



A SUPPLEMENT
TO 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ
IN EUROPE, 1912-1913

PREPARED BY ADIB MASUMIAN

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Introductory Remarks

This supplement to *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Europe, 1912–1913*, is composed of three parts:

Part I: The Discourses of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, December 1912 – June 1913

This part, which constitutes the bulk of the supplement, is a collection of words that were spoken by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and originally recorded in various sources—mainly the diary letters of Ahmad Sohrab, but also *Star of the West*, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, and others.* The contents of this part are restricted to those talks and other remarks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that are contemporaneous with the events covered in *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Europe*, which mostly spans December 1912 to June 1913. While there are many oral remarks by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and even extensive transcripts of His talks recorded in that volume, there are many other instances in which its author, Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, only briefly summarized the topics ‘Abdu’l-Bahá discussed on a given occasion. I felt it would be useful to provide those researching this period of history with a resource that adds another layer to *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Europe*, one that fleshes out the chronicler’s passing references to certain talks with lengthier reports of those discourses documented elsewhere, and that is the goal I have set out to accomplish in this part of the supplement.

The length and nature of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s oral remarks in this part vary from entry to entry. Some of them are formal talks, others are informal conversations, yet others are recorded interviews or journalistic reports, and still others are stories He told. Some entries span several pages, while others are only a few sentences long. Some were captured in the form of directly quoted speech, while others read more like paraphrases. This part of the supplement is not intended to exhaustively encompass the six-month period it covers, but it probably comes close to doing so. For instance, some potential candidates for inclusion were intentionally left out because they were already incorporated into *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Europe*, mostly in the form of endnotes to that book.

As the texts in this part of the supplement have been taken from various sources, each entry is accompanied by a brief heading that explains its respective provenance. This part consists of about 200 such entries, all numbered for ease of reference, and this should prove useful

* I benefited immensely from the Bahá’í Works site (<http://bahai.works/>), which has scans and typescripts of many volumes of *Star of the West* and other Bahá’í periodicals; the Bahá’í Library Online (<https://bahai-library.com/>); and *A Partial Inventory of the Works of the Central Figures of the Bahá’í Faith* (<http://blog.loomofreality.org/>), a catalog of more than 24,000 Writings and utterances of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, including individual entries for every oral remark attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (whose ID numbers are all prefixed with ABU) in numerous sources, which was a tremendous help in identifying those utterances that are chronologically relevant to this supplement.

since a single date sometimes has more than one entry. In most cases, it should be assumed that original texts for the words attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in this part of the supplement either do not exist or are not readily available, so their accuracy cannot be verified. There are, however, a small number of talks that *do* have published Persian transcripts in sources like *Najm-i-Bákh̄tar* and *Kh̄itábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*. In lieu of existing English translations, I have rendered a few of these talks myself provisionally, such as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s address to the Turanian Society on 14 April 1913 in Budapest, and taken care to mention explicitly that these translations were produced directly from the original language(s) of delivery. Unless otherwise indicated, these provisional translations of mine have **not** been reviewed by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice; they were merely produced as an individual initiative for inclusion in this supplement.

Part II: Selections from Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Regarding His Western Journey

This part of the supplement comprises my provisional translations of twenty-seven selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in which He discusses His journey to the West, and several of which He composed while still there. The vast majority of these Tablets have been sourced from a collection of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Writings titled *Muntakhabátí az Makátib-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, volume 5.* All my provisional translations of these Tablets were reviewed by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and approved for digital publication following the incorporation of some recommended edits.

Part III: A Biography of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání Written by ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání

This part of the supplement contains my translation of a biography of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, written by ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání and published in *Masábih-i-Hidayat*, vol. 8, pp. 147–86.† I have also incorporated details from other accounts of Zarqání’s life; more information on those sources can be found in my prefatory note to Part III. The biography translated in this part of the supplement includes a Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and letter of Shoghi Effendi, and my provisional translations of each were reviewed by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and approved for digital publication following the incorporation of some recommended edits.

* * *

Version 1 of this supplement, created in March 2022, was limited to the talks and other oral remarks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá featured in Part I of this version, and it was never released publicly. In early 2023, I expanded the supplement to include Part II, which I finished near the end of

* Available online here: <https://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/SWA5/index.html>.

† Available online here: https://afnanlibrary.org/d/sulaymani_masabih-i-hidayat_vol_8/.

2022, and Part III, completed in May 2020 and originally intended as an appendix to *‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Europe, 1912–1913*. After widening the supplement’s scope to this extent, I saw fit to increment it to **version 2**—to which a tasteful cover page designed by Violetta Zein was also added and corrections to typographical errors caught by Arjen Bolhuis were made—and put it up on the *Bahá’í Library Online* for freely available access. In November 2023, I incremented the supplement to **version 2.1** after adding two more talks by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá (nos. 20 and 196) to Part I and the addressees of His Tablets selected in Part II, kindly provided to me by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

ADIB MASUMIAN
NOVEMBER 2023

Part I:
The Discourses of 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
December 1912 – June 1913

England

[#1]

Undated Talk on Christ as “the Word”

December 1912 (probably Friday, the 27th)
Probably at the Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following account is taken from *The Sufi Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1928), pp. 227–28. Zarqání’s chronicle seems to suggest that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá probably gave this talk on 27 December 1912: “. . . the Master gave an extensive talk . . . in which He gave a commentary on the first verse of the New Testament, and offered an interpretation of the meaning of ‘the Word.’”

* * *

In the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John the opening words are as follows: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Up to this time the explanation of it is this. *In the beginning was the Word* — this, they say, means: “In the beginning was the Son, the Lamb of God, Christ.” *The word was with God* means: “Christ was with God.” *The Word was God* means: “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one.” This is what they say regarding the Trinity, according to all the theologians and metaphysicians in the world of Christendom.

This is a most delicate subject. I will explain it to you. The reason we call Christ the *Word*, is because we human beings, compared to Him, are like letters, and He as a word. A word has a complete meaning, whereas a letter has not. A letter has not an independent meaning; likewise all members in a political body have not a distinct status. A *word* always gives one the idea of something with a complete meaning, an independent meaning.

Christ is the *Word*. Now what may this mean? The sign of the Word of Christ is the Divine Virtues: the sign of the Messianic Word is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The *Word* means Divine Perfection, Heavenly Bestowals. No one can deny that the Divine Perfections were originally with God. It is an undoubted fact that the most ideal virtues are inseparable from the existence of God. The rays and heat of the sun are co-existent with and inseparable from the sun. In the sun there is a unity of these forces, which blends together in an [*sic*] harmonious whole. The Reality of Christ is like a translucent mirror — the Sun of Divinity is inclusive of the properties which are manifested in it. By this we do not mean that the Sun has

left his station and entered into the mirror. For the Reality of Divinity there is no ascent and no descent, no entrance, and no exit.

[#2]

Undated Talk on the Attributes of God

December 1912 (probably Friday, the 27th)
Probably at the Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following account is taken from *The Sufi Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1928), pp. 228–31. Zarqání's chronicle seems to suggest that 'Abdu'l-Bahá probably gave this talk on 27 December 1912: "... the Master gave a most eloquent talk on the all-encompassing nature of the outpourings of God's grace, as well as the unending conferment of divine bestowals and perfections in the world of existence."

* * *

God, the Almighty, is the Creator. His Highness, the Divine God, has certain attributes. In thinking of God, one presupposes certain virtues and perfections. If one could for one moment imagine the cessation of the outpouring of these virtues, then would the Divinity cease. His Highness, the Almighty, is unknowable. All we human beings can know of Him, is the manifestation of His virtues: all the children of humanity can comprehend is through the showing forth of His attributes to the world.

To illustrate this point — the sun continues to be the sun only as long as it floods the world with its heat and with its rays. Therefore, we cannot think of the sun without its attributes of light and heat. If you could imagine the sun as a dark, sad body, it would no longer be the sun. It would, in fact, be impossible to imagine such a thing. If we could imagine such a thing, the reality of the sun would be accidental, not eternal. Could any one imagine a time when the sun was without rays, or without heat or light?

We attribute to the Reality of God certain virtues, or qualities, which are as follows: Knowledge, Omnipotence, Creative Power; He is the Provider, the Life-giver, the Perfecter. And if we could even imagine a time when God was not adorned with these attributes, then He were no longer God. We can only think of the Reality of God as an infinite and unlimited Being. If we could imagine the cessation of these virtues, the Divine World would exist no longer.

In thinking of the Divine Perfecter, one presupposes the existence of sentient beings. Knowledge presupposes the existence of certain beings who are possessed of intellect. Were it not for this power of understanding, how could we have any idea at all of God? The term *Creator* presupposes the existence of created beings. Were it not that we were created, how could we conceive of the Creator? In thinking of the Provider, one presupposes certain beings who are provided for, and One Who provides. In speaking of the Life-giver, one thinks of life. Were it not for the living ones, how could there be any thoughts about the Life-giver? The idea *Giver* supposes the idea of recipients. Were it not for the Divine Giver, how could we think of the One Who was to give?

This is a very abstruse question — attend to it. It is impossible to imagine the cessation of certain attributes and virtues which are co-existent with God. If we could imagine for a moment an interruption in the onward flow of the bounties of God, it would be to suggest that God was a finite being. We cannot imagine such a thing. This proves, therefore, that God has always been the Creator, the Provider, the Generous, the Life-giver, the Omniscient, the Omnipotent: and in the outpouring of His virtues there is no cessation at all. Think and ponder upon this very deeply, because this is a very subtle point in Divine Science.

We cannot state that there could ever be a time, either in the past or in the future, when the bounties of God did not flow down upon the world of humanity. How can we limit the Divine Virtues to any special period of history? The virtues of God are as drops falling unrestrainedly from a mighty ocean — how are we to hold them back? How can we limited beings know anything of the Unlimited God? Or we finite beings of the Infinite God? How shall man dare to settle a point when the Divine Virtues shall cease? An ignorant man, who was devoid of any insight, might imagine such a cessation. How could he comprehend the Reality, the Unsearchable? Man receives the bounty of God all his life: the bounties of God are the source of life. The bestowals of the Almighty are infinite; a wise man will never try to limit them. Limitation is the property of the mind of man.

That which is contained in the Holy Books is full of mystery, full of meaning. Those who do not understand, take it in a literal way: I hope that you will investigate the reality of the meanings and understand. For example, Christ said: “I am the bread which came down from Heaven; whoever partakes, will receive Everlasting Life.” By the Bread of Heaven Christ meant the Heavenly Benediction. He who realises the Divine Virtues, and takes for himself a goodly portion of the Heavenly Benediction, shall have eternal life. The Jews did not understand this: so they said, “How can we eat the flesh of this man? Can we become cannibals? How can he claim to have come down from Heaven? We know he was born in Nazareth.” Therefore the Jews arose in opposition to Christ. Then again, the Vision of St. John in the Revelation is symbolic. Likewise the description of the bride and bridegroom in the writings of Solomon. In short, I hope and pray that each of you may discover the Reality of the Symbols and the mystic

meanings of the Holy Books. If the Jews had understood, they would at once have believed in Christ; but they only saw the literal sense, and therefore they denied Him, and arose to oppose His teachings. They said: "Christ come down from Heaven! We know that he was born of Mary; he has not a sword, not even a stick! He does not establish the throne of David. He comes in a desert: he has no home, and no food: he is a wanderer in the land. He has not even a mat." They could see the real meanings of the Holy Books. His Spirit came from Heaven, but His body was earthly. His sword was His thoughts, with which He shepherded His flock. With it He divided the right from the wrong, the truthful from the untruthful. The power of His sword was not like that of Buonaparte [*sic*]; but it was an eternal unchangeable power. This the Jews could not understand.

[#3]

Undated Remarks on a Legend of Christ

December 1912
London, England

The following account is taken from *The Sufi Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1928), p. 231.

* * *

On one occasion they told 'Abdu'l Baha a legend of the Christ: how the Christ-child gathered some roses from His garden and gave them away to His friends. His friends said: "Behold! you have given us all your roses and you have none left for yourself." "The thorns are left for me," the Christ-child answered.

"That is a very beautiful story," said 'Abdu'l Baha. "The meaning of that legend is that Christ says to us: 'For you I have desired joy and happiness; for myself I have chosen sorrow and trials. The flower springs from the thorn. Out of the thorny bush springs the blossom of happiness and joy. I choose for myself the thorns, that you may inherit the roses, the peace and joy of Earth.'"

[#4]

Undated Remarks on This World as a Theater

December 1912
London, England

The following account is taken from *The Sufi Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1928), p. 231.

* * *

Another time the Bahai Master said: "This world is a theatre. It is not an eternal world: it is a stage where every kind of play is enacted. Man must observe every drama. There is the drama of heat and the drama of cold: the drama of Spring and the drama of Summer — the drama of happiness and of sorrow, of sickness and of health, of shame and of glory, of freedom and of prison — Yes: indeed the world is a great theatre, and man must observe each of these plays."

[#5]

14 December: Address to the Theosophical Society in Liverpool

Saturday, 14 December 1912
Liverpool, England

The following account of the discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave on this occasion is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 17 (19 January 1913), pp. 3-4.

* * *

The Search for Truth

Address of Abdul-Baha before the Theosophical Society, Liverpool, England, Saturday night, December 14, 1912.

[Footnote:] The President of the Theosophical Society, Mrs. Armour, introduced the speaker by saying that he needed no introduction and at once Abdul-Baha began speaking to the group of earnest listeners. He remained seated and spoke in Persian, M. Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, of Paris, acting as interpreter.

BY ISABEL FRASER.

Investigation of Truth; Barriers

When I was in America, I had many opportunities of addressing the Theosophical Society there. In every city I spoke once to them, and in some cities many times. The Theosophists are very dear to me, for they have abandoned all prejudice. They do not abide in the confines of dogma, but are seeking truth in a spirit of freedom. All the religions of the world are submerged in prejudice. A Jew is a Jew because his father was before him. A Christian is such for the same reason, and it is the same for a Muslim. All follow the precepts of their fathers, refusing to go forth and seek for themselves.

We both (Theosophists and Bahais) have abandoned all dogmas in our earnest search for truth. But look at the tribes and nations of the world why are they seething with contention? Because they are not seeking truth. Truth is one. It admits of absolutely no division and accepts neither limitations nor boundaries. All dogmas differ, hence the nations are opposed. The different dogmas make wars and strifes. Behold the events of these days! If it were not for these differences in religions there would be no wars.

We would not see what is now taking place in the Balkans if both sides were sincere seekers after truth.

Regard Persia: in that land there were many tribes, governments and religions, but they cut down the barriers of dogmas, became followers of Bahauallah and are now as one. Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians, et al, meeting together as we are doing here to seek for truth. Truth is one, so they became united.

Purpose of Religion to Inform and Train

All the different religions of God that have risen on the face of the earth have one purpose: to educate man and to inform him of the spiritual, the luminous, the divine, so that he may partake of heavenly spirit and find eternal life, show forth the virtues of mankind, and from a world of darkness enter a world of light.

There is no other reality of meaning to the different religions. Their purpose is one, the teaching is one.

Man's Three Natures

Man may be said to have three natures: The first is sunk in darkness and here he is a prisoner to his desires for here he is the co-possessor of the same qualities as the animals. The second nature might be called his human nature and in this human nature is the home of the mind and the soul. The third is his likeness to God and this he possesses in proportion to the divine qualities he imparts, the breeze of the holy spirit, pure spiritually, luminosity.

Prophets Raise Man, Continually

All the religions, all the prophets, all the great teachers had no other purpose than to raise mankind from the animal to the divine nature. Their purpose was to free man and to make him an inhabiter of the realm of Reality. For although the body of man is material, his reality is spiritual; although his body is darkness, his soul is light; although his body may seem to imprison him, his soul is essentially free. To prove this freedom, the prophets of God have appeared and will continue to appear, for there is no end to divine teachings and no beginning.

God, Manifestations and Creation Endless

The thoughtless say that the power of God is occasional; some will say that this material universe is hundreds of thousands of years old. But the power of God is eternal and the creation of God is likewise eternal. Divinity is dependent on creation. Can you imagine a king without a people? Can you imagine our sun without light and heat? The sun to us means light and heat. The king needs his kingdom and the qualities of God are eternal. As long as God exists his creation will exist and the manifestations of God in the divine teachers have always existed as an energy of God and will always continue to exist.

The very greatest blessings of God are represented by these divine beings who come and who will continue to come forth to humanity for hundreds of thousands of years. They represent the blessings of God and the blessings of God never cease.

The Universal Teacher and Dawn

Always hope that one day a Sun of Truth will rise and bring a Dawn whose light will destroy the darkness of the human world, will unite hearts and make souls happy, do away with contention and establish universal Peace. Then there will be no divisions. All be united and live as one family under the flag of unity and love. Then will mankind be inspired with a new progress and show forth diverse virtues. A new spirit will be given to him and the new world will be invested with a divine beauty. I hope we will always be expecting the appearance of such an One, for he will have education marked with a divine power. Such an One will be superhuman in all conditions, able to subdue material limitations, able to free man from his bonds of country and unite east and west. Such an One will make the Kingdom to appear, for such an One is, in his essence, superior to the laws governing human education. In his essence he is a universal teacher and does not depend on human means for knowledge. He does not need the light from a human lamp nor yet from an astral body. His mission is to give light.

Such an One is a pure mirror in which the Light of Reality is reflected on the world of humanity.

We must be looking for such an One to the end that we may be attracted when he comes to go on wings flying to such an One, born with a new spirit each day to do new works. Thus we will invite this greatest of divine blessings to appear.

Persian Martyrs

Again let us look at Persia! More than 20,000 there sacrificed their lives joyfully giving them in the path of God. They were supplemented by hosts of Heavenly spirits so that they never complained; nay, as trouble increased, their efforts increased and day by day they were enlightened with the Light of the Eternal.

My hope for you is that you may do all in your power to invite to this earth God's greatest blessing in your search for truth.

* * *

Sohrab quotes the ending of the address as follows:

“I hope that you will assist them in the establishment of the Kingdom upon this earth, so that conjointly you may become the means of transforming this world into another world, heavenly progress may be realized, spiritual powers may be obtained, divine Bounties encircle humanity and this nether world may become the world of the Kingdom.”

[#6]

15 December: Address at the Pembroke Chapel

Sunday, 15 December 1912
Pembroke Chapel
Liverpool, England

The following account of the discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave on this occasion is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 17 (19 January 1913), pp. 4–5.*

* * *

The Spirit of Love and Unity

* Other transcripts are published in Elizabeth Herrick, *Unity Triumphant* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co.: London, 1923), pp. 87–95, available online here: http://www.afnanlibrary.org/herrick_unity-triumphant-1923/; and in the Pembroke Chapel's journal, *The Plain Truth*, vol. 23, no. 260 (Jan 1913), pp. 4–10.

ABDUL-BAHA ADDRESSES PEMBROKE CHAPEL

Liverpool, England, Sunday December 15th 1912

By Isabel Fraser

Those Gathered

"Tonight I am exceedingly happy to find myself in an assembly, the members of which are a recognized factor in philanthropy and well being. Therefore, I supplicate at the throne of God that He may bestow divine confirmations upon you that at all times you may be the vehicle of divine mercy and the means of prosperity to the individual members of the world of humanity.

One Humanity Under God

"Man should endeavor always to realize the Oneness of Humanity. We are all the children of God; all created by God; all provided for by God and all under the protection of God. God is kind to all his children. Why should they wage war between themselves? God is the Real Shepherd- all are his sheep. There is no difference whatever among the members of the flock. He educates all of us, is compassionate to all of us; protects all of us. Ponder and you will understand that with the bounties of God there is no restraint. His grace encompasses all mankind. All live under his bounty.

Strife and Separation

"What benefit do we ever draw from separating ourselves one from another? Why should we wrangle and battle to kill each other? God is kind. Why are we unkind?

Religious Divisions; Imitations; the Reality

"The first separating principle is religion. Every sect and community has gathered around itself certain imitations of Reality in ceremonies and forms, and as these imitations differ, contentions follow. Each division is encompassed with thick clouds through which the Sun of Reality cannot penetrate. If these divisions should forget the differences in imitations and seek for the underlying Reality, all would be united and agreed and fellowship would be established between the organizations of mankind.

Love and Unity; Animosity

"As His Holiness Mohammed states, God is Love upon Love, with Love. Therefore it is evident that the foundation of Religion is Love and the fundamental purpose of Religion is Unity.

The Religion of God is honor to humanity; why make it the cause of degradation? Why make it the cause of darkness and gloom? Assuredly it is a thousand pities that the cause of such a glorious reality should become the cause of degradation and hatred.

Baha'u'llah and His Cause

"It was at a time of great darkness that His Holiness Bahauallah appeared in Persia, summoning all to love and friendship. Now, in Persia, Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians and other contending religionists who heard the words of Bahauallah are living in the utmost state of love and reciprocity.

"This Cause is great and it was at great cost that Bahauallah strove to spread these principles in the world. During his life he was imprisoned, his property was pillaged. He was separated from his friends and 20,000 of his followers were martyred. They sacrificed their lives in the glorious cause of doing away with imitations and limitations, to this end that Unity might be established among the children of men.

Conquest For A Graveyard; International Peace

"Nations sometimes say, We wish to extend our boundaries! Consider with me for a moment, What is the earth? We live for a few years on its surface and then it becomes our eternal cemetery. Millions of generations are buried there. It is the universal graveyard of humanity. Is it praise worthy to engage in war for a cemetery-to pillage the wealth of nations for an eternal graveyard?

"Praise God, this nation at this time is striving with all its energy for International Peace. Rest not from your endeavours until international peace become established. This is my request of you and my earnest hope for you is that you may always be protected."

Hymn and Benediction

After the hymn, "All People That on Earth Do Dwell," Abdul-Baha pronounced the following benediction in Oriental fashion, with hands outstretched and upturned:

"O Thou most kind Lord, this reverent assembly is calling on thy name. These souls are seeking thy good pleasure. They are seeking the prosperity of the world of humanity. O Lord, confer upon their souls life evermore. O Lord, forgive their sins and keep them in thy protecting shade in both worlds. O Lord, confer upon them thy great pleasure. All are servants of international peace, all are servants of humanity. Thou art The Merciful, The Generous, The Forgiver, The Almighty, The Praiseworthy!"

[#7]

17 December: Miscellaneous Conversations with Various Visitors

Tuesday, 17 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 19 (2 March 1913), pp. 3–4. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 17 December 1912.

* * *

This morning Abdul-Baha spoke about America and the probability of his return to that country. He said: "God willing! If I go to America another time I will go differently; but it is very difficult. This first trip was made with great exertion." As I was reading one of his addresses delivered in America, he said it would be well if all his addresses in that country could be printed in one or two volumes. At present, he declared, they are all scattered and not collected. He called attention to how quickly the Paris and London addresses delivered last year were printed; and this was done through one woman, Lady Blomfield. Some one mentioned the name of a prominent wealthy woman and he said: "One of these poor, sincere and honest women is more beloved by me than a thousand millionaires; just now this Lady Blomfield is dearer to me than all the queens of the world."

In Belfast, Ireland, lives a fine Bahai, a splendid believer. She traveled all day and night to see the Master. He welcomed her most cordially and said: "You must become the cause of the illumination of Ireland. In Persia a woman came to the city of Ardestan from one of the surrounding villages. She was made radiant and became a Bahai. She returned to her home. In one year she was enabled to ignite forty lamps, but now you must ignite four thousand lamps in one year. Praise God, that you enjoy freedom in this country. There was no freedom in Persia. They used to kill the Bahais. If a Bahai desired to teach another, he had to do it with the utmost precaution." This lady said that in speaking about the Revelation to the people, many are afraid of a new religion, saying, "Our old religion was good enough for our ancestors and it is good enough for us." The Master said: "They are like unto those souls who say: 'We don't like fresh flowers but we are satisfied with withered and decayed flowers.' Decayed flowers do not have sweet fragrance; their odor is not good; they have no freshness and charm. The fresher the flower the sweeter it is and the more charming. If old and decayed flowers were good then the Adamic flower would have been sufficient. Every new year needs a new flower, new fruits are necessary, fresh and gentle breezes are needed. Every new day requires new food, you cannot partake of the decayed food of yesterday."

Speaking to Miss Jack, Abdul-Baha said: "Those souls who consider themselves as imperfect, they are the people of the Kingdom. Those persons who prefer themselves above others are egotists and worshippers of self; they are deprived of the graces of the Lord of mankind."

An Englishman, who is an Arabic professor in London, came with his wife to see Abdul-Baha, who spoke to him in Arabic about America: "The American people investigate everything. Their minds are open, their ears are listening. They comprehend the Teachings of BAHÁ'O'LLAH. They are thirsty for this salubrious water. They are a mighty nation, a noble people. They love the Reality. They are not limited. They have a vast country and enjoy all the material blessings. God has perfected His bounties for them. They listen to every discussion with dignity, urbanity, and politeness. If it is in accord with reason they will accept it, if they do not understand they ask questions. But the Egyptian people are very prejudiced, they are very dogmatic." After talking with this Arabic scholar on many other interesting topics he came out to the reception room where people were gathered and gave a wonderful address. It was on the conformity of all the problems of life with science and reason. It was most interesting.

[#8]

20 December: Address at the Westminster Palace Hotel

Friday, 20 December 1912
Westminster Palace Hotel
London, England

The following account of the discourse 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave on this occasion is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 17 (19 January 1913), pp. 6-9.

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ADDRESS BY ABDUL-BAHA.

Attractive Forces and Love and Unity

Scientists tell us that the world of matter is made up of constellations of molecules which hold it in its various forms; each molecule consists of a similar constellation of atoms which in turn recent discovery shows is made up of tiny worlds of electrons. Thus we see that this law of affinity is the very basis of existence.

As in the material, so in the spiritual world, love is the attracting force that welds together the constituent elements into a composite unity and holds them firm against disintegration.

Love is the cause of life, and hatred or animosity spell death or disintegration. Just as affinity is the fundamental principle of composition, the greater affinity, love, is the light of unity and the lack of love is the darkness of separateness. Love is conducive to existence, difference is conducive to disintegration. Love is the cause of the illumination of the whole of humanity, discord and dissension are the cause of the destruction of the human race.

Divine Messengers

All the divine messengers have come to this earth as specialists of the law of love. They came to teach a divine love to the children of men; they came to minister a divine healing between the nations; they came to cement in one the hearts of men and to bring humanity into a state of unity and concord. In this pathway, each one of these divine Manifestations of God's love has accepted innumerable calamities and hardships. For the sake of a realization of love and concord amongst men, they have sacrificed their lives. How many persecutions have they suffered; so that they might bring into a state of harmony those contending nations and religions; so that they might create peace and consolation between these various peoples of the earth!

Christ; Healing of Warfare

Let us consider His Holiness Jesus Christ: how many trials he accepted along this pathway, how many difficulties and persecutions, even giving up his life. He chose for himself the cross, so that the light of love might shine in the hearts of men, and the various contending nations come into a state of affinity and love, so that love might encompass the hearts of humanity. This was the purpose. When a holy and divine man shows us the way and sacrifices himself like Jesus Christ for the sake of love and affinity amongst the children of men, our duty is plain; it is evident that we, likewise, must follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ.

We too must be ready to sacrifice our lives, so that this love may live. We must accept every hardship, so that this love may come to the hearts of the people.

Consider carefully that for the last six thousand years there has been constant strife and warfare amongst the people. All the wars which have occurred in past history have been the basis of the destruction of the human race; love, on the other hand, has been the cause of cementing the people together.

Consider how Jesus Christ, through the power of his love, brought a state of harmony between the Egyptian nation, the Assyrian nation and all the nations of ancient times. Such a unity and concord was realized amongst these various peoples that the pages of history are adorned

with their accomplishments, although formerly these nations were in a state of constant strife and contention. Formerly their business was war, but, through the Breath of the Holy Spirit, unity became a creative factor. The great and wise men of the world have ever striven hard, so that the hearts of humanity might be cemented together by the heavenly teachers, whose mission it is to bring into the world this divine state of love.

The foundation of all religion as taught by all the divine messengers has been love and affinity. A hundred thousand pities alas! that the divine message has become the means of warfare and strife!

Balkan War; Blind Dogma; Divine Radiance

In the Balkans blood is being freely and copiously shed, lives are being destroyed, houses are pillaged, cities are razed to the ground, and all this through religious prejudice; while in reality the foundation of the religion of God is love. All the divines and holy manifestations invite the exercise of love. In reality we are living in the midst of the greatest proof of divine love. For at a time when, in the Orient, there existed the utmost state of strife and sedition, warfare raged between the nations; warfare raged between the religions and between the various sects; darkness encompassed the horizon of the Orient, and each religion asserted its claim over the other - at such a time, under such circumstances, His Holiness Baha'o'llah shone from the horizon of the East. He declared that the reality of all religion is one, that all religions have the same foundation for their teaching. He taught men that the foundation of the religion of God is love. Alas, that they should have entirely forgotten this foundation! They have created blind dogmas, and as these blind dogmas develop, we observe constant bloodshed and strife. If all the religions and sects were to quit themselves from all past limitations and search diligently for the foundation (as the foundation of the divine religion is one), there would follow unity and concord, these terrible events would not happen, bloodshed would cease, and hatred between the hearts of men would be dispelled. Heavenly illumination would dawn, divine love would be created, the efforts of the divine teachers would be held and would yield results, hearts would be knit together, the basis of strife and quarrel would be forgotten, divine justice would be revealed and divine radiance diffused.

Baha'u'llah's Mission

In order that the darkness of strife and sedition might be entirely banished from the human world, His Holiness Baha'o'llah established and taught certain declarations or principles. The first principle which He proclaimed was the principle of the Oneness of the human family. He said, "Humanity constitute the sheep of God's flock. The real shepherd is God." The real shepherd is compassionate and kind towards all the members of his flock. Humanity was created by God; He provides for all, protects all. He is kind to all. Why should we treat each other harshly? He has made a plea for love, not for difference, or hatred, or animosity.

God created humanity; none of us were created by Satan. All are edifices of God, therefore we must strive that these edifices be protected and not seek to destroy them.

International Peace; Epistles to the Rulers

The second principle of Baha'o'llah concerns international peace and to this end He wrote all the nations and sent special epistles to the rulers and kings of the earth.- Likewise he proclaimed peace amongst the religions. Was not peace the foundations of religion? It is time that these limitations and dogmas be done away with, that the foundation of the religion of God be made the means of union and good fellowship.

Again, He proclaimed inter-racial peace, for humanity is the progeny of one Adam - all belong to one lineage. "This sphere is one globe," He said, and is not divided, the various continents on the face of the globe are in reality one native land, inhabited by one human family; therefore, there should not exist between the various countries this warfare and strife.

Religion Must Be Cause of Love

Another principle of Baha'o'llah is that religion must ever be the means of love; that is, if so-called religion be the cause of hatred and animosity, it is better to quit such religion. Every affair, every matter which in the world of humanity is the cause of love, that matter is good; but if it is creative of difference amongst the children of men, that matter is evil. If it be a cause of hatred amongst the people, it is absolute evil. Irreligion is better than that so-called religion. The people have made religion the cause of warfare and strife, while the reality of religion is the cause of unity and love.

Religion Should Accord With Good Science

The fourth teaching of Baha'o'llah is relative to the conformity of science and reason with true universal religion. If it is contrary to science and reason, it is superstition. A theory which is not acceptable to the mind of man and which science rejects is devoid of reality. It is a vision of superstition.

Prejudice of Race and Nation To Be Obliterated

The fifth teaching of Baha'o'llah is relative to prejudice, which must be abandoned. National prejudice must be forgotten, racial prejudice must be obliterated, and patriotic prejudice must likewise be lifted from amongst the people.

Since the beginning of history all the wars which have occurred have been caused primarily through religious prejudice, or racial prejudice, or patriotic prejudice. As long as these prejudices are not broken, the world of humanity will not attain to perfect peace and tranquillity.

Equality of Men and Women

Another teaching of Baha'o'llah is relative to the equality of men and women. In the human family of God there is no distinction. God is no respecter of gender. The religion of God is one. The human family share in common all the faculties; they share in common all the divine bounties. God has not accredited any difference between the male and the female. The same education must be given to women as to men, so that they may acquire science and arts, so that they may advance along the course of civilization, in order that they may become proficient and attain to the level of men.

In the Orient women have been very degraded in the past, men giving no importance to them, thinking that men were created superior, but through the teaching of Baha'o'llah who declared that a great calling is destined for women, they promoted the facilities for the education and training of the girls. In a brief space of time the girls and the women alike have advanced along the pathway of education. Now, in the country of Persia alone, many schools have been organized for the girls, and girls are engaged in the study of the sciences and arts.

Professions and Crafts

The seventh teaching of Baha'o'llah concerns itself and is in accord with this system of universal education; it is that all the children should study and acquire a profession, that there should not remain a single individual without a profession whereby he can earn his livelihood. Baha'o'llah further declares that through the equipment of science and art the misunderstandings which have prevailed between religion and science will become reconciled.

Science and Religion: Jew and Christian Disunity

The non-conformity of science and religion has been the greatest factor in keeping the religions apart.

If this misunderstanding be taken away from amongst religions, perfect love will be established. For example, for nearly two thousand years there has been strife and contention between Jews and Christians and it is evident that if the cause thereof be understood with intelligence, it would wipe away from among them all discord; there would remain love and concord.

While in California, in a Jewish Synagogue, in San Francisco, I spoke on this subject. There were nearly two thousand Jews present I said to them, "This long misunderstanding which has been between you and the Christians is very pitiable. You think that His Holiness Christ destroyed all the foundation of the Mosaic law. You think that He degraded the law of Moses, you go further and think that His Holiness Christ was the enemy of Moses, while all these

things are contrary to history. The first teaching that His Holiness Christ gave was in regard to the prophethood of Moses. The first mention He made was in praise of the law of Moses. His Holiness Christ spread the foundation of the law of Moses, but He abrogated and extended that law to accord with His times. Before the appearance of Christ the name of Moses was confined to Palestine only, but His Holiness Christ spread the name of Moses throughout the world, and promulgated the Old Testament throughout the nations. Were it not for Christ, who would have heard the name of Moses in America? Were it not for the existence of Christ, how would this Bible have been spread so broadcast for 1,500 years? You could not translate and spread this Bible throughout the nations were it not for the blessings of Christendom. The Old Testament has reached every corner of the globe, His Holiness Christ established the fact that you are the people of God. Let us be fair and see whether Christ was the friend of Moses or His enemy? Let us be just. Was there ever a greater love than this, and was there ever a greater assistance than this? His Holiness Christ spread the name of Moses everywhere. He proclaimed the teachings of the Old Testament.

Consider how this lack of understanding of the Jewish people has created enmity and strife. His Holiness Christ was the first to proclaim world wide the name of Moses. Read the Gospel and you will find out how His Holiness Christ reverently mentions His name.

International Peace; International Institutions

The paramount declaration of Baha'o'llah is that peace must be realized between all the nations of the Earth. International tribunals will be established and certain representatives from amongst all the governments of the earth will be sent to that inter-parliamentary gathering. The era of "the parliament of man" will be ushered in. This international tribunal will be the court of appeals between the nations. Fifty years ago Baha'o'llah wrote to all the rulers of the world about this international tribunal of arbitral justice.

Peace Conference

These are some of the teachings in the religion of Baha'o'llah - all of which would take a great deal of time to expound. I will just add that it is my hope that during these days in which this Peace Conference is discussing negotiations for terms of peace, you will strive to the utmost that peace measures and peaceful negotiations may be carried on among them. I am very pleased that I am living in London during these days. I supplicate that the Conference may be crowned with success, so that peace may be established in the Balkans, so that this bloodshed may cease, so that this Conference may become a working basis for the future international peace. May all the nations and all the countries of the world strive with us, that in the future there may be no war and no bloodshed.

As the English government is a just government and as the British nation is a noble nation and accomplishes whatever it undertakes, it is my hope that in this matter it will manifest the

utmost wisdom and sagacity, so that the sun of peace may dawn on the horizon of the Balkans, so that eternal fellowship may be realized among them, and whenever in the future there is any difficult problem a conference may be called for its settlement, so that through these various conferences all the troubles of humanity may be solved.

May there remain no more war and strife; and tranquillity dawn on the world of humanity expressive of the world of light, so that this nether world may be transformed by love and concord and may become the foretaste of the other kingdom. Then all humanity will be sheltered under the shadow of the Almighty. This is my hope, this is the highest desire of my life day and night. I pray and I beg confirmation from God for this government, that this nation may be assisted to hold aloft the banner of international peace.

* * *

'Abdu'l-Bahá then concluded the above discourse with a Persian prayer that has been translated as follows (taken from Star of the West, vol. 3, no. 17 (19 January 1913), p. 10).

* * *

O Thou Kind Almighty, we supplicate at the Throne of Grace for mercy for the blood that has been shed in the Balkans; the children that are being made orphans; the mothers losing their dear sons; the sons who have become fatherless; the cities that have been destroyed; the many hearts that have been filled with sorrow; the many tears that are being shed and the many spirits that are in a state of agitation!

O Lord, be merciful, extinguish this spirit of war, this consuming fire, this peril, this gloomy darkness! Cement together these hearts, let the sun of Thy Truth dawn upon all.

O Lord! this world is dark, guide us toward a brilliant light. The horizons are glooming with the clouds of war; disperse these impenetrable clouds. Grant us holiness and calm! Dispose of these quarrels, illuminate the horizon of life, so that the sun of real loyalty may shine with its rays. May these dark hearts become illuminated, may these blind eyes become open, may these deaf ears become gifted with hearing.

O Lord! cause Thy divine justice to appear in this world. Summon these people to the Banquet of International Peace, so that they may live together in the utmost state of love. May all the religions and all nations embrace each other with this spirit of universal kindness, and may hatred be forgotten.

O Lord! confirm this just government in the establishment of peace, so that it may hold aloft the banner of reconciliation in the Balkans. May the light of love shine and flame forth undefiled. O Lord! Thou art Almighty; Thou art Merciful; Thou art Clement; Thou art Kind!

[#9]

22 December: On the Jews' Rejection of Jesus Christ

Sunday, 22 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khiṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 74–75. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

* * *

He is God

Last night, there was a theatrical performance about the birth of Jesus Christ.* It was truly skillful to the utmost. It was, however, surprising that all those involved in this event acted as if they were awaiting the Messiah and that they recognized Him. Yet when Christ appeared, He remained a stranger, single and alone; the Messiah came and no one realized it. And so it was that the people went on searching for the Messiah in anticipation of His advent. Christ had come, but the Jewish leaders continued to await the Messiah's appearance—a desire they cherished. But when He came, they were deprived [of Him]; indeed, they rejected Him, saying, “This is not the true Messiah!” Rather, they made allegations that I am ashamed to recount. You all have surely read the Gospel and seen that title which they gave Christ.

To put it briefly, they dubbed Him “Beelzebub,” meaning “Satan.”† It is with this title that they made Christ notorious. A hundred thousand times alas, a hundred thousand times indeed, that they called that celestial Beauty “Beelzebub”! A hundred thousand times alas, a hundred thousand times indeed, that they failed to recognize Him! A hundred thousand times alas, a hundred thousand times indeed, that that Sun of Truth remained concealed by the clouds of vain imaginings!

And to this very day, the Jews still await the advent of the Messiah. It has been two thousand years since the Messiah appeared, and yet the Jews continue to wait. Observe what unawareness does! They set their expectations on the text of Isaiah—that the Messiah would

* ‘Abdu'l-Bahá was referring to the performance of *Eager Heart*, a play written by Alice Buckton, held at Church House Westminster on 21 December 1912. Hence, this talk had to have been given the following day on 22 December, not 21 December, which is the date incorrectly assigned to it in *Khiṭábát*.

† cf. Mark 3:22 and parallel verses from the synoptic Gospels, where Jewish doctors accuse Christ of being possessed by Beelzebub.

come from the skies, an unknown place,* and that, when He came, He would break the mountains apart and cause a mighty earthquake.† In fact, these things did happen, but they did not understand the symbolism thereof. They failed to apprehend this allegory: that by “mountains” was not meant mountains of stone, but rather people who resembled mountains and were scattered apart, and that the intended meaning of “earthquake” pertained to the realm of human thoughts, not this world of dust.

Everything that the Prophets foretold came to pass, but they were all allegories. Literal meanings were not intended, inasmuch as the Words of God are symbolic; they are mysteries. They are a treasure; treasures are hidden. They are a mine of gems; mines are always hidden. For example, Christ says, “I am the bread of heaven.”‡ It is obvious that Christ was not bread, and that to outward seeming He did not come from heaven; rather, He issued from the womb of Mary. By this “bread,” however, is meant the bread of heavenly bounty—the celestial perfections. There is no doubt that the reality of Christ was heavenly, that those perfections were heavenly—that they stemmed from the realm of divinity.

He further says, “He that eateth of this bread shall live forever,”§ meaning that whoever draws on these divine perfections will certainly be quickened. Yet the people did not understand; they objected, saying, “This Man says, ‘I am the bread of heaven.’ Are we able to eat Him?” The meaning is that, although Christ issued from the womb, in reality He came from heaven. What was it that caused the expectant peoples to deny Him? They were waiting for Christ to literally descend from heaven, but when they saw that this did not happen, they rejected Him. The intended meaning, however, was the reality of Christ, not His body—and there is no doubt that the reality of Christ came from heaven, but because the people did not realize this, they rejected Him and have remained deprived to the present time.

Hence, the mysteries of this Holy Book must be understood, and the meanings of the Torah and the Gospel comprehended, for they are all allegories and mysteries. So long as one does not unravel these mysteries, one will remain deprived and fail to grasp the truth.

I hope that you all will unravel the mysteries of the Scriptures and correctly understand their meanings, in order that you may grasp the truth. Always discover the mysteries of reality, and never allow yourselves to be shut out by any veil. Fix your gaze on God, and pray to Him constantly for confirmation and success, that you may not be bereft of the beauty of reality—that you may benefit from the lights of the Sun of Truth and become apprised of the divine

* Apparently a reference to Isaiah 19:1.

† Apparently a reference to Isaiah 24:18–19.

‡ A paraphrase of John 6:51.

§ John 6:58.

mysteries—so that you may enter the Kingdom of God, be accepted at His Threshold, and attain to eternal life. This is my hope; this is the highest aspiration of the spiritual ones.

[#10]

22 December: On the Theater of the Cause

Sunday, 22 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 14, no. 6 (September 1923), p. 177. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 22 December 1912.

* * *

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in London, in 1913, among his many callers was an actress who spoke to him of the theater and her work. "We also have a theater," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The actress immediately became all interest and enthusiasm. "Yes, where is it?" she said. "I should love to see it. Can I play in it?"

"Our theater," 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered, smiling, "is built in a country where there is eternal springtime. The streets of that city are as clean as the surface of a mirror. The lights of that playhouse are the rays of the Sun of Reality, the actors of our drama are the Holy Manifestations of God, the audience is composed of pure and sanctified souls. They play their parts with the most delicate art. They deliver their words with power and potency. The stage of our theater is the arena upon which is played the sublimest tragedy, the most terrible drama, the most thrilling and heart-moving events of life.

"Come and join our company. You have acted all your life upon the material stage. Now come and act on this celestial stage. Your fellow actors will assist you, will coach you in your part and, step by step, you will become a star shining in the galaxy of those heavenly inspired dramatists."

[#11]

23 December: Short Remarks to Various Visitors

Monday, 23 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 23 December 1912.

* * *

The Master first met several laboring men who had come from afar to see him. One of these men said that although I am not a Bahai but I like to tell you what I think of you. You are "the Napoleon of Peace". . . .

To another one He said:

The Cause of God is like unto a rose-garden. As long as man is far from it, he cannot survey its artistic beauty, he cannot see how many kinds of flowers are planted therein, he cannot inhale the sweet fragrances of the roses. But when he approaches the garden, he experiences new feelings; he hearkens to the melody of the birds, the delicate perfume is wafted toward him by the gentle breeze; he beholds the variegated flowers; his soul is rejoiced by the charming scene and his spirit is refreshed.

To another one He said:

The Cause of God is like unto a house. As long as man has not entered therein he does not know what it contains. In the house there are many precious jewels, many rare objects the like of which cannot be found anywhere in this world. But the men in the street may pass by the house a thousand times and know nothing about it. Only the one who has the key can enter. That key is the love of God.

To another He said:

Every object in this world has the power of combustion. The objects by themselves and in themselves will not be ignited. A flame is necessary. I hope you will become that flame to enkindle the hearts.

To a railroad man He says:

You are paving the material roads. May you become able to straighten the pathway to heaven. That is more important. Straighten the path, for the Kingdom of God is nigh. Be a heavenly lineman.

[#12]

24 December: On the Two Kinds of Education and the Effects they Produce

Tuesday, 24 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khīṭábát*, vol. 3, pp. 107–08. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

* * *

He is God

Every person must first think of educating themselves. Indeed, they must think of perfecting themselves, for it is necessary for one to first educate oneself.

Observe how all living things are in need of nurturing. You will find that every plant in a state of utmost weakness will, when nurtured, achieve consummate power. When you tend tiny flowers, they grow very large. When you care for a fruitless tree, it bears fruit. When you till land bestrewn with thorns and weeds, it becomes a rose garden. When you train an animal, it progresses. When you tame wild beasts, they become domesticated.

It has been made clear, then, that nurturing exerts an influence on all things, but this is most true in the world of humanity. An uneducated person is an animal; no, he is worse. For example, were children to remain in the wilderness and receive no education whatsoever, it is certain they would stay in a primitive state and be oblivious to the civilized world. No industry, no trade, no agriculture would they know; they would resemble the inhabitants of central Africa, who are wild to the utmost.* What is it that has distinguished Europe from

* 'Abdu'l-Bahá is using the contemporarily popular example of "uncivilized" peoples in Central Africa to highlight the importance of education and refute the then-prevailing theory that a person's race determined their intellect.

Africa? It is education, of course, because the people of Europe receive an education while those of Africa do not—and it is clear and apparent that humanity is in need of education.

Education is of two kinds: material and spiritual, which is to say natural education and divine education. The Prophets of God are spiritual nurturers—divine educators. They rear people with godly training, edifying their hearts and morals. Furthermore, material advancements occur in tandem with spiritual advancements. When one's spirit, one's heart, and one's character are edified, physical education will also certainly result.

I hope, therefore, that you all will strive first to educate yourselves, to edify your characters and regulate your speech, that you may be purged of imperfections and adorned with the virtues of humanity. It is then that you should engage in the education of others, for the world of humankind is beset with darkness. You see that wars and killings are always happening, that conflict and contention are ever present. Pray God that you may be aided to successfully serve humanity—that you may cause this world to be illumined.

The *power* of education is likewise of two kinds: one can educate others through words or through deeds. One may educate people with words, but superior to that is education through deeds, inasmuch as deeds are more effective. Consider, for instance, whether one simply speaks of faithfulness and summons people, solely through his words, to love and loyalty, or arises to display those virtues himself. It is surely this act that will prove more effective. Similarly, consider whether that one merely invites others to be generous or practices generosity himself. It is certainly this act that will have the greater effect. If he, moreover, should call on others to be kind, it will prove more effective if he himself acts kindly. Whatever one may summon others to do, if he carries it out himself, it will undoubtedly have an effect.

If, however, he should invite people to demonstrate a good character while he himself is immoral, it will have no effect at all. Should one call on others to behave justly while he himself is unjust, of what avail would that be? Were he to summon them to the oneness of humankind while he himself fails to act accordingly, what fruit would that bear? Hence, one must educate others through his deeds, for until he becomes the very essence of holiness and attains to absolute faith—until he reaches the station of sacrifice, until his sentiments become godly, until his soul grows enamored of the Holy Spirit, until he achieves radiance of thought, until he possesses a sanctified heart, and until he performs goodly deeds—there is no doubt that his words will have no effect whatsoever, and that his thoughts will not yield any fruit at all. Whatever he says or writes will all be in vain. Thus, we must beseech God to help us to do good works, to help us have lofty thoughts, and to help us evince a spiritual character. It is then that we can serve humankind. Then can we cause the world of humanity to be illumined; then can we work in service of the unification of humankind; then can we set ourselves to spreading universal peace. I hope you all may be aided in these benevolent pursuits.

[#13]

25 December: A Lunch-Table Address on Christ

Wednesday, 25 December 1912
London, England

The following record of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s discourse on this occasion—apparently at lunchtime, as gifts were being exchanged—has been published in Elizabeth Herrick, *Unity Triumphant*, pp. 113–15.

* * *

"Christ's birthday is a glorious day," He said. "It is necessary that these anniversary celebrations be observed, else man in his negligence would forget all about his Creator; but we should seek to penetrate the dark veils of custom and imitation of ancestors, perchance we may discover the reality of the meaning.

"The advent of Christ on this earth was a blessed day, for it was the day on which the Sun of Reality dawned; the day on which all beings were revived. In the world's calendar, it was the beginning of a Heavenly Spring.

"To-day the mention of Christ is on a thousand tongues, but when He was on earth, He was not thought much of, notwithstanding they were awaiting his coming with great impatience. They thought that they would be his intimate friends. Some there were who used to cry day and night, saying, 'O God, hasten the day when the Promised One will manifest himself on this earth.' When He came, they knew Him not; they persecuted Him and finally killed Him, for they said: 'This is not the true Messiah whose coming is to be under special conditions. How is it that He claims to be from Nazareth, the son of Mary? He was to come with a sword; this man does not possess even a staff. He was to sit on the throne of David; this man does not possess a mat to sit on. He must conquer the East and the West; this man does not possess a shelter. He was to teach the law of Moses; this man is abolishing it. In His day, justice was to encircle the world, the wolf and the sheep drink from one fountain; the lion and the deer to graze in one pasture; the vulture and partridge live in one nest.'

"The people could not see that these things were taking place. The Reality of Christ was from heaven, though His physical body was from Mary. The sword was the tongue of Christ, which cut right from wrong. Many had swords, but his sword conquered the world.

"The Kingdom of Christ was Heavenly and not like the kingdom of Bonaparte; it was the reality of the ancient law Christ spread, not the words. He conquered East and West by the Holy Spirit, not by force. Sects which were in the utmost animosity drank from the one fountain - that is, the Fountain of Love."

[#14]

25 December: Christmas Dinner Address at the Salvation Army Center

Wednesday, 25 December 1912
Salvation Army Center, Great Peter St.
London, England

The following account of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse on this occasion is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 3, no. 18 (7 February 1913), pp. 8-9.*

* * *

I feel tonight great joy and happiness to be in this place, because my meetings and callings have ever been mostly with the poor, and I call myself one of them. My lot has ever been with those who have not the goods of this world. When we look at the poor of humanity, we behold a world of brothers. All are the sheep of God; God is the real shepherd. The poor have ever been the cause of the freedom of the world of humanity; the poor have ever been the cause of the upbuilding of the country; the poor have ever labored for the world's production; the morals of the poor have ever been above those of the rich; the poor are ever nearer to the threshold of God; the humanitarianism of the poor has ever been more acceptable at the threshold of God.

Consider his Holiness Christ: He appeared in the world as one of the poor. He was born of a lowly family; all the apostles of Christ were of humble birth and His followers were of the very poorest of the community. This is what Christ states in the Gospels. 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.' This testimony of Christ of the exaltation of the poor ones in the sight of God is sufficient. It is easy for the poor, very easy for them to enter into the Kingdom of God. In another place Christ speaks of the charity of the poor ones of the world as praiseworthy.

* Another transcript has been published in Herrick, *Unity Triumphant*, pp. 115-23. Refer also to accounts in *The Christian Commonwealth* (documented in Amín Egea, *Apostle of Peace*, vol. 2, pp. 35-37) and the *Social Gazette* (London), 11 Jan 1913, p. 2, col. 2-3.

The poor ones have capacity. They were favored at the threshold of God. If wealth were a necessity, Christ would have wished it for himself. He lived a simple life, and one of the titles of Baha'o'llah was “the poor one.” In Persian His title was “darvish” and that means one who has not a slave.

All the prophets of God were poor, His Holiness Moses was a mere shepherd. This will show you that in the estimation of God, poverty is greater than the accumulation of wealth - that the poor are more acceptable than the lazy rich. A rich man who spends his wealth for the poor is praiseworthy. Consider that the poor are not born in a state of solvency: they are not tyrannous. All the tyranny and injustice in this world comes from accumulation. The poor have ever been humble and lowly; their hearts are tender. The rich are not so.

Sorrow not, grieve not. Be not unhappy because you are not wealthy. You are the brothers of Jesus Christ. Christ was poor; Baha'o'llah was poor. For forty years he was imprisoned in poverty. The great ones of the world have come from a lowly station. Be ever happy; be not sad! Trust in God and if in this world you undergo dire vicissitudes I hope that in the Kingdom of God you will have the utmost happiness!

[#15]

26 December: Exchanges on Prayer, Evil, and the Progress of the Soul

Thursday, 26 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following exchanges between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His visitors on this day are taken from *Paris Talks*, pp. 176–79.

* * *

PRAYER

Question: 'Should Prayer take the form of action?'

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: 'Yes: In the Baha'i Cause arts, sciences and all crafts are (counted as) worship. The man who makes a piece of notepaper to the best of his ability, conscientiously, concentrating all his forces on perfecting it, is giving praise to God. Briefly, all effort and exertion put forth by man from the fullness of his heart is worship, if it is prompted by the highest motives and the will to do service to humanity. This is worship: to serve mankind and to minister to the needs of the people. Service is prayer. A physician ministering to the sick,

gently, tenderly, free from prejudice and believing in the solidarity of the human race, he is giving praise'.

Question: 'What is the purpose of our lives?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'To acquire virtues. We come from the earth; why were we transferred from the mineral to the vegetable kingdom - from the plant to the animal kingdom? So that we may attain perfection in each of these kingdoms, that we may possess the best qualities of the mineral, that we may acquire the power of growing as in the plant, that we may be adorned with the instincts of the animal and possess the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste, until from the animal kingdom we step into the world of humanity and are gifted with reason, the power of invention, and the forces of the spirit.'

EVIL

Question: 'What is evil?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'Evil is imperfection. Sin is the state of man in the world of the baser nature, for in nature exist defects such as injustice, tyranny, hatred, hostility, strife: these are characteristics of the lower plane of nature. These are the sins of the world, the fruits of the tree from which Adam did eat. Through education we must free ourselves from these imperfections. The Prophets of God have been sent, the Holy Books have been written, so that man may be made free. Just as he is born into this world of imperfection from the womb of his earthly mother, so is he born into the world of spirit through divine education. When a man is born into the world of phenomena he finds the universe; when he is born from this world to the world of the spirit, he finds the Kingdom.'

THE PROGRESS OF THE SOUL

Question: 'Does the soul progress more through sorrow or through the joy in this world?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'The mind and spirit of man advance when he is tried by suffering. The more the ground is ploughed the better the seed will grow, the better the harvest will be. Just as the plough furrows the earth deeply, purifying it of weeds and thistles, so suffering and tribulation free man from the petty affairs of this worldly life until he arrives at a state of complete detachment. His attitude in this world will be that of divine happiness. Man is, so to speak, unripe: the heat of the fire of suffering will mature him. Look back to the times past and you will find that the greatest men have suffered most.'

Question: 'He who through suffering has attained development, should he fear happiness?'

'Abdu'l-Bahá: 'Through suffering he will attain to an eternal happiness which nothing can take from him. The apostles of Christ suffered: they attained eternal happiness.'

Question: 'Then it is impossible to attain happiness without suffering?'

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: 'To attain eternal happiness one must suffer. He who has reached the state of self-sacrifice has true joy. Temporal joy will vanish.'

Question: 'Can a departed soul converse with someone still on earth?'

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: 'A conversation can be held, but not as our conversation. There is no doubt that the forces of the higher worlds interplay with the forces of this plane. The heart of man is open to inspiration; this is spiritual communication. As in a dream one talks with a friend while the mouth is silent, so is it in the conversation of the spirit. A man may converse with the ego within him saying: "May I do this? Would it be advisable for me to do this work?" Such as this is conversation with the higher self.'

[#16]

28 December: On the Bounties of Bahá'u'lláh

Saturday, 28 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 28 December 1912.

* * *

If the believers of God had lived in accord with the good-pleasure of the Blessed Perfection, all the people of the world would have been Bahá'ís now and each one of the friends of God was shining and luminous like unto the sun. The Blessed Beauty caused the appearance of the Sun of Reality. Praise be to God we are friends with all. We love all. He broke all the imaginary limitations between the races. He took away these fetters and chains. We love the people with heart and soul and not only by mere word of mouth. Last night as I looked upon those children I loved them as much as I love my own children; nay rather I loved them more, because they were the children of the poor. Always think of the Bounty of Bahá'u'lláh! Ponder over His divine Favors! He made us all one when He uttered the wonderful words, "Ye are all the leaves of one branch and the fruits of one tree."

[#17]

29 December: On the Language of the Heart

Sunday, 29 December 1912
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 29 December 1912.

* * *

The language of the heart is more eloquent than the physical tongue. When two hearts are united together astonishing results will be seen. But a perfect union is necessary. All the phenomena speak with man, explaining to him in an eloquent tongue all the secrets of creation.

[#18]

29 December: Address at the Home of Annie Eliza Gamble

Sunday, 29 December 1912
Gamble Residence, 38 Santos Road
Putney, London, England

The following translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse on this occasion is taken from the unpublished diary letters of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.

* * *

Are you all well? Are you all very happy? Are you all joyous? You must be exceedingly joyous because God has brought about such friendship and has caused us to come together. Up to this time it has been very difficult for the Orientals and the Occidentals to associate with each other in the spirit of fellowship in one gathering, to manifest such love and amity and to appear with such unity and such concord. It is my sincere hope that day to day this love and mutual assistance may be increased between the Orient and the Occident. May the love of God appear and dawn in the horizon of the hearts to such an extent that the people may become as one people. Although from a physical standpoint we are different, each one of us having our own individual bodies, yet we may become united as far as the spiritual side of our lives is concerned. Although we may be as many candles, as many lamps, yet the same light may

shine from all of us. If such a state of ideal union is established, then you shall witness the power of the Kingdom of God, and you shall behold the heavenly glories of Light.

This world is attacked by sickness and ailment. There must needs be a physician to diagnose the sickness of the body politic. If the sickness is slight no doubt very little medicine will be needed to heal the patient; but, if the disease is chronic and if the signs of pathology are very great, then extreme measures must be taken for a slight medicine will not do away with the powers of evil.

The body of humanity at large today is attacked by severe sickness. One of these ailments is this: the human world at large is submerged in a sea of materialism. The power of materialism has prevailed and is in the ascendancy. Spiritual susceptibilities are lingering behind; the knowledge of God has not remained; the powers that discover the realities of phenomena are not manifest. The larger part of the world of humanity, like animals, is captive in the claws of nature.

They cannot comprehend what is said to them regarding the spiritual world. Truly, I say, they are worshipping nature, glorifying in this sort of adoration, while the animal which is inferior to man is similarly engaged in the pursuits of the natural sides of life. The animal does not know anything else excepting the world of nature; the animal is a captive of the tangibilities and does not know anything about the world of idealism and aestheticism; the animal is out of touch with the world of spiritualities; the animal is out of touch with the Love of God: it does not know anything about the Love of God, and is not informed at all of the realities of things.

It is, indeed, very strange and astonishing to witness that contemporaneous thinkers and scholars are glorifying in this kind of worship, stating that, 'we do not accept anything but that which we see with our own eyes; we adhere to that which we see in the world of nature; we do not want to have anything to do with the world which you religionists call supernatural. This kind of super-naturalness is without foundation, because we cannot conceive of it with our own eyes. We only accept that which is tangible; that which we see and feel in the world of nature. We are indeed the philosophers and the wise men of the age; we are the professors of universities and we have searched the whole laboratory of nature and have found nothing of what you call God and spiritual things.'

Whilst in reality this condition of life belongs to the animal kingdom - the animals in this world of materialism - and [do] not know anything other than matter (natural): therefore if the glorification and worship of nature, as believed by some of our contemporaneous thinkers is a great virtue, then the animal is the most virtuous. The cow is entirely out of touch with the realm of God and is not cognizant of the spiritual life. The cow is out of touch with the supernatural realm and is not cognizant of the realities of sentient beings. The cow is a captive

of the senses and holds fast to that which is in the world of nature. Without entering a college, without learning the sciences, the cow being a captive of nature (similar to our philosophers) is consequently a great philosopher.

This will demonstrate to you that this is not the glory of men nor the honor of humanity.

God has deposited in man the ideal power. The animal kingdom is deprived of the enjoyment of that ideal power which is in man and which enables him to discover the realities of things. This reality, this ideal reality, causes men to attain to knowledge of the aesthetic world. This ideal power prompts man to become informed of the knowledge of God. This ideal power prompts man to ascend heavenward and to discover the mysteries of God. This ideal power will unveil to men's hearts the secrets of the Divine Books and Holy Scriptures. This ideal power will put man in touch with the powers that are super-mundane.

In brief, these statements will show you that the body of humanity is sick; for it is entirely submerged in a sea of materialism. The sickness is chronic and very severe; the darkness is very intense and impenetrable. It is time - it is high time for the friends of God to arise with extraordinary power so that they may effectively heal the body politic which is attacked by these chronic diseases. Perchance humanity may be delivered from these ailments.

What is the strong remedy that is needed, or what the course of treatment? It is purity of intention, turning one's face towards the kingdom of Abha; it is sublime spirituality; it is the eloquence of the spiritual tongue; it is strength of heart; severance from all else but God, it is the greatest sanctification; it is the tenderness and cleanliness of the heart; it is the polish of purity of the spirit. If the believers in God are assisted and confirmed with these ideal powers, they shall indeed be enabled to heal effectively these sicknesses and heal the body politic.

It is an established fact that a little darkness will vanish when a small lamp is lit. For example: this room is lighted by one lamp, but a small lamp will not light the outside world; there must needs be a powerful light - a searchlight, in order to discover the very dark recesses of nature. The darkness which encircles the globe today, is very dense, for it is the darkness of the realm of nature and matter which environs the globe. Now, each one of you must be like a penetrating searchlight, so that you may dispel this darkness.

When there is compound ignorance, compound knowledge is necessary. Consider, look upon all the people of this life, most of them are what we may call atheists, or deniers of the existence of God and are of the school of anthropomorphists, who are submerged in a sea of blind dogmas and imitations. They are not informed of the realities of being, nor of the foundation of the religions of God. They hold fast to the imitations of their forebears and ancestors. If you ask for conclusive proofs in regard to their beliefs, they cannot bring them forward: only certain blind traditions, which they have received from their ancestors and

have accepted without independent attestation. It is like the blind leading the blind. Real belief, real faith is acquired as we investigate the reality independently.

Today the world of humanity is divided into two parts: the first are agnostics, materialists and atheists; the second are holding fast to the imagery and symbolisms of the churches, not knowing at all the world of idealism, entirely ignorant of the unity of the basis of religion; being in the claws of prejudice, they are biased, constantly waging warfare and contention, killing each other for the sake of a piece of land, pillaging each other's property and engaging in rapine and bloodshed; razing to the ground the houses and the homes of each other.

Consider how this human world is in the lap of superstition in this day. Therefore, show forth your magnanimity; arise with the greatest power; beg confirmation and aid from the Kingdom of God, so that with the Divine Assistance and through the breath of the Holy Spirit you may be rendered victorious and successful in the great spiritual fight. May the souls be quickened; may their eyes be endowed with insight; may their ears be opened; may they become informed of the reality of God; may they behold the lights of the Kingdom of the Almighty, so that this universe, this world, may become a new world, and this great emanation of divinity may become widespread and universal. Dark are they: may they become enlightened! Earthly are they: may they become heavenly! Like animals are they: may they become human! Men are they: may they become angels! May they become the discoverers of the realities of things. May they become informed of the mysteries of God. Then the surface of the earth will become a delectable paradise. Love will reign supreme among the hearts of men and the illumination of the Kingdom will be widespread.

All of you must strive in this world-service, and in this path be ever ready to sacrifice your possessions, your wealth, even your lives, so that we may establish the fact that we are the lovers of the world of humanity, and it may become manifest that we have attained to the station of self-sacrifice. Then may we obtain everlasting glory.

[#19]

29 December: Address at the King's Weigh House

Sunday, 29 December 1912
The King's Weigh House Church
London, England

The following translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse on this occasion is taken from the unpublished diary letters of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.

* * *

Praise God that a number of revered souls are gathered in this congregation to serve the Almighty, whose hearts are cemented together, whose faces are joyous with the Glad Tidings of the Kingdom of God. The signs of love are evident, are manifest in your countenances. For, when we study the world of existence we discover that there is no greater object in life than to obtain this Love which is divine in character. Love is the cause of life. Love is the means of salvation. Love is the cause of the connection of the hearts of men. Love is the cause of the progress and sublimity of mankind. Love is the cause of entrance into the Kingdom of God. Love confers upon man life eternal.

Just as His Holiness, the Christ declares: "God is Love" - What is greater than Love?" This statement of Christ is clear that there is no greater attainment in the world of humanity than the attainment to the highest station of Love.

In this world many societies are organised or being organised - every society or congregation has a certain definite object, every assembly strives to fulfil a certain mission in life. That which is the highest mission of the religion of this world is the

Propagation of the Law of Love.

These meetings must bring about the Love between the hearts of men. There is no exception to this, because His Holiness, the Christ declares in another place "The Sun of God shines upon all. The just and the unjust alike". This means that God, the Almighty is kind toward all the human race. Humanity at large is submerged in the sea of the Divine Mercy. Consequently the greatest ambition of the Religions of God should be to create this love and to bring about this fellowship between the hearts of the children of God.

We declare that the foundation of the Religions of God, is Love - Read the text of the Holy Books, read the Blessed Writ and you will come to the conclusion that the purpose of all the Divine Revelations is Love. The foundation of all the great religious systems of this world is Love. Although other forces may bring to a limited extent the realisation of this love yet there is no power on the face of the earth which is just as influential and penetrative as the power of love which is religious in character. For example, consider for a moment how the foundations of the teachings of Christ in His time and afterwards became the basis of a lasting solidarity and federation of many races. When His Holiness Christ appeared from the Invisible Kingdom we find that the nations of the old world such as the Egyptian, the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Syrians and others had been in a state of constant strife and contention. This Divine Power which emanated from Christ established this Unity amongst these various races and they exercised toward each other this great love and amity. Different nations became expressive of one nation. Through this instance we can comprehend that the Religion of God is no other than the bond of love and amity - the Religion of God is not the means of alienation

and hatred. Likewise at the time of the dawn of the Mosaic dispensation, the greatest affiliation and fellowship became realised among the Israelitish people. This will also show you that Religion must be the means of love and good fellowship.

The greatest power in this world for unity and for the federation of man is religious power. Political powers or the powers of diplomatists are unable to bring about this ideal condition. They cannot cause the hearts of men to love each other. The influence of science and arts is impotent to bring about this union in character which is beautiful and sublime. It is impossible, except by the power of Religion. It is the power of Religion which will unite the East and the West. It is the power of Religion which will enlighten the world. It is the power of Religion that bestows life to humanity. It is the power of religion which uproots the tree of hatred and hostility from the minds of the people. Study history and you will witness how in each dispensation this religious power has become the cause of affiliation. I mean the fundamental principles of the Religion of God.

On the other hand blind dogmas and imitation have ever been the cause of envy and hatred. When we investigate the very foundation of the Religions of God we find that it is absolute love but when we look at the present dogmatisms we see that it is absolute harm. Because the foundation of the religions of God is One, therefore it is the means of association. But these blind imitations differ consequently they create this hostility and this enmity. At this time the various contending nations are awakening, if they discover the foundation of the Religion of God they will immediately become reconciled to each other because all the Religions of God invite men to love and amity. You are aware when you read the history of the past religions that, a thousand times alas! the people have forgotten the foundation of the Religion of God and have held fast to certain blind imitations which are against and contrary to the Religion of God. Therefore they have engaged in shedding each other's blood, destroying each other's houses. All the prophets of God, how they suffered! How many difficulties they underwent! Many of them were thrown into prison, some were exiled from their native land, others were martyred by the cruel hands of the people, others even sacrificed their lives. Just ponder for a moment over the trials and sufferings of His Holiness, the Christ, who finally accepted for himself the cross so that this bond of Love might become a realised fact amongst the children of men, so that the hearts of the people might be united together. But alas! the religionists are ever prone to forget these mighty lessons, ever ready to forget the foundation of the Religions of God, believing firmly these superannuated symbols and imaginings, and as these imitations differ in nature in appearance from each other they engage in quarrel and in strife.

A thousand times alas! That these people have made that which God has meant to be the cause of Love, the cause of death - a matter which has been meant to be the instrument of salvation has become the cause of destruction! Religion which is the cause of the illumination of the world of humanity has become the cause of utter darkness! a hundred thousand times alas! We must weep over the conditions of the so called Religions of God. How these fundamentals

and principles are entirely forgotten and relinquished! How these bats of superstition are darkening the horizons of humanity and causing so much destruction and warfare and spoliation! This century is the century of Light. This period is the period of sciences and knowledge. This is the century of marvellous discoveries. This is the century of the discoveries of the realities of being. This is the century of justice and equity. This is the century of the emancipation of man and this is the century for the preservation of universal rights. Notwithstanding this, you observe daily there is enmity between the religions, there is contention between the races, there is war between the people and there is battle between the Fatherlands. How regrettable it is! We must indeed sit and lament at the conditions which today prevail in the world of humanity, notwithstanding the civilization which we have attained.

At the time when in Persia the utmost contention and hostility prevailed, when there was great hostility between the religions, the sects fighting and hating each other, shunning each other's fellowships considering each other as contaminating, when war existed between the various communities and strife between the various tribes and provinces:- at such a time His Holiness, Baha 'O'llah, like the glorious sun, appeared from the horizon of the East flooding the regions with its glorious light and dispelling the darkness which prevailed all round. He proclaimed the oneness of the world of humanity. He proclaimed that humanity must become

One Universal Commonwealth.

He announced that Universal Peace must become a fact between the religions and between the various nations. Those people and those nations who hearkened sincerely to the Teachings of Baha 'O'llah are today living together with the utmost spirit of love and spiritual grace. That misunderstanding which was ever the cause of strife between the religions was swept away. At this time many gatherings are formed in Persia, likewise in other parts of the Orient. The members of these gatherings who have listened to the instructions of Baha 'O'llah, constitute the members of various religions and they gather together in the spirit of Universal Love and universal amity. There in these meetings you will often see Christian, Mohammedan, Jew, Zoroastrian and Buddhist speaking and discoursing with each other as though they were the members of one family. All unite and agree, there is no quarrel nor strife nor bloodshed nor warfare - They have realized that fellowship and affinity are the greatest attainments of this world, because they have forgotten those blind imitations which kept them apart. They have relinquished entirely those superstitions and imaginations and have taken hold of the foundations of the Religions of God - finding out that as the foundation is one and that foundation is Reality and Reality not being liable to divisibility or multiplicity, therefore they are associating with each other in this spirit of love and unity. Their hearts are cemented together and reciprocity and cooperation and mutual assistance hold a great station in their midst. They are ever ready not only to assist each other but if necessary to sacrifice their lives

for each other in case of danger. But other people in the Orient who have not listened and who have not followed the Teachings of Baha 'O'llah are today in strife and constant warfare.

His Holiness, Baha 'O'llah promulgated certain institutes. The first institute of Baha 'O'llah is the oneness of the world of humanity. Addressing the human kind He says "You are all of one tree, each one of you constitutes a certain leaf or certain blossom and fruit, you all belong to the adamic tree, you are all one family, you are all the servants of God, you are all the sheep of God." The real Shepherd is God and He is compassionate and kind to all His flock. As long as the Kind Shepherd is compassionately shepherding all the flock, why should we be engaged in quarrel and strife? Why should we let the name of religion be the cause of alienation and difference? Why should we let the name of nationality and patriotism be the means of the shedding of blood? Why should we even let the name of the fatherland become conducive to hatred, whilst in reality all these theories are nothing but superstitions? Religion must become the cause of fellowship and love - Humanity is one Kindred. The sphere of the earth is one native land. These differences which have each caused alienation are superstitions. God has not meant that these religions should hate each other. He has laid one foundation. God has not divided this earth geographically. This earth is one continent. God has not laid any racial lines between these various nations, they are all one race - humanity. Why should we create these imaginary lines? Why should we make these superstitious lines, calling this land "Germany" and that "France" - "This is my country" and then go to war? Whilst in reality we are all one land,

We are all brothers,

God has created all one and He is kind to all. Why should these imaginations ever be the cause of battle and hatred? Especially in regard to Religion which is the very basis of this great Love and unity, which is the absolute Light of heaven, which is the spirituality of consciousness, which is the effulgence of the Kingdom. That such a beloved object should become the cause of man's selfish purpose and the means of quarrelling - what ignorance! What inadvertence! What thoughtlessness! What lowness of thought!

Another teaching of Baha 'O'llah is this:

Religion must be the cause of Love and amity - If Religion ever becomes the means of hatred and rancour then irreligion is better than that kind of religion for Religion is a cause of treatment and remedy for the sickness of the body social. If this cause of treatment is conducive to sickness undoubtedly it is better to abandon such a treatment, if religion is the means of enmity it is absolutely evil and its non-existence is therefore better than its existence.

Again religious prejudice, patriotic, national and political bias are the destroyers of the foundation of the prosperity of man. As long as these prejudices last, perfect security and

peace in the world of humanity are impossible. Therefore we must entirely forget these prejudices so that human kind may attain to the highest summit of peace and concord.

Praise be to God that we are all His servants! Praise be to God that we are all submerged in the sea of the mercy of the almighty. As long as we have such a compassionate and kind Lord why should we ever treat each other harshly for this is nothing but utter ignorance and darkness.

In brief, there are many Teachings which are revealed and instituted by Baha 'O'llah - I have just given you two or three of them. If you desire to be informed fully concerning these Teachings there are books and epistles in which they are all included - you can be fully informed of them. This Movement has brought affiliation and fellowship between the religions and nations in the Orient. Therefore as the English nation is a noble nation and the British Government a just government it is my hope that these two will be the means of raising the standard of Universal Peace, and proclaim the oneness of the world of humanity so that this dark world may be transformed into a world of light, wars and rumours of wars be changed into palms of peace and conciliation* and discord and hostility which has raged like fire may be transformed into love and concord.

[#20]

30 December: The Meaning of the Nineteen-Day Feast

Monday, 30 December 1912

Home of Mrs Mary Letitia Robinson and Mrs Annie Symonds
16 Warrington Crescent, Maida Vale, London, England

The following transcript is taken from *Bahá'í News Letter* (or *Bahá'í News* for short), no. 33 (July 1929), pp. 1–2. A prefatory note to the transcript reads, “Talk by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the Time of the Meeting of International Peace Arbitration Committee, Given at a Nineteen-Day Feast in London, December 29, 1912.” However, the accounts of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, as well as research by Momen et al. (*The Bahá'í Community of the British Isles, 1844–1963*, pp. 197 and 205), indicate that this talk was given on 30 December 1912, not the 29th.

* “Palms were an ancient symbol of the end of war, the victory of the spirit over the material, and eternal life, with Jesus Himself waved in with palms on His final entrance into Jerusalem” (David Merrick, *Abdu'l-Baha in Britain, 1913* (11 June 2018), p. 206 (of PDF), note 1059).

According to the Dwight Barstow Collection, item #32,* this translation was produced by Sohrab and transcribed from notes taken by Isabel Fraser.

* * *

Those delegates who have gathered in the Peace Conference are like merchants; each strives to compete for victory with his rival. Even if peace were established it would be but temporary. Years ago, there was an international peace agreement, but wars have continued notwithstanding. If such conferences were endowed with the power to establish an enduring peace, the world would have been at rest long ago.

Praise be to God, souls have assembled here with pure intention. That which is the means of love and fellowship in the world of humanity is acceptable at the divine threshold, and that which is conducive to the warfare of mankind, or any movement which brings a rancor, hatred and animosity, is not acceptable.

All the holy and inspired messengers who have appeared in the history of the world have, as the fulfillment of their mission, the promotion of love and amity in the hearts of the people. In order that the members of the world of humanity might associate with each other, these divine souls have utilized every means, for it has been the aim of all the prophets of God to bring about reconciliation and fellowship among the sons of men. The divine philosophers and scholars of history strove with all their power to bring about this ideal condition. In this highway, they have given up wealth, property and possessions. For this, central principle of peace more than twenty thousand in the Orient have given up their lives. While under the sword of execution, their great desire was this fulfillment; while in the pillory they longed for the effulgence of the Holy Spirit; while actually being hewn asunder, they went to death with the greatest joy and felicity, knowing that their martyrdom hastened the millennium. Consider to what an extent they were self-sacrificing. They were happy and ready to give up everything, even to life itself.

There are certain souls whose aim is equally lofty, their desire is also an affinity between members of the human family; but they practice it only to the extent of verbal demonstrations. They are not ready to give up their lives for its accomplishment. There is a great difference between the man who rests on the bed of luxury and selfishness, and the man who in the arena of activity willingly sacrifices all for the attainment of a sacred object.

Philosophers and those who see visions, dream safely in the security of their own houses, but the faithful servants of the Almighty did not merely dream high ideals in homes of comfort. In order to prove their sincerity, they gave up their houses and lives. The earth became

* A collection of miscellanea, mostly early translations of the Bahá'í Writings and pilgrims' notes, available online at: https://bahai-library.com/dwight_barstow_collection.

crimson with their blood; the cross adorned their holy temples; their bodies and their heads decorated the points of spears. Thereby we can judge of their sincerity. This is the station of sacrifice. This is the station of martyrdom. The man who desires the improvement of the human race must ever be ready to sacrifice his honor, glory and life. In this century the Bahá'ís have sacrificed their lives so that fellowship and affection may become realized in the hearts, so that the world of humanity may become radiant, the children of men be resuscitated with a new life, and the earthly world becomes a mirror reflecting the divine world. When a holy and divine messenger appears on earth, this power of unity and agreement is made possible.

One of these means of unity and agreement is made possible in this very meeting. The Nineteen Day Feast was inaugurated by the Báb and ratified by Bahá'u'lláh, in His holy book, the Akdás, so that people may gather together and outwardly show fellowship and love, that the divine mysteries may be disclosed. The object is concord, that through this fellowship hearts may become perfectly united, and reciprocity and mutual helpfulness be established. Because the members of the world of humanity are unable to exist without being banded together, cooperation and mutual helpfulness is the basis of human society. Without the realization of these two great principles no great movement is pressed forward.

It is an established fact that this plant, or that palm tree, can grow and develop alone. Some animals live in the solitary life, but not so man. He does not live and grow up by himself. It is beyond the range of his ken and ability to live independently of his fellow men. For example, he cannot at the same time engage in agriculture, cook his own food, make and sew his robe, and gather the materials to build his house. The human cry is for cooperation and reciprocity.

There are two kinds of cooperation: material and spiritual. Cooperation in the material world will insure happiness and fellowship, and will facilitate the progress of humankind; but the ideal. The most real and virtuous cooperation is spiritual. That is realized when people gather together to investigate and discuss principles impartially, to talk over the divine and philosophic principles of the age and to assist each other in pursuit of divine knowledge and wisdom. This real cooperation and mutual assistance is the foundation on which the super-structure of material reciprocity is based. Through this spiritual inter-assistance the prosperity of the world of man is unveiled.

Consider the divine ones who lived in bygone ages. Consider the sacred souls and philosophers of the past. Of their knowledge and wisdom those contemporaneous until we are the inheritors. They left as a divine heritage for future generations lore gathered from the laboratories of nature. This is indeed spiritual cooperation, valid, age abiding, because the requirements of one age are passed on to other ages.

In brief, this is my hope: that the Nineteen Day Feast become the cause of great spiritual solidarity between the friends, that it may bring believers into the bond of unity, and we will then be so united together that love and wisdom will spread from this center to all parts. This Feast is a divine Feast. It is a Lord's supper. It attracts confirmation of God like a magnet. It is the cause of the enlightenment of hearts.

Every day great feasts and banquets are being spread with the object of material enjoyment and relish of food. People partake of certain delicacies and waters from various fountains, that they may have a good time. Balls and dances follow. All these are for the body, but this fellowship is of the enjoyment of God, for the partaking of spiritual food, for the elucidation of spiritual subjects, for the discussion and interpretation of the teachings and counsels of God. It is absolute spirituality.

It is my hope that the Nineteen Day Feast may become firmly established and organized so that the holy realities which are behind this meeting may leave behind all prejudices and conflict, and make their hearts as a treasury of love. Even if there is the slightest feeling between certain souls—a lack of love—it must be made to entirely disappear. There must be the utmost translucency and purity of intention.

They must enjoy the love of God, acquire the power for the promotion of the happiness of mankind and the Word of God. With such high mention must this Feast become an established institution. When they gather in this meeting, all those present must turn their faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá, and from their hearts supplicate, invoke and entreat toward the lofty throne, beg for God's forgiveness for all shortcomings, read the teachings and rise to His service.

Then spread the feast and give refreshments. Assuredly great results will be the outcome of such meetings. Material and spiritual benefits will be assured. All who are present will be intoxicated with the breezes of the Love of God, and the Breath of the Holy Spirit will with tremendous power inspire the hearts.

If this meeting be established on such a rock, it will become a power which will attract heavenly confirmations, be the means of the appearance of the Light of God, and the reality of every subject will become unfolded. Such a meeting will be under the protection of God. It is my hope that you will continually hold these meetings and that each time it will become more and more the center of all the virtues, the point for the effulgence of God.

May your hearts be enlightened!
May your faces become radiant!
May your spirits be illumined!

May your thoughts find wider range of vision!
May your spiritual susceptibilities be increased!
May the realm of God surround you, and may your hearts become the treasury of heaven!

This is my hope.

[#21]

31 December: Address at Manchester College

Tuesday, 31 December 1912
Manchester Hall, Manchester College
Oxford, England

The following summary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse on this occasion was published in the 3 January 1913 issue of *The Oxford Times*.

* * *

Abdul Baha, who delivered his lecture through an interpreter, said it was science which caused the progression of the intellect of man; which held before the vision events of the future - it animated the body and the quickening of it. Science distinguished man from the animal; had there been no such thing as science, then man and the animal would have been on the same level. It was science that made them understand the mysteries of God, therefore the first efforts of the human mankind was to have science. If they desired to bring out the mysteries of nature, they must think and investigate, and if they did not do so they would never reach any comprehensive conclusion. All the sciences and crafts were once the mysteries of nature, but man had discovered them, and out of the plain of invisibility he had brought them into visibility. This showed that he had powers to break the mystery of nature. He had taken the sword from the hand of nature and used it against the head of nature. For instance, man had the power of perception: nature had not. He had the power of (in)discrimination, and power of the discovery - nature was devoid of this. Man could prophesy the future, but nature could not. Nature had only an apparent comprehension, but man had the full comprehension, and whilst on earth he could discover the mystery of the heaven. Why should they adore nature, whilst that invisible power which was in men was superior and more perfect than nature? In his natural state man was imperfect, but in his humanity he had thrown his imperfections aside. They must not forget to look towards those divine gifts. Referring to warfare, the speaker said there was warfare of nature in fire, water, wind and earthquakes, and in the power of man there was warfare which was taught in the battlefield. The latter warfare was the question of the survival of the fittest. There was also another warfare; that of competition,

which was the ideal. Was it not regrettable that the people were fighting against themselves, because of their religion? Had not the fundamental idea of Christianity been entirely forgotten? Think how easy the original foundation of God had slipped from their minds, yet pure religion invited men to love each other. But the great fundamental principle had been abandoned. Dogmas had come into force which were entirely out of place in present day religion. The Balkan War was due to the fundamental basis of religion having been set aside. Religion, which should have become the cause of love, prosperity and happiness, had become the cause of hatred, destruction, and unhappiness. He was glad to say that the intellect of man had taken a much broader view; his perception was becoming clearer, and the great universities were carrying on that great work of peace and reconciliation. Now was the time for universal peace between all countries. This was the dayspring of the future. It was his hope that each one of them would, with their tongues and their hands, help to spread the keeping of peace amongst all men, so that they would be able to uproot the tree of warfare, and in consequence all nations and religions would become uniform. He was very hopeful of the future - he was a great optimist, and he hoped that the bounties of God would descend upon them - (applause).

The Chairman proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the speaker, who he said was going to reside, in the future, at Alexandria, under the protection of the Khedive and Great Britain.

The meeting then terminated.

[#22]

1 January: Brief Summary of an Address on Civilization

Wednesday, 1 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following summary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse on this occasion is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 1 January 1913.

* * *

Our beloved spoke this morning on the changing and shifting character of ancient and modern civilization which is not endowed with the lights of divine civilization. "Civilization," [H]e said, "is like unto a moving hill of sands; today it is here; tomorrow, it is many thousands [of] miles away. It is subject to the constant transferences: one day in Persia, another day in Assyria; now in Egypt; anon in Greece; once in India and again in Rome; in this age in Europe and in another age in America. Who knows what course of nobler and higher civilization is

not made ready for the East, the cradle of spiritual civilization, the foundation of the moral life of man, the main-spring of divine effulgences and the horizon from which the Day-Star of hope is arising with resplendent beauty? When the material civilization joins hand[s] with divine civilization, then the world will have reached the goal of a new order of things. Then there will be no poverty, no squalor, no crime, no shame. Then there will be no night and no winter. Eternal day and perennial spring will gladden all hearts.”

[#23]

1 January: Address to the Cosmos Club

Wednesday, 1 January 1913
The Cosmos Club
London, England

The following text is taken from Amín Egea, *Apostle of Peace*, vol. 2, pp. 48–51. Mirza Ahmad Sohrab served as ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpreter on this occasion.

With regard to the provenance of this transcript, Egea writes:

Notes of the translation of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk were taken by ‘three lady disciples’. One of them was probably Lady Blomfield, who was present at the meeting, and the other two were perhaps Ethel Rosenberg and Mary Thornburgh-Cropper, who on that day had visited the Master. Their notes appeared in the March issue of the *International Psychic Gazette* (*Apostle*, vol. 2, p. 48).

Egea’s full citation of the talk is as follows:

‘Abdul Baha’s Address to Cosmos Club’, *International Psychic Gazette*, Mar. 1913 (8:1), p. 220.

* * *

Tonight I wish to speak before this loving assembly on the subject of the Spirit. All phenomena are endowed with spirit, but the spirit is manifested in varying degrees of life according to the capacity and ability of the manifester.

It has been demonstrated that mineral life is endowed with spirit, or soul. A step higher than the mineral is the vegetable kingdom, and when we observe carefully we see that the vegetable is also endowed with this virtue of life, or spirit. It is evident that the spirit in the vegetable kingdom is of a higher order than that of the mineral.

A degree higher still, and we enter into the animal kingdom. The animal likewise possesses this spirit. A sphere yet higher, and more comprehensive, is that spirit possessed by man. This life and this spirit has been bestowed upon man. These four categories of spirit are in the realm of matter. They belong to the materialities of life.

There is yet a higher spirit which belongs to the world of idealisation that is the real spirit. In this connection, his Holiness, the Christ, says, 'Let the dead bury their dead', while in reality those who desired to bury their dead were endowed with spirit - that is, they were living. Although they were endowed with the spirit of the vegetable, the animal, and human kingdoms, you will see clearly how Christ classed them as dead people, because they had not the spiritual life.

Unknown and insignificant, humble fishermen became known throughout the heaven of the Almighty, and their glory was like unto a brilliant star, ever shining on the horizon of life. Therefore we must ever strive so that this spirit may become resuscitated through the breath of the Holy Spirit; so that He may draw these illumined ones to the kingdom of God; so that the rays of the sun of reality may shine upon us, and that invisible reality of man which is immortal may ascend to the supreme concourse.

Illumination is of two kinds. There are two kinds of bodies which bestow light: one kind enjoys light from itself and independently, like the sun. It does not receive these rays from any other source. There is another light-giving body, like unto the moon. The moon is not itself a light-giving body, it is a recipient of the light from the sun. Likewise, the realities of humanity are not independent light-giving bodies. They must receive these rays from the sun of reality, because from this centre of illumination and its rays all phenomena are educated and cultured.

This sun is one sun, although it may have many dawning places. For example, the dawning place of the sun during the summer differs from its dawning place during the season of winter. Sometimes the sun dawns from the equinoxial point, again from another horizon, and at another time it may shine from a southern horizon. Although the dawning places may differ, yet the sun is ever the same sun. Those beholding the sun will receive the rays of the sun, no matter from which horizon it may dawn. But those who are limited to a certain definite horizon, while the sun is shining from that point, turn their faces in that direction, but later on when the sun directs its course to another horizon, they stay just where they are and do not turn their gaze to the new rising and dawning place; they worship the dawning place and not the sun. For example, there was a time when the sun of reality shone from the Mosaic place of dawning. Then, when the sun of reality shone from the Mosaic horizon, the Jews worshipped that horizon. Then that light of reality was transformed into the sun of reality

which appeared from the Messianic dawning place. If the Jews had been adorers of the light, they would have turned their gaze to the horizon upon which the light was dawning, and from which Christ appeared; but because they were worshippers of the horizon, and were gazing towards the Mosaic point, they were consequently deprived from holding the rays of the sun of reality.

Man must never be limited: he must be the adorer of reality. He must be the seeker of the light of reality, no matter from what dawning place it may arise. No matter from what point or from what lamp the light is shining, we must be lovers of the light. We must be athirst for water, no matter from what fountain it may be flowing. We must be seekers of fruit, no matter from what tree it is plucked. Let no one be subject to his own limitations, for if he be limited he will be deprived of that bounty which God has willed a man may enjoy, from the benefit which He has showered upon world and from the effulgence of the sun of reality. In short, that spirit of God shines upon all the creation. It is my hope that all you may become illumined through the light of reality; that each one of you may become quickened by the spirit of God; that you may all turn your attention towards the kingdom of God; that you all may become manifestations of the bounties and favours of God. Again Christ says 'Those who are born of the spirit are spirit, those who are born of the flesh are flesh.' Man enjoys two kinds of realities - a reality which is visible or seen, and a reality which is invisible or unseen; a reality which is limited, another reality which unlimited. His limited reality belongs to the world of matter, and through these limitations he belongs to the animal kingdom, but his illimitable reality belongs to the world of God. His visible reality is circumscribed, and is captive in the claws of the natural world. All the catastrophes in the material realm are contingent upon this visible and limited reality. If the body of man is exposed, he catches a severe cold. He may become submerged and drowned in the sea through an accident, and the animals attack likewise the outward body of man.

But as regards the invisible reality of man, that reality is infinite. It is the discoverer of the reality of beings; it is endowed with supernatural power; it can withstand all creation, it can withstand attacks from the Occident or the Orient. All phenomena are humbled before it. A mountain becomes as nothing before that invisible reality. A lion is caged through that invisible reality.

This radiant reality which is in man is like unto a clear mirror through which the secrets of the Kingdom are reflected. The rays of the sun of reality mirror forth through it the breath of the Holy Spirit which bestows life. This invisible reality is of the world of light. It is of the world of eternity. This is why spirit is changeless and immutable.

In the beginning of every dispensation, at the dawn of every new manifestation of God, this spirit is breathed through the body of men, and by it people become renewed. Their qualities

and attributes are changed. It transforms man from the lower degrees of life to the higher realm or state of existence. Whereas a man was imperfect, he becomes wise, whereas he was imperfect, he becomes perfect, though but a dead body he enjoys a new life.

Consider how, during the time of Christ, this spirit of reality was breathed through the body of the Apostles, who, though ignorant, became wise, and who, though living in darkness, became illuminated.

[#24]

2 January: Address to the Women's Freedom League

Thursday, 2 January 1913
Essex Hall
London, England

The following account of this occasion is taken from the 10 January 1913 issue of *The Vote*.*

* * *

AN EASTERN PROPHETS MESSAGE.

ABDUL BAHA SAYS: "THERE IS NO DISTINCTION: MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL."

A venerable figure, radiating brotherliness, despite long years of imprisonment, wearing a long brown robe and a white turban, which emphasized the keen, alert eyes, Abdul Baha greeted with evident pleasure the crowded audience which received him with reverent enthusiasm at the Women's Freedom League meeting, Essex Hall, on January 2.

The leader of the Bahai Movement, speaking through a very able interpreter,[†] said:-

This is a wonderful gathering. I hope its purposes and objects will be realised, demonstrating to mere man that men and women are equal. May it become an impetus to women in all parts of the world to greater achievements!

The world of humanity is like a bird with its two wings - one is male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong and impelled by some common force, the bird cannot fly heavenwards. According to the spirit of this age, women must advance and fulfil their mission in all departments of life, becoming equal to men. There is no difference between men and women.

* Another account was published in *The Suffragette*, 10 January 1913, p. 5.

[†] Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.

They must be on the same level as men and receive all their rights. This is my earnest prayer, and it is one of the fundamental principles of Baha Ullah. Baha Ullah proclaimed that the world of humanity was one tree; all nations, peoples, religions, men and women constitute the branches, leaves, blossoms, fruit. In this one peerless tree there is no distinction of gender in God's sight. Whoever practises humanitarian work draws near to God, whether man or woman; there is no distinction.

No Strife between Male and Female

As we study world phenomena we come to the conclusion that in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms there is no difference between male and female; in plant life there is no strife for suffrage; the vegetable kingdom has suffrage already. Likewise in the animal kingdom there is no quarrel and strife between male and female, although it is an inferior creation to man. The male never taunts the female with his superiority; both enjoy perfect equality.

Why should man, who is endowed with great intelligence, who is made in the likeness of God, stoop so low as to permit such things? That he should ever dare to declare himself superior to woman is astonishing. He thinks himself as a creation to be above woman.

Artistic Skills

He declares that at present women have not attained to his intellectual and artistic level; that they are intellectually weaker; their will power is less; so man must be superior.

Brain Size

Some scientists have declared that the brains of men are heavier when weighed than women's, and so science shows that men are superior. Yet when we look round us we see people with small heads, whose brains must weigh little, but they show the keenest intelligence and great powers of understanding; and others with big heads, whose brains must be heavy, and yet they are witless. Therefore the avoirdupois of the brain has nothing to do with intelligence or superiority.

Accomplishments

When men bring forward the second proof of their superiority by saying that women have not achieved as much as men, they use poor arguments which leave history out of consideration. If they kept themselves more fully informed historically they would know that great women have lived and achieved great things in the past, and that there are many living and achieving great things to-day.

Great Women in History

Let us turn for a moment to history, and we shall see what women have accomplished in humanitarian, charitable, religious, and administrative work.

As regards political life there was the great and powerful Queen of Palmyra, Zenobia, whose dramatic history most people know. When the king, her husband, died, she showed such administrative capacity that the Roman Government appointed her his successor; she waged wars and gained great victories in Syria, she laid siege to Cairo and took it; but she also organised an efficient and just Government, and through her sagacious administration, wise deliberation, strict justice, and great hope for the advancement of the people under her rule, her new subjects unanimously accepted her as Queen, although she belonged to another nation. She built many cities, the remains of which are to be seen to-day; the many tourists from Europe and America who visit them are astonished at the signs of her power and wisdom. She became so powerful that she threw off the Roman yoke, and when the legions of Rome were marshalled against her, she completely routed them, although her army was much smaller. Clad in a red mantle, wearing her crown, sword in hand, she charged at the head of her army; such dauntless courage was irresistible, and victory was complete.

Many other women have accomplished great things in the past, too many to be mentioned here to-night; they have administered justice, shown themselves powerful, resourceful, and courageous. These are historic facts. In the religious world it is the same. You find recorded in the Old Testament how all the conquests of the Israelitish nation were inspired by one woman; His Holiness Moses was not permitted to cross the Jordan after caring for the children of Israel in the wilderness forty years, but a woman led them to victory. Likewise during the Messianic dispensation, after the crucifixion of His Holiness Christ, the apostles were shaken in their faith; even Peter, the rock on which the Church was to be founded, had denied his Master three times; finally it was Mary Magdalene who strengthened them, assuring them that the Christ ever lives, is changeless; His body was crucified, but He was the Word of God from the beginning to eternity. This fearless woman saved Christianity to shine everlastingly on the horizon of glory.

A Persian Heroine [Tahirih]

Amongst the women of our own time there is Qu'urat 'ul Ain, the daughter of a Mohammedan priest; at the time of the appearance of the Bab she showed such tremendous courage and power, that all who heard her were astonished. She threw aside her veil, despite the immemorial custom of the Persians, and although it is considered impolite to speak with men, this heroic woman carried on controversies with the wisest men, and in every meeting she vanquished them.

The Persian Government took her prisoner, she was stoned in the streets, anathematised, exiled from town to town, threatened with death, but she never failed in her determination to work for the freedom of her sisters. She bore persecution and suffering with the greatest heroism; even in prison she gained converts.

To a Persian Minister, in whose house she was imprisoned, she said: "You may kill me as soon as you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women."

At last the end of her tragic life came; she was carried into a garden and strangled. She put on, however, her choicest robes as if she were going to join a bridal party. With such magnanimity and courage she gave her life, startling and thrilling all who saw her. She was truly a great heroine.

To-day in Persia among the Bahais, there are women who also show unflinching courage, and are endowed with great poetic insight; they are most eloquent, and speak before large gatherings of people.

Women must go on advancing; they must extend their knowledge of science, literature, history for the perfecting of humanity. Ere long more will receive their rights. Men will see women in earnest, bearing themselves with dignity, improving the civic and political life, opposed to warfare, demanding suffrage and equal opportunities. I expect to see you advance in all phases of life; then will your brows be crowned with the diadem of eternal glory.

In giving his benediction at the close of the meeting, Abdul Baha said:-

O Thou Almighty, confirm the members of this Society; assist these souls present to arise and serve the world of humanity, to proclaim the oneness of the world of women, that they may become free from past prejudices and behold the countenance of God. O God, confer marvellous progress upon this Society; cause it to advance in all the virtues of humanity; illumine the hearts of all with the rays of Thy Kingdom; quicken their spirits with the breath of Thy Holy Spirit, and bestow the life of God. Give us Thy blessing so that men and women may have equal freedom; may they attain to equal rights so that even male and female may be entirely forgotten. May all unitedly and solemnly serve Thee and obtain the blessings of God. Give us Thy bounty, O Lord, so that all humanity, men and women, characterised by the image of God, may attain the supreme knowledge of Thee, discover the foundation of all holiness, live and act in accordance with Divine teaching, unitedly and with one accord, their hearts cemented and spirits joyous till they see the world of heaven!

The announcement that Abdul Baha would speak on the Equality of Men and Women at a meeting arranged by the Women's Freedom League, at the Essex Hall, on Thursday, January 2, attracted so large a gathering, that not only was the Hall crowded to its utmost limits, but many had to be turned away. Mrs. Despard presided, and in an introductory speech welcomed

the Prophet from the East with his great message of peace. She said that it was the false relations between men and women which had brought discord, and what all desired was that the discord should cease. She gave a brief outline of the Bahai movement, beginning with the coming of the Bab - The Gateway - who died a martyr's death, but his teaching lived, and the number of his followers grew in spite of persecutions, imprisonments, and martyrdoms. She spoke of the wonderful progress of the woman's movement in Persia, and especially of Qu'urut 'ul Ain and her remarkable influence in the emancipation of women, through her tragic life to a martyr's death. We can never forget, she said, the great spiritual force behind the woman's movement; it is moving throughout the world; knowing this, we go on with courage and hope.

After the Masters address, Mrs. Holmes made a moving appeal for service in the woman's Cause; personal service and the service of money; the Suffrage movement, she said, was part of the great Divine plan for the regeneration of the world. Till the status of woman was raised it was impossible to complete the plan.

Lady Bloomfield, in a short speech about the Bahai movement, said she was glad to identify herself with her sisters working for freedom. She told how the message of Abdul Baha was not an essay written in a luxurious library; it was a cry of regeneration ringing out from behind prison walls. Now he had come out into the world with his message - peace, the banishment of religious differences, humanity not fighting against each other but against evil, and the equality of men and women. Mr. Sidley, in a sympathetic speech, said that none could fail to be impressed by the simplicity and sympathy of the Master after forty years of prison. All paid homage to his courage and fidelity of purpose and the Divine intention of his message.

[#25]

2 January: Brief Statement on Reincarnation

Thursday, 2 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from *The International Psychic Gazette*, no. 7, vol. 1 (February, 1913), p. 197. I am grateful to Amín Egea for providing me with a scan of this source.

* * *

Reincarnation is a very abstruse question. If one desires to give a satisfactory explanation, one must write a book, so that the real meanings may be fully revealed. This subject can only be explained through divine philosophy, not through mere exposition of theories. Briefly stated,

the idea is as follows:—Man is indestructible. The man you see before your eyes has travelled through all the worlds of existence. Those molecular atoms which go into the make-up of the human body were originally in the mineral world, and these atoms have had journeyings and coursings through all the various phases of the mineral kingdom, appearing under various forms and images. Stepping up into the vegetable kingdom these atoms have been transferred from mineral to vegetable. In the vegetable kingdom they have manifested under various shades, and in a myriad of forms. Rising into a higher scale of life, we see them again in the animal kingdom, expressing themselves through multitudes of forms and images. And now we see these indestructible atoms dawning upon the horizon of man. In the world of man they become evident through many many pictures and forms. In brief these primordial atoms have coursings and transferences in infinite images. In every image they have had a certain peculiar virtue. Therefore, these primordial atoms, which have now appeared in man, have had their myriads of transferences in phenomena, and in each degree appearing with certain virtue and function. This is a brief statement of reincarnation.

[#26]

3 January: Address to the London Theosophical Society on the Three Realities

Friday, 3 January 1913
The Residence of Daniel N. Dunlop, 8 Sunnyside, Wimbledon
London, England

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 7, no. 13 (4 November 1916), pp. 117–119 and 124. A note is appended to that source indicating that the text was “Reprinted from *The Path* of February, 1913.”

It may be that a transcript of this talk in the original Persian exists somewhere—since what appear to be brief passages from it have been published in *Amr va Khalq*, vol. 1, p. 151—but the full text seems not to be readily available.

* * *

How beautiful it is to organize such lovely gatherings that are not based upon the pursuit of the material principles of life! Such gatherings belong to the study and the investigation of spiritual facts. . . . The spiritual power has gathered us together. Our aim is to discover the realities of phenomena. When we ponder over the reality of the microcosm, we discover that in the microcosm, or the little man, there are deposited three realities. Man is endowed with an outward or physical reality. It belongs to the animal kingdom because it has sprung out of

the material world. This side of life, or the first reality, is darkness and gloom because the world of matter is the world of darkness. This is the animalistic reality of man which he shares in common with all animals.

Man, however, enjoys a second or higher reality which is the intellectual reality that comprehends all phenomena, or is infinite as regards the phenomena. It is a governor, victorious over the world of matter. It discovers and unfolds the realities of sentient beings; it "explodes" the laws of nature, because from a physical standpoint it is superior, above and beyond the laws of nature.

When we ponder over the morphology of the human body we find that man, like any other animal, is subject to the laws of nature. All creation is the captive of nature; it cannot deviate one hair's breadth from the mandates of nature. For example, the fire is circumscribed and limited within the boundaries of the laws of nature and it cannot transcend any laws laid down by nature. This globe of ours is the captive of the postulates of nature; it cannot deviate one hair's breadth from the laws of nature. All the stellar bodies in this infinite universe, notwithstanding their colossal size, cannot deviate from the laws laid down for their courings by nature; they are the prisoners of nature; they cannot go out of the circle or the circumference which is allowed for their journeyings. The great shoreless sea is the prisoner of nature. The vegetable kingdom in its entirety is a captive of nature. The animal kingdom is a captive of nature. All this will show you that these phenomena cannot go beyond the limits set by nature. Likewise man, as far as his first reality or his physical life is concerned, is also a prisoner of nature.

But the reasonable or intellectual reality with which man is endowed enables him to transcend the laws of physical nature. For example, according to the laws of nature man is a denizen of the earth; he must walk upon the earth, and, because he is born on this globe, he belongs to this earthly life. This is a regulation of nature. But man, through his intellectual power transcends this law of nature, discovers the science of aviation and flies in the air like a bird. He becomes like a fish and goes to the very depths of the seas. He builds a great fleet and sails over the seas. It is, therefore, an indubitable fact that man is able to transcend the laws of nature; this intellectual reality of man conquers nature. Through it man is enabled to make a fruitless tree fruitful. He transforms the wild woods into fruitful orchards. He changes the plains of thistles and thorns into lovely meadows and rose gardens. Then there is the electrical energy which breaks the very mountains. Man through the application of intellectual force takes this electrical energy and makes it a captive within the incandescent lamp. According to the postulate of nature his voice is a free activity. Man takes it and makes it a prisoner within a box—a phonograph. Man through this power is enabled again to communicate with the east and the west within a few minutes. Through this intellectual power while he is in Europe he is able to discover America. This is an extraordinary power! He may live all his life in the east and yet through this power may organize great affairs in the west. All these

sciences that we enjoy were the hidden and recondite mysteries of nature but man was enabled to discover these mysteries and out of the plane of the unseen he brought them into the world of the seen. All the artistic accomplishments and undertakings which we have today were once the secrets of nature; man discovered them and brought them to the plane of visibility. In short, the exploration of the secrets of nature seem to be very numerous. Therefore the citation of these facts will demonstrate to you that man is superior to nature. He is, in fact, its governor, although his physical reality is a captive of nature. It is then self-evident that in man there exists an intellectual reality which is superior to his physical reality.

There is, however, a third reality in man, that is the spiritual reality. Through that medium come spiritual revelations. This is a celestial power which is infinite as regards the intellectual as well as the physical realms. This power is conferred upon man through the breath of the Holy Spirit. It is an eternal reality, an indestructible reality, a reality which belongs to the divine kingdom. This celestial reality, or the third reality, delivers man from the material world. It is the power which enables man to escape from the world of nature.

This is proven from scientific as well as spiritual evidence. When we ponder and look over phenomena we observe that all have their origin in a single element. This single atomic element travels and has its coursings through all grades of existence. I wish you to ponder over this carefully. This single element has been in the realm of the mineral kingdom. While staying in the mineral kingdom it has had its coursings and transformations through myriads of images and forms. Having completed its travellings through the mineral kingdom it has ascended to the vegetable kingdom and in this kingdom it has had again its travellings and transformations through myriads of images; sometimes it has been a grain, again it was in the form of a leaf, anon it was a flower or an animal, a tree, or a blossom! Then it attains to the stage of fruition and is a fruit. This single primordial element has had its transformations through these infinite forms and images. Again in the human kingdom it has its transferences and coursings through multitudes of forms. In short, this reality or this single primordial atom has had its numerous travelings through every stage of life and in every stage or form it was endowed with a special and peculiar virtue. Therefore the great and divine philosophers have had an epigram as follows: "All things are involved in all things." Every single phenomenon has enjoyed the favors of God, and in every form of these infinite electrons it has had its perfections or virtue. This, I hope, is evident and clear to you. This flower once upon a time was the soil; the animal eats it; it ascends to the animal kingdom. Man eats the body of the animal and there you have the ascension into the human kingdom, because all phenomena are the eaters and the eaten. This breath we respire is it not true that there are many thousands of infinitesimal microbes in it, each one of these microbes going into the constitution of our body? And this will show you that the lower forms of life can be transmuted into the higher realms of existence. Therefore, every primordial atom of these atoms, single and indivisibly, has had its coursings throughout all sentient creations, going constantly into the make-up and aggregation of elements. Thus you have the conservation of energy and the

infinitude of phenomena, the indestructibility of phenomena, changeless and immutable because life cannot become annihilated. The utmost is this; that the form, the outward image, throughout these changes and transformations is dissolved. The realities of all phenomena are immutable and unchangeable. Extinction or mortality is nothing but the transformation of pictures and images but the reality back of these images is eternal.

Every reality of the realities of life is one of the bounties of God. Some people believe that the divinity of God had a beginning. Therefore with this principle they have limited the downpour of the bounties of God. For example, they think that there was a time when man did not live, and that there will be a time in the future when the race of man will be destroyed, that there was a time when this globe did not exist. Such a theory circumscribes the power of God, for how can we understand the divinity of God but through the manifestation of his qualities? How can we understand the fire? Through its physical heat, through its flame. Were not heat and flame in this fire, naturally we could not say that the fire existed. The illumination of the lamp is through electrical energy and if we believe that there was a time in this world when this electrical energy was not in existence, then that is equal to the statement that there was no life at all. Or, take another example, the sun; let us say that there was a time when the sun was not endowed with rays and heat. That is equal to saying that there was no sun, because the very existence of the sun is demonstrated through its heat and rays. If there was a time when God did not manifest his qualities, then there was no God, because the attributes of God presuppose the creation of phenomena. For example, we say God is the creator. A creator must of necessity create. We say God is the provider. The provider must have someone to provide for. We say God is omniscient. Then omniscient knowledge is the consequence of omniscience. Therefore, as long as God has been God there has been creation, there have been the creatures. God has no beginning and his creation has no ending, for the bestowal of God is never failing. The effulgence of God cannot be suspended. The sovereignty of God cannot be interrupted. If we conceive a beginning for the universe of creation then we have conceived for the dominion and sovereignty of God a beginning which is a false theory. In reality his sovereignty is without beginning and without ending. Can we ever dream or conceive of a king without subjects, without an army, without a kingdom? Is it possible? No. A king is in need of a kingdom; he is in need of an army; a king is in need of wealth. Now as long as the kingdom of God, the sovereignty of God, is eternal, the creation of this universe throughout eternity is presupposed.

When we look at the reality of the subject we will see that the bounties of God are infinite, without beginning and without ending. The greatest bounties of God in this phenomenal world are his Manifestations, (i. e. the great prophets). They are the greatest bounty. These Manifestations are the suns of the reality. Therefore, for the appearance of the holy divine Manifestations of God there has been no beginning and for the appearance of the holy divine Manifestations of God in the future there is no ending whatsoever, because God is infinite and his grace cannot be limited. And if we ever dare to circumscribe his grace within certain

limited spheres, then we have as a necessity circumscribed the reality of divinity which is all-powerful. Therefore the perfect man ever beholds the rays of the sun, he ever expects the coming of the effulgence of God, he ever gazes at the grace and bounties of God, he ever ponders over the omnipotent God, and he knows of a certainty that the reality of divinity is not finite. His names and his attributes are not finite, his graces and bounties are not limited and the coming of the Manifestations of God are not circumscribed. This fact is self-evident and manifest.

Those people who have harkened to the teachings of BAHÁ'O'LLAH—Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jews—such people have discarded their past rancour and are associating with the utmost love and unity. Take my example and see with what degree of love I am associating with you tonight, loving you with all my heart and soul. In the same way all those people are living together, with the utmost accord and unity, to such an extent that they are ready to sacrifice their possessions and lives for each other; and to such an extent has the transformation been wrought that they are ever self-sacrificing for each other. Were you to enter into any (Bahai) gathering in the Orient, it would be very hard for you to discover who is a Christian and who is a Jew, or who is a Zoroastrian, for they are just like so many flames which have become one big flame. (Applause) All these different faiths are merging into one great faith.

[#27]

4 January: Conversation with an Anti-Suffragist Woman

Saturday, 4 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following record of this conversation is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab to Harriet Magee dated 4 January 1913.

* * *

Then the curtain is raised again and a celebrated actress and also a teacher of elocution is sitting before the Master. She teaches Lady Blomfield's daughter, Nouri Khanoum, elocution and public speaking. Our Lady is also present. She is welcomed by the Master and somehow the question of suffragists comes in. She emphatically declares that she is an anti-suffragist. She does not believe in women getting votes and she is working against the realization of such a dreadful thing! The Master is of course amused and tells the lady you have found an enemy, a foe worthy of your steel. "What is your belief in proof in working against suffrage?" The

Master asks. "Oh! I feel that women must attend to the duties of the home and child rearing."
She answers.

"But here is not a question of feeling, we like to have some evidence for your opposition. Suppose a judge is sitting in the chair and you and a suffragist are going to decide your case. The suffragist would say, that the plant and animal life already enjoy suffrage. There are male and female, their rights are equal and they are never fighting who is superior or who is inferior, because they receive the same kind of natural education. But in the human Kingdom there is this fight. In the vegetable kingdom only the female is productive; the male is barren. A female palm tree yields dates; a female fig tree produces figs; a female mulberry tree gives fruits etc; while the male trees are good-for-nothing. What will you say to this? Besides, a lioness is more valorous than the lion. The hunters are not as much afraid of the lion as the lioness. The lion may escape at the sight of a hundred hunters with their rifles aiming at him but the lioness will stand on her own ground. A mare is more patient and more mettlesome than the horse. Once an Arab wanted to sell me his horse. He had a mare also. I told him I would like to buy the mare. He would not sell her - Why? Because if I keep this horse for ten years it will grow old and there will be no increase in the family while the mare every year brings a little horse into the world."

The anti-suffragist and the celebrated actress laughed. She could not say anything. "I bow my head before you. The proofs are unanswerable" she says. The Master tells her how in America in nearly all states woman are enjoying suffrage and so far as experience teaches us the women in these states have not abused their right and privilege. The interview was full of fun and laughter and serious discussion at the same time. She [the actress] left the Master after kissing His hand and expressing her great delight and gratitude.

[#28]

4 January: Discourse on the Four Kinds of Love

Saturday, 4 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following translation of this discourse is taken from *Paris Talks*, pp. 179–81.

* * *

What a power is love! It is the most wonderful, the greatest of all living powers.

Love gives life to the lifeless. Love lights a flame in the heart that is cold. Love brings hope to the hopeless and gladdens the hearts of the sorrowful.

In the world of existence there is indeed no greater power than the power of love. When the heart of man is aglow with the flame of love, he is ready to sacrifice all—even his life. In the Gospel it is said God is love.

There are four kinds of love. The first is the love that flows from God to man; it consists of the inexhaustible graces, the Divine effulgence and heavenly illumination. Through this love the world of being receives life. Through this love man is endowed with physical existence, until, through the breath of the Holy Spirit—this same love—he receives eternal life and becomes the image of the Living God. This love is the origin of all the love in the world of creation.

The second is the love that flows from man to God. This is faith, attraction to the Divine, enkindlement, progress, entrance into the Kingdom of God, receiving the Bounties of God, illumination with the lights of the Kingdom. This love is the origin of all philanthropy; this love causes the hearts of men to reflect the rays of the Sun of Reality.

The third is the love of God towards the Self or Identity of God. This is the transfiguration of His Beauty, the reflection of Himself in the mirror of His Creation. This is the reality of love, the Ancient Love, the Eternal Love. Through one ray of this Love all other love exists.

The fourth is the love of man for man. The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.

But the love which sometimes exists between friends is not (true) love, because it is subject to transmutation; this is merely fascination. As the breeze blows, the slender trees yield. If the wind is in the East the tree leans to the West, and if the wind turns to the West the tree leans to the East. This kind of love is originated by the accidental conditions of life. This is not love, it is merely acquaintanceship; it is subject to change.

Today you will see two souls apparently in close friendship; tomorrow all this may be changed. Yesterday they were ready to die for one another, today they shun one another's society! This is not love; it is the yielding of the hearts to the accidents of life. When that which has caused this 'love' to exist passes, the love passes also; this is not in reality love.

Love is only of the four kinds that I have explained. (a) The love of God towards the identity of God. Christ has said God is Love. (b) The love of God for His children—for His servants. (c) The love of man for God and (d) the love of man for man. These four kinds of love originate from God. These are rays from the Sun of Reality; these are the Breathings of the Holy Spirit; these are the Signs of the Reality.

Scotland

[#29]

Undated Interview with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Scotland

Undated
Presumably in Edinburgh

The following account is taken from *The Scots Pictorial*, 18 January 1913 (vol. XIII, O.S. no. 696), p. 335.

* * *

January 18, 1913. The Scots Pictorial. ABDUL BAHÁ

THE TEACHINGS OF BAHÁISM. UNITY OF ALL RELIGIONS. UNIVERSAL PEACE INTERVIEW WITH ABBAS EFFENDI - "THE SERVANT OF GOD." By Ion

To be ushered into the presence of Abdul Baha, Abbas Effendi, "the Servant of God," is to have the curtains of time lifted back and to hold converse with a prophet of Israel. The artistic dignity of his quietly coloured Eastern gown, the white folds of his turban, and the patriarchal beard which hangs upon his bosom all contribute towards giving the immediate impression of an Eastern scholar and divine. But it is the finely moulded contour of his face, the gentle movements of his hands, and the deep expression in his eyes which make it manifest that here, indeed, is an embodiment of the prophets of old. In comparing Abdul Baha to the Biblical prophets, there is a distinction to be made. The early prophets descended upon mankind as the scourgers of iniquity and as swords of the Lord. This messenger comes as a great reconciler of all faiths, as the forerunner of universal peace. In his eyes there is suffering and love. He is a man who has looked aghast and with pity upon the turmoil of life, and has heartfelt thoughts to utter.

When I entered the dimly-lit room, Abdul Baha was seated deep in a great arm-chair. At his feet reclined a companion in quiet conversation with him. Nearby there sat one of his secretaries, * a slenderly-built young Persian, with a delicately-shaped nose and a short square-cut black beard. He looked like a figure from an Assyrian statue. A gentle and courteously-mannered Persian, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, acted as interpreter.

* Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání.

In a low and gentle voice Abdul Baha spoke to his interpreter, who translated his message into English, sentence by sentence.

"I come as the preacher of the religion of Bahai, which recognises the fundamental unity of all religions. Jews and Christians, Mohammedans and Buddhists, worship the same great God of mankind. The mission of Bahaism is to unite all religions in one, and to propagate universal peace. When I speak of religions I mean, of course, the foundations of religions, and not the dogmas or blind imitations which have gradually stolen in here and there. These are ever destructive and hinder the progress of nations.

"The foundations of the religions of God are one. They are not multiple, for they are realities. (Reality does not accept multiplicity, though every one of the divine religions can be divided into two distinct departments, one concerned with the world of morality, and that is essential, the other with conduct, which is subject to transformation and change with the times and customs.) The foundation of these divine religions is ever the cause of progress, and the mission of these divers prophets has been no other than the education and advancement of the world. If a prophet is a true prophet it will be found that he has educated the people, lifting them from the abyss of ignorance. Whatever religion it is that the true prophets have preached, they have all been sent by the same God. Christ and Mohammed, Moses and Buddha, all teach the fatherhood of God. The followers of Bahaism have a religion which selects from the great religions of the world that which is common to them all.

"Men of every land and thought believe and know that God is kind. Now, so long as we have a kind God, why should we be unkind? He is our Creator, our Provider, and Help. Why, Therefore, should we say, 'This is a Christian, this is a Jew, that a Mussultuan, or Mohammedan, or Buddhist?' It is really none of our business. God has created us all, and it is our care to be kind to everybody. That is our duty. As to our speculative beliefs, that is a matter between each individual and the universal God.

"Religionists have considered each other as contaminating, and have shunned and reviled each other, exercising the severest enmity. Then dawned His Holiness Baha'o'llah, the founder of the Bahais. He has laid institutes and teachings which unite all the nations, cause fellowship among the various religions, and which dispel political, religious, and racial prejudice, and usher under the tabernacle of its Oneness of humanity all the peoples of reality, just as if they were one household.

"That is why His Holiness Baha'o'llah addresses humanity. saying, 'Ye are all the leaves of one tree and the drops of one sea.' That is to say, the world of humanity, representing all the religious, representing all the races, may be likened to a tree. Every nation of the nations is like a branch thereof, and every soul among them is like a leaf. But all of them belong to one

tree, and that tree is the blessed tree, and that tree is the tree of life, and that tree is the tree of sacrifice.

"Therefore it is not allowable that among human individuals there should linger any strife. All must live in the utmost kindness, in the utmost love, the utmost of fellowship. and must pass their days pleasantly, for this will win the bounties of God and the bestowals shall surround them, and the Kingdom of God will become personified in the human kingdom. And this is our wish in its entirety."

When he had finished speaking the prophet smiled gently. With a feeling of deep reverence I clasped his hand as he wished me good-night.

[#30]

7 January: Address to the Edinburgh Esperanto Society

Tuesday, 7 January 1913
Freemason's Hall
Edinburgh, Scotland

The following translation of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's discourse is published in *Star of the West*, vol. 11, no. 18 (7 February 1921), pp. 299–304 and 306.

* * *

Every movement in the world of humanity bringing on its back unity and accord is good; and every matter which creates discord and dis-harmony is evil. This century is a radiant century. Its discoveries are many. Its inventions are great. Its undertakings are multitudinous. On account of these great accomplishments, this century is superior to all other centuries. But the greatest undertaking is the unification of language, because it is more beneficial and productive of more pleasure than any other undertaking of this age. The unity of language brings about great fellowship between hearts. The union of language is the cause of the attainment of accord. It brings about the entire sweeping away of misunderstanding between the people; it establishes accord between all the children of men. It gives broader conceptions and greater vision to human minds, and to-day the greatest undertaking in the world of humanity is to understand and make yourself understood. Every individual member of the body politic, on account of the widespread of an auxiliary international language, will be enabled to put himself in touch with the current events and ethical and scientific discoveries of the age. An auxiliary universal language will give us the key - or the master key - to the understanding of the secrets of the past ages. Through an international language every nation

in the future will be enabled to pursue its scientific discoveries very easily and without any difficulty.

It is well known to you that the Oriental people, young men coming to the West trying laboriously to study the discoveries of the West, for many years must work hard so that first they may study the language and then their special branch of learning. At the very least, they must give many years of their life to the study of the language of the country they go to; then they can start on the study of that special branch of science in which they are interested. For example, let us suppose that a young man from India or Persia or Turkestan or Arabia, desiring to study medicine, comes to this country; at the very least he must study the English language for four years, and nothing else; and then he may begin the study of medicine. But if this international auxiliary language were a part of the curriculum of education in all the schools, in his childhood he would study that language in his own country and then, no matter to which country he desired to go, he would be enabled to study his special branch of science very easily, without losing any years of his life.

To-day, even if each one of us studied languages, yet, if some one desired to travel abroad, he might be handicapped on account of not knowing the special language of a given country. I have studied the Oriental languages very profoundly, knowing the Arabic language more deeply than the Arabians themselves, having studied the Turkish language and the Persian in my own native land, and knowing other languages of the East, yet, when I came to the West, I was obliged to bring with myself a translator, and it is as if I know no language whatever. But if there were an international language, well, the Persian language of my own native land and the other one would have been sufficient to carry me along in all the countries of the world. Just think how the international language will facilitate communication between all nations of the world. Let it be said that half of our lives is spent in the acquirement of languages; for in this enlightened age every man must study languages, so that if he expects to travel to Asia and Africa and Europe he may be able to converse with the people; but by the time he has studied one language, there is another one to travel to. So you see that this life is spent in the acquirement of these languages, which are a handicap to international communication. Well, this international language will free man from all these problems. In short, to understand and make yourself understood, there must needs be an international instrument. The teacher and the student must know each other's language, so that the teacher may be able to impart his knowledge and the student acquire that knowledge. In the world of humanity there is no greater factor than to make yourself understood to your fellowmen, for civilisation itself, the progress of civilisation, depends upon this process. To acquire arts and sciences one must know how to speak, make himself understand and understood at the same time. So on this understanding and making yourself understood will depend the acquisition of sciences, and it will make men to comprehend all affairs of life; and this process of understanding and making yourself understood depends upon language. Therefore, if this auxiliary language is established, all the members of humanity will then be enabled to understand each other. As I

speak now, an episode comes to my mind which happened in Bagdad. There were two friends who did not know each other's language. One of them got sick; the other one called upon him, but he could not express his sympathy, so by making a sign he asked him "How are you?" By making another sign, the sick man answered "I am almost dying," and the friend who called, thinking that he had told him that he was feeling much better, said, "Thanks be to God." By such incidents you realise that the best thing in this world is to be able to make yourself understood by your friends, and also to understand them, and there is nothing worse in this world than not to be able to convey your thoughts. But if there is this auxiliary language, all these difficulties will be removed.

Now, praise to God, this language of Esperanto is invented, and this is one of the special endowments of this brilliant century; this is one of the greatest undertakings of this great age. Up to this time the world of humanity has failed to bring about this invention. This unification of languages had never crossed the minds of the thinkers of the past ages, and in reality it was an impossibility in those times, because then there was no freedom in going and coming, and no travelling and no intercourse between the various countries. Now the means of communication and transport are greatly increased, therefore it is necessary and it is possible to bring about the use of this international language.

His Holiness Baha'u'llah fifty years ago wrote a book; that book is called "The Most Holy Book," and in that book one of the fundamental principles of the Bahai movement is that there must be the invention of an auxiliary language; and then he goes on to explain the benefits and profits that will accrue through such a medium. Now let us thank the Lord because this Esperanto language is created. Therefore we have commanded all the Baha'is in the Orient to study this language very carefully, and ere long it will spread all over the East. Therefore I request you also, non-Esperantists and fellow-Esperantists, to put your utmost exertion into the spread and promulgation of this language, because it will hasten that day, that millennial day, which has been prophesied by the past prophets and seers, that day in which, it is said, the wolf and lamb will drink from the same fount, the lion and the deer graze in the same meadow. The signification of this Holy Writ is that the contesting races, warring nations, inimical religions, will come to each other in the spirit of love and amity - then, the day-spring of that millennium and every means, every instrument which confers unity and amity upon the children of men, that is love and that is the spirit.

As we said, the greatest affair in this world is the reality of an auxiliary international language. The unification of language will transform the world of humanity into one world; the unification of language will do away with the misunderstandings between religions, and the unification of language will bring together the East and the West in the spirit of fellowship and love. The unification of language will change this world of many families into one family. This auxiliary international language will gather the various races under one cover, as if the five continents of the world had become one continent, because then they can convey their

thoughts to each other. The international auxiliary language will do away with ignorance and superstition, for each child, no matter to which race or nation he may belong, will be able to pursue his studies in science and art, because at that time he will be called on to study only two languages - one his own native language, and one the international auxiliary language. Let us hope for that day, when even the boundaries of native languages will be swept away and the world may enjoy one language. What greater bounty is there than this? What more munificent welfare is there than this? Then the world of humanity will become the delectable paradise, just as it is said that in heaven there is one language. The material world will become the expression of the world of the inner. Then the discoveries will be unfolded; inventions will become multiple; sciences will advance by leaps and bounds; scientific agriculture will take a wider sphere of accomplishment, because at that time the nations will be able quickly to assimilate the thoughts which are expressed, and because all these thoughts will be expressed in that universal language. If this international language is a factor in the future, all the countries of the East will be enabled to acquire the sciences of the West in no time, because they will be able to read these books and comprehend their meaning; and the Western nations will be enabled to acquire the thoughts and ideas of the East, and through this they will be enabled to improve their condition. In short, on account of the establishment of this international language, the world of humanity will become another world; extraordinary progress will be attained. Take, for example, a family in which the various members speak each a different language; how difficult it is for them to convey their thoughts to each other, and how great and wonderful it is when they are able easily to understand each other's thoughts. For if they know each other's language, they will go on very rapidly; there is no doubt whatever about this. Therefore it is our hope that the Esperanto language will spread universally before long, that it may be promulgated in all the countries, so that all the people may live with each other in the spirit of amity and love.

The kings - may God assist them - or the counsellors of the world - must consult together, and appoint one of the existing languages, OR A NEW LANGUAGE, and instruct the children therein in all thy schools of the world, and the same also must be done in respect to writing (i.e., the characters employed must be similar for all languages).

BAHA'U'LLAH. The Glad Tidings.

We have formerly decreed that speech was to be in two languages, and that there should be an effort made to reduce it into one. So likewise should it be with the writings of the world, in order that people may not waste and lavish their lives in the study of various languages, and that the whole earth may be considered as one city and one land.

BAHA'U'LLAH. Words of Paradise.

To-day the greatest need of the world of humanity is for the discontinuance of the existent misunderstandings amongst nations, and that can be brought about through the unity of

language. Unless unity of languages is realised, the Most Great Peace, and the unity of the human world in a binding manner, cannot be accomplished and established. For the function of language is to portray the mysteries and secrets of the human hearts. The heart may be likened to a box, and language to the key. We can open the box only through the key, and observe the gems contained in that box. Therefore, this question of an auxiliary international language is of the utmost importance. Man can be trained and educated internationally through this language. They can acquire the evidence of past history and ages through language. The spread of the known facts of the human world depends upon language. The explanation of Divine teachings can only be brought about through language. Because of the diversities of languages, and the lack of human comprehension of the languages of each other's nationalities, these glorious aims cannot be realised. Therefore, the very foremost service to the world of man is to establish an auxiliary international language. It will become the cause of the tranquillity of the commonwealth of man. It will become the cause of the spread of sciences and arts amongst the nations of the world. It will be the cause of the progress and development of all the races. Therefore we must with all our powers make an effort so that we may establish an international auxiliary language amongst the nations and races of the world.

[#31]

8 January: Address at Rainy Hall

Wednesday, 8 January 1913
Rainy Hall, New College, the Mound EH1 2LU
Edinburgh, Scotland

The following account of this occasion is taken from *The Scotsman*, 9 January 1913, p. 11.

* * *

ABDUL BAHÁ IN EDINBURGH A NEW UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

The Persian Reformer, Abdul Baha, appeared for the second time before an Edinburgh audience yesterday afternoon, and delivered an address in the Rainy Hall to a large audience, mostly ladies. The meeting had been arranged by the Outlook Tower Committee to give Abdul Baha an opportunity of expounding to the people of Edinburgh the principles of Baha Ullah, whose object was to "show the way to divine union of man with God and its manifestation in the brotherhood of mankind."

Professor Patrick Geddes, who presided, said that on Monday night Abdul Baha spoke of a universal language, on which he set much value as a means of international communication in commerce, in science, and in sympathy; that day he would speak of the ideas and ideals of the movement with which he was identified. That Bahai movement, which had struggled for half a century through persecution and difficulty, recalled the martyrdoms of old. It was now widely known in the Persian world, and from it made its appeal to the surrounding Mohammedan countries, to the Jews, and to the Christians. Arising as it did in the cell of the mystic, it was at the same time strongly fitted to interest the modern Western world.

AT BAHU ULLAH'S COMING.

Abdul Baha, who was in the costume of the Orient, spoke in Persian, and had his remarks interpreted into English by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. I have, he said, pleasure in presenting myself to this gathering, so that I may explain to you certain of the principles of Baha Ullah. Nearly sixty years ago, at a time when the Orient was engaged in warfare, when there was enmity between the different religions, his Holiness Baha Ullah appeared. Darkness brooded over the horizon of the Orient; foul clouds of ignorance hid the sky; religious prejudice and race prejudice prevailed. The peoples of the Orient were as though submerged in a sea of blind dogma and tradition. The votaries of the different religions hated each other; they never associated with each other in the same building. Had they done so they would have considered themselves contaminated. His Holiness Baha Ullah, under such conditions, appeared, and boldly proclaimed the doctrine of the oneness of the whole of humanity.

THE UNITY OF THE RACE.

He stated that humanity were the sheep of God; that God was the real and kind shepherd. When this great shepherd was compassionate and kind, why should the sheep fall out with each other? Addressing the whole of humanity, Baha Ullah says:- "Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. All the nations, peoples, and tongues are the branches, leaves, blossoms, and fruits of this great tree of humanity." God created all; God provides for all; God protects all; and as He is kind and good, why should you be unkind?

INTERNATIONAL PEACE.

The second principle of the religion of Baha Ullah has regard to international peace. Concerning this weighty matter, Baha Ullah had written to many rulers and kings. In these epistles he had brought forward certain unanswerable principles that the whole of humanity could not enjoy security and composure without the establishment of universal peace. Every war, he says, is against the good pleasure of the Lord of mankind. God has created men so that they may enjoy fellowship with each other. Man is the edifice of God. War destroys the divine edifice, and cannot, therefore, be pleasing to God. Peace is the stay of life; war the cause of death.

The third principle of Baha Ullah is this; religion must ever be the cause of love and amity. If religion breeds rancour and strife it is only a so-called religion, and it is better to do without it. God made religion a means of fellowship. When His Holiness Moses appeared, instantly good fellowship prevailed amongst the Israelites, and with the dawn of the Christian era there was wonderful concord between Egyptians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Europeans, and other nations of the world. When His Holiness Mohammed appeared in Arabia, with his presence and his mission there arose light out of the ashes of discord, and between tribes of Arabs who had warred like wild beasts against each other for 2000 years there was peace. These three examples show that religion in its nascent stages has been the cause of union. In the Old Testament it is recorded that God created man in his own image.* His Holiness Jesus says that God sends His sun to shine on the just and unjust,† and in the Koran it is written that between the creation and God thou shalt not see any difference. Therefore, if religion brings about warfare between nations, you are better without that sort of religion.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

The fourth teaching of Baha Ullah relates to the conformity of religion with science and reason. If religion is not conformable to science and reason it is superstition. God has given us an absolute mind, so that we may distinguish between error and that which is just, differentiate between right and wrong. If religion does not correspond with science and reason, it is a phantasm of the brain; for science and religion are realities, and if that religion to which we adhere is a reality, it must conform to other realities.

RELIGION AND RACIAL PREJUDICE.

The fifth teaching of Baha Ullah is this - that religious, racial, political, and patriotic prejudices are the destroyers of the foundation of the edifice of man. As long as these prejudices last, the world of humanity will not attain to peace and composure. If we consult history, we shall find that every war was due to one or other of these prejudices. These prejudices are phantasmagoria, breeding hostility and dissension; if we investigate the objects of the religion of God we shall be united. As regards racial prejudice, is not all humanity the progeny of Adam - members of one family, though the family has grown quite large? How ridiculous it is to sow division between members of one family! As regards patriotic prejudice, how small is this terrestrial sphere as compared with the great astral regions; how evanescent is the life of man! What is this native land, this fatherland that we glory over so much? We live but a few years on the surface of the earth; afterwards it becomes our eternal cemetery, as it has been the cemetery of all the men and women that have lived since Adam. In the circumstances, is patriotic prejudice worth all the divisions it has caused?

* Genesis 1:27.

† Matthew 5:45.

THE EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN.

The sixth teaching of Baha Ullah is as regards the equality of men and women. Male and female belong to the same stock of humanity. They share in common the same faculties. God created men and women alike; why should we cause a difference between these two partners? The world of humanity has two wings - one wing the male, the other the female. If the male wing is strong and the female wing is weak, the higher flight is impossible. But if both wings are strong, there will be a flight heavenwards to the higher dominions of human perfection. Then if the same curriculum of education is given to women as has been given to men in the past; if they are allowed to acquire all the virtues which they can possibly acquire, they will become the peers of men. As up to this time the means of education have not been given in an equal degree to women as to men, women lag behind to a certain degree. Praise be to God, however, that this glorious century has given the means of education and culture to women, and if men cooperate with them, there is no doubt that they will advance extraordinarily and attain to the same level as men. Then the world of humanity will attain to a higher pitch of perfection.

ECONOMICS AND EDUCATION.

The seventh teaching of Baha Ullah is what we call solidarity, or, in your terminology, economics, and it suggests a plan whereby all the individual members of the social body may enjoy the utmost comfort and welfare. There is a special programme concerning this Socialism, but I will only give of it bare details. He says the degrees of society must be preserved. These degrees in the body politic must not be disintegrated. An army has need of a general, a colonel, a captain and of private soldiers. In the body politic, as in an army, these degrees are essential; at the same time each individual member of the various classes must enjoy the utmost comfort and happiness.

The eighth teaching of Baha Ullah concerns universal education. That means the education of all the children of all the communities. If the parents are capable of giving a thorough education to their children well and good; if not, the State must take care of them. Every child must also learn a profession, so that he may not be left helpless.

The ninth teaching of Baha Ullah is that work done well is as acceptable to God as prayer in the Churches;

the tenth principle relates to the necessity for having an international auxiliary language. Each person need only study two languages in their classes - their own native tongue and the auxiliary language.

The eleventh of the Baha Ullah's teaching is that there must be a standardisation of education or the system of the training of children in all countries, so that the children as they grow up may lose their prejudices in reference to foreigners. Were this done misunderstandings would

be swept away from amongst the peoples. There are many other principles, but I have spoken of a few of them to you, and from these you will understand the spirit of the Bahai revelation.

THE MARTYRS OF BAHAIISM.

His holiness Baha Ullah instituted this teaching in Persia. Those who adopted his views became entirely free from their former shackles and limitations. Nowadays meetings and assemblies are organised in Persia, in which you will find Mahommedans and Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians, and Buddhists gathered together in the same room in the utmost fellowship and amity, so that if an outsider were to enter he should find such a spirit of love prevailing and so complete an elimination of the ego or self that he would be unable to distinguish between one religion and another. But in the days of Baha Ullah, the Mahommedan clergy stirred up enmity against the leaders of the new movement. They represented to the ex-Shah of Persia, Nazir [Náşiri'd-Dín Sháh], that this community was a political party striving to dethrone him. So the Shah rose in his wrath and tried to destroy the Bahaists, caused all the possessions of Baha Ullah, to be pillaged, and threw him into prison. Then he exiled him from Persia. But the Baha Ullah met these persecutions with the greatest resolution and firmness, and in his exile continued to promulgate these principles to humanity. From Bagdad the Baha was exiled to Roumelia, thence to Akka, near Mount Carmel, where he died in 1892. Nearly all the days of the life of Baha Ullah were spent in prison or exile, and many of his friends and followers were martyred and pillaged. More than 20,000 people sealed their faith with their blood. Notwithstanding all this, the Baha Ullah never wavered or had a faint heart. Nay, rather the cause spread more rapidly like wildfire from day to day, so that all the Orient was covered with the rays of this revelation. From his prison in Akka the Baha Ullah ascended to the throne of God. Those who were his followers were left in prison until the flag of revolution was raised in Constantinople, and they were free. Before that the Shah had fallen before the Democratic movement in Persia, and they were free to return to their own land.

THANKS TO THE BAHÁ.

Dr Barbour expressed the thanks of the audience to Abdul Baha for his eloquent exposition of one of the great movements of their time. It was a plant which had spread rapidly in the Persia of to-day. Yet one recognised in it a great similarity to plants that were growing nearer home. What struck him when their friend was speaking was that he was giving expression to some wishes of their own heart. They approved of the ideal he laid before them of education and of the necessity of each one learning a trade, and his beautiful simile of the two wings on which society was to rise into a purer and clearer atmosphere put into beautiful words what was in the minds of many of them. What impressed them most was that courage which had enabled him during long years of imprisonment, and even in the face of death, to hold fast to his convictions.

AN EASTERN MISSIONARY.

The Rev. A. B. Robb, Falkirk, said they had been in the habit of sending missionaries from the West to the East to preach the Gospel; that day they had a missionary from the East to preach the old Gospel, and to preach it in a new and original way. After all, it was not the words which had impressed them so much as the life. He had a right to speak, for he had spent forty years of his life in prison for the sake of the truth which was revealed to him. Dr Kelman, he thought, said last night that Abdul Baha was not here to proseletyise. He (Mr Robb) was not so sure of that. He felt they were not preaching quite the Gospel they had heard that day, though they were all longing to preach it, and perhaps Abdul Baha's address would give some of them assistance to do so.

The Rev. R. B. Drummond, late of Castle Terrace Chapel, also said a few words, and the Chairman having conveyed the thanks of the meeting to Abdul Baha, the interesting meeting terminated.

[#32]

9 January: Address to the Theosophical Society in Edinburgh

Thursday, 9 January 1913
28 Great King St.
Edinburgh, Scotland

The following transcript of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab's translation of this discourse is taken from *Theosophy Today*.

* * *

IT gives me very great pleasure to be with you this evening and to take part in your delightful gathering, for you Theosophists - praise be to God! - are always independent investigators of reality, released from mere imitation of the customs of your forebears and ancestors. Your purpose in life is to achieve and welcome the knowledge of reality, no matter from what region the light may dawn. The religions of to-day are all captives in the claws of custom and of blind dogma, for the absolute reality and dominant truth which prompted the foundation of these very religions in the past are entirely forgotten, and certain blind observances of ritual and sacerdotal mummeries have crept in which are in entire opposition to the fundamental principles of Divine religion. True religion, which comes from God, is founded for the purpose of illuminating the world of humanity, and for the emancipation of the human race. It establishes a complete fellowship between all hearts, and unfolds before our vision the Kingdom of Heaven. But - a thousand times, alas! - religions so founded have become the cause

of contention and mutual strife, and to-day they are constantly waging war against each other. There is even bloodshed among their representatives, who engage in strife, ransack each others' possessions, and destroy each others' homes, What makes them do all these things? They do them because they are prisoners of blind dogma.

As an illustration, take anyone you meet. You ask him to what religion he belongs. He says he is a Jew. "Why art thou a Jew?" "Because my father was a Jew, and my ancestors were Jews. That is why I follow in their footsteps." Another man is a Mussulman. "Why art thou a Mussulman?" "My father was one, and my forebears also." And if you put this query to the devotees of other religions they will give you the same answer. And indeed if you go through the whole category of the present-day religions you will find that in all of them numbers are following blindly; and that it is a case of "the blind leading the blind." But, if you inquire, you will find they have never investigated the reality; for if they had done so they would all have become unanimous and would work in harmony. If reality is one, then it is not subject to division; and this absolute reality is the foundation of all religions.

The Theosophical Society has freed itself from such blind imitation of what was thought and done in the past; and, soaring up toward the heaven of reality, is ever trying to investigate the deeper truths which underlie all religions. Therefore I am very happy.

As we look upon this world - the Macrocosm - and upon all that goes to make up man - the Microcosm - what do we find? We find that every organism is composed of single primordial atoms, and has come into existence through the interaction of the elective affinities inherent in them. Its existence is a scientific fact. Every given atom of these myriads of atoms has passed through multitudinous forms, and in every form it has manifested a particular virtue or power.

For example, looking upon this flower, there is no doubt that it is composed of single atoms, simple elements. There was a time when the various substances composing it were all in the Mineral Kingdom, and during that period they underwent many transformations. Having completed their course in the Mineral Kingdom, these atoms ascended to the Vegetable Kingdom, and they will go on, maybe for many hundreds of years, continuing their journey through experiences in this vegetable life. One day this, which is now a chrysanthemum, may become a rose; another day it may form part of a carnation. Another day it may enter into the composition of a tree. In short, each indestructible atom goes on journeying, first through the Mineral Kingdom, and then through successive stages of the Vegetable World. This is a fact in harmony with the laws of Biology.

Now this atom having run its course through the Vegetable Kingdom ascends next into the Animal Kingdom, where again it has its varied experiences. Having finished these, it enters the realm of humanity, and travels through its many and varied stages. In short, this

primordial atom has undergone transformations through all the kingdoms and sub-kingdoms of life, and, in consequence of these experiences, it manifests in a certain form and possesses a particular virtue or power.

It is one of the philosophic epigrams of the East that everything is included in the All. Therefore every man during this multitude of transformations is gradually learning to know the many aspects of that All, and in every transformation has the opportunity of acquiring a fresh virtue, so that man may become a compendium of all the virtues of creation. This is an exposition of a divine mystery.

Philosophic man, or the inner man, is indestructible. He is ever existent. For the immortality of the soul is a fact not to be denied. The spirit is everlasting; it is illimitable. The rational proof of the immortality of the soul is as follows:- Man enjoys two realities - two verities (or aspects of Truth). The first aspect of this human verity is material; and the second aspect is spiritual. The aspect which is material is subject to non-existence. But the ideal aspect of man, which is the spirit, is indestructible. What does mortality or death mean? It means transference from one body to another body. Thus, to take again the illustration of this flower. This flower, you may say, is doomed to death. It is dying. Why? Because it is losing its present form and is returning to its original constitution, which is mineral ; but there is ever a conservation of energy lasting through all creation; so that even the material constituents which make up this flower never die, but are constantly transformed. Thus, when grass is eaten by an animal, you may say that the grass is dead. But the real fact is that it has only lost its vegetable form and become absorbed into the animal kingdom; and through this process animal life is made possible; the plant has never been lost. So that we may say of annihilation that it is a process of transference from one form to another; but the elements are indestructible. That is all that is meant by annihilation. Thus it is with the body of man, his material form that you see before you. The spirit leaving the body means that this temporal body, having done its duty, will return to its original constituents and become part of the earth; but it still has an existence. So that death simply means a step beyond the present conditions of life; in this way the material body of man may go through many forms and changes, and die and again be born, because it is used constantly in the making of various new forms and shapes. At the same moment one body cannot occupy the same space as another. It may only occupy one space. Take, for example, any given body - say a triangle. As long as it is triangular it cannot become a square, nor can it become a hexagon. It cannot become any other geometrical figure; for if it becomes a hexagon it cannot remain a triangle. One body can only be one shape at one time. So two forms cannot become part of one body at the same time, But, even as you are sitting here, your soul or mind or spirit, by whatever name you may call it, contains all these various forms. At this very moment you can conceive of a triangle, a square, a hexagon, or a geometrical shape all at the same instant. Just at this time in your mind, in your spirit. you may call up anything. There they are. these forms, existing simultaneously, without having to be broken, and to replace one another in succession. They

are all present in your spirit. In this way all forms exist in the spirit. There is no need of breaking one form so that the spirit may enjoy another form. The spirit is independent of these forms, and at the same time it can hold all these forms. Therefore this is scientific proof that the spirit is eternal. Why do we enjoy the immortal spirit? It can never be transformed from one shape into another. It is able to contain all the shapes and forms in the world. This is self-evident. The spirit enjoys immortal life. Another piece of evidence:- This physical body of man once in a while is subject to sickness. At other times it gets well. Sometimes the body grows fat, and at other times it grows the opposite way - all lean - so that the body goes through very various conditions; but the spirit is ever the same. If the body grows lean the spirit does not grow lean, and if a man enjoys three hundred pounds, avoirdupois, his spirit does not weigh three hundred pounds. Therefore this Divine and heavenly Absolute Reality, which is in man, is not subject to transformation or change. If one hand is cut off and the other arm is cut off, and the lower limbs are cut off, you will see that the man is going on living all the time, and his spirit is not mutilated. He is exactly the same man. The eternal spirit in him is undying. Third proof:- What is death? Death means the losing of sensations or susceptibilities. While in a state of sleep man's body lacks all sensation. His eyes do not see. His ears do not hear. The power of smell does not act. All the senses are in a state of quiescence. The power of touch is not present. All the senses are at rest. They are asleep. Yet notwithstanding all this the man travels. He journeys, he dreams. His spirit sees, and his tongue speaks. In that very state of quiescence he is endowed with all his faculties. Now if man was made only of this material flesh he would not have these various conscious experiences while in the state of dream. This likewise demonstrates the fact that in the inner reality of man there is a second deeper reality by which everything is surrounded. Therefore it is another evidence that in man God has hidden a second reality, which second reality is entirely free from all the fatalities of life, ever going forward, never retrogressing; and this will show you that man enjoys this immortal and everlasting spirit.

The fourth proof:- While speaking you use the word "I." "I went there." "I came here." Who is this "I" that speaks within you? It can look out and see its own body. It is evidently the ego within (cogito ergo sum). Therefore there is a second indestructible reality in man.

The fifth proof:- When you want to undertake a great thing you retire within the chamber of your own thought and wonder "will it be profitable? Ought I to do this? What will be the results of this?" Who is the consultant within you? That consultant is the spirit. You consult with it, and you get the proper opinion: and if the spirit dictates "Go on and do it," you will go on and do it; and if it dictates "No, it is not profitable," you will not dare to do it. And this state is constantly working in man, and it is a proof in regard to the immortality of the soul. That inner reality is the rider and your body is the charger. The body is like this glass, and the spirit within you is like the light which illumines the glass. Although this glass be broken, the light will not be broken. Although the bulb containing the electric light goes through the process of dissolution, the light is not destroyed. It remains latent as electric energy; and another glass

will come and take the place of its predecessor, and you will again have the light shining through it.

Man has had all this journeying through the various grades, and he is travelling still, and will travel, until in the end he will reach a destination which is superior to this physical life. That is called the state of perfection; but he is constantly breaking these glasses, and purifying them, making for himself, by degrees, a purer and purer vehicle, until it becomes perfectly transparent. At one time this glass that is here before us was in the course of vitrification in the mineral kingdom; and in the same way there was a time when the constituents of our material body were in the vegetable kingdom, and at another time they were a part of animal life. Now they have come together so as to form the human body. Therefore, although the glass be shattered, the light of the spirit of the true Reality will ever shine; and this is another proof. It is not a traditional proof - not a matter of belief and theory. It belongs to the philosophy of the Kingdom, and it is unanswerable.

To take another line of argument, the world of existence, the world of manifestation, by itself and in itself, cannot enjoy perpetuity. No, the phenomenal world, or world of existence, has, rather, the capacity for receiving bounties and outpourings. There is a Reality which is central. The world of existence has emanated or issued from that central Reality. As this material globe of ours - which in itself is not luminous - is vivified by rays emanating from the phenomenal sun - for the sun is a star - so the spiritual ray issues from this stupendous centre of life, and immediately all are illumined thereby.

The greatest Divine outpouring is the appearance of Divine Masters in this world. These Divine and Heavenly verities consist of one central verity. But they have diverse dawning places; just as this electric light here is always the same light, although it shines through various glasses. One day it shines through this glass, another day this glass is extinct and it will shine through the second glass. A third day it shines through a third glass - you can have many glasses - but the energy which gives the light is the same without any difference. The light is indivisible. It is one light, and although these Heavenly Divine Masters, as far as their personalities are concerned, are different, as regards their inner nature they enjoy one central realm, and that one central realm emanates from the central spiritual sun. There are many mirrors from which the sun is reflected. Yet the sun is one. This is an astronomical question. For example:- Here on the map you have 12 rays issuing forth from the central body. As you look you see that there is one centre and one stellar body; but this stellar body is capable of transmitting many many rays of light to all parts. One light gives forth these 12 rays. Similarly one sun, the phenomenal sun, dawns at one time from the celestial sign of Capricorn; at another time it shines from the sign of Leo; at another time it will appear from the sign of Aries. It will shine from one point in spring, and again from another point in winter; but the sun is the same sun, and the ray is the same ray, although it passes through many signs. When the sun dawns from any particular sign its heat is of a certain intensity. Similarly, there are differences in these

divine manifestations, or "Masters"; but in reality they all show forth the one central Truth. Man must never look at the dawning points. He must ever look upward and see the sun. He must be an adorer of the sun, no matter from what point it appears. He must recognise the light, no matter through which glass it has been admitted. For light is illimitable, and man must attain to that state of divine perception. He must never limit himself to any one system. There are many mirrors reflecting the light; but though all these mirrors should be shattered, the light would remain. So long as we are seeking the light, and turning our attention constantly toward it, we shall love the light, no matter from which globe it may be shining. And now I have made you quite tired.

Return to England

[#33]

12 January: Address at the Quakers Meeting House

Sunday, 12 January 1913
Quakers Meeting House, St. Martin's Ln.
London, England

The following translation of this discourse is taken from *Unity Triumphant*, pp. 120–22.*

* * *

'ABDU'L BAHÁ WITH THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.

AT the Westminster Meeting of the Society of Friends, January 12th, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said:

About 6,000 years ago a Society was formed in Persia called the “Society of Friends,” who gathered together for Silent Communion with the Almighty.

They divided Divine Philosophy into two parts. That which can be acquired through lectures and study in schools and colleges: and the philosophy of the Illuminati, or Followers of the Inner Light. The schools of this philosophy are held in Silence and meditation, and by turning to the Source of Light. From that Central Light the mysteries of the Kingdom were reflected in their hearts. All the Divine problems were solved by this power of illumination.

Among the great questions unfolding through the rays of Divine Reality upon the mind of man, is the question of the reality of the spirit of man; of the birth of the Spirit; of his birth from this world into the world of God; the question of the inner life of the Spirit; and of the fate of the Spirit after its ascension from the body.

They likewise meditate upon the scientific questions of the day, and these also are solved.

“Followers of the Inner Light,” they attain to a superlative degree of power, and are entirely freed from blind dogmas and imitations. Men rely on their statements. By themselves, within themselves, they solve all mysteries.

* A somewhat different transcript has been published in *Paris Talks*, pp. 173–76.

If they find a solution by the assistance of the Inner Light, they accept it, and afterwards declare it; otherwise they would consider it a matter of blind imitation.

They go so far as to reflect upon the essential nature of Divinity, Divine Revelation, and the Manifestation of God in this world. All philosophical, divine, and scientific questions are solved by them through the power of the Spirit.

Bahá'u'lláh says there is a sign from God in every phenomenon. The sign of the intellect is contemplation, and the sign of contemplation is silence; because it is impossible for man to do two things at the same time. He cannot both speak and meditate.

It is an axiomatic fact that while you meditate you are speaking with your own Spirit. In that state of mind you put certain questions to your Spirit, the Spirit answers, the Light breaks forth, and Reality is revealed.

You cannot apply the name of 'man' to any being devoid of the faculty of meditation. Without it, he would be a mere animal.

Through the faculty of meditation, man attains to eternal life; through it he receives the Breath of the Holy Spirit. The bestowal of the Spirit is given in reflection and meditation. Through it, the Spirit of man is informed and strengthened. Through it, affairs of which man knows nothing are unfolded before his view. Through it, one receives Divine inspiration; through it, one partakes of Heavenly Food.

Meditation is the key for opening the doors of mysteries. In that subjective mood, withdrawing himself from all outside objects, man can unfold the secrets of things within himself; because he is immersed in the ocean of spiritual life.

Through the power of meditation man frees himself from the animal nature, discerns the reality of things, and is put in touch with God.

This faculty brings forth from the invisible plane the sciences and arts. Through the meditative faculty inventions are made possible, and colossal undertakings are carried out. Through it governments can be run smoothly. Through this faculty man enters into the very Kingdom of God.

Nevertheless, some thoughts are useless to man. They are like waves ebbing to and fro in the sea without result. But if the faculty of meditation is bathed in the Inner Light, and characterised with Divine attributes, then the results will be wonderful.

The meditative faculty is akin to the mirror. If you put before it earthly objects it will reflect them. Therefore, if the spirit of man is contemplating earthly subjects, he will be informed of these. But if the mirror of the Spirit be turned heavenwards, the heavenly constellations and the rays of the Sun of Reality will be reflected in the heart, and the virtues of the Kingdom will be attained.

Let us, therefore, keep this faculty rightly directed, turning it to the Heavenly Sun and not to earthly objects, so that we may discover the secrets of the Kingdom, comprehend the allegories of the Bible, and the mysteries of the Spirit. May we indeed become mirrors reflecting Heavenly Realities, and may we become so pure as to reflect the Constellations of Heaven.

[#34]

13 January: Remarks on Jesus Christ

Monday, 13 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 13 January 1913.

* * *

Why did Christ come into this world? People think He came in order that they may believe in Him as the Word of God or the Son of God. He came, they say, to redeem us through His blood. Christ was not seeking after fame. Christ came so that He may educate the world of humanity, illumine the realm of morality. He sacrificed His life for the realization of this fact. This is reality. Every fair and just man accepts this. Now is it befitting that we lay aside the refining of characters and engage in war? Or abandon the second birth and occupy our time with enmity? Christ came in order to release the people from the promptings of the lower nature, to make them angelic. For this thing He accepted all calamities...

[#35]

15 January: Address at the Clifton Guest House

Wednesday, 15 January 1913
Clifton Guest House, 17 Royal York Crescent
Clifton, Bristol, England

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 1, no. 1 (21 March 1913), pp. 4–6.

* * *

Every age requires a central impetus or movement. In this age, the boundaries of terrestrial things have extended; minds have taken on a broader range of vision; realities have been unfolded and the secrets of being have been brought into the realm of visibility. What is the spirit of this age. what is its focal point? It is the establishment of Universal Peace, the establishment of the knowledge that humanity is one family. Think on the conditions of this world of humanity. Nations have become like armed camps waiting to be ignited by the combustion of war.

Whereas in reality God has created man for love's sake. God has endowed man with creation so that he may illumine the world with the flame of brotherhood and express the utmost state of unity and accord. This state would express God's good pleasure; this would be the prosperity of the world of humanity. A thousand times alas! that this glorious century has been besmeared with war and strife, hatred and rancor. Bloodthirsty wolves are tearing the sheep of God. Destruction is more widespread than in all the ages of the past.

We hear on every side praises of the wonders of this cycle, its achievements, its refinements, its genius; calling the past the age of mediaeval horror. What mediaeval age held the horror of a Krupp gun, a Mauser rifle or a shrapnel shell that kills a whole camp? On the sea we have the submarine and the dreadnaught. If you compare the past with this age, impartial judgment will call this the age of human fratricide.

All the religions are revealed for the sake of good fellowship. The fundamentals, the foundations of all are fellowship, unity and love. The heavenly books were revealed and divine love bestowed to bring about peace. What has man made of religion? He has made it the cause of bloodshed and strife; enmity and hatred. Religion was destined to be a remedy for the sickness of humanity; an illumination for the darkness of uncertainty. Have we then forgotten the divine teachings cast aside the heavenly books, created imaginary thoughts and illusions and made them the basis of rancor and strife? The Bible commands the practice of peace and justice. God desires love. In the gospel we find the golden statement that man should be

expressive of love even to his enemy; he should be expressive of love to his ill-wishers; he should be expressive of love to all his fellow men. He must have an eye to pardon; he must have an eye to benevolence. All the divine books invite men to these teachings. All the divine prophets suffered that man might realize these teachings. Consider what His Holiness Christ endured, how many vicissitudes he underwent, every day tasting a new poison, finally sacrificing his own life, so that the tent of love and concord might be raised over the world of humanity so that this dark world might be invested with divine light. Alas! that all the travail of these holy souls and sanctified prophets should be wasted. The world of humanity is in a stupor of sleep and it cannot grasp the realities. The horizon of the minds are still beclouded and the hearts are occupied with phantasmal longings. We seem never to think of the reason of creation! never to strive to proclaim those principles which enlighten humanity. In the sea of materialism we are sinking and of the Kingdom of God we know nothing. We are not living in accord with those precious teachings of God.

Nearly 60 years ago when the horizon of the Orient was in a state of the utmost gloom, warfare existed and there was enmity between the various creeds; darkness brooded over the children of men and foul clouds of ignorance hid the sky - at such a time His Highness Baha'o'llah arose from the horizon of Persia like a shining sun. He boldly proclaimed peace, writing to the kings of the earth and calling upon them to arise and assist in the hoisting of this banner. In order to bring peace out of the chaos, he established certain precepts or principles:

Investigations of Truth.

The first principle Baha'o'llah urged was the independent investigation of truth. "Each individual," he said, "is following the faith of his ancestors who themselves are lost in the maze of tradition. Reality is steeped in dogmas and doctrines. If each investigate for himself, he will find that Reality is one; does not admit of multiplicity; is not divisible. All will find the same foundation and all will be at peace.

The Unity of the Race.

The second principle of Baha'o'llah proclaims the oneness of the human race. He states that humanity constitute the sheep of God. God is the real shepherd. When this shepherd is compassionate and kind, why should the sheep quarrel amongst themselves? Addressing all humanity, Baha'o'llah says, "Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch. All the nations, peoples and tongues are the branches, leaves, blossoms and fruits of this great tree of humanity." God created all; protects all; provides for all and is kind to all; why should you be unkind? If God had not loved humanity he would not have created it. Creation presupposes love. God is the real father; all are his children. All the creatures are equal in this one family of God save whosoever is more kind, more compassionate,—he is nearer to God.

International Peace.

The third principle of the religion of Baha'o'llah is in regard to international peace. There must be peace between the fatherlands; peace between the religions. In this period of evolution the world of humanity is in danger. Every war is against the good pleasure of the Lord of mankind. Man is the edifice of God. War destroys the divine edifice. Peace is the stay of life; war the cause of death. If an active, actual peace is brought about, the human world will attain to the utmost serenity and composure. Wolves will be transformed into lambs; devils into angels and terrors into divine splendors in less than the twinkling of an eye.

Religion Must Conform to Science and Reason.

The fourth principle declares that religion must be in conformity to science and reason. If a religion does not agree with the postulates of science nor accord with the regulations of reason it is a bundle of superstitions; a phantasm of the brain. Science and religion are realities, and if that religion to which we adhere be a reality it must needs conform to the fundamental reality of all things.

Prejudice Must Be Forever Banished.

The fifth principle of Baha'o'llah is this: that religious, racial, political and patriotic prejudice are the destroyers of human society. As long as these prejudices last the world of humanity will not attain to poise and perfection. As long as these threatening clouds are in the sky of humanity, the sun of reality cannot dawn.

Equality of Sexes.

The sixth principle of Baha'o'llah regards the equality of men and women. The male and female of the human kingdom are equal before God. God is no respecter of gender. Whosoever practices more faith, whosoever practices more humanitarianism is nearer to God; but between the male and female there is no innate difference because they share in common all the faculties. The world of humanity has two wings, one the male; the other the female. When both wings are reinforced with the same impulse the bird will be enabled to wing its flight heavenward to the summit of progress. Woman must be given the same opportunities as man for perfecting herself in the attainments of learning, science and arts. God has created the man and the woman equal, why should she be deprived of exercising the fullest opportunities afforded by life? Why should we ever raise the question of superiority and inferiority? In the animal kingdom the male and female enjoy suffrage [laughter], and in the vegetable kingdom the plants all enjoy equal suffrage [laughter and applause]. In the human kingdom, which claims to be the realm of brotherhood and solidarity, why should we raise this question?

The Social Plan.

The seventh teaching suggests a plan whereby all the individual members may enjoy the utmost comfort and welfare. The degrees of society must be preserved. The farmer will continue to till the soil, the artist pursue his art, the banker to finance the nation. An army has need of its general, captain, and private soldiers. The degrees varying with the pursuits are essential. But in this Bahai plan there is no class hatred. Each is to be protected and each individual member of the body politic is to live in the greatest comfort and happiness. Work is to be provided for all and there will be no needy ones to be seen in the streets.

The Parliament of Man.

The eighth principle declares that there must needs be established the parliament of man or court of last appeals for international questions. The members of this arbitral court of justice will be representatives of all the nations. In each nation the members must be ratified by the government and the king or ruler, and this international parliament will be under the protection of the world of humanity. In it all international difficulties will be settled.

Universal Education.

The ninth admonition is in regard to education. All the children must be educated so that there will not remain one single individual without an education. In cases of inability on the part of the parents through sickness, death, etc., the state must educate the child. In addition to this widespread education, each child must be taught a profession or trade so that each individual member of the body politic will be enabled to earn his own living and at the same time serve the community. Work done in the spirit of service is worship. From this universal system of education misunderstandings will be expelled from amongst the children of men.

Universal Language.

The tenth principle is the establishment of a universal language so that we will not have to acquire so many languages in the future. In the schools they will study two, the mother tongue and the international auxiliary language. The use of an international auxiliary language will become a great means of dispelling the differences between nations.

There are many other teachings. I have given you but a few. Praise be to God! that day by day we are advancing and every day we see some new blessing descending. Let all of us render thanksgiving to our generous Lord that he may bless our eyes with sight and give our hearts understanding. May we become resuscitated with the breath of the Holy Spirit. May we be enabled to leave behind the world of matter in beholding the bounties of God. The divine table is spread, the heavenly illumination is all-encircling; eternal life is provided for all; divine food is prepared for all! Therefore let us practice the divine essence of love and love each

other from our very hearts and souls so that the East and West shall embrace each other and realize that all are the sheep of God. God is the good shepherd - then will we gather under the tabernacle of His mercy!

[#36]

16 January: Address at Lady Blomfield's on Complexities in the Cause

Thursday, 16 January 1913
Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text has been taken from the unpublished diary letters of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.*

* * *

The Cause has become very great. Many souls are entering in it - souls with different mentalities and ranges of understanding. Complex difficulties constantly rise before us. The administration of the Cause has become most difficult. Conflicting thoughts and theories attack the Cause from every side. Now consider to what extent the believers of God must become firm and soul-sacrificing. Every one of the friends must become the essence of essences, each one must become a brilliant lamp. People all around the world are entering the Cause, of various tribes and nations and religions and sects. It is most difficult to administer such heterogeneous elements. Wisdom and divine insight are necessary. Firmness and steadfastness of the friends are needed at such a crucial period of the Cause. All the meetings must be for teaching the Cause and spreading the message, and suffering the souls to enter in the Kingdom of Baha-o-llah. Look at me. All my thoughts are centered around the proclamation of the Kingdom. I have a lamp in my hand, searching throughout lands and seas to find souls who can become the heralds of the Cause, who can raise their voices in meetings and assemblages, who can become the defenders of the Cause. Day and night I am engaged in this work. Any other deliberation in the meetings is futile and fruitless. Convey the message! Attract the hearts! Sow the seeds! Teach the Cause to those who do not know. It is now six months that Sayad Assadollah implores that I may write a few lines to my sister or daughters. I have not done this, because I find I must teach. I enter all meetings, all churches so that the Cause might be spread. When the "most important" work is before our sight we must let go the "important" one. If the meetings or the Spiritual Assembly has any other occupation the time is spent in futility. All the deliberations, all the consultations, all the talks and addresses must revolve around one focal center and that is: teach the Cause, teach, teach, convey the

* Other versions of this address can be found in *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 1 (21 March 1913), p. 16, and also in Lady Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway* (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975), pp. 176-77.

message, awake the souls. Now is the time of laying the foundation. Now must we gather brick, stone, wood, iron and other building materials. Now is not the time of decorations. We must strive day and night and think and work. What can I say that may become effective. What can I do that may bring results. What can I write that may bring forth fruits. Nothing else will be useful today. The interests of such a glorious Cause will not advance without such undivided attention. While we are carrying this load we cannot carry any other load.

[#37]

17 January: Address at the Sháh Jahán Mosque

Friday, 17 January 1913
Sháh Jahán Mosque
 Woking, England

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian and Arabic, in *Najm-i-Bákh̄tar*, vol. 12, no. 10, pp. 174–76. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

* * *

For nine months, I traveled through the states of America and spoke at many churches, gatherings, and clubs. Even in the synagogues of the Jews, I raised the call for the oneness of humanity, summoning everyone to universal peace. I explained the basis of the divine religions—that they all share a single foundation and stem from the truth, and that the truth admits of no multiplicity. The foundation of the divine religions is love. Religion is the cause of humanity’s edification—it guides them to human virtues, it is the basis of mutual aid and cooperation, it is a heavenly foundation, it is the means through which people are linked together—but what leads to dissension are blind imitations, and since such imitations are diverse, they conduce to conflict and contention.

Fundamentally speaking, every religion consists of two aspects. One of these is essential; it pertains to the domain of morality and is not subject to change. It is the basis of faith and belief in God, as well as good deeds and the virtues of mankind, [such as] love, justice, equality, and beneficence. Hence, it will never change. Adam promulgated this very thing, Noah imparted this same message, Abraham revealed this very Cause, Moses established these same principles, Christ promoted this very foundation, and Muḥammad hoisted this same banner. This is the basis underlying all the divine Scriptures; it will never be subject to change.

The other aspect, however, is secondary; it pertains to our dealings with others, which change according to the exigencies of the time. We must, therefore, renounce all blind imitations; investigate the foundation of the religion of God; and become united, one and all. Moses was raised up, and He established a religious law. When Christ came, He affirmed the truth of Moses, praising Him and the Torah to the utmost. Indeed, He caused the fame of His name to be spread throughout the world. And when Muḥammad came, He declared that Christ was of God and that the Gospel was divine Scripture. He, too, extended the utmost praise to Moses. In the Qur’án, a Súrih has even been revealed that is devoted specifically to Mary, where one finds the amplest praise and highest glorification of Christ and the Apostles. It has there been likewise revealed that “Christians are more friend to you than any other people.”* Christians as the friends of Muslims, and these are the words of the Qur’án; we cannot alter the divine Text. God has enjoined that the People of the Book be treated with kindness: “Dispute not with the People of the Book except in the kindest manner.”† And yet, some of the priests deemed Muḥammad to be an enemy opposed to Christ, just as the Jews imagined that Christ was an enemy of Moses. This, however, is an error. They all loved one another; each was the other’s friend. Why, then, should we not be friends? They were at peace with one another; why should we make war? Each affirmed the truth of the other; why should we condemn [one another] as liars?

Praised be God, this is the century of light. Minds have progressed, thoughts have broadened, and realities have been discovered. This is the time in which love and fellowship will be manifested among all—the time when the religions shall become connected to one another. For six thousand years, humanity has been embroiled in war and strife. Love must now have a turn, and peace be given a chance. God has created mankind as human beings. Why should they be animals, tearing one another to pieces like wolves? God has fashioned us as sheep—we are all His flock, and He is the True Shepherd. He is kind to everyone; why should we be unkind?

At a time when the peoples of the East were engaged in conflict and contention—when the various kindreds spilled each other’s blood, and when the utmost war and strife prevailed, along with the darkness of ignorance and estrangement—it was at such a time as this that Bahá’u’lláh rose from the horizon of the East, since the Sun of Truth has always shone from the East upon the West. Hence, it was in the East that Bahá’u’lláh first proclaimed the oneness of humanity and universal peace, raising the call of peace among diverse kindreds, races, and nations. He gathered the various peoples and fostered fellowship among the religions, as evidenced by the fact that His followers in the East who belong to different kindreds now live in the greatest harmony. They are like brothers to one another; each loves the other and accounts him as belonging to the same tribe. Furthermore, Bahá’u’lláh declared that religion

* Possibly a paraphrase of Qur’án 5:82.

† Qur’án 29:46.

must be the cause of love and the world's illumination—that it must conduce to the oneness of humanity—and that if it leads to war and strife and results in ferocious bloodshed, it would be better to dispense with it, as God established religion to bring about fellowship, not hatred, and so that people would become linked together, not seek to avoid one another. Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed, moreover, that religion must accord with science and reason, and that if it does not, it is mere superstition.

In brief, Bahá'u'lláh brought harmony and healing to all the peoples of the East, such that His followers today refer to the Gospel, the Torah, the Psalms, and the Qur'án as divine Scripture; they invite everyone to unity and peace. In the Torah, God has called all humanity His sheep;* in the Gospel, it is stated that His sun shines on everyone;† and in the Qur'án, it is revealed: “No difference canst thou see in the creation of the God of Mercy.”‡ These books summon all to unity; why should we be in conflict? The religions point the way to love; why should we hate? All the Prophets came to establish fellowship and unity; each of them suffered thousands of blows. Why must we be this way, wasting the toil of the Prophets and using the law of God as a pretext? What is it that compels us to do this?

Praised be God, we are all the servants of one Lord; we are the flock of a single Shepherd, and God is kind to everyone. We are all His creation; His favors extend to everyone, and all are immersed in the sea of His mercy. Hence, we must give thanks, not engage in war and strife, toppling the Edifice of God in so doing. This would be unseemly. Is this the cause of abasement or glory? Would it conduce to virtue or vice? Does it indicate perfection or deficiency? Every fair-minded person will attest that peace is better than war, that love is better than hate, and that fellowship is better than estrangement. The good-pleasure of God consists in this, our glory consists in this, tranquility and eternal life consist in this. We should not be so heedless, so ferocious, so unfair as to engage in this sort of war and strife instead of giving thanks. Ignorance prevailed in former centuries. Peoples had yet to associate with one another; misunderstandings were predominant. Praised be God that ties have now been formed among humanity—that misunderstandings have faded away, and the realities of [the divine] laws appeared. Let us give thanks in order that we may apprehend the truth, and let there be no doubt that true gratitude consists in the oneness of humanity.

(The gathering was concluded with this prayer.)

O God, my God! I humbly supplicate Thee; on Thee do I place my whole reliance, and before Thee do I fervently pray. O God, my God! Lead us to the Straight Path. O God, my God! Guide us to the Broad Way. O God, my God! Dilate our breasts with the light of Thy knowledge, and

* Possibly a reference to Psalm 23:1.

† cf. Matthew 5:45.

‡ Qur'án 67:3.

illumine our eyes with the splendors of Thy guidance. O God, my God! Behold us with the glances of Thy compassion. O God, my God! I beseech Thee by the glorious rank of the Manifestation of Thy Noble Self, Him Who is Thy Great Messenger, to immerse us in the oceans of Thy mercy and send down the sustenance of Thy grace from heaven. O God, my God! The darksome palls of waywardness have grown thick; I entreat Thee by Thy mighty light to lead us to the Path of salvation and show us Thy perspicuous signs. Thou, verily, art the Generous; Thou, verily, art the Almighty; Thou, verily, art the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate.

[#38]

17 January: A Play Spoken to Gabrielle Enthoven

Friday, 17 January 1913

The Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke this play, *The Drama of the Kingdom*, to Gabrielle Enthoven, who lived above Lady Blomfield. It was later published in Mary Basil Hall, *The Drama of the Kingdom*, pp. 2–8, from which the following text is taken. It was also later included as an appendix to H.M. Balyuzi's biography of 'Abdu'l-Bahá; see *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, pp. 497–502. In a prefatory note to the book, the author, who was the daughter of Lady Blomfield and received permission from Enthoven to write the play, states that it was approved by Shoghi Effendi, who showed "deep interest" in and gave "inspiring suggestions" on its publication (p. v).

* * *

The Herald of the Kingdom stands before the people. Wonderful music swells from an unseen orchestra, moving and soul-inspiring. The music becomes soft, while the Herald proclaims the coming of the Kingdom. He holds a trumpet to his mouth.

The curtain rises. The stage is crowded with men and women. All are asleep. At the sound of the trumpet they begin to awake.

Suddenly the music breaks forth. The people hear and wonder. They rise and question one another, saying: 'What is this? Whence comes this music?' Some return to their occupations, unheeding. First a few talk together, then one ceases his work, and proceeds to make enquiries. A merchant, leaving his stall, comes to ask the meaning of the eager group. A soldier, who is practising arms, withdraws from his comrades and joins those who are wondering.

Here, a banker is seen counting his money, his attention is attracted. He pauses in his calculation, and asks: 'What is the news?'

There are seen dancers and others holding revelry. Some of them come forth and ask the news, questioning the Herald.

Now those who come to ask are more or less divided into the following groups. First those who, having heard of the Coming of the Promised One, frown and shrug their shoulders, returning to their work, scoffing and disbelieving. The second type are those who hear the music, strain their ears to catch the meaning of the Message, and their eyes to discern the Mystery.

The blind receive their sight, the deaf their hearing, and those who were dead arise and walk, still wrapped in the garments of death.

Then there are those who will not believe until they have had signs revealed to them, who crave for proof, saying: 'But we want to see the earthquake. If the Promised One is indeed come, the sun should not give his light, the moon should be darkened, and the stars should fall. We await our Promised One till these signs be fulfilled. We expect to see him descend from heaven in clouds of great glory.'

Those who believe shout: 'The Promised One has come!' Those who doubt cry: 'What proof is there? Show us a proof!'

They who understand explain: 'Whence did Christ come? He came from heaven, though they who scoffed at Him said: 'We know this man, he comes from Nazareth.' This is the real meaning: His spirit came from heaven, while His body was born of an earthly mother. As it was then, so is it with the Second Coming.'

'But we await the signs', say the doubting ones. 'How, otherwise, shall we know? The earth must shake, the mountains be rent asunder. The Promised One shall conquer the East and the West.'

One arises and tells the people that these signs did not come outwardly, nor will they again. Those who look with the eyes of Truth shall see that these portents are of the Spirit.

The Eternal Sovereignty descends from heaven, the body is of the earth. The mountains are men of high renown, whose famous names sink into insignificance, when the dawn of the Manifestation fills the world with light. The pomp of Annas and Caiaphas is outshone by the

simple glory of the Christ. The earthquake is the wave of spiritual life, that moves through all living things and makes creation quiver.

The prophecies of the Coming of Christ were mystical. The prophecies concerning the Second Coming are also mystical. The earthquakes and unrest, the darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars - all these foretell the humiliation of those whom the world considers great. Theologians wrapped in blind traditions, the bigots and the hypocrites: such will fall.

Now these sayings will be divided between different people, altogether forming a conversation, questions, answers, exclamations of wonder, and so forth.

Now a procession passes. The Pageant of the World. Grand nobles and kings, high priests and dignitaries of the Churches, jewelled and gorgeously dressed. They look with scorn on those who believe, saying: 'Why should we leave our ancient religions?' They look like devils of malice and oppression. Yet each is miserable. One falls, the others pass on. One is dying, the others take no heed.

Another breathes his last. They do not stop by the way.

The poor who have believed look on sadly.

The scene changes. A banquet hall. The table is spread with all delicious foods. The orchestra is playing heavenly music. The lights become gradually more brilliant, until the whole hall is shining. Round the table sit the very poor in torn garments. An Oracle arises and cries: 'The Kingdom of God is like a feast! Remember what Christ said! Here we see the Kingdom! The greatest and the worldly wise are not here, but the poor are here!'

Each sings from the joy of his heart, and there is great rejoicing. Some dance, one plays the flute, everyone is radiantly happy. Someone addresses the people. While this man is speaking they say: 'Hear him! Hear his eloquence! We know him. He was poor and ignorant, and now he is wise!' And so they wonder and question one another. A woman rises and speaks, laughing and happy. The people are surprised, saying: 'But what has happened? Yesterday this woman was sad, and angry. Her heart was full of sorrow and disappointment. Why is she so joyous?'

A man enters with a sack of gold and begins to offer it to the people, but they refuse, one saying: 'I am rich, I do not need your gold.' 'Nor I.' 'Nor I.' The man with the gold is surprised and says, 'We know you are poor and starving. Why do you not accept my gold?'

Then a teacher comes and speaks on a high plane of philosophy and science. All those who listen wonder, for he had been ignorant and accounted of no importance. How is he now so learned?

Another comes with shining eyes, gazing with joy on the beautiful surroundings. The people wonder and say: 'How is this? Yesterday he was blind.'

Another hears beautiful music and he tells the people that a few hours ago he was deaf to all sound. 'A miracle! A miracle! Here is one who was dead, and now he is walking before us!'

One arises and says: 'You know the cause of these miracles? It is the Heavenly food! Everlasting life is for him who partakes of it.'

When the people hear this they shout with one will: 'Glad tidings! Glad tidings! Glad tidings!' Each one is supremely happy. They sing an Alleluia.

'O God, we were poor, You have made us rich!
We were hungry, You have made us satisfied!
Athirst were we, and You have given us the Water of Life!
Our eyes were blinded, You have given us sight! We were dead, You have given us Life Eternal!
We were of the earth, You have made us the children of Heaven! We were outcasts, You have made us beloved!
We were helpless, You have made us powerful! We praise Thee, O Lord!'

After this song, glorious diadems descend from Heaven and rest on each head. They shine with the radiance of Heavenly jewels. All wonder and ask questions. One arises and says: 'These are the crowns of the Kingdom! You are all Heavenly rulers! You shall have eternal dominion! You shall have everlasting glory! The illumination of the Spirit is yours. God has chosen you for His service!' They take their crowns and kiss them, and again place them on their heads.

Then they begin to pray and supplicate:

'O God! O Almighty!
'We give You thanks for these proofs of Your bounty! You have given us Life! Make us faithful, so that the fire of Your Love may fill our hearts, that Your Light may illumine our faces! Suffer us to be firm unto Christ, Who gave up His life for us!'

The curtain falls.

In the last scene one of those who believe is taken by the persecutors. 'We mean to kill you', they say.

'I am ready. I am happy', he answers. With hands raised to Heaven, he cries: 'O God, make me ready!' Then he gives himself up to death. Another is taken, and dies praising God and His mercy to mankind.

The third is a beautiful girl in a white garment, wearing a heavenly crown upon her head. Everyone gazes at her in wonder. She is seated, apart. A messenger comes from the king with an offer of great riches if she will but give up the Cause which she has embraced. She answers: 'I have not accepted this Cause blindly through tradition. I have seen Reality with my own eyes. The Truth is in my heart. How should I renounce my faith thus lightly?'

Her father comes and entreats her to give up her faith. She answers: 'Can you say there is no sun, when you have seen the light? I have seen the sun. You are blind. Awake! The sun is shining! Awake!'

Another messenger comes. This time from a great prince who wishes to wed her on condition that she gives up her Faith.

'I know no prince save God. I will not close my eyes to the glory of the King of Kings!' They bring her jewels and an earthly crown. 'Take these!' they say.

'These to me are so many pebbles. The jewels I treasure are the jewels of the Knowledge of God. Those earthly stones may be broken or lost. Behold my crown! These are eternal gems! For those earthly stones that are doomed to perish, shall I give up this everlasting diadem?'

They say: 'We shall imprison you.' 'I am ready.'

'We shall beat you.' 'I am ready.'

'You shall be killed.'

'Is that true? Do you mean it? Good news! Good news! For then I shall be free. My soul will escape like a bird at liberty from this earthly cage of my body. Then shall I be free. Now am I in chains. These bonds shall be broken. Kill me! Kill me!'

They slay her. One after another is martyred. Their bodies are covered with shrouds, and after a great silence, people enter and lift the coverings in awe and reverence. They stand wondering, as lights appear and shine upwards from the prostrate forms. Some question as to

the meaning of this. 'These are the spirits of those martyred ones, freed from their bodies. Now they enjoy eternal liberty. See, they ascend to the Kingdom!'

Realising this, the people are wonderstruck and amazed. They cry: 'What bounty God has bestowed on them! They are so free and joyful! Now can they wing their way to the Sun of Reality! Their souls return to the Sun from which they came!'

[#39]

18 January: Interview with Sir William Crookes

Saturday, 18 January 1913

The Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 January 1913. According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Sir William Crookes was a "British chemist and physicist noted for his discovery of the element thallium and for his cathode-ray studies, fundamental in the development of atomic physics."*

* * *

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "People are running after dogmas, they are holding fast to blind imitations, they are following the creed of ancestors and forefathers. I hope that you shall become the means of spreading the illumination of reality and this world of humanity may become freed from imaginations."

Sir William Crookes: "This is the hope that all of us have."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Have you read the writings of Bahá'u'lláh?"

Sir William Crookes: "No! I have seen very little."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Then it is necessary for a man like you to become well informed with these teachings."

Sir William Crookes: "I will get the books and study them."

* <https://www.britannica.com/biography/William-Crookes>

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are the spirit of this age; for although material civilization has advanced, yet divine civilization is left behind. We are in need of divine civilization, for material civilization without the aid of spiritual civilization is of no avail. Were divine civilization visible and active, wonderful traces would have been left on material civilization. But nowadays material civilization invents Krupp guns, rifles, destructive war implements, and vices and corruptions are increased, etc.; all these things are the results of material civilization. When divine civilization becomes visible, then all these clouds will be dispelled."

Sir William Crookes: "But we cannot live in these days without war."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "No doubt there will be a great war."

Sir William Crookes: "Now Europe is waging a moral war in the Balkans."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Right! May God protect Europe. I pray to God that this fire of war may not become enkindled in Europe. I am, therefore, anticipating to hear good news from you."

Sir William Crookes: "It is also my hope to become fully informed with the teachings of this Movement."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "I was most pleased to meet you and it is my hope great results will be the outcome of this meeting, for you have worked very nobly during your life. I wish your life be crowned with an eternal success. Were you to be informed of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, you will reap many harvests"

Sir William Crookes: "The influence of a great and good man is very beneficial. I will study deeply into this subject. Where are more Bahá'ís?"

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The headquarter of the Bahá'ís is Persia. There are many Bahá'ís there. They are all over the world. There is not a country in which there is no Bahá'ís."

Sir William Crookes: "I hear there are millions."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "We have no statistics, but there are many."

Sir William Crookes: "Persia was the center of one of the oldest civilizations and religions in the East."

'Abdu'l-Bahá: "Yes . . . The lights of the Sun have ever shone forth from the East."

[#40]

19 January: Remarks to the Wife of a Professor

Sunday, 19 January 1913

The Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 19 January 1913.

* * *

You must thank God that, although I am a person from the East and you are a revered lady from the West, yet we are gathered in this place with the utmost spiritual affection. I beg of God that you may become divine, spiritual, godlike and heavenly! May you become my daughter. I desire such a glory with you. God is most kind to His Servants. He has destined for them all the divine bounties, but these negligent people never think of them; they are not seeking. They are like the stones. They are satisfied with this world. God says: "I have prepared for them such glorious palaces, but these people are satisfied with their wretched hovels. I have created for them wonderful worlds of light, but they are totally negligent. I have opened before their faces the doors of the Kingdom, but they run away from me. I have desired for them heavenly illumination, but they prefer the dim ray of the candle. I have spread before them the Supper of the Lord, but they prefer to eat grass." Now it is my hope that you and people like you may sit around this divine table and partake of this heavenly food.

[#41]

19 January: Exhortations to Teach the Cause

Sunday, 19 January 1913

The Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 19 January 1913.

* * *

The object of all the prophets has been the purification of the souls, the cleansing of the hearts from the gratification of selfish desires, and living in accord with the heavenly Teachings. Today we are standing before the illimitable sea; let us not deprive ourselves. Let us heroically dive in the depth of the great ocean and gather the scintillating pearls of wisdom. You must teach the Cause, spread the message. When you are asked to deliver a talk in a meeting, turn your heart to Bahá'u'lláh, beg confirmation from Him and then speak. He will inspire you. Cry out the message of the Kingdom. Do not be silent. Be not quiet. Teach the Cause.

[#42]

19 January: Address at the Home of Felix Moscheles

Sunday, 19 January 1913
The Grelix, 80 Elm Park
Chelsea, London, England

The following account of this occasion is taken from *Unity Triumphant*, pp. 123–27.

* * *

THE RADIANCE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

SPEAKING in London, at the Studio of Mr. Felix Moscheles, on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 19th, 1913, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was asked by him to make allusion to the Hague Conference and to the beneficence of a Universal Language. He said:

"For every Age there is destined a great Movement, which is the sum total or Expression of that Age. In the 19th Century, Freedom, and Liberty, and Human Brotherhood was proclaimed.

But the Radiance of the 20th Century, into which we have entered, is Unity and Harmony. The Light we declare is: The Oneness of Humanity: That the Foundation of the Religions of God is One: And the Fellowship of all Races.

In this Century Human progress and perfections will ever be advanced from the Table of the Oneness of Humanity.

All the Prophets of God have been sent for this: That they may usher in the Era of Peace. His Holiness Christ embraced the Cross. His Holiness John gave up his head. Bahá'u'lláh endured the pillory.

"He suffered 50 years' exile and imprisonment. All through His Life He was exiled, imprisoned in dark dungeons, or incarcerated in a barrack. All these renunciations and sacrifices were for the sake of Humanity and the fundamental Unity of all Religions.

"At a time when the Orient was wrapped in contention, and encompassed in foul clouds and darkness: Lo, and behold! The Sun of Reality shone forth and flooded these regions with its rays. The first effulgent ray from this illumined sun emanating from the fact that God is the One Shepherd, Who ever provides for, cares for, and protects all Humanity, and is ever kind to all.

"The second ray appears through the investigation of Reality. We have to abandon all hearsays, and investigate realities. Everything must be seen with our own eyes, heard with our own ears, and demonstrated with our own minds - so that we may free ourselves from blind dogmas and superstitions.

"These decayed and superannuated dogmas and tales of the past, not being based upon Reality, have ever been the cause of contention. They have been causative of the laying waste of Mankind.

"These blind dogmas have made sons inimical to their fathers, and caused them to shun their mothers. "Reconciliation is at hand. But, as long as the nations will not abstain from these blind dogmas it is impossible.

"It is very difficult for the Sun, to penetrate the clouds of superstition and dogma. Therefore, if we dispel these clouds, we shall have the efficient rays of the Sun of Reality.

"One of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is that a Universal Language should be established - so that everyone may study two languages: One his native, and one auxiliary. Then, all people will be enabled to associate amicably and do away with misunderstandings.

"All enmity between Religions comes from lack of understanding. The Auxiliary language will serve to sweep away misunderstanding. This was proclaimed 50 years ago by Bahá'u'lláh. He laid down this law in the Holy Books.

"Another Teaching of Bahá'u'lláh is: There must be a Universal Court of Justice, so that all International disputes may be arbitrated by the Parliament of Man.

"Bahá'u'lláh 50 years ago, in the Book of Aqdas, commanded the people to establish a Universal Court of Arbitration, and summoned all nations to the Divine Banquet of International Peace.

"For this the whole Human Race must be consulted through their representatives, whose conclusions when ratified by the people of every country, will latterly be signed by their King, or President if the Country is Republic.

"These representatives will gather together in a place accepted by all the people. That place will be under the protection of Humanity, and no doubt of God.

"Then, all the disputes between nations will be referred to that Court for Arbitration.

"But, if one rise in rebellion not desiring to follow this Council, then all the individuals of the World will rise up against that nation.

"There is no doubt when this Council is brought into being the Peace of the World of Humanity will be established."

Referring, as requested, to the Hague Conference 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "The Hague Conference is good but insufficient. Its sphere of discussion is narrow. It is not representative of the electorate of the World.

"The members of this Conference were obliged to follow the inclinations of the Governments which supported them, and could not deviate one hair's breadth from their instructions. Had they been free and untrammelled you would have realized what could have been accomplished."

"The Council outlined by Bahá'u'lláh will be the last resort. It is confirmed by God: And under the protection of God. Rest assured this International Court of Arbitration will come into existence - for it is the demand of the time. We can positively say the nature of the time demands it."

"In the closed Century the demand was for Freedom. Whoever tried to quell it failed."

"Likewise, the International Court of Arbitration is requisite to this Age. It is impossible for any Power to postpone it, and the World of Humanity will assuredly rest in the cradle of Peace. This is one of the bounties of this Cycle. Its miracles are multitudinous. Its discoveries are wonderful."

"Therefore, let us all arise to serve Mankind, and bring International Peace into being - spending all our endeavours to that end. Let us go to the utmost sacrifice: 20,000 Bahais have given up life itself for this end: That the Divine commands may be realized throughout the Globe. So that all the children of men may live in the utmost prosperity."

"It is my hope that ere long we may enjoy these blessings."

[#43]

20 January: On the Infinitude of the Universe

Monday, 20 January 1913

The Blomfield Residence, 97 Cadogan Gardens
London, England

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 January 1913. Sohrab writes that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made these remarks to Ethel Rosenberg, Mary Thornburgh-Cropper, and Louise Heron that evening in response to a question about astronomy.

* * *

Although this globe of ours is very small, yet it has all these living beings. Can it be imagined that these tremendous bodies hanging in the limitless atmosphere are without inhabitants? The Creation of God is infinite. The worlds of God are numberless. Is it not preposterous to believe that God is only the Creator on this sphere and not on any other spheres? The moon revolves around the earth; the earth rotates around the sun; the sun has also a center around which it revolves, and that space is immeasurable. These stars in the infinite space which twinkle, each one of them is a sun with many satellites, but they are so far that the eyes cannot see them. All these numberless stars are suns, but owing to the incredible distance, they look so small. The light travels about one hundred and eighty thousand miles in a second, and there are certain stars the light of which takes eight years to reach the earth. Such is the infinitude of the universe of God. Have you ever thought that the worms inside of an apple may think that the creation of God is ended there and that there is nothing outside? Again, the tiny worms inside of an apricot seed may boast that God’s creation has come to a terminus in this small seed—there is nothing beside this. Now the worms must “wiggle” out of the apple, eat their way out, and then lo and behold—the creation of God is infinite.

France

[#44]

Undated Discourse on the Novel Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh

Exact date unknown

Exact location unknown; possibly at one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's apartments
Paris, France

The following text is taken from *'Abdu'l-Bahá in Divine Philosophy*, pp. 79–86.

* * *

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

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

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

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

In every language we find favorable criticisms except from those who have personal animosity against BAHĀ'O'LLĀH, and these cases are rare. Even those newspapers that are not universal in policy, have been favorable in criticism. In the universities, professors and students have listened while I expounded the principles of BAHĀ'O'LLĀH.

Observe and realize the power of this cause. During the time of former prophets, have you ever heard of praise from those who were not disciples? The immediate followers of Christ spoke and wrote to the glorification of the Christ spirit, but others did not occupy themselves with the subject. Verily, what is happening in this day is an unheard-of thing! The like is not recorded in Greek, Roman or Egyptian history. Behold the sovereignty and brilliancy of this truth. Jews and Gentiles alike acknowledge its vitality and are astonished at the radiance of its light. A rabbi of America although he did not claim to be a follower of BAHĀ'O'LLĀH, nevertheless praised the precepts of BAHĀ'O'LLĀH, and said, "We have been wrong in thinking that the light in the East is extinguished." Even those who deny the divinity of this cause do not contest BAHĀ'O'LLĀH'S greatness, his extraordinary power, his universal wisdom; in a word, that he was a super-man.

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

Certain of the clergy in America said, "Many of the truths of our religion have been forgotten. BAHĀ'O'LLĀH has come to remind us of them." One clergyman said before a large congregation "BAHĀ'O'LLĀH revises the old beliefs but he has brought us nothing new. These truths are already found in the sacred books."

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

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

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

"Religion must be the cause of affection. It must be a joy-bringer. If it become the cause of difference, it would be better to banish it. Should it become the source of hatred, of warfare, it were better that it should not exist. If a remedy produce added illness, it were far better to

discard the remedy. A religion which does not conform with the postulates of science is merely superstition. In which sacred book do you find this thought? Tell me!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[#45]

Undated Exhortations to Nurture the Seeds Sown in America

Exact date unknown; possibly Thursday, 27 February 1913*

Exact location unknown; possibly at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 15 (12 December 1913), p. 256.

* Sohrab has attributed these words to 'Abdu'l-Bahá in his diary letter for that day: "I scattered pure seeds in America. All of you must strive to water them. This is conducive to the glorification of all." Zarfání also notes that Americans were among 'Abdu'l-Bahá's visitors that day.

* * *

I have planted the Seeds in America. You must nurture them and care for them. If you do this, they will yield an abundant harvest * * * * You must arise with superhuman strength to spread the teachings for the Cause is GREAT; and whosoever shall arise in this Day to TEACH, know that he will be assisted by the Divine Concourse. This is not the day of silence! It is the day of the Proclamation of the Kingdom! It is not the day of rest. We must ACT, ACT, ACT!

[#46]

Undated Interview with Henri Bergson

Exact date unknown; probably sometime during the week of 23 January 1913*
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 302–304. It was translated from French by Sheryl Mellor; see Valíyu’lláh Varqá, “L’entrevue avec Henri Bergson,” in *Sur les pas de ‘Abdu’l-Bahá à Paris*, pp. 44–45. A partial record of this same interview in Persian has also been published in Áqá Mírzá Qábil-Ábádih-í (ed. Ghulám-‘Alí Dihqán), *Vaqáyi’-i-Amrý-i-Ábádih* (Hofheim, Germany: Bahá’í-Verlag, 2007), pp. 254–255.

* * *

During ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s stay in Paris, Professor Bergson, considered one of the most famous philosophers of materialism of the day, wanted to meet Him. Many Iranian princes were also in Paris at the time and most of them had the honor of being admitted into the Holy Presence. One was Prince Nusratu’l-Dawlih, the eldest son of Farmánfarmá, who was studying law in Paris. One day when he was in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s blessed presence, he remarked with astonishment that he had read in the newspapers that a meeting had been arranged between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Professor Bergson. He was even more surprised by the fact that it was the Professor who would come into the Holy Presence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that this was true and that the professor would be coming to see Him on such and such a day. Nusratu’l pleaded with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to allow him the honor of attending the meeting and discussions. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá agreed with his request.

On the day and time set for the meeting, Bergson came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s residence, accompanied by several other professors who followed his school of thought and were regarded as his students. Jinábi-i-Valí’u’lláh Varqá, who had the honor of being in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s service, described Bergson as a short man who walked smugly before his students. He

* According to Jan Jasion; see *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, p. 302.

came up to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and everyone came in the normal manner to shake hands with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and then they sat down on the chairs. After the usual greetings and tea, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá started off the conversation by saying that there was unity of vision between materialists and those who believe in God on just one issue, i.e., that the creation of all existing things is the result of a very great and indescribable force. The difference in view between these two groups resides in the fact that materialists call this stupendous power ‘Nature’, whereas those who believe in God call this creative force and absolute intelligence ‘God’. Bergson then humbly said, “If you could reconcile materialists and those who believe in God in this way and establish understanding between them, we would be most grateful.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that this misunderstanding could be eliminated on the condition that the honorable philosophers consider the matter with equity. And Bergson said: “You have the floor in this meeting.” and then cupped his hand behind his ear and said, “Our ears are open to hear and consider the matter.” His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “To clarify this issue, we will give an example: if a person goes to the seashore and takes some seawater into the cup of his hand, and then holds it to his lips and tastes it, his sense of taste will note that the water is salty. Can he then claim that there is no salt in the sea even supposing that only that handful of water was salty and the rest was fresh water?”

Bergson thought for a moment and replied, “No.” Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that among the countless creatures that exist in the world of creation, one is man. A force exists in man that we call consciousness and intelligence. It is through this force that man has succeeded with all these extraordinary inventions and discovered the forces that exist in nature. Could it be claimed that the original being or creative force that created man was devoid of such a power? Bergson pondered the matter deeply and then suddenly broke the silence of the meeting by slamming his fist down on the table, shaking all the empty tea cups, and stating that never before had anyone been able to resolve such a complex problem with such simple words. Then he rose and asked leave to depart, and all his companions, in contrast to their attitudes at their arrival, said goodbye with deep humility before departing.

With this simple example ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave Bergson two paths to choose, that is to say if he were to respond that the original being who was the Creator of man was nature, which lacks consciousness and awareness, his response would be contrary to the standards and criteria of reason since its creation, man, possesses these qualities. And if he were to claim that nature possesses intelligence and awareness, that too would be false since we see that man, through his own intelligence and reason, discovers the secrets of nature, whereas no created thing is capable of understanding the being that created it. So, he was forced to accept the truth that the Creator and Fashioner of all things in nature is not deprived of consciousness and awareness but rather possesses a power far beyond human intelligence and understanding.

So, after Bergson and his students had left, Prince Nusratu’l-Dawlih arrived, apologizing by saying that an unforeseen event had kept him from taking part in the discussions. He then

asked what the outcome of the meeting had been. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told him that Bergson had come and that the response that He had given him had convinced him. With a great deal of astonishment, he asked how he had been convinced. And ‘Abdu’l-Bahá repeated the example that he had given Bergson. Prince Nusratu’l-Dawlih said that in his opinion, the handful of water could be salty while the rest of the water was fresh. His Holiness ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied, “O prince, you know that Bergson is a famous scholar, so I gave him proof (*Istidlál*) in this way and he was convinced, but for you I will certainly give proofs in another manner.”

[#47]

22 January: Two Short Stories about Bahá’u’lláh

Wednesday, 22 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 22 January 1913.

* * *

About half past nine, our Beloved [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] called me into His own room and till long past midnight various subjects were discussed. Among the many anecdotes which He told me about the days of Bahá’u’lláh, I [would] like to tell you two of them.

Once Muḥammad-‘Alí thought in a public way to show his priority over ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In these days the Blessed Perfection lived in the Palace of Bahjí, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lived in ‘Akká, Muḥammad-‘Alí living in Bahjí. Our Beloved often called on Bahá’u’lláh and always as a sign of respect sat near the door. Now Muḥammad-‘Alí thought if on one of these occasions he should enter the room and see the Master sitting near the door (and if there were many believers standing), he would sit above the Master, so that before the eyes of all his superiority would be established. One day he entered the room and the Master was sitting as usual near the door. Bahá’u’lláh, giving him permission to sit, he went right above the Master and sat down. When the Blessed Perfection observed this, with His own hands he made up him get up and take another seat.

On another occasion, one of the Bahá’í women, after much pleading and insisting, kissed the Master’s hands in the Presence of Bahá’u’lláh. Muḥammad-‘Alí and [the] rest blamed her severely, telling her that she had made a great mistake, to kiss the hands of anybody else before Bahá’u’lláh. Then Bahá’u’lláh, hearing about this, called that woman to him and said to

her before everybody, “I am very pleased with you because in my Presence thou didst manifest thy devotion and respect to the Master.”

[#48]

23 January: Discourse on Divine Grace and Guidance

Thursday, 23 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following remarks were originally taken down in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab in an unpublished diary letter addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 January 1913. Sohrab writes that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá made them in response to “some very wonderful symbolical paintings” that had been brought that morning by a certain Miss George, whose mother was “an excellent Bahai.” Sohrab notes there were two canvases called “the path of life”; he describes the first one in this way:

On one was painted two very ethereal maids with their hairs flowing in the winds, behind their backs. They were walking in an enchanting sylvan wood. In the hand of each, one observed a lamp, shedding its rays on the path. Their faces radiated peace, serenity and assurance. They walked with steady feet, and with the assistance of their lanterns they detected all obstacles in their path and quickly avoided them. The background of the picture was very lovely, tall green trees, ascending heavenward, birds perching in the branches were singing the songs of light and love. The light in the lanterns, I was told, is the symbol of the human intelligence which guides man to higher summits of Reality.

And the second one thus:

The other canvas contained many pictures. The background was rocky, full of crags and impassable roads. Men and women, young and old with their lanterns in their hands and some having babies in their arms tried to scale these rocks. Some had dark lanterns — the light of intelligence was not burning — and as a result they were lost in the deep recesses of the valleys. They were pitiful sights. Gloom and depression were stamped on their faces and the terrors of hopelessness and despair pictured in their every move. Side by side there were men and women whose lanterns were lit. Divine splendors emanated from countenances; gaily they danced along as though they were walking on a flower bed. They experienced no difficulty in finding their way. The lantern lighted every cranny and crevice. The thing I liked best about them was they made you stop and look.

He then concludes:

The Master took the two paintings as the theme of His morning address. It was a beautiful exposition of this light which came to the mind and illumined it with the rays of the Sun of Supreme Intelligence. This lantern guided man to the virtues of the world of humanity. You will read the address at the end of the day's writing.

And the address itself is as follows:

* * *

The artist has drawn very beautiful pictures for she has painted allegorical figures on this canvas - each figure carries a lantern in the hand — the lanterns of some are lighted while those of others are not and still others are only dimly lighted. In this manner she has portrayed the various stages of human development.

The light of Guidance shines brightly in the pathway of some people while the direction of others is only distinguished faintly by a feeble light — and still the way of another is entirely dark. The aim of the artist is to show that this light is shining within man and by the process of reflection is illuminating his pathway and thus causing him to attain to the virtues of the world of humanity.

From our standpoint this is correct, for the light consists of the potential capability which is hidden in the life of man. There are certain souls whose capabilities are very great, having in themselves the latent power of igniting (or ignition) or soon as they come in touch with a flame they take fire like a torch - others have but - little capability like unto a piece of wet wood. They have the power of enkindling, but it may take some time before the wood is dry enough to light. Other souls are like unto the stones, if a stone is put-into the fire for a thousand years it will not burn — it has no capability of lighting.

For example we observe that the Divine Grace like the rain pours down upon the Earth. Now if this rain falls upon brackish ground nothing will grow for the soil lacks the power of producing vegetation — as long as there is not the capacity in the soil no matter how much the rain may fall on it, it will yield no result. On the other hand there is a piece of land which is good and free from blemish and as soon as the rain falls flowers and hyacinths will spring up from it. Now, reflect that notwithstanding an abundance of rain it is impossible for a withered tree to put forth leaves, because the vital energy of growth is lacking and the life-cells are dead. Therefore no matter how great is the Divine Grace yet if a man is not endowed with capability to receive it there is no result. On the other hand, however much the capability is great and yet the Divine Grace does not assist, the man will not be able to attain to the summit of perfection, for the soil, though free from blemish is in need of the downpour of the rain. There are certain souls who believe that the virtues of humanity are obtainable through

the power of capability alone, but it is evident that unless the Divine Grace descends no fruit will be produced. Unless the sun shines, the clouds pour down its rain and zephyrs blow, the dark soil will not be transformed into a delectable rose garden.

This will show you that capability alone is not sufficient - capability will be fruitful if it is joined with the Divine Grace and also if this divine Grace is obtained and there is no capability on the part of man there will be no harvest.

Consequently we must strive in order to obtain the capability so that this divine Grace may have its effect upon us and may enrich us with its inexhaustible favours. We must make an effort — so that when thirsty we may drink with utmost relish and enjoyment this water of life — but if a sea of fresh water is waving before us and there is no thirst in us we shall not enjoy it. If the rays of the sun flood the whole region and we are blind we cannot witness its glories. If the celestial symphony of the supreme Concourse is raised and we are deaf we shall not hear it. If the sweet fragrances waft towards us and we have not the power of swelling what would be the use. If a most royal banquet were spread before us and we have no appetite we cannot partake of it.

Consequently let us strive to obtain unlimited capabilities in order that we may enjoy these divine Graces of Bahá'u'lláh which have encompassed the world. For His Grace is all-circling; His clouