of life, which is planted in the all-glorious paradise? . . ."* He said the verse refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I learned from him how to concentrate on the Holy Writings.

The previously mentioned Áqá Muḥammad Ḥasan, who was the caretaker of the Pilgrim House and other places during the time of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-

Bahá, was a jovial person and every night he would tell us all a story and make us laugh, such as some of the tales from "One Thousand and One Nights".

During our pilgrimage the Bahá'í community suffered a great loss when one of the venerable friends, Ḥájí Abú-Ṭálib, who was always sitting in a corner of the Pilgrim House, passed on to the Abhá Kingdom. During his long lifetime he was often attacked by the enemies of the Faith. 'Abdu'l-Bahá remarked that Ḥájí Abú-Ṭálib had managed a number of times to fend off 'Azrá'íl [the Archangel of Death] and had even tried to redirect the Archangel's attention to Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-'Alí! But, ultimately, 'Azrá'íl prevailed.[53;193]

The end of our pilgrimage

On the eve of the last day of our pilgrimage 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to us, "Thanks be to God all of you were assisted by Him to come and visit the Shrines, which are the points of adoration for the world. You should all remember that in this visitation you have had privileged access to the holy sites in relatively few numbers, but in the

future this visitation will feature thronging masses." He referred to the people of Mecca, who during the early days of Islám called the Ka'bah the "House of God" and the pilgrims the "Guests of God". These titles were allegorical but these holy places were a reality.

'Abdu'l-Bahá added, "I hope that wherever you journey you may go with the standard of God—Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!—and that you may be the cause of encouragement to others." The pilgrims who visit the Shrines are in a highly spiritually receptive state, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá showered upon us many holy words which we soaked up like heavenly rain, giving us a new life. We wanted to throw ourselves at His feet and take the dust from His feet as a blessing. We were weeping continuously and shaking.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was so kind that He invited us to go to the room of the Greatest Holy Leaf and view the portraits of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. We went into her room and sat on the floor in front of these two holy portraits and inhaled their fragrance and kissed them as a sign of respect and love and dedication. Afterward we were in a dazed state and

forgot our way to the Pilgrim House, but we came upon Mírzá Muḥsin Afnán, who guided us back. We were inconsolable at the prospect of departing the next morning and could not sleep all night.

The next morning we were informed that all the routes home were closed because of the war. The custodian of the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdád, Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn Vakíl, told us that it would be better to ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá what we should do. We all agreed and he went to inform 'Abdu'l-Bahá of the situation. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said the road to Shám was open and to go through Shám. But Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn said to 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he had received a letter indicating the route to Shám was blocked by the French. 'Abdu'l-Bahá responded, "I am telling you that the Shám route is open, and you say it is closed!"

Mírzá Muḥammad Ḥusayn seemed in a state of shock as he recounted to us the Master's words, and he added, "It is the will of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that we should go by way of Shám. So let us all go and trust in Him, and it does not matter if we are all martyred." 'Abdu'l-Bahá had said to us the night

before, "If you all go by way of Shám, convey my love to Mírzá 'Alí Áqá and tell him that 'Abdu'l-Bahá says he has not been forgotten; I do remember him." 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew that we would have to travel to Shám. [54;193]

With broken hearts we were going on our way when we saw a figure from afar. When we got closer we saw 'Abdu'l-Bahá seated, with His blessed hair falling on His shoulders. This last meeting was a consolation for our hearts, courtesy of the Master. He greeted us and then said "Fí amáni'lláh" ["Be in the protection of God"]. This brought an end to our pilgrimage.

My pen is unable to record all the things which happened in His holy presence. If a thousand secretaries were to write down 'Abdu'l-Bahá's remarks and talks, they would surely fail to record everything. In His presence we were transformed into spiritually charged beings, like the disciples of Christ. When He rose to His feet and started walking, we followed Him. We walked through the streets praising His name, which was known to everyone.

When we reached the main road 'Abdu'l-Bahá ordered Khusraw to stop His carriage and told us to climb in. We dropped ourselves at His feet and inhaled the fragrance of His pure love, while I was repeating in my heart one of the prayers of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. By the Will of God we boarded the carriage. 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked with us for some time and then turned into a lane, and we could no longer see Him. We will never forget how 'Abdu'l-Bahá walked with us as we rode in His carriage.

Epilogue: The loving heart

9 Urdíbihisht 1309 marked the arrival of Ms. Martha Root in Shíráz. It was springtime and the flowers were blooming and their fragrance filled the air with perfume. [55;194]

Some kilometers away from the city the automobile carrying her was approached by a number of persons riding on horses. As soon as they came close they gave their greetings and conveyed messages on behalf of the thousands of Bahá'ís in the city and its vicinity. The horsemen then bowed and proceeded to perform fine acrobatics.

Ms. Root and her companions were guided to the ancient ruins of the famed Persepolis. She viewed the ruins and praised that amazing spot. Ms. Root saw the Bahá'ís crying with happiness, moved to tears to hear an American lady praising Írán.

A shepherd arrived at the gathering from a far distance, having left his flock behind. He shook hands with Ms. Root. He was uneducated but spoke with sincerity and eloquence. He said that during the prime of his life his fellow shepherds used to mock him and torment him by doing things like pressing pebbles painfully against his ear. They did this because he was a Bahá'í. Although the majority of those cruel people were no longer in this world, he wished that they could raise their heads out of their graves and see the greatness of this Faith. He was so excited that he took his hat off and, according to his tradition, threw it toward heaven twice and shouted at the top of his voice, "Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá!" Everyone was thrilled and applauded him. Lunch was served in honor of Ms. Root and all enjoyed a picnic. It was a lovely moment when Ms. Root distributed copies of a photograph of 'Abdu'l-

Bahá which she had brought from America.

Buses came carrying more people to welcome Ms. Martha Root, and the entire gathering then headed for the cradle of the Faith. Ms. Root and her fellow travelers admired beautiful gardens full of flowers of different aromas and colors and nightingales singing their sweet melodies. They passed through the narrow streets of Shíráz and reached the residence of the Dihqán family, one of the prominent Bahá'í houses in the city. Moved by the atmosphere of the city Ms. Root started to cry, tears rolling down her cheeks. Although Ms. Root was comfortable and every possible thing was arranged for her, she was uneasy and waited for the Bahá'ís to take her to the blessed House. It was on 5 May 1930 that the Bahá'ís guided her to the House of the Báb.[56;194]

Ms. Martha Root associated with kings and queens and heads of state everywhere, but now for the sake of the Cause of God she was experiencing these dark and narrow streets with long passages, which she preferred to the world of wealth and beauty and comfort. After a long walk, joy building with each step, the visitation party reached the House of the

Báb. The Afnán custodians of the House suggested that Ms. Root rest in another room for some time and partake of refreshments before proceeding to the room of revelation, but she declined to rest even for a moment. She asked the Afnán family about the Báb and His Writings and she recorded everything in her diary. Presently one of the Afnán brought a metal trunk full of the Writings of the Báb. It was rusty and the contents damaged by moisture, because during the riots and turmoil in Írán they were forced to bury it in the earth. Ms. Root did not care about the rusted trunk or the ugly effect of the moisture. She kept her face on that trunk and kissed it until the people thought she would surely take off all of its rust.

The House of the Báb had a soul-stirring aura. It consisted of three sections, the highest of which was the chamber where Mullá Ḥusayn received the Message and other tablets were revealed. Before visiting this room Ms. Root viewed the orange tree which had been planted by the Báb Himself. Then Ms. Root—who had traveled the world over and mentioned the name of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb everywhere and

had come with utmost humbleness as a pilgrim—saw with her own eyes the blessed chamber. She kissed even the walls of the room and while doing so was remembering all the Bahá'í friends around the world.

A meeting was held at the home of Mr. Munajjim at which Ms. Root spoke. There was an overflowing crowd, both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís. Ms. Root delivered a beautiful talk about the Báb and His new Revelation. A second meeting was held in the same house and Ms. Root lectured about the development and progress of the Faith in the West. A third meeting was arranged in Muḥammadíyyih Garden. The friends decorated this beautiful garden with banners containing the Greatest Name and with framed verses from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb, such as *"Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch."*

The number in attendance at Muḥammadíyyih Garden was not less than two thousand, and they heard songs most movingly sung by the Bahá'í children as well as a powerful talk by Ms. Root. She spoke about the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the West and His many accomplishments, and she also addressed the many

Muslims and several Christian priests and missionaries in the audience, telling them that they had misunderstood each other's Faiths. By so doing she was able to remove the barriers between the adherents of these Faiths, and in fact some among the Muslims praised her for mentioning the names of all religions with reverence. She ended her talk by saying that whosoever was from Shíráz should be proud of his or her native city because it was a holy place and in the future it would be visited by kings and heads of state with utmost respect. After the conclusion of her talk the applause continued on and on.

Ms. Root visited the House of the Báb a second time, wearing a simple white dress. There was a photographer who was from a Bahá'í family but knew little about the Faith. He was astonished by the dedication of our dear and respected Ms. Root. She took out her watch and presented it to the photographer for his efforts. The photographer was shaken and discovered for himself that this House in Shíráz was not, as he may have thought, any ordinary house. Ms. Root plucked leaves from the orange tree

planted by the Báb to send to the United States.

This writer was privileged to be in Ms. Martha Root's service during her visit to Shíráz and Işfahán. He witnessed these events—yet no words can possibly express the spirituality of Ms. Root and her dedication to the Cause of God.[57;194]

**THE TWIN PILGRIMAGES OF NÚRU'D-DÍN MUMTÁZÍ:
SECOND PILGRIMAGE (1955-56) —**

**"EXCERPTS FROM NOTES TAKEN BY MOMTAZIS
WHILE VISITING HAIFA, JAN. 1956"**

Arrival in Haifa

Our car is taking the Tel Aviv-Haifa road. We are near to our beloved Guardian now. The time of attainment is near: our hearts—my and my wife's—are beating fast. All we are thinking of is how we must present ourselves before our beloved Guardian.

We have come a long way but the dome of the Shrine is not visible yet. We cannot wait any longer and everyone is anxious to meet our beloved Guardian.

Alas [sic], here is the dome. We can see it clearly now. Our hearts are beating faster. This sign speaks to us: it tells us that the time of attainment is near and that we do not have to wait much longer.

We are now in Haifa but we do not know where to go in this strange place and yet in this holy city:

to the Pilgrim House or to the sacred residence of our beloved Guardian. One of us suggested that we ring the bell [telephone?] of his residence and ask for advice, but while this state of confusion was prevailing Fujita called a taxi and told him to drive toward our beloved Guardian's residence. We got into the taxi and with extraordinary speed the driver took us to his sacred residence.[58;195]

When entering our beloved Guardian's residence [at 7 HaParsim Street] we saw the familiar words [on the nameplate]—ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS—all of which reminded me of my previous visit to this holy place in 1920, 35 years ago. We kissed these sacred words while we were head-over-heels in confusion. The sacred door was opened and Fujita, who was walking ahead of us, was the first to enter it. From a far distance we could see our sacred second [sic] Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánum.

We were now in complete ignorance and no one knows when we are destined to meet our beloved Guardian, who, as we learned later, was already informed that pilgrims from the Far East—the farthest place from the Holy Land—have come to him

and with humble hearts are waiting to meet him. His ocean of mercy was touched and we were immediately called to his presence.[59;195]

First meeting with our beloved Guardian

The time had come when the voice of God would speak to us. Finally our sufferings came to an end and his door was opened unto us. Fujita and I had lost our minds and all we knew was that we were at his holy feet. He tried to lift us up but, alas, our hands were tightly bound to his holy feet. Fujita and I each had one of his holy feet in our hands. Fujita was told to stand up, but since he was told so in English I took it as being addressed only to him and not to me. When the same was addressed to me and I was told to stand up Fujita took advantage of the situation and thus each of us was again holding one of his holy feet in his arms.

Here was my reward after 35 years of depression and suffering. I was depressed since I had been so far from our beloved Guardian and I had suffered greatly as I was unable to attend and serve him from close. This was our situation for a few minutes

until Fujita and I were somehow unconsciously and with the help of our beloved Guardian lifted up and stood humbly in his presence. We were all wet with tears at this moment and only those who have had the happiness and privilege to visit our beloved Guardian know what these tears meant to us.

It was at this moment that my wife arrived and, ignorant of our presence, threw herself on his holy feet, and since she was alone she had his two feet in her arms. She was kissing his feet and her voice, which was coming deep from her heart, was repeatedly heard saying "My soul be sacrificed to thou" until she too was unconsciously lifted up with his help and stood humbly at his presence. It was then and there that she observed us in his presence.

Our beloved Guardian asked us to be seated, and then his holy voice spoke to us: "You have come a long way, leaving seas and skies behind yourselves to come to me. You are welcome. I was waiting for you." Then he asked us if we had any delay on our way, stressing that we had come a little late.

[60;195]

"Thanks [be] to God that you have pioneered to

Japan," said our beloved Guardian. "The Faith of God has made great progress in Japan and, with your efforts, devotion, and determination, Bahá'í centers have been set up [i.e., established] all over Japan for the activities of our friends in this country. I have always looked with appreciation on your services, all of which will be recorded in history. Now we are at the beginning of the Administration [sic] Order of Japan; in the future you will face big victories and successes in that country. I am delighted with your faithful services in Japan. Do not weep—now is the moment of your happiness. Thanks [be to] God that you have made great progress in Japan. This progress is both in spirit and in organizing the Administration Order in that country." [61;195]

Then our beloved Guardian asked me, "How are our friends in Japan?"

"All of them are continuing their sincere services to thee with faith and diligence," I replied, "and all they ask for is your help and blessings."

"Thanks [be to] God," said our beloved Guardian,

“that our friends are all determined and sincere to the Faith irrespective of their nationality, whether they are Íránian, Japanese, or American. You have had the great privilege of visiting the Holy Land,” our beloved Guardian said, “while this visit was very difficult during the time of His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh. Our friends had to travel for six months in those times in order to come to the Holy Land, while they could stay here only for a few minutes and Bahá’u’lláh could only have a look on them. They could never stay in His presence for more than a few moments. Now the situation is changed, but you must value this precious occasion.” Turning toward Japan again, he added, “You must treat the Japanese with kindness since, as Bahá’u’lláh has stated, ‘A kind word captures a heart.’” After speaking these holy words our beloved Guardian stood up and left us.[62;196]

First visitation of the Shrine of the Báb

After our beloved Guardian’s departure we got up, too, and started walking toward the Carmel mountain. On the way to the mountain we were

praising God while we were all astonished. Now we, his humble servants, are called here in this holy place. It is obvious that, as everyone else, we all desired to come to the presence of His apostle, but the amazing thing was that His apostle was waiting for us and wished to see us. It is for such occasions that the Íránian poet said:

“There is nothing unusual
 when a hunter follows a deer,
 But it is quite different when our poor deer
 comes to meet its hunter.”[63;196]

It is only the work of God and the wishes of our Master that such miracles happen. After all these spiritual inspirations which his presence had inspired in us, we departed toward the Báb’s Shrine with a guide, Miss Revell.[64;196]

We walked through beautiful gardens and nicely decorated avenues until we arrived near the Shrine. It was a sweet dream for us. We were in doubt whether it was our own persons here before the Holy Shrine. How beautiful are the flowers and what an enchanting view we are facing now. The whole earth was attractive with a sort of beauty and fascination

that we had not seen or touched before. A spiritual breeze is blowing on us. Here is the promised paradise of human beings, appeared to us in the form of these enchanting gardens. This garden with its beautiful flowers in it is the sacred residence of our beloved Guardian and a single flower—or everything in it—is a symbol of him and brings him into our memories. Above all these is the golden dome of the [Shrine of the] Báb, which according to our beloved Guardian is “the white dress of mankind’s bride decorated with a golden crown.” [65;197]

We are now before the Shrine and the doors were opened for us. Suddenly all the lamps were lighted and the whole sacred place turned into a piece of bright jewel. We all fell into worship and prayed for the prosperity of mankind, our Japanese friends, and for our close relations. A spiritual enchanting breeze is blowing upon us as our heads are bowed on the threshold of this holy place. We feel as if the spirits of all God’s prophets are now pilgriming in this holy place.

In our hearts, addressing His Holiness the Báb,

we repeated the words: "Our dear Báb! Our souls be sacrificed to Thy sacred blood and to Thy oppressed body. Thou [wast im]prisoned in Chihríq and Mákú while Thou had none beside You. There was not even a servant to light a lamp for Thou, and finally Thou wert martyred in Ádharbáyján. But since Thou gave light to the world and promised Your eternal and future kingdom unto mankind, thousands [of] lamps are now lighted in Your holy place lighting our hearts."

Although our beloved Guardian was not with us in this pilgrimage [i.e., visitation] yet his first meeting had such a spiritual effect on us, which is as if he is always with us and we now feel his presence.

**The light in the middle of the continent
and the middle of the ocean**

In the afternoon of 27th December our beloved Guardian came toward the gardens of the Pilgrim House and called us into his presence.[66;197] We now had the privilege of walking with him. [He said to us] "The Faith of God will make great progress in

Japan as Bahá'u'lláh has promised us. He said, 'If you cover the light in the middle of the earth it will come out from the middle of oceans and seas and it will speak unto you saying, "Behold, I am the light and the savior of the world!"'

Our beloved Guardian then explained what this meant: "By the middle of the earth," he said, "Bahá'u'lláh meant Írán, which is in the middle of Asia; by the middle of oceans and the seas He meant Japan, which is an island among the ocean and seas." He then added that if they would try to hide the Faith of God in Persia it will appear and come out from Japan saying, "I am the true light and the savior of mankind!"

"Still," said our beloved Guardian, "they have not been successful in eliminating the Faith of God in Írán, and the same situation will continue for some time." [67;197]

Hiroshima

"The friends in Hiroshima are presenting to your holiness their humble and sincere devotions," I said to our beloved Guardian. Our beloved Guardian

replied, "The people of Hiroshima have suffered greatly during the recent war and they are therefore prepared to accept the Faith easily. This is a new center which was opened to the Faith of God after Mr. Khádim's visit to the Far East."

I then spoke to our beloved Guardian of [the new center], which was established by the Japanese inhabitants of the city. "Of course," said our beloved Guardian, "such centers must be formed through the efforts and determination of the Japanese people, as in the case of Africa, where the friends are so active and enthusiastic in their work that they extended their activities and pioneered to other countries." [68;198]

Japan and Africa

"Japan," he then told us, "will become a second Africa one day." Our Faith was introduced in this country fifty years ago, but now it is the moment of obtaining positive results from our activities. [69;198]

Establishment of a National Spiritual Assembly

"The National Spiritual Assembly of Japan," said our beloved Guardian, "must be formed next year. This year it is the turn of Africa. We will have three National Spiritual Assemblies in Africa this year: one in the heart of Africa, the second in the west, and the third in the south." Turning [back] to the question of Japan, our beloved Guardian added, "The surrounding islands will be ordered to send delegates to Japan to participate in selecting [i.e., electing] the members of the National Spiritual Assembly." [70;198]

"Then this Assembly can be called the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan and the Far East Islands," I said.

But our beloved Guardian corrected my statement by saying, "Not all the islands, as there are too many of them in the Far East, but only Japan and the surrounding islands." [71;199]

A new believer in Kobe

I then informed our beloved Guardian that in [the city of] Kobe a prominent educated personality—

a newspaperman in career—has been recently converted into our Faith and has registered his name just before our departure for the Holy Land.

“This is very important,” said our beloved Guardian, after blessing the new believer (Mr. [Rihei] Sako). “Editors, authors, and educated people are important provided that when converted to our Faith they leave aside all their political activities and never interfere with such affairs again. Politicians and political affairs must never be an attraction to the friends, but on the contrary their activities must be of such nature as to convince these politicians of God’s great work, the importance of their [the friends’] Motto, and the nothingness of their [the politicians’] worldly ambitions and activities before His wishes.” [72;199]

National Spiritual Assemblies in the Pacific region

“The National Spiritual Assembly of Japan,” said our beloved Guardian, “is the foundation of the North Pacific for our Administrative Order, and the National Spiritual Assembly of New Zealand the foundation of the South Pacific. Between these two,”

he added, "we will have two National Spiritual Assemblies: one in Fugi [sic; meaning Fiji], [to] the east of Australia; and the second in Indonesia, east of Asia [i.e., South East Asia]. Therefore we will have four National Spiritual Assemblies as follows:

- one for Japan and the surrounding islands, to be formed in Japan;
- one in [the] south to be formed in New Zealand;
- the third will be formed [to] the east of Australia at the Fugi Island [Fiji];
- the fourth one is to be formed in the islands of Indonesia.

And finally, there is the fifth N.S.A., in Australia."

Then he turned to the Íránian pilgrims and said, "These five National Spiritual Assemblies will form the foundations of our organization in the Pacific Ocean." [73;199]

**A Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Tokyo,
and incorporation of the Tokyo Spiritual Assembly**

[Continuing to address the Persian pilgrims] our

beloved Guardian said, "A Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds is now established in Tokyo through Mr. Mumtází's efforts and devotions, and the Local Spiritual Assembly of this city is already registered [i.e., incorporated]. The Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds has been purchased and the Local Spiritual Assembly is registered in Tokyo. Both of these works," again confirmed our beloved Guardian, "have been carried out and are completed now. And these have come to us through the efforts and devotions of Mr. Mumtází, who is the distinguished servant of the Faith of God."

"These all," I replied, "had been accomplished through thy blessings and guidance, and through the spiritual inspirations that thou had extended to your humble servant."

"You have come a long way, almost half of the globe," said our beloved Guardian, and he then blessed me. [74;200]

Bahá'í endowments in Japan

"Thanks be to God," said our beloved Guardian, "that we now have two Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds in Japan, and

our endowments, too, must be included to them." [75;201]

"By the blessings of God," I said, "the land for an endowment is already prepared."

"I know it," replied our beloved Guardian, "and thanks be to God that the privilege of contributing land for this purpose has been yours, too. These are important matters," said our beloved Guardian, "and they will be recorded in history—both the contributed land and the names of the contributors." [76;201]

Our beloved Guardian knows everything

"Now the Bahá'ís of Japan," said our beloved Guardian, "must think of electing their National Spiritual Assembly. Hitherto they elected the Local Spiritual Assembly; now they must make preparations for their National Spiritual Assembly."

"We have two Local Spiritual Assemblies in Japan," [continued] our beloved Guardian, "one in Tokyo and the other in . . ." He waited a few moments to name the second place, while I said, ". . . Hyogo ken." I then explained to our beloved

Guardian that in Japan the collection of several cities in one place is called "ken". I wanted to give further explanation to our beloved Guardian about the type of organizations in Japan, and starting with "ken" I was going to explain the rest but before being able to continue our beloved Guardian said, "After 'ken' comes 'fu'; after 'fu' is 'to'; and Tokyo is 'to'—is it not so?"

I bowed, and it was at this moment I realized that our beloved Guardian knows everything.[77;201]

Obedience to the Administrative Order

I said to our beloved Guardian: "Previously and when our beloved Guardian had informed us that in 1957 [the election of] the Japanese National Spiritual Assembly will take place we were all amazed and wondering how this is to happen. We had no Local Spiritual Assemblies in Japan, the believers of the Cause of God were so few, and many requirements were to be met. But now that through God's grace and our beloved Guardian's blessings and assistance this is going to take place we are all certain that this has become a possibility from a

dream through the blessings of God and under the spiritual guidance and the blessings of our beloved Guardian. It is obvious that the Cause of God has worked its way in this matter."

Our beloved Guardian then turned his face toward me and said, "Do you know why and how all this has come into reality? It is because of the obedience to the Administrative Order that all this have been performed," he then replied to his own question.

By the Administrative Order our beloved Guardian meant that one must be faithful to the Covenant, as it is the wish and desire of our Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Unity of the Bahá'ís of Japan

"Are all the Bahá'ís of Japan united and faithful to the Cause of God?" our beloved Guardian asked me then.

[I replied] "Although they are of different nationalities and races, such as Iránians, Americans, and Japanese, and the unity of these diverse types and races is difficult, thanks be to God that all of them are united and faithful in our

Great Motto and the Cause of God."

Our beloved Guardian was delighted at hearing this and we could see happiness and delight in his face and in his whole appearance.

Obedience to the N.S.A. of the United States

"The Japanese organizations are under the supervision of the U.S.A. organizations and I have entrusted Japan to the U.S.A., as I have entrusted Turkey to Írán. The National Spiritual Assembly of Japan must be organized by the U.S.A.'s organizations," confirmed our beloved Guardian.

Then our beloved Guardian asked if the Bahá'ís of Japan are obeying the Bahá'ís of the U.S.A. "Yes," I replied. Our beloved Guardian confirmed again that the U.S.A. organizations are supervising and taking care of the Japanese organizations and that this is the New World's Order.

"The L.S.A. of Tokyo must be an intermediate between the U.S.A. National Spiritual Assembly and the Bahá'ís of Japan. It must take the required information from the U.S.A. and give it to the Bahá'ís of Japan. As now it is the beginning of

Japan's organizations, all the measures and steps which we take with regard to forming these organizations must be profound," said our beloved Guardian. "The progress of the Cause of God depends on having plans and means," he added. "Plans are very important in performing this great work." [78;201]

Progress of the Cause in Japan

"Thanks be to God," said our beloved Guardian, "that the Cause of God has made a great progress in Japan." Then he turned to the Íránian pilgrims and added, "Mr. Mumtází is the distinguished servant of the Cause of God."

Turning to me he said, "You must assure the Japanese people that their country will turn into a second Africa one day. The fire started from the U.S.A. but its flames are now appearing in Japan. Like Írán, many Bahá'í centers will be formed in Japan. When the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan is formed, the Faith of God will make great progress there."

Election of the National Spiritual Assembly

[Speaking of the formation of the N.S.A. the Guardian said] "There will be a Convention for electing the members of the National Spiritual Assembly."

"Are the members of [i.e., delegates to] the Convention to be elected by the Local Spiritual Assemblies or by the believers of Japan?" I asked.

"The members of the National Spiritual Assembly," said our beloved Guardian, "will be elected by the members of the Convention, and the members of the Convention will be elected by Bahá'ís in the centers which have already formed their Local Spiritual Assemblies."

"Are the members of the Convention to be elected by the centers which have Local Spiritual Assemblies, or other centers, with no Local Spiritual Assemblies, can also participate in electing these members?" I asked.

"Only the centers which have formed their Local Spiritual Assemblies must take part in electing the members of the Convention," replied our beloved Guardian. "This decision has been taken for the

purpose of encouraging all our centers to form their Local Spiritual Assemblies as soon as possible." [79;202]

"How many Local Spiritual Assemblies must we have in Japan to form the National Spiritual Assembly?" I asked.

"The more you have the better," replied our beloved Guardian.

"It is the order," I said, "that only the Local Spiritual Assemblies which were formed in 1956 are entitled to elect delegates for [the Convention to elect] the National Spiritual Assembl[y] [in 1957]. In this case what are the duties of the Local Spiritual Assemblies of [i.e., formed in] 1957?"

"These L.S.A.[s]," replied our beloved Guardian, "must wait for a year and then they will elect the delegates of [the Convention to elect] the National Spiritual Assembly of 1958. The same applies in the U.S.A."

"We have very little time for setting up the National Spiritual Assembly of 1957 and therefore we are in great need for thou blessings and assistance," I said.

"The time is short," said our beloved Guardian, "but the blessings and assistance of God will come in time."

Incorporation of the National Spiritual Assembly

"First of all," said our beloved Guardian, "[you] must form the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan, and then comes the question of registering [i.e., incorporating] it in Japan, and finally comes the question of registering the same in the Holy Land."

"The government of Japan has already registered our Assembly," I replied at this moment.

"That is the Local Spiritual Assembly which is registered," said our beloved Guardian. "When the National Spiritual Assembly is formed you must try to register it too."

"This will become a problem for us," I said, "as the government of Japan, according to their laws and regulations, must have one person responsible for this Assembly and not a committee."

Our beloved Guardian replied that the Assembly must be registered in the name of a committee and

not a person. He then added that first of all we must investigate about this matter, secondly we must consult and ask the advice of specialists, and finally to work hard for the solution of this problem. "When you do all these," he said, "you will certainly succeed." [80;202]

The "Bahá'í News" of Japan

"Are you receiving the Bahá'í news [i.e., worldwide news of the Faith] in Japan regularly and in time?" asked our beloved Guardian.

"Yes, our beloved Guardian," I replied.

"Through which channels?" he again asked.

"Through the U.S.A. regularly, and sometimes from Írán," I replied. Our beloved Guardian then gave instructions so that we may translate the main parts of our news and circulate them.

"We have a bulletin," I said, "which is called the 'Bahá'í News', and this is printed in the Japanese language in Tokyo."

"Although this is published in the Japanese language," said our beloved Guardian, "you should send a copy of it regularly to the Holy Land."

"Praise be to thy knowledge and wisdom," I said to myself [addressing the Guardian], "thou surely knowest Japanese too."

Translation of Bahá'í literature

Our beloved Guardian then pointed out that the Bahá'í literature has been translated into most languages while up to now very little of it has been translated into the Japanese language.

"The translation of this literature," I replied, "is very difficult, but still our translators are working on it with keen interest."

"You must be very careful," said our beloved Guardian, "so that these translations are accurate and correct. These translations must be very accurate and precise, expressing all the expressions and the beauties of our literature. They must be translated in such a way as to leave the real meaning—the spirit of the original text—untouched [i.e., unchanged]." He then asked us to send a copy of everything we translate there to the Holy Land. "I will keep these works," said our beloved Guardian, "since I have books from 180 languages in

the International Archive of the Holy Land."

Yokohama and Kyoto

"Yokohama and Kyoto," said our beloved Guardian, "are two important cities in Japan and you must pay them special attention."

Youth and women

"The Japanese youth and women must be encouraged to be brave in serving the Cause of God," said our beloved Guardian while he was turning his face to me. "Have you many young people in Tokyo?"

Our beloved Guardian was told that we have not many young people in Tokyo.

"Special and private committees must be organized for young people and women," added then our beloved Guardian. "The privilege of our Faith is that women will progress and improve far above men in the East."

"How are the Bahá'í women of Japan?" he then asked me.

"All of them are active and faithful to the Cause of God," I replied, "especially the young

girls who are newly converted. They take an active part in our organizations and have become members of the Local Spiritual Assembly."

"You must encourage them very much," said then our beloved Guardian.

I pointed out that the Japanese women are mostly educated. "I know it," said our beloved Guardian.

"They are very polite, hard-working, and patient when being oppressed," I then added.

"Still they are Oriental," said our beloved Guardian, "and more or less under the influence of man, but [the Bahá'ís] must encourage them, make them brave, and change their conditions." [81;202] Again our beloved Guardian added that the Bahá'í young people and women must be very clean and virtuous, especially in Írán.

Our beloved Guardian then pointed out that the moral of society is very low in U.S.A. "Is it the same in Japan?" he asked.

"Yes, it is the same in Japan," I replied.

People have released themselves from fanaticism in the twentieth century, but on the other hand they have turned to materialism and become materialistic.

They escaped one disaster, but are now involved in another one.[82;202]

**A symbol of the Japanese Bahá'ís' love
in the Mansion of Bahjí**

We then presented a symbol of the Japanese Bahá'ís' love to our beloved Guardian: an embroidered piece of cloth of Fuji mountain, at the bottom of which the following words were embroidered: "This piece is a symbol of our most exalted love to thou, Oh our beloved Guardian."

We thought of the extraordinary work and the many occupations and important matters which our beloved Guardian has and the correspondence which he must carry out with 242 countries [sic; see the next section], and were of the opinion that he will come to our present after a period of at least one or two months. But a wonderful thing happened the next day when we were visiting the Mansion of Bahjí: the servant of the Mansion told us the good news that our present was accepted and that our beloved Guardian had ordered him to hang it in a visible place in his own private room in the Mansion,

together with a picture of Nikko's Conference, which was to be hanged somewhere in his sitting place.

[83;202]

All I was wishing now was that all our Bahá'í friends of Japan could be here to see us present in this holy place. I started crying and was going almost to faint when I heard the servant of the Mansion speaking to us, saying that we have all received the special blessings of our beloved Guardian and that despite all the occupations and the troubles that our beloved Guardian has to bear for mankind he has noticed us so early and has given us his special blessings.

Progress of the Cause throughout the world

In our second visit on the 27th of December our beloved Guardian spoke of the progress of the Cause of God all over the world, saying, "The Faith of God has made a great progress in the world: 160

Assemblies, some of which are National Spiritual Assemblies and others Local Spiritual Assemblies, are registered, and you will see their respective documents in the Bahjí Mansion. Our literature is

translated into 190 languages. Our centers have reached the figure of 3,700 throughout the world, of which 1,500 are in the U.S.A.; then comes Írán, which has between 700 to 800 centers—but the friends in this country must try to bring the figure to 1,000. Also, we have now more than 400 centers in Africa, 100 in Canada, and another 100 in England. [84;202]

“Now the number of countries where the Faith of God has reached is 242. In the Ten-Year Crusade it was originally planned that another 131 countries should be opened to the Faith of God, while, to our delight, up to now and before three years, 111 of them are already opened.” Then said our beloved Guardian, “You must communicate these glad-tidings to the friends in Japan.” [85;202]

“Two countries which are newly opened to the Faith of God and which were not mentioned in our Ten-Year Plan are Trinidad and Saigon. Another country not originally named in the Plan is Tibet, which is beyond the Iron Curtain and the center of Buddhism,” said our beloved Guardian.

Pioneers in the northernmost parts of the American continent

"Our pioneers have reached to the 73rd latitude above the equator," said our beloved Guardian. "This is the north[ernmost point in the] Bahá'í world. The highest inhabited point above the equator is 68 [degrees], but the friends have reached to 73. In Europe they have reached to the 70th latitude.

Our beloved Guardian added, "Bahá'u'lláh, in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, has spoken to us about these islands. In that Book He has ordered us to pray the Obligatory Prayer in regular intervals in the places and cities where they have long nights and long days. This saying is for such islands, since in the middle of winter there is no sun in them, and in the middle of summer the sun never disappears." [86;203]

Races introduced to the Faith

"The various races converted [i.e., introduced] to the Faith are above 40 now. The white race comes first and has the majority but later the Negro race will take over this majority, as the number of believers of the black race has exceeded the figure

of 2,300 within a period of less than three years. After the black comes the red race, or the natives of America, of whom only a few have been converted up to now." [87;203]

Islands opened to the Faith

"The converted [i.e., opened] islands are over 95, of which 30 were converted before the Ten-Year Crusade. Another 65 islands [have been] converted during the period of the Crusade. During 100 years only 30 islands were converted to the Cause, while 65 islands are converted and opened to the Faith during three years." A sort of spiritual happiness appeared in our beloved Guardian's face when communicating these good news to us. Our delight was beyond description and we wanted all our Bahá'í friends from all over the world to hear his words and to share our delight and happiness.

"There is so much good news arriving from all over the world," said our beloved Guardian, "that I have not time to write it. I am therefore communicating it to the pilgrims who are visiting the Holy Land so that in their turn they may

communicate the same to the friends all over the world."

Purchases of National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds around the world

"In the Ten-Year Crusade we had planned to purchase 50 National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, while up to this moment—thanks be to God—32 National Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds are purchased and during less than three years, including the Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds of Tokyo." [88;203]

The Bahá'í New Order

Then our beloved Guardian said, "The Báb in His Holy Book has spoken to us about the Bahá'í New Order. In His prison at Mákú—at the time of distress and depression—He said: 'Happy be those who can see the New Order of Bahá'u'lláh.' Bahá'u'lláh, in His turn, has spoken to us about this New Order and said, 'The order of the old world has been abolished and replaced by this New Order.' Bahá'u'lláh has spoken of two orders: the first is the old order, which will be abolished; the second is the New Order, which will replace this abolished

order." [89;203]

[The Guardian continued:] "In His Will and Testament 'Abdu'l-Bahá has spoken to us about how this New Order is to be performed. It is through organizing Local Spiritual Assemblies and National Spiritual Assemblies and the International House of Justice that the New Order will be put into work all over the world. The foundation of this New Order, which is the establishment of Local Spiritual Assemblies, is already performed; the pillar[s] of the construction, namely the National Spiritual Assemblies, are ready. And therefore only the roof, which is the International House of Justice, is left to be constructed. The members of the International House of Justice must be elected by the National Spiritual Assemblies." [90;204]

"Now it is the beginning of this New Order," our beloved Guardian then added. "The Báb has spoken to us about this in advance, Bahá'u'lláh has ruled this New Order, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá has explained to us how this will be performed, in His Will and Testament. Now it is the time to perform it. This is the great happy tidings."

Purchase of land for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár

Our beloved Guardian said, "100,000 meters [sic] of land has been purchased at the top of Mount Carmel and a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be built there soon. In the Ten-Year Crusade we were supposed to purchase eleven pieces of land in eleven countries for this purpose, while up to this time ten pieces of land are purchased and only one is left." [91;204]

Two Plans for the progress of the Cause

"We have two Plans to improve the Faith of God in the world," said our beloved Guardian. "One of these Plans is our Ten-Year Crusade, which is to be performed by National Spiritual Assemblies and Local Spiritual Assemblies and by our committees and the friends all over the world. This, however, is our minor project. The second Plan, which is our major Plan, is the Plan of our Lord—the unseen hand of God—which at His order works out through the recent revolutions all over the world." [92;204]

Walking with our beloved Guardian

Up to now we had always been presented to our

beloved Guardian while he was walking in the garden. He was speaking to us while making these walks and we knew in our hearts that all the kings of the world were envying us, as we were at the presence of our spiritual king and had his blessings.

**Visitation of the Shrine of the Báb
in the presence of our beloved Guardian**

While speaking with us our beloved Guardian was proceeding toward the Holy Shrine of the Báb and we were following him. At intervals he would worship the place and when entering the Shrine he worshipped and kissed the threshold. Following him we kissed the places which he had kissed and by this, as the Íránian poet says, we were performing two performances by a single act, both of which had given us a great delight and happiness.

I wish all the friends from all over the world could be here to hear our beloved Guardian's voice while he was reading [i.e., chanting] with his own sacred voice the Tablet of Visitation. We fell into a sort of unconsciousness and we were almost going to faint when his heavenly melody was heard. Our

souls were flying in the skies and his holy voice had taken us into heaven and in the dwelling place of the angels. We are sure that whatever we had asked from our Lord, God, then and there it will be granted unto us, since we had all these blessings and were received with kindness, affection, and mercy by our beloved Guardian.

His affection

While entering his car the corner of our beloved Guardian's eyes would turn unto us and it was then and there and by observing such affection from him that our souls and bodies would not have the capacity to swallow all this affection and his words. Then the door of his car would open and he would leave us: at those moments we would fall into a state of unconsciousness—a state which is spiritual and cannot be explained by words. This state was the effect of his holy words and his spiritual power on us. Here with our own eyes we were observing the riding of the king of kings. He would lift up his hands and would look with affection to his devoted servants through the corner

of his eyes. We wanted to have a hundred lives at those moments and sacrifice them all for him and before him.

He knows all that is in our hearts

One day when I was at our beloved Guardian's presence I thought of telling him about my visit to the Holy Land and our Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which took place 35 years ago, in 1920. "You have been here and visited our Master 35 years ago," said our beloved Guardian, before I could say a word.

**The beauty of Mount Carmel,
and the buildings to be constructed there**

During the period of our stay in the Holy Land, one day our beloved Guardian turned toward the Shrine of the Báb and said, "This is a beautiful, dignified, and outstanding Shrine. It is all light, there are steps of light in this mountain, and in the future it will be turned into a mountain of lights." While speaking these words to us his chair was placed in a high place and we were ordered to sit in his presence. Here was the master of the

world, shining like the sun and speaking to us, telling us of the past and the future of the world. The future of the world, the events which will take place for the Cause of God, were spoken to us in such a dignified way and with such a spiritual power and authority that it was as if we could almost see them with our own eyes.

“We will have two centers in this mountain,” said our beloved Guardian. “One is the spiritual center and the second our center for the Administrative Order. The spiritual center is the Shrine of the Báb, but we will construct here the following buildings for maintaining and organizing the Administrative Order:

- a building for the International Archives, whose construction has already started;
- a building for the International House of Justice, where the unwritten orders of our Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, will be composed and ruled for the people of the world;
- a building for the Guardians of the Cause of God, where they will explain the written but unknown orders of the Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas;

– also a building is to be allocated to science-industry [i.e., technology or applied science?] and scientific researches;
 – and finally, there will be constructed a building for teaching the Cause of God; the Hands of the Cause will meet in this building.”

“Is the building for teaching the Cause a spiritual building or an administrative one?” I asked.

“It is an administrative building,” replied our beloved Guardian.

“Is the Shrine of the Báb our spiritual center only?” I asked then.

“Only the Shrine of the Báb in Mount Carmel and the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh in ‘Akká are spiritual centers,” confirmed our beloved Guardian.[93;204]

The extent of the Bahá’í Revelation

“The orders of our Holy Book,” said our beloved Guardian, “are only for 1,000 years, and it is possible that after 1,000 years we might have new orders and new advents, but for 500,000 years no Prophet Who could be compared with Bahá’u’lláh will

appear in the world. We will witness the coming of Prophets during this period but all of them will be under the guidance of Bahá'u'lláh." [94;205]

**Registration of branches of
National Spiritual Assemblies in the Holy Land**

"Now we have ten National Spiritual Assemblies in the world but in the Ten-Year Crusade we have planned to have another 50, and this will bring the total figure to 60," said our beloved Guardian. "In the future all the [Bahá'í] properties and lands of the Holy Land will be registered in the name of these 60 National Spiritual Assemblies. Through this registration we will unite the National Spiritual Assemblies of the world together. The National Spiritual Assembly of Japan is one of these centers and we will register a piece of land here in its name. We have already registered [a branch of the] U.S.A.'s N.S.A. here. Later the Assemblies of England, Canada, India, Australia, and finally Írán were registered here."

Pilgrimage to the holy city of 'Akká

At the order of our beloved Guardian, we left for the holy city of 'Akká together with a group of Bahá'í pilgrims from the U.S.A. and Írán. On entering the city the first thing we did was to visit the great prison of Bahá'u'lláh—"Qishliḥ". We were walking in the same dark, narrow streets where our beloved, oppressed Apostle, Bahá'u'lláh, had walked guarded by the soldiers of the 'Uthmán Empire. The thick walls of that historic prison could be seen now from the distant. We are now closer and have entered it through the front door. [95;205]

While we were entering His prison old memories came back into our minds; we remembered the period when people were forbidden to approach and enter the place. We could see shadows of those soldiers accompanying Bahá'u'lláh and forbidding people to approach Him, and then we could see among them Jarráh Effendí, who became converted and who prayed that he be given the privilege of serving the Cause of God. Now his grandchildren are blessed and honored by being privileged to serve the Cause of

God as gardeners of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh.

[96;205]

We entered the prison with a confused and disordered mind. The humble and sad atmosphere of this prison are signs and symbols of the oppression which Bahá'u'lláh had endured. After going up through narrow and irregular steps, we entered the special room where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned. This dark and small room is still covered with a rough mat, as a souvenir to those days.

The 'Uthmán Empire was in vain using this prison with thick walls as a means to prevent the world from being informed of His appearance and advent. No one knows whether there was ever a lamp in this prison where our Beloved One was [im]prisoned for years, but every observer is sure of one thing, and that is, the sun has never touched His prison.

[97;205]

But it was in this dark room that Bahá'u'lláh made preparations for the salvation of the world, and He established here and in this dark and sad room the foundations of an international and world peace. We sat there for some minutes and, reminded

of the oppressions which He had endured, said a prayer. We worshipped the place and kissed the ground, and then we left the prison and went to the House of 'Abbúd.

The House of 'Abbúd

Although Bahá'u'lláh was a little comfortable here with his family, but still the House of 'Abbúd was humble, small, and unsuitable for Him. Our Beloved One lived here with His Family for seven years. We saw His bed, hat, and several other items of His household belongings and furniture there. We then went to the room where the Holy Book—the Kitáb-i-Aqdas—had descended. It was in this room that the foundation of the New Order of the world was established and the old order was destroyed and abolished. After worshipping the place and kissing its holy threshold we left the House.

The Garden of Riḍván

"I have not seen green grass for over nine years," said Bahá'u'lláh. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá heard this He went and prepared the Garden of Riḍván,

where Bahá'u'lláh was walking in it sometimes. Now we had the privilege to walk in this Garden. We sat [by] the brook where Bahá'u'lláh used to sit in those times, and we were feeling a sort of delight at this simple and yet noticeable privilege. A chair and a bed were left there from Bahá'u'lláh's personal belongings. We kissed them. There was also a written tablet from Bahá'u'lláh there. We read it and, while reading it, it was as if Bahá'u'lláh was present there and was watching us. After visiting this Garden we left it to go to the Garden of Firdaws.[98;206]

The Garden of Firdaws

The Garden of Firdaws has a pool where Bahá'u'lláh would sit in front of it sometimes. We visited this Garden, too, and enjoyed its beauties.

The Mansion of Mazra'ih

We then entered the Mazra'ih Mansion and visited some of the personal belongings of Bahá'u'lláh. It was after this visit that we realized that He was not very comfortable here, [where] He dwelt after

His release from prison. We saw beautiful sights in this Mansion.

The Mansion of Bahjí

This Mansion is a symbol of His Kingdom. Now there are beautiful gardens and wide avenues with the shadow of big trees, all of which have come into existence through the special attention which our beloved Guardian is paying to the residence of His Holiness. The beautiful flowers and the extraordinary handsome statues took our breath away from us. The wide avenues shadowed with its big trees are something a visitor can never forget. The Mansion is lighted with strong projectors in the evenings. We visited it in the evening when all its gardens were full of light.

We then visited the rooms of the Mansion one by one. In the hall were the certificates of the registration which the governments of the world had issued in recognition to the Faith. There was a written document from every country, and pictures of Bahá'u'lláh's Family were decorating the hall.

We visited all the rooms until we entered the

private room of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the same room where the British professor and historian Browne was presented to Bahá'u'lláh—and who said, when visiting His Holiness, "I could obviously see that kings of countries were envying me as I was visiting the King of kings, and One Whose Kingdom is eternal." [99;206] The bed of Bahá'u'lláh was still in this room and His slippers were laid down near it. All the rooms were lighted with electricity except this room, which had still a petrol lamp in it as a matter of tradition and remembrance of those old historic days. We were all confused and our minds could not work any longer. Are we—the humble servants of our Master—here present in this historical place?

Visitation of the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh

Intending to enter the Shrine we first made a tour around it humbly until we came to a street which was leading us to the door of the Shrine. From far away we could see the Sign set on the top of the entrance. "My God! What an extreme happiness Thou hast given to us" we said while crossing these streets. Beautiful statues and big bowls of flowers

are located on both sides of the streets. They are wide and beautiful and it appeared to us that somehow our beloved Guardian had provided them for the future kings who will come to pay homage and pilgrimage to this Holy Shrine and who will walk through these streets.[100;206]

We were approaching toward the Shrine humbly. All the way we were praying humbly until we reached the door of the Shrine. We took off our shoes and the door was opened unto us. All the Shrine was lighted and full of flowers, and the whole place was smelling with a sort of fine spiritual scent which I am unable to explain it in words. This scent and the holy atmosphere of the Shrine took our souls to heaven right in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. Automatically our heads bowed and we kissed this sacred place, which had been kissed so many times by our beloved 'Abdu'l-Bahá and our beloved Guardian.

We were wandering in heaven—soul and body—now. I wish all our Bahá'í friends could be here to see what a privilege we have had at this moment. We prayed for all the people of the world, asking God to grant them the same privilege and blessings.

Night's stay in the Mansion of Bahjí

Every pilgrim was allowed through the kindness of our beloved Guardian to sleep one night in the Bahjí Mansion. But here a special blessing came to us from our beloved Guardian. It was Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím who gave us this good news, that our beloved Guardian has given orders that I might be allowed to spend the evening alone in the reception room of Bahá'u'lláh. My wife, too, was allowed to spend the evening at the special room which our beloved Guardian had in the Mansion. This good piece of news had a great and surprising effect on me and my wife and we were almost going to faint from the extreme pleasure which this good piece of news had brought to us. We were both crying like children when we had to leave our companion pilgrims to go to our rooms.

I can find no words to explain the blessings and privilege which we have had in those two rooms. It was something beyond explanation and a whole book will not suffice to express and explain those merciful and kind blessings and the privilege which had come to us during that night. We could see all the Prophets of God in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh.

It was for such occasions that the Íránian poet said:

“Like Moses all the Prophets of God are here
standing before Thee,

And all of them are impatient to see Thee.

I am also among them, among Thy lovers,

But if Thou would refuse to show Thyself to me,

I won't leave Thee;

I will stay and stay until I see Thee.”[101;206]

We were praying and worshipping God all that night, and this was the only night which will be remembered throughout all our lives. From the special blessings extended to us during that night we hope that we may all succeed in our pioneering service all over the world.

Effect of the 'Akká visit

“Have you visited all the places?” asked our beloved Guardian, after returning to him. “Have you enjoyed this visit?” he repeated. “Have you kissed all the holy thresholds?”

“Yes,” I replied, “but in all these holy places we first saw thee, and then we kissed these holy

places."

"All your thoughts must be toward the Shrine only," replied our beloved Guardian at this. "Have you prayed for all your Japanese friends?" he then asked us.

"Yes, our beloved Guardian," I replied.

"Were you very glad at seeing all these holy places?" he then asked.

"We do not deserve all [this] kindness and affection. We have not done anything to deserve all thy blessings," I replied.

"This is the reward of your sincere and faithful service in the Far East, in Tokyo and in other Japanese cities, and also the reward of your service in other countries," replied our beloved Guardian. I was standing humbly before him and felt a sort of shyness at hearing all this from our beloved Guardian.

"Your services are very important," said our beloved Guardian, "since the organizations [i.e., Bahá'í institutions] of Japan must help us in the matter of establishing the International House of Justice."

Our farewell

The time of farewell had come. The period of our stay in the dreamed paradise had come to an end. Our beloved Guardian called us alone to his presence to bid us farewell. On entering the room I threw myself at his feet, embraced them, and started kissing his feet.

"God forbid it," was saying our beloved Guardian. "Do stand to bid farewell to me." His behavior was similar to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's treatment of the pilgrims.[102;206]

When I stood up I saw my wife, too, had entered the room. And since she intended to throw herself unto his feet, our beloved Guardian opened his hands and kept them before her so that she might not be able to throw herself at his feet. But my wife, who was on her knees now, was crying and asking him to be allowed to kiss his feet. The more he was preventing her, the more she would cry and beg him. I was witnessing an astonishing sight. It was the scene of an ant asking to throw itself at Solomon's feet. Our beloved Guardian was saying, "This is prohibited," but my wife was saying, "My life be

sacrificed for thee—allow me to kiss thy feet, to throw myself under thy feet only once.” The argument was going on for several minutes and at the end my wife’s devotions and her sincere prayers touched his ocean of mercy and he removed his hands, and my wife threw herself on his feet.

After kissing his feet my wife and I were ordered to sit and, while we were both crying from joy and happiness, our beloved Guardian said, “Thanks be to God that you have succeeded and have come and visited the Holy Land and enjoyed the spiritual breeze of the Shrine[s]. I was very eager to see you. I had always blessed your sincere service, and praise be to God that you have succeeded and are both the organizer of the Faith of God and its teacher in Japan. Be sure of the future and give confidence to everyone that the future of Japan is bright.”

“We have nothing, we are weak and need thy guidance and blessings,” we said while we were both weeping.

“Be sure that the blessings of Bahá’u’lláh are with you,” said our beloved Guardian. “Now it is the

beginning of the organization of Japan, and you have succeeded in such a difficult time. Japan will make great progress, especially now that the National Spiritual Assembly is to be formed there. This Assembly is one of the foundations of the International House of Justice. The Faith of God will be extended from Japan to all the surrounding islands and it will then be extended to Russia."

"All the population of Japan—90 million people—are anxious and in need of thy blessings and guidance," I said to our beloved Guardian.

"Give assurance to all of them," said our beloved Guardian, "that I will pray for you and for the population of Japan, especially when I go to the Shrine of the Báb."

"The pioneering of the believers to Japan is very important," then added our beloved Guardian. "On your way to Japan—in Írán, India—encourage the friends to pioneer to Japan, and especially you must encourage the friends in Írán and give them the good news of the Holy Land. Give my love and blessings to our old and new Japanese friends, and especially to Miss [Agnes] Alexander and Mr. Robert

Imagire." [103;206]

Then our beloved Guardian stood up with the purpose to leave us. He came near and kissed me and while leaving us his voice was repeatedly heard to assure us of his blessings, until he disappeared. We did not hear his holy voice, neither saw his holy face again. But his bright and holy face was engraved in our hearts, and we hope to keep this spiritual blessing and wealth throughout all our lives.

AFTERWORD

A tapestry from the resting place of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Shrine of the Báb was presented by the Guardian through Núru’d-Dín Mumtází to the Spiritual Assembly of Tokyo. The Assembly permitted the precious tapestry to be displayed in the Amagasaki Ḥazíratu’l-Quds—which was the first in Japan and whose building and property had been donated by Mr. Mumtází—for some years, after which it was sent to Tokyo.

The tapestry has since been on display in the National Bahá’í Center in Tokyo together with a brocade which, according to a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, “rested immediately over the remains of Bahá’u’lláh in His glorious Shrine.” This precious brocade was a gift from the Guardian to the Bahá’ís of Japan and was presented in February 1954 in Haifa to Hiroyasu Takano, who was the only Japanese Bahá’í other than Saichiro Fujita to meet the Guardian. Mr. Takano later served as the chairman of the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan.

During the pilgrimage of Mr. and Mrs. Mumtází a letter referring to them and to Mr. Fujita, who had accompanied them from Japan to Haifa, was written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Hyogo Prefecture Spiritual Assembly, of which the Mumtázís were members. The letter can be found in *Japan Will Turn Ablaze!* (p. 99 rev. ed.) and follows:

[dated January 2, 1956]

It is indeed a great privilege for the Bahá’ís of Japan,

so remote from the Holy Land, to have two of their most devoted teachers come to Haifa on pilgrimage; and he [the Guardian] feels sure that they will carry back to the work in that important Center in the Pacific area a fresh impetus and a new inspiration.

It is also a source of great satisfaction to him that dear Fujita has returned to serve here. It brings the Japanese believers even closer to the International Center to have a representative of their nation working for the Cause at its World Center.

He assures you all that he will pray for the success, not only of the work in Hyogo-ken, but throughout Japan, and urges you and your co-workers to persevere in the face of every obstacle.

[signed by Leroy loas]

[in the Guardian's handwriting:]

May the Almighty remove all obstacles from your path, enable you to lend a great impetus to the onward march of His Faith, and contribute to the consolidation of His institutions.

Your true brother, Shoghi

NOTES

1; 19. Dr. Yúnis Khán Afrúkhtih served as secretary, translator, and physician to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

The affirmation “He is God” (Arabic *huwa alláh*) appears in several places in the Qur’án, is found very often in the Bahá’í and Bábí Writings (e.g., the “Remover of difficulties” prayer), and is the subject of theological discourses by both Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. It appears as an asseveration at the beginning of a number of tablets revealed by the Central Figures and likewise sometimes in the works of Middle Eastern writers, as here. For the special significance of this expression in the Bahá’í Revelation see Adib Taherzadeh, *The Covenant of Bahá u lláh*, pp. 160-161, or *The Revelation of Bahá u lláh*, Vol. II, pp. 286-290.

2; 20. Mr. Mumtází and his brother had different surnames. Although he writes that he was asked to help his brother in Europe, he also transacted some business of his own while there, as will be apparent later in this account.

The ‘abá was an outer robe functioning as a coat. “Ná’íní” means of the city of Ná’ín, famed for its garments and rugs. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá regularly received robes as gifts, which He graciously accepted and, aside from a few of the simpler ones, generously gave away. Dr. Yúnis Khán Afrúkhtih’s above-mentioned book contains an extended reference to such an episode.

3; 22. Going by what he says later in his account, this was not the first time Mr. Mumtází left Írán and thus, presumably, not the first time he applied for a passport.

Bandar-i-Pahlaví is known today as Bandar-i-Anzalí and is on the Caspian Sea. Bádkúbih is present-day Baku, Azerbaijan.

4; 22. Siyyid Jalál Síná, eminent teacher of the Faith, was the son of the Bahá’í poet Síná (Siyyid Isma’íl Síná Sidihí Işfahání). Probably the latter two persons mentioned were among the substantial number of Bahá’ís who moved in the late 1800s and early 1900s from Írán to the Caucasus

and Central Asia and established thriving communities there.

The “uf” in the names is the Slavic surname ending -ov. The Caucasus and Central Asia were ruled by the Soviet Union and earlier by the Russian Empire, and many residents Russianized their surnames. Although the communists who took power following the demise of the Romanov dynasty formally forswore the policy of Russification that had been implemented by Czar Alexander III, in actuality something similar proceeded apace—having been duly modified to conform with Soviet political and social theory—as Sovietization. One feature of the latter was an ideological and practical intolerance of religion. Oppression of the Bahá’ís began systematically in the late 1920s, culminating in imprisonment, expulsion, or execution, along with the expropriation of the first House of Worship, in *Ishqábád* in what is now Turkmenistan, but at the time that Mr. Mumtází was passing through those regions the Bahá’ís were as yet mainly unafflicted. On the situation of the Bahá’ís see Graham Hassall’s paper at www.bahai-library.com/hassall_babi_bahai_russia.

5; 23. Tiflís is present-day Tbilisi, Georgia. Báţúm is present-day Batumi, Georgia, on the Black Sea.

6; 25. Probably the persons mentioned were from Hamadán.

7; 25. Although the name of the city is given as “Istanbul” here, in the original Mr. Mumtází uses “Islámbul”, which was one of several names by which the city was known during the centuries of Ottoman rule.

8; 25. Mírzá Ĥusayn Tútı later lived in China and the Philippines and visited Japan.

9; 26. The cathedral of Hagia Sophia was captured at the fall of Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, to Ottoman forces in 1453; Constantine XI died defending his city.

10; 27. Messina is on the northeast tip of Sicily, across a narrow strait (of “Scylla and Charybdis” fame) from the Italian mainland. The earthquake

(and tsunami) occurred in 1908.

11; 28. The First World War had ended a year and a half earlier.

12; 29. The kuláh was a brimless Persian hat.

Loulie Albee Mathews was a pioneer in Paris for several years, during part of which time she was a volunteer caregiver to casualties of the First World War. An anecdote, found in Loulie Mathews' obituary in *The Bahá'í World* Vol. XIV plus online sources: Ms. Mathews hosted many meetings in quite luxurious circumstances at her Paris hotel suite. Many Persian Bahá'ís passed through Paris and attended those meetings, including one man simply dressed and with deeply scared wrists, who introduced himself saying he had come from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. When Ms. Mathews inquired of the injuries the man explained that he had been tortured for his Faith but that those moments had been of pure joy. This encounter precipitated an existential crisis in Loulie Mathews as to the depth of her knowledge of and commitment to the Cause of God, and she wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá saying she felt that she should return home to the U.S., that she did not know enough about the Faith or herself to teach in a place like Paris. Before she could mail the letter she received a tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá that read in part, "Do thou go home and be humble and obedient and by-and-by thou shalt become 'Abdu'l-Bahá's lion and roar across the Seven Seas." Later she traveled extensively internationally to teach the Faith, particularly in Latin America, and established a school in Pine Valley, Colorado, U.S.A. to train Bahá'í teachers for international service.

13; 32. In her book *Arches of the Years* Marzieh Gail, whose family lived in Paris at the time, gives glimpses of Shoghi Effendi's sojourn in the city, including a large gathering at the residence of Loulie Mathews at which he spoke. She records July 5 as its date—too late to be the meeting Mr. Mumtází attended. Previous to the Paris stay Shoghi Effendi served as secretary to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, assisting Him in various ways in addition to translating correspondence. In the latter half of July he moved from Paris to England, where he matriculated at the University of Oxford.

Dr. Luṭfu'lláh Ḥakím, who translated Shoghi Effendi's remarks at the

meeting Mr. Mumtází attended, served ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Haifa, accompanied Shoghi Effendi to France and England, and many years later was a member of the appointive and elective International Bahá’í Councils and then of the first Universal House of Justice.

14; 35. Ḥájí Akhúnd was an Apostle of Bahá’u’lláh and a Hand of the Cause.

15; 38. Edwin Scott was an American Bahá’í artist living in Paris.

16; 39. Yuhanna, or Johanna, Dawud (as he rendered his name) was for a time a prominent figure in the Faith in the West and translated into English ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s treatise *Risálih-i-Madaníyyih*, later translated by Marzieh Gail and published under the title *The Secret of Divine Civilization*.

17; 39. It is not clear which city is referred to.

18; 40. Trieste is on the Adriatic coast.

19; 40. Here and in a later section “Ḥijází” refers to chanting or singing of a distinctive style and tonal scale. Yáfá is present-day Jaffa, Israel.

20; 40. In the case of Muslims, of course, “Ḥájí” refers to a person who has performed the *ájj*, or pilgrimage to the holy sites in and near Mecca. Perhaps Mr. Mumtází’s elder brother (who was quite a bit older) visited Jerusalem as a Jew before accepting the Bahá’í Faith, which would explain why Mr. Mumtází entitles him “Ḥájí” (here, although not in the mention at the beginning of this account): Jews and Christians living in Muslim lands who visited the holiest sites of their religion were called “Ḥájí”.

21; 42. “Abbás Effendí” is generally how the non-Bahá’í public in Palestine referred to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

22; 43. ‘Azízu’lláh Khán Varqá was the son of famed martyr Mirzá ‘Alí-

Muḥammad Varqá, the elder brother of martyr Rúḥu'lláh and Hand of the Cause Valíyu'lláh Varqá, and the uncle of Hand of the Cause Dr. 'Alí-Muḥammad Varqá. He served on the first Spiritual Assembly of Ṭihrán.

The Pilgrim House mentioned was the Eastern, near the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. The House of the Master was and is located at what became the address 7 HaParsim Street, some minutes' walk down the mountain from the Shrine. The building that functioned at the time as the Western Pilgrim House is at 4 HaParsim St. (The later Western Pilgrim House is at 10 HaParsim St.)

23; 43. Mírzá Muḥsin Afnán was a son-in-law of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In addition to various distinctions he was the owner of the Western Pilgrim House building at 4 HaParsim St.

24; 45. Hárúnu'r-Rashíd, renowned Abbasid Caliph, features in a number of the "Arabian Nights" tales.

25; 45. "Fí amáni'lláh" is Arabic meaning "[Be] in the protection of God", and often said by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, as here, by way of dismissal.

26; 48. The Qájár dynasty ruled Írán from 1794 (or 1785 or 1796, depending on the source) to 1925.

Among many other services, Badí' Buṣhrú'í operated a school for children of the Bahá'ís residing in the Holy Land. He attended the Syrian Protestant College (later named the American University of Beirut)—as did quite a few Bahá'ís from the Middle East—organized the Society of Bahá'í Students there, and headed the Haifa chapter of the College's alumni association.

27; 50. While 'Abdu'l-Bahá is quoted in this section speaking of the burden of His correspondence, a reading of His Will and Testament makes clear that by far the greatest burden He bore during His ministry was the opposition of the Covenant-breakers and the persecution by the Ottoman government that resulted from their calumnies—matters that He takes up later in this account as well.

'Abdu'l-Bahá's plaintive tones recorded in this section are echoed in

the accounts of other pilgrims and Haifa residents of this period—the last few years of His life in this world. In the history *God Passes By* (p. 310) Shoghi Effendi quotes ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saying, fewer than six months before His ascension, “*No strength is there left in Me wherewith to arise and serve Thy loved ones . . . O Lord, My Lord! Hasten My ascension unto Thy sublime Threshold . . . and My arrival at the Door of Thy grace beneath the shadow of Thy most great mercy . . .*”

The flow of letters and tablets to and from the Holy Land amounted to the circulation of the life-force of the Faith, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was always careful to maintain this flow, whatever the burden. In one of the tablets found in *Selections from the Writings of Abdu l-Bahá* (p. 193) He writes, “*O ye two seekers after truth! Your letter was received and its contents noted . . . and I have therefore set about writing, in spite of much pressing business, so that ye will know that ye are loved amongst us, and also accepted in the Kingdom of God.*” In *God Passes By* (p. 304) Shoghi Effendi writes that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá «felt acutely the virtual stoppage of all communication with most of the Bahá’í centers throughout the world» caused by the disruptions of the First World War, and in *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (p. 15) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself states that by such communication “*my heart and soul may obtain joy and fragrance through the remembrance of the friends.*”

28; 51. The victories Mr. Mumtází was confident of seeing would be spiritual, of course. The story is from a well-known *adíth*, or Muslim tradition, attending the Battle of the Trench, which was fought defending Medina from siege. According to the tradition, sparks flew off the rock struck by Muḥammad and flashed toward the south, north, and east. These sparks, the Prophet then stated to His followers, had lit up the palaces of Yemen, Syria (then ruled by the Eastern Roman, or Byzantine, Empire), and Persia, and He saw those palaces opened to Him. In fact, those areas later fell to Muslim forces. The Arch of Kisrá (or *Khusraw*), which still stands, formed a part of the royal palace at Ctesiphon, which was the capital of the Persian Sassanid Empire and fell in 637. Dr. Yúnis *Khán Afrúkhtih* writes in his *Memories of Nine Years in Akká* that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often told the story of the besieged Muslims and the Prophet’s

promise.

See ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s elucidation of the future of the Arch of Kisrá in His *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 19-20.

29; 53. Mírzá ‘Alí Muḥammad Khán Dihqán was from a prominent Bahá’í family in Shíráz.

Herbert Samuel arrived in Jerusalem on June 30 to take his post as British High Commissioner for Palestine. He made a visit earlier, in the spring, which apparently is referred to here.

30; 55. Many scholars have offered textual analyses, including classifications, of the works of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and/or Shoghi Effendi. Classifications might include structure or form, style or mode, genre or type, voice or level, subject or topic, motif or theme, subject matter or content, stage or phase, recipient or occasion. In his *The Revelation of Bahá u lláh*, Vol. I, pp. 42-43, Adib Taherzadeh notes that Bahá’u’lláh states there are nine categories of Bahá’í holy scripture, and then gives an enumeration of these by the scholar Jináb Fáḍil Mázindarání. The great Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl Gulpáygání in his *The Bahá í Proofs*, pp. 70-72, identifies four categories: laws and ordinances, prayers and meditations, exegeses or “solutions” of the sacred scriptures of the past, and discourses and exordiums. In his *Logos and Civilization*, p. 293ff., Nader Saiedi notes passages in the Persian Bayán in which the Báb identifies four modes of revelation in Islám—verses, prayers, commentaries, and discourses—and further discusses how the Báb relates these modes to the Bayán itself, His Dispensation, and that of Bahá’u’lláh in a hermeneutical tour de force.

In *God Passes By* (pp. 205-206) Shoghi Effendi categorizes the revelations of the ‘Akká period as follows: «The first comprises those writings which constitute the sequel to the proclamation of [Bahá’u’lláh’s] Mission in Adrianople. The second includes the laws and ordinances of His Dispensation, which, for the most part, have been recorded in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, His Most Holy Book. To the third must be assigned those Tablets which partly enunciate and partly reaffirm the fundamental tenets and principles underlying that Dispensation.» Concerning the earlier, Adrianople period he writes (*ibid.*, pp. 170-176) of Bahá’u’lláh’s

proclamation of His Mission and Message in tablets in which He addresses monarchs, ecclesiastical leaders, ambassadors, philosophers, et al., together with numerous other tablets «in which the implications of His newly-asserted claims were fully expounded.» Among the outpourings of the earliest, Baghdád period—some of which Bahá'u'lláh ordered cast into the Tigris River because no one was ready to absorb them—Shoghi Effendi identifies (pp. 137-141) «epistles, exhortations, commentaries, apologies, dissertations, prophecies, prayers, odes [and] specific Tablets» together with «homilies», constituting the «doctrinal and ethical . . . [and] mystical» core of the new Revelation.

31; 56. “Marḥabá”, often said by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to the pilgrims, is a welcoming greeting and also an interjection meaning something like “Very well” or “Well done”.

32; 58. The Kitáb-i-‘Ahd is the Book of the Covenant, found in *Tablets of Bahá u lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas* pp. 217-223.

33; 60. As he asserts here, by the time of Mr. Mumtázi’s second pilgrimage in 1955 the Bahjí Mansion had been cleared of Covenant-breakers. While a few of their shacks remained near it, much of the area around the Mansion had been developed by Shoghi Effendi with gardens. The remaining structures were removed in 1957, in the culmination of an extended legal process.

As is sadly apparent in this memoir, the Covenant-breakers not only occupied the Mansion at the time of Mr. Mumtázi’s first pilgrimage but also targeted the pilgrims. A number of pilgrims and Haifa/‘Akká residents mention in their memoirs being waylaid when visiting Bahjí.

34; 66. While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá showed forbearance toward the Covenant-breakers, the Guardian initiated civil and legal proceedings to regain custody of the Mansion of Bahjí. As stated in the previous note, they were eventually evicted from the Mansion and its vicinity.

35; 68. Perhaps the reference is to Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí Falláh, an Afnán, who studied at the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut and

sometimes interpreted for Western pilgrims in Haifa in the period that Mr. Mumtází was on pilgrimage. “Muḥammad-‘Alí” was a common given name, and over the years or decades there were several believers with that name who lived and served faithfully in the Holy Land.

36; 69. In the pilgrimage account of George Latimer there is a passage with echoes of this section in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is quoted praising the teaching work of a “short” woman in Germany; viz., Alma Knobloch. Alma Knobloch is one of the believers immortalized by name in the Tablets of the Divine Plan.

“Fujita” is Saichiro Fujita, the second Japanese to accept the Faith, well known to Bahá’ís for attending ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during His visit to North America and for valuable services rendered over a total of forty years in the Holy Land. Mr. Fujita was serving in the Holy Land, including in the Master’s House, at the time of Mr. Mumtází’s pilgrimage, and they would have met. (See the photo on the title page.) Little could either have imagined that some thirty-five years later they would together leave Japan on a voyage to the Holy Land—Mr. Mumtází going on his second pilgrimage and Mr. Fujita returning for good. For more on this see the first two sections of the second pilgrimage account and the Afterword.

37; 70. Re “glance of His eye”: See Dr. Yúnis Khán’s aforementioned memoir, pp. 416-419, for a fascinating typology of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s glances.

38; 70. Khusraw, of Burmese origin, was ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s attendant.

39; 76. This section refers to a talk given by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in San Francisco at the Open Forum on October 10, 1912 and to a visit a few days later to Phoebe Hearst’s estate about sixty kilometers away in Pleasanton, near Dublin. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá brought up the bovine philosopher in several of His talks in the West, and there was another bovine encounter the preceding August, in Dublin, New Hampshire. (It is possible that the two Dublins were conflated by the pilgrim in the hearing or recalling of the story.) For a record of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk at the Open Forum see *The Promulgation of Universal Peace* pp. 355-361; for a summary see *Ma múd s Diary* p. 313. The reader may notice that the

conversational give-and-take in Mr. Mumtází's account is missing from the record of the talk in *Promulgation*. Such give-and-take may have occurred at the outset of the talk or before the talk began and not been recorded.

In *Some Answered Questions* (pp. 297-299) 'Abdu'l-Bahá speaks of "four accepted methods of comprehension", adding "the bounty of the Holy Spirit" to the senses, reason, and tradition. Mr. Mumtází writes in this section that 'Abdu'l-Bahá told the pilgrims He tailored his remarks for His listeners at the Open Forum, which may explain why the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in Mr. Mumtází's account. Incidentally, the talk recorded in *Promulgation* contrasts the senses and reason but discusses neither tradition nor the Holy Spirit. It should be pointed out that letters written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi have stated, and analysis by researchers has shown, that *Promulgation* is not an entirely rigorous or reliable record of the talks 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave on tour in North America in 1912.

Here and there in His tablets and talks 'Abdu'l-Bahá states that the animal is the supreme materialist and notes the comparative wisdom and contentment of the cow or the bird with respect to the natural world. In *Tablets of the Divine Plan* (p. 45), for example, He concludes a passage on this theme: "Thus it becomes evident that in the matters of this world, however much man may strive . . . he will be unable to earn the abundance, the freedom and the independent life of a small bird." (All man can do, it seems, is ruin the bird's environment.) In the conclusion to the above talk, as recorded in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, 'Abdu'l-Bahá states, "Strange indeed that after twenty years training in colleges and universities man should reach such a station wherein he will deny the existence of the ideal or that which is not perceptible to the senses. Have you ever stopped to think that the animal already has graduated from such a university? Have you ever realized that the cow is already a professor emeritus of that university? For the cow without hard labor and study is already a philosopher of the superlative degree in the school of nature. The cow denies everything that is not tangible, saying, *I can see! I can eat! Therefore, I believe only in that which is tangible! Then why should we go to the colleges? Let us go to the cow.*" Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání writes in his diary that the audience "burst into laughter" at this denouement.

In the notes taken by ‘Alí Qulí Khán during his pilgrimage in 1906 (available here: www.bahai-library.com/ali-khan_pilgrim_notes_1906) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is recorded getting to the nub of the matter: The freedom of the cow to roam and the bird to soar “are of no consequence; while a man who endures trials, and sacrifices ease and comfort to great achievements, is endowed with true independence.” Hence for the human true freedom—and wisdom and contentment—is spiritual.

In *Promulgation* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His talk at the Open Forum addresses the evolution of the human species—a common subject of his talks before Western listeners—propounding the principle of originality of species (i.e., the human species is not descended from another species). He also contrasts Western empiricism and Eastern (under which He includes Greek) rationalism.

No matter one’s epistemological bent, modern science has shown—by such principles as the absence of an absolute frame of reference (relativity theory in physics), uncertainty (quantum theory in physics), incompleteness (logic and mathematics), and the observer effect (various disciplines)—that there are insuperable limits to one’s grasp of reality, whether objects or states or formal systems.

The Bahá’í Writings stress and praise education, knowledge, intellectual attainment, and craftsmanship—see, among many other sources, the tablets Ṭarázát, Tajalliyát, and Lawḥ-i-Ḥikmat from the volume *Tablets of Bahá u lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*—while firmly locating their *raison d’être* in a spiritual context: “By the one true God! If learning be not a means of access to Him, the Most Manifest, it is nothing but evident loss” (*Selections from the Writings of Abdu l-Bahá*, p. 110).

40; 84. Here and at the end of the second account Mr. Mumtází refers to the story of Solomon and the ants, found in the Qur’án and in different versions in Jewish lore. Also, the heading of this section is taken from an untranslated Persian prayer of Bahá’u’lláh (found in *Ad íyyih-i- a rat-i- Ma búb* pp. 365-368) in which He quotes a supplication—*rabbi ariní* (literally “My Lord show me”)—originally appearing in the Qur’án in a verse where Moses asks that the Lord reveal Himself but is refused by Him (Qur’án 7:143; cf. Exodus 33:18-23). In this “blessed Day”,

Bahá'u'lláh states in the prayer, one may be granted one's wish in response to this supplication.

The reply from the Kingdom in the heading, "*Behold, and thou shalt see Me*", consists of two terms—*un ur*, "behold", and *tarání*, translated as "thou shalt see Me"—taken from a passage in the above-mentioned Qur'án verse 7:143: the two terms are actually separated in the original passage but Bahá'u'lláh has omitted the intervening text and brought the two words together to form a new phrase, as if to signify the new Revelation. This phrase is also found in a tablet in Arabic addressed to Áqá Mírzá Áqá Afnán (known as Núru'd-Dín) included in *Tablets of Bahá u lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 239 (p. 147 in the Persian edition of *Tablets after Aqdas*). Incidentally, in the reference footnote on page 239 the Qur'án verse number is given not as 7:143 but as 7:139, which is Rodwell's reckoning.

The thought Mr. Mumtází records having before visiting 'Abdu'l-Bahá — "*Though wicked, sinful, and intemperate, we still seek from Thee a seat of truth . . .*" —is from the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (see also *Prayers and Meditations* no. CLX or *Ad íyyih-i- a rat-i-Ma búb* pp. 326-328).

In a number of His tablets Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself as the One Who conversed with Moses at Sinai and/or states that the voice heard by Moses at Sinai has now been heard again, proclaiming the new Revelation—see, for example, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, p. 68 —and further stresses that it is not God in His Essence but rather in His Manifestation Who was heard at Sinai and may be seen in this new Day—see, for example, *Gleanings* no. XXVI (particularly p. 62). Bahá'u'lláh also vigorously refutes any inference of co-equality or identity with God: see, for example, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf* pp. 41-44, 118-119, or more generally on the station of the Manifestation *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* passim, particularly p. 176 et seq. (U.S. edition). Also on this point see Shoghi Effendi's explication in "The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh", found in the compilation volume *The World Order of Bahá u lláh* pp. 97-157, especially pp. 112-115.

(The Moses-at-Sinai theme is prominent in the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh —see, for example, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, paragraph 80 of the main text and no. 111 of the Notes section; or *Tablets of Bahá u lláh revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 52-53, 107; or *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, pp.

117-118—and is treated in a study by Stephen N. Lambden entitled “The Sinaitic Mysteries: Notes on Moses/Sinai Motifs in Bábí and Bahá’í Scripture”, found in the publication *Studies in the Bábí and Bahá’í Religions*, Vol. 5. On the Sinai motif in Bábí Scripture see, for example, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, pp. 70, 72. Hand of the Cause George Townshend notes in his glossary to *Gleanings* that Sinai itself can signify the human heart, the place of God’s descent; cf. *The Hidden Words*, Arabic 59 and 63.

Further to the non-co-equality point, a reading of the first full paragraph of p. 7 of Shoghi Effendi’s *The Promised Day is Come*—see also *Selections from the Writings of the Báb* pp. 87-88—as well as of the latter part of the well-known Fire Tablet revealed by Bahá’u’lláh indicates that the Manifestation of God occasionally speaks in a voice by which God is referred to in the grammatical first person and the Manifestation Himself in the second or third person.)

It is probably a safe assumption that Mr. Mumtází above is not equating ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with the “Lord” of the Qur’án verse. Be that as it may, in this account Mr. Mumtází uses expressions such as “lord of the worlds” and “king of kings” and “creator of Paris and London” and “master of the Qur’án” to refer to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. These locutions should be appreciated for their rhetorical flourish—as expressive of the author’s personality and cultural background—rather than for their doctrinal rigor. More generally, the reader ought not to expect doctrinal precision in personal reminiscences: the early Western Bahá’ís, for instance, tended to liken ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Christ, much to His dismay. In his works, preeminently in his letter “The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh”, Shoghi Effendi has addressed and clarified the respective stations of the Central Figures of the Faith.

41; 88. By “today” Mr. Mumtází means 1959, some 39 years after the pilgrimage. A little checking on the Internet reveals that in the late 1950s one U.S. dollar was worth about 7 túmáns, or one túmán about 14 cents, and what was worth one dollar in 1959 would be worth nearly 8 dollars in 2013. The reader, if interested, can do the math.

42; 89. The sháhí was an old silver coin.

43; 90. Hájí Maḥmúd Qaṣṣábchí was the chairman of the Spiritual Assembly of Baghdád. He also funded the addition of three rooms to the six that already existed in the Shrine of the Báb, and one of the doors to those rooms was named after him by Shoghi Effendi.

44; 91. The Sháh mentioned here is Aḥmad, the last of the Qájárs, who was in his early twenties at the time. He is characterized by Shoghi Effendi in *The Promised Day is Come* as a «boy-king . . . a mere cipher and careless of his duties.»

45; 92. The quotation is from the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf.

46; 95. The verses the chanter of the Qur’án intoned are not identified. By “holy place” and “holy vale” Hájí Muḥammad may be alluding both to ‘Akká/Haifa and to Ṭuwa. The latter is mentioned in the Qur’án in súrih 20 and súrih 79: in the former súrih, verses 9-48, the episode of the Burning Bush, located “in the holy vale of Ṭuwa”, is recounted (cf. Exodus chs. 3 and 4); in the latter súrih, verses 16-19, the Lord speaks to Moses “in the holy vale of Ṭuwa” near Mount Sinai and commands Him to go to Pharaoh and tell him that He will guide Pharaoh to his Lord. In *The Kitáb-i-Íqán* (p. 54 U.S. edition) this episode is also mentioned, placing Moses “in the holy vale, situate in the wilderness of Sinai.” Hájí Muḥammad seems to be subtly suggesting that in this Day the voice Moses heard at Ṭuwa has been heard again and that the Qur’án-chanter may be guided thereby.

Hájí Muḥammad was capable of speaking somewhat less allusively or indirectly: One day a Christian priest came to his shop with shoes to be repaired. Their conversation eventually turned to religion, and Hájí Muḥammad remarked that the priest ought to worship the donkey rather than the cross, because Jesus suffered on the latter whereas He was at ease on the former. This anecdote and more on Hájí Muḥammad is contained in the memoir of Khalíl Shahídí—who served for decades in the Holy Land—translated and annotated by Aḥang Rabbani.

47; 96. The last line is a paraphrase of a verse from Háfiz.

On various websites there are a number of photographs of ‘Abdu’l-

Bahá posing with pilgrims, or mixed groups of pilgrims and Bahá'í Haifa residents. Most of the photos whose years are given date from the late 1910s to 1921, the year of His passing, and most of the others seem to be from the same period. In these photos He is shown sitting with small groups of standing Western believers, while with larger groups of Eastern, or mixed Eastern and Western, believers (posed at the Shrines or in front of His House) He is standing when all others are standing, or sitting when the persons in the front are sitting and those in the back are standing. However, there is one photo showing Him sitting, on a chair placed on a carpet laid on the ground, with a group of mostly Eastern believers who are all standing, found on the title page of this document and also here: www.bahai-biblio.org/centre-photo/gens/abdul-baha/abd-haifa/abdhai~36m~Abdu'l-Baha-haifa.htm.

Mr. Mumtází's youngest son recalls this photograph hanging on a wall of the family home. The youngest son and a daughter-in-law of Mr. Mumtází (his eldest son's wife) have independently identified the man with a mustache standing immediately behind 'Abdu'l-Bahá as Mr. Mumtází. This man does closely resemble Mr. Mumtází as he appears in photos taken a few years later in Írán. There are a couple of persons standing behind Mr. Mumtází who resemble his brother, Yúsuf Munfarid, as he appears in a photo taken a few years later. The brother's wife, Munavvar Khánúm, would have been with a separate group of Eastern women.

(While the identification by two family members, including a son, should suffice, it could be—and has been—suggested that the man identified as Mr. Mumtází looks like he might be older than his early twenties and further that a man of such comparatively young age would not be standing front and center on such an occasion. The image of the pilgrims is not sharp, though, and may not reflect age clearly. And, although Mr. Mumtází writes several sections above that because of his comparatively young age he tended to stay at the back of gatherings during the pilgrimage, in this case there might have been some reason for him to stand in front: perhaps he prepared the chair and carpet.)

48; 98. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was very much respected by the general public in Palestine for His humanitarian activities, which ranged from almsgiving

and provision of medical care to large-scale famine relief in the years during and just after the First World War, which the Ottoman Empire fought on the losing side.

49; 99. The emperor is Czar Nicholas II, who abdicated in 1917 as revolution swept Russia. The Bolsheviks triumphed, ushered in communist rule, and executed Nicholas and his family. Bádkúbih, where Mr. Mumtází's Pilgrim House roommate Ustád Muṭallib was from, is present-day Baku, Azerbaijan.

The references to the Imperial Russian consuls are regarding their response to episodes of persecution of the Bahá'ís in Írán. In 1903, during a period of pogrom-level persecution around the country, there was an instance in Iṣfahán in which Bahá'ís fleeing mob violence were offered sanctuary in the Russian consulate but then told to leave when the consul did an about-face. The expelled Bahá'ís were set upon by the riotous crowd. See Moojan Momen, *The Bábí and Bahá'í Religions, 1844-1944: Some Contemporary Western Accounts*, p. 376ff., concerning this episode.

“Ḥakím Báshí” is a title meaning “Chief Physician”. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is likely referring to Mirzá Músá Khán, a prominent believer in Qazvín. In his memoir Dr. Ḥabíb Mu’ayyad, who was to serve as a doctor in the Holy Land and later as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán, writes of his journey to the Holy Land in 1907 and mentions the hospitality shown his traveling party in Qazvín by “Mirzá Músá Khán Ḥakím Báshí”.

50; 100. Dr. Ḍiyá Baghdádí (Zia Baghdadi), renowned for his services to the Cause in the United States, was on an extended visit to the Holy Land.

51; 104. Ismá'íl Áqá served for many years in the Holy Land. He had his own room in the House of the Master (to which Mr. Mumtází was taken after he fainted) and three of the Tablets of the Divine Plan were revealed in that room. In the last years of His life ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often confided in him. Ismá'íl Áqá was so distraught when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away that he attempted suicide, but he was discovered in time and lived into the

1930s.

Many of the accounts of the Persian and Western pilgrims and Holy Land residents, including Mr. Mumtází's in a section above, remark on the very heavy burden imposed on 'Abdu'l-Bahá by His voluminous correspondence with Bahá'ís around the world. Yet ironically the same accounts often portray the pilgrims making their own persistent demands on the Master's time and energy, in some instances lining up outside His door for separate audiences one after the other—this in addition to the meetings, dinners, Feasts, Holy Day observances, Shrine visitations, and photographs they were privileged to have with Him in groups. Some pilgrims succeeded in repeatedly gaining His presence for private meetings (beyond any occasions they were actually summoned by Him)—Mr. Mumtází himself is depicted trying to do so in this section and successfully doing so in other sections of his account. But, to use one of Mr. Mumtází's favorite metaphors, perhaps the moths could not help being drawn to the candlelight. Although the separation of Eastern pilgrims into male and female groups continued (a concession to cultural exigencies), other protocols for the pilgrims changed during the ministry of the Guardian, as will be apparent in the second account.

Incidentally, the candle-and-moth trope is common in Persian (and other) literature and is found in the Bahá'í Writings: e.g. (from *Gleanings* no. CLI), *“The everlasting Candle shineth in its naked glory. Behold how it hath consumed every mortal veil. O ye moth-like lovers of His light! Brave every danger, and consecrate your souls to its consuming flame.”*

52; 106. The first mention of war in this section could refer to the First World War, in which a number of men from Palestine—which was then ruled by the Ottoman Empire, a combatant in the war—fought.

The two Indians were probably part of a contingent of Indian soldiers attached to the armed forces that secured the post-First World War British administration of Palestine, which was later formalized as the British Mandate for Palestine. The war the Indians were to deploy to may have been the uprising then beginning in 'Iráq against the British administration there, or a campaign being conducted by British forces in Waziristan, in what is now Pakistan. H.M. Balyúzí in his book *Abdu'l-Bahá: The Centre of the Covenant of Bahá u lláh* (p. 441) mentions a visit by two Indian

soldiers to the House of the Master in October 1919. These may have been the same two, who perhaps periodically visited Haifa while stationed nearby.

There is online a photograph of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with pilgrims and believers residing in Haifa and including what look to be two Indian soldiers in the top row, here: www.bahai-biblio.org/centre-photo/gens/abdul-baha/abd-haifa/abdhai~29m~Abdu'l-Baha-haifa.htm. This photo and the aforementioned photo that shows Mr. Mumtází invite a comparison. (To go to the other photo replace 29 with 36 in the URL.) A notable presence in both photos is a person who resembles the aforementioned Dr. Dīyá Baghdádí, standing on the far left on both occasions. Dr. Baghdádí was staying in the Holy Land during the first half of 1920. Among several other prominent Bahá’ís appearing in one or both of these photographs is Saichiro Fujita, standing above the Greatest Name being held behind ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the photo with the Indian soldiers, and in the middle of the uppermost row in the photo with Mr. Mumtází. (He is wearing a greyish coat on both occasions.)

53; 108. The reference is to Mullá Abú-Ṭálib, by whom, according to Shoghi Effendi in *God Passes By*, the banner of the Faith was «permanently planted in the Caucasus». He and Hájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí—the great teacher of the Faith known as “the Angel of Mount Carmel”—living their final years in Haifa, would often joke with each other in the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and the pilgrims. Mullá Abú-Ṭálib lived to be over a hundred years old, and as early as 1845 a Mullá Abú-Ṭálib is recorded as having been arrested and tortured together with Quddús, Mullá Şádiq Khurásání (Ismu’lláhu’l-Aşdaq), and Mullá ‘Alí-Akbar Ardistaní.

The Archangel did not forget the Angel of Mount Carmel: the following December Hájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí was reunited with Mullá Abú-Ṭálib, having been relocated by the Archangel, like his friend, from the Pilgrim House in the Holy Land to the Concourse in the Abhá Kingdom.

54; 111. The war mentioned is the Franco-Syrian War. “Shám” here refers to Damascus (although more generally it refers to the area roughly comprising the modern-day states of Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Israel).

From Damascus the Shám route continued to Baghdád. Another land route went much further north, well past the Lebañon Mountains before turning inland.

“Mírzá ‘Alí Áqá” is presumably a reference to the Afnán who was the father of Hand of the Cause Ḥasan Balyúzí, correspondent of the orientalist E.G. Browne, and minister of the Persian government.

55; 112. Urdíbihisht is the second month of the modern Íránian calendar, known as the Solar Hijrí calendar; 1309 is Anno Hegirae. The date given corresponds to 29 April 1930.

56; 114. This date is given according to the Gregorian calendar in the original Persian account. In the biography *Martha Root: Lioness at the Threshold* it is stated that Ms. Root arrived in Shíráz “toward the end of April” and that “on 4 May 1930 she was taken to the house in which the Báb had first declared His mission . . .”

57; 118. Mr. Mumtází was among a number of persons accompanying Ms. Root. Another person later to pioneer to Japan accompanied Ms. Root: Yadu’lláh Raf‘at, or Y.A. Rafaat, who served as Ms. Root’s interpreter for her journey through Syria, ‘Íraq, and Írán. The first Tokyo and National Ḥazíratu’l-Quds were located in Mr. Raf‘at’s former home in Japan’s capital, and the current building housing the National and Tokyo Centers stands on the same property. Mr. Raf‘at and the Mumtází family, together with the Katírá’í and Muqbil families, constituted the vanguard of a veritable phalanx of Persian pioneers who settled in Japan beginning in the 1950s and who rendered, are still rendering, and whose descendants now render, all kinds of service to the Faith around the world.

While quite a few Western Bahá’ís visited or lived in Írán in the twentieth century, perhaps none had a more profound spiritual effect on their hosts than Martha Root and Keith Ransom-Kehler—the latter of whom passed away in Işfahán in 1933 and was designated «the first American martyr» and called «fearless and brilliant» by the Guardian (*God Passes By*, p. 398), who also praised her «high distinction, indomitable will, and unswerving, exemplary loyalty» (*Messages to America* p. 3); both of whom were appointed Hand of the Cause

posthumously by him; and the former of whom was referred to by him (*God Passes By* p. 386) as «that archetype of Bahá'í itinerant teachers and the foremost Hand raised by Bahá'u'lláh since 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing» as well as «Leading Ambassadors of His Faith and Pride of Bahá'í teachers, whether men or women, in both the East and the West» whose teaching journeys «established a record which constitutes the nearest approach to the example set by 'Abdu'l-Bahá Himself» in His journeys. In oral and written reminiscences Persian believers have spoken most movingly of their presence in Írán.

The notes below are for the second account.

58; 120. Saichiro Fujita, who had served for many years in the Holy Land, was sent to his homeland by the Guardian on the approach of the Second World War and in 1955 given permission to return. He accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Mumtází to Haifa.

59; 121. NB: Concerning the conversations recorded in this account, the reader is reminded both that text within quotation marks should not be considered a literal transcript and that this account was dictated by Mr. Mumtází in English and as such he is offering his own translation of what he recalls of the Guardian's remarks (see the Foreword).

60; 122. The Mumtázís were late arriving in Haifa because they had delayed their departure from Japan for two weeks waiting for Mr. Fujita to settle his affairs. He would stay in Haifa for the rest of his life.

61; 123. The word “centers” here refers not strictly to the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds (for a Bahá'í Center in that sense existed in only two places—Tokyo and Amagasaki—at the time) but rather to all localities with a Bahá'í presence. “Center” in this broad sense appears often in the Guardian's messages and in letters written on his behalf, and also in this account. (Cf. *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, pp. 101-102, 105-106: “collective center”, an interesting concept seeming to have both ontological and sociological aspects.)

Here and in sections below Mr. Mumtází uses the translation “set up” where “form” or “establish” would be more appropriate. In further such

instances the more appropriate word has been substituted without editorial brackets.

62; 124. In the Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Bahá'u'lláh states, “*A kindly tongue is the lodestone of the hearts of men.*”

This first meeting with the Guardian probably took place on December 27 in the late morning. It was the first of two meetings that day. The reader will notice that Mr. Mumtází's words and actions in this account reach an emotional and reverent pitch not usually found in Western pilgrims' reminiscences of the Guardian. This reflects differences of culture and language between the East and West in general as well as the Persian and Western believers in particular.

In Mr. Mumtází's original first pilgrimage account, written in Persian, expressions such as *haykal-i-mubáarak*, meaning “Blessed Temple” or “Blessed Person”, are applied to the young Shoghi Effendi, who was not yet Guardian; also the pre-nominal honorific *a rat-i*—which is translated as “His Holiness” when applied to divinely guided personages and can be rendered as “His Honor” when applied to high-ranking or highly respected persons—is always used before his name. While most instances of these terms have not been retained in the translation of the first account, the pre-nominal “our beloved”, which invariably appears in the original second account in references to the Guardian, has been retained.

In this and other sections Mr. Mumtází uses the phrases “thanks God”, “thanks to God”, and “praise to God” where “thanks be to God” or “praise be to God” would be better translations; also “Administration Order” where he means the Administrative Order; also “our friends” where “the Bahá'ís” or “the believers” is meant and “the friends” is the usual usage. In further such instances the correct or more standard or usual form has been substituted without editorial brackets.

63; 125. The original verse can be found on any number of Persian-language blogs, but the author could not be determined.

64; 125. The sisters Jessie and Ethel Revell devotedly served in various capacities in the Holy Land.

65; 126. In a cabled message to the Bahá'í world in 1953 Shoghi Effendi, announcing the completion of the superstructure of the Shrine of the Báb, described the Shrine as the “Queen of Carmel enthroned God’s Mountain, crowned glowing gold, robed shimmering white, girdled emerald green, enchanting every eye . . .” Mr. Mumtázi’s version may be his translation of part of a message Shoghi Effendi sent to the Persian Bahá'ís.

66; 127. Mr. Mumtázi’s first meeting with the Guardian (and probably the last) was private and took place at his residence. The other meetings, including this second one, occurred at the Eastern Pilgrim House, in the vicinity of the Shrine of the Báb, in the company of other Persian male pilgrims, who are the “us” the Guardian was speaking to.

As was the case during the ministry of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Persian women formed a separate pilgrimage party, while the Western pilgrims’ groups were mixed. Needless to say, this segregation was not based on Bahá'í precepts but rather was a concession to the Middle Eastern cultural milieu. As an examination of religious history would reveal, no matter how forcefully a new divine dispensation may be proclaimed, cultural milieu does not transform overnight.

67; 128. In his history *God Passes By* (p. 253) and in the compilation of his messages *The World Order of Bahá u lláh* (pp. 78-79), Shoghi Effendi quotes Bahá'u'lláh: *“In the East the light of His Revelation hath broken; in the West the signs of His dominion have appeared”, and “Should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent, it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim, I am the life-giver of the world!”*

The book *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1968-1973* (pp. 74-75) contains a message addressed in May 1971 to the South Pacific Oceanic Conference in which it is stated, «Recalling the promise of Bahá'u'lláh, “Should they attempt to conceal its light on the continent, it will assuredly rear its head in the midmost heart of the ocean, and, raising its voice, proclaim, ‘I am the life-giver of the world!’” we now witness its fulfillment in the vast area of the Pacific Ocean, in island after island mentioned by the Master in the Tablets of the Divine Plan.» Further, the

book *Messages from the Universal House of Justice, 1963-1986* (p. 635) contains a message hailing the dedication in August 1984 of the House of Worship in Western Samoa in which it is stated that «the raising up of this House of Worship [is] a further significant fulfillment of the Blessed Beauty’s promise». Another message (p. 564), referring to the Samoa Temple when it was still being built, states that it is rising in the «midmost heart» of the Pacific Ocean. It could be inferred from these messages, particularly from the phrase “further significant fulfillment”, that the realization of this promise of the Pacific has progressed in stages or steps and will continue to do so in the future (for as long as the “light on the continent” is concealed, at minimum).

68; 129. Hand of the Cause Dhikru’lláh Khádím had visited Japan earlier in 1955 and, accompanied by Agnes Alexander (appointed Hand of the Cause in 1957) and Mr. Mumtází, made a teaching trip to Hiroshima which resulted in the first enrollments in that city. Mr. Khádím cabled the news of the enrollments to the Holy Land and the Guardian answered in a cable that he was “delighted”. In a letter written in 1952 on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Tokyo Spiritual Assembly (quoted in *Traces that Remain: A Pictorial History of the Early Days of the Bahá’í Faith Among the Japanese* p. 238), it had been stated that “in Hiroshima, where the people suffered so mercilessly during the war; they have a special right—the people of that city—to hear of Bahá’u’lláh’s Message of peace and brotherhood.”

69; 129. It is not certain whether the latter sentence is the Guardian’s remark or Mr. Mumtází’s comment.

The first Bahá’í pioneers to Japan arrived in 1914: George Augur in June and Agnes Alexander in November. The first Bahá’í visitors to Japan—Howard Struven and C.M. Remey—arrived in late December 1909, in the midst of a teaching trip around the world.

70; 130. As is made clear elsewhere in this account and in various sources, the intention was to establish this Assembly in April 1957, and thus the statement ascribed to the Guardian in the first sentence that it was to be established “next year” can be explained either as a

misunderstanding by the pilgrim if the remark was made at the meeting on December 27, or as a remark made by the Guardian at a meeting in January 1956.

Here and in sections below Mr. Mumtází uses the translation “select(ing)” where “elect(ing)” would be more appropriate. In further such instances the more appropriate word has been substituted without editorial brackets.

71; 130. In sections below where the “National Spiritual Assembly of Japan” is mentioned this is a reference, as in this section, to the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia, which was elected in Tokyo in April 1957. Its jurisdiction was Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau and, initially, Hainan Island and Sakhalin Island. This Assembly was also referred to as a National Spiritual Assembly, despite its regional jurisdiction. Mr. Mumtází was elected to this Assembly, a photograph of which can be viewed online here: www.bahai-library.com/east-asia/traces/56-61.html; scroll down to the second photo.

In a message to the first Convention of the Bahá’ís of North East Asia (see *Japan Will Turn Ablaze!* p. 80 rev. ed.), Shoghi Effendi hailed the election of this Regional Spiritual Assembly, calling its formation an «auspicious event, which posterity will regard as the culmination of a process initiated, half a century ago, in the capital city of Japan, under the watchful care and through the direct inspiration of the Centre of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh . . .»

In 1974 the Regional Assembly went out of existence and the National Spiritual Assembly of Japan was elected. Korea had formed an N.S.A. in 1964, Taiwan in 1967, and Hong Kong did so in 1974 with Macau under its jurisdiction; Macau formed an N.S.A. in 1989.

72; 131. Mr. Rihei Sako later served on the Spiritual Assembly of Kobe.

The word “Motto” appears here and in a later section. It is unclear what this refers to, but perhaps it is the principle of the oneness of humankind.

73; 132. The N.S.A. of New Zealand was formed under the sponsorship of the N.S.A. of Australia and New Zealand. Like that of North East Asia

seated in Japan, the third and fourth Assemblies listed here were planned to be regional in jurisdiction, encompassing the South Pacific and South East Asia, respectively. In a letter written in July 1957 to the N.S.A. of Australia, Shoghi Effendi states that the emergence of the Regional Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia marked the establishment of «a spiritual axis, extending from the Antipodes to the northern islands of the Pacific Ocean . . . »

Here and there in this and other sections the words “and”, “of”, “to”, and “the” are omitted in the original account. The words “to” and “the” have been inserted in editorial brackets in this section, but henceforth such words are inserted without brackets.

74; 133. The Guardian made a substantial financial contribution toward the purchase of the Tokyo Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds, and others—including Hand of the Cause Amelia Collins and the U.S. N.S.A.—also generously contributed, but there was still a shortfall; Mr. Mumtází then contributed a sum which made possible the purchase. This was the second Ḥaẓíratu’l-Quds in Japan. Mr. Mumtází donated the building and property for the first, in the Mukonoso district of the city of Amagasaki, between Osaka and Kobe. (It is referred to in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi found in *Japan Will Turn Ablaze!* as the “Mukonoso Center”.)

In response to the shortfall for the Tokyo Center, the Guardian had stated through his secretary that he saw no objection to selling the Amagasaki Center in favor of the Tokyo Center—which was to be the seat of the future National Spiritual Assembly and whose acquisition, as such, was a goal of the Ten-Year Crusade—but Mr. Mumtází’s contribution obviated the need. In a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi in English to Mr. Mumtází, this contribution was praised as “a further sign of the dynamic spirit which animates you in all of your services.”

Concerning the incorporation of the Tokyo Assembly, which was granted in April 1955, the aforementioned Yadu’lláh Raf‘at (see the epilogue of the first pilgrimage account) played an important part as liaison with government officials, and other members of the Assembly helped with the translation and preparation of documents. A photograph

of this Assembly can be viewed online here: www.bahai-library.com/east-asia/traces/62-63.html; scroll down to the third photo.

75; 134. The meaning is that just as two Centers have been acquired so should endowments be acquired.

76; 134. As a matter of fact, difficulties arose and Mr. Mumtází was not able to contribute land for an endowment. Some years later his eldest son, Rúḥu'lláh Mumtází, made a contribution of land for that purpose, fulfilling his father's pledge.

77; 135. "Ken" is translated as "prefecture" and is analogous to a state or a province; "fu" refers to regions associated with certain urban areas and having the status of a prefecture; "to" denotes the capital, Tokyo.

In 1954 Hyogo Prefecture became the second area in Japan to form a Spiritual Assembly, after Tokyo, where an L.S.A. was formed first in 1932 and after the Second World War in 1948. In 1956 the Hyogo Assembly was superseded by three Assemblies formed in cities within the prefecture: Kobe, Nishinomiya, and Amagasaki. A photograph of the Hyogo Assembly can be viewed online here: www.bahai-library.com/east-asia/traces/62-63.html; scroll down to the second photo.

78; 138. By "organizations" here is meant Bahá'í institutions. In the Ten-Year Crusade, 1953-1963, the Guardian assigned several of the older or more mature national Bahá'í communities, such as those of Írán and the United States, responsibility for supervising and assisting a number of younger or smaller national communities in the achievement of expansion and consolidation goals. Responsibility for Japan (and the other communities of North East Asia except Hong Kong) was assigned to the United States. Until 1957 there was no Spiritual Assembly whose jurisdiction encompassed the entire national community of Japan (although the Tokyo Assembly assumed some such functions de facto), and the guidance and supervision of the U.S. N.S.A. in the initial years of the Ten-Year Crusade was crucial.

Concerning the Ten-Year Crusade, see the Guardian's majestic

announcement and exposition of it in *Messages to the Bahá'í World, 1950-1957*.

79; 140. Today the privilege of casting ballots at District or Unit Conventions to elect the delegates to the National Convention is not limited to persons living in communities which have a Local Assembly.

80; 142. The North East Asia Spiritual Assembly was incorporated in February 1959.

81; 145. In the typescript it is omitted who must encourage the Japanese women, but presumably it is the Bahá'ís.

82; 146. It is not specified whether these last remarks are the Guardian's or Mr. Mumtází's.

83; 147. The Nikko Conference, or formally the Asian Regional Teaching Conference, was held in the resort city of Nikko—which the great travel-teacher Keith Ransom-Kehler visited in 1931 and effusively praised—in the mountains north of Tokyo in September 1955. It was organized by the L.S.A. of Tokyo under the auspices of the Asia Teaching Committee of the N.S.A. of the United States. Hand of the Cause Dhikru'lláh Khádím attended as the Guardian's representative. Bahá'ís gathered from around the Far East and the Pacific region. A conference photograph can be viewed online here: www.bahai-library.com/east-asia/traces/51-55.html; scroll down to section 55.

Incidentally, shortly before she passed away Ms. Ransom-Kehler stated in a letter to Agnes Alexander that she liked Japan more than any other country she visited (*History of the Bahá'í Faith in Japan, 1914-1938* p. 82).

84; 148. Most of the Assemblies were incorporated, others registered; in some countries these might have been the same. Here and in a section below "England" refers to the British Isles.

85; 148. The numbers given clearly refer to more than just "countries": a

more apt term would be “territories”, which is used in the Guardian’s messages and in the volumes of *The Bahá’í World* in reference to the Ten-Year Crusade and which encompasses various polities and places such as countries, colonies, principalities, islands, etc.

Statistics recorded by Mr. Mumtází are given as they are. The compilation volume *Messages to the Bahá’í World, 1950-1957* and volumes XII and XIII of *The Bahá’í World* contain information on the goals and achievements of the Ten-Year Crusade. See particularly *Messages* pp. 75-120, where many matters relating to the remarks the Guardian makes to Mr. Mumtází about the Ten-Year Crusade are elucidated.

86; 149. The northernmost point is identified elsewhere as “Franklin” in Canada, the opening of which was a goal of the Ten-Year Crusade. The “*Franklin Islands in the Arctic Circle*” are mentioned in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, in a tablet addressed to the Bahá’ís of Canada and Greenland. Concerning “islands” in Mr. Mumtází’s quotation of the Guardian: Many of the Ten-Year Crusade’s goal territories located in the northern and southern extremities were islands.

87; 150. Although not made explicit in the typescript, presumably these remarks are the Guardian’s.

Anent the word “race”: A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi in July 1957 to the newly elected Regional Spiritual Assembly of North East Asia—whose membership comprised two Japanese, three Persians, one African-American, and three Caucasian Americans—it is stated that the Guardian was “very happy to see that your Assembly has represented on it members of the three great races of mankind . . .” In the publication *Bahá’í Faith, The: 1844-1963: Information Statistical and Comparative*, a list is given of 71 “races represented in the Bahá’í world community”—a usage which seems close to “nationality” or “ethnicity”.

88; 151. Although not made explicit in the typescript, presumably these remarks are the Guardian’s.

89; 152. Cf. the following translations by Shoghi Effendi: “*Well is it with him who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá u lláh*”, from the Persian

Bayán; and “*Soon will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead*”, *Gleanings* no. IV.

90; 152. Particularly in his earlier messages, Shoghi Effendi sometimes uses the term “International House of Justice” or “Supreme House of Justice” for the institution commonly known today among Bahá’ís as the Universal House of Justice. The most literal translation of the original Arabic—*bayt al- adl al- a am*—would be “Supreme House of Justice”. Mr. Mumtázi’s use of “International” in his translation reflects the Guardian’s occasional usage.

91; 153. In an April 1955 message Shoghi Effendi states that 36,000 square meters have been purchased on Mount Carmel for the site of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár.

92; 153. Concerning the Major Plan of God, Shoghi Effendi in his messages writes not strictly of “revolutions” but more generally of an essentially inscrutable yet manifestly turbulent worldwide process of disintegration that will inevitably conduce to world unity. For a succinct summary of both the Major Plan and Minor Plan of God see the Ridván 155 message of the Universal House of Justice.

93; 158. Four structures have since been built on Mount Carmel: the International Archives Building, the Seat of the Universal House of Justice, the Center for the Study of the Texts, and the International Teaching Center; the fifth, the International Bahá’í Library, is yet to be built. (The “building for the Guardians”, perforce, will not be built; the Teaching Center, perforce, is staffed by Counsellors rather than Hands.) The Universal House of Justice, in its 1987 letter on the Arc Project, states that in the future the Library «will serve as an active center for knowledge in all fields, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.»

Concerning the functions of the Universal House of Justice and the Guardian: In Shoghi Effendi’s message, “The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh”, Bahá’u’lláh is quoted (from *Kalimát-i-Firdawsíyyih*, one of the tablets revealed after the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*) stating that the members of the

Universal House of Justice are *“to take counsel together regarding those things which have not outwardly been revealed in the Book . . .”* while, in Shoghi Effendi’s own words, the Guardian «interprets what has been specifically revealed . . .»

94; 159. In the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá’u’lláh indicates the duration of His Revelation to be at least *“a full thousand years”*, whereas ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in a tablet quoted by Shoghi Effendi in the compilation volume *The World Order of Bahá u lláh* (p. 102), states that *“the Bahá í cycle . . . must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years.”* In *God Passes By* (p. 100) Shoghi Effendi explains that the Bahá’í Revelation is to be «hailed as the promise and crowning glory of past ages and centuries, as the consummation of all the Dispensations within the Adamic Cycle, inaugurating an era of at least a thousand years’ duration, and a cycle destined to last no less than five thousand centuries . . .»

Regarding the future Manifestations, cf. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as quoted in *God Passes By* (p. 99) and in *The World Order of Bahá u lláh* (p. 111): *“Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future in the shadows of the clouds , know verily that in so far as their relation to the source of their inspiration is concerned they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them doeth whatsoever He willeth .”* “Ancient Beauty”, of course, refers to Bahá’u’lláh.

95; 160. “Uthmán” is “Ottoman”; “Qishlih” is “kishle”, meaning the barracks of Ottoman forts or citadels. The barracks were often used as jails or prisons.

96; 161. Obviously Mr. Mumtází is not recalling personal “memories” of the incarceration of Bahá’u’lláh but rather is imagining the conditions of those times. Aḥmad Jarráh, an Ottoman Army officer, and his brother Amín Effendí, an ‘Akká municipal official, both embraced the Faith.

97; 161. The cell Bahá’u’lláh occupied did have windows, from which He would acknowledge the pilgrims gathered beyond the walls of the citadel to catch a glimpse of Him, but certainly the interior of the complex of cells

confining the Holy Family would have been quite dark.

98; 163. The tablet, chair, and bed were in a building where Bahá'u'lláh sometimes stayed during visits to the Garden.

99; 165. In his introduction to *A Traveller's Narrative*, Prof. Edward Granville Browne wrote of Bahá'u'lláh, with Whom he was privileged to have five interviews (actually more like audiences) over several days, "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!"

100; 166. Making "a tour around" means circumambulating the Shrine. The "Sign" is the Greatest Name; the "streets" are the paths of the Shrine gardens.

101; 168. The poet could not be identified.

102; 170. Both 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the Guardian forbade (often in vain) the Persian pilgrims from the kissing of their feet.

103; 173. Robert Imagire, a Japanese-American pioneer, played a prominent part in the renewal of the Faith in Japan after the Second World War.

Among Agnes Alexander's distinctions are mention by name in the Tablets of the Divine Plan, appointment as Hand of the Cause, and being the first Bahá'í in the Hawaiian Islands, the second to pioneer to Japan, and the first to teach the Faith in Korea. She served the Faith in Japan over the successive periods of the ministries of 'Abdu'l-Bahá' and the Guardian, the custodianship of the Hands of the Cause, and the leadership of the Universal House of Justice. Shoghi Effendi once wrote to her (quoted in *Japan Will Turn Ablaze!* p. 9) that she was a «radiant herald» whose «glorious services in those remote regions of the earth are never to be forgotten.»

End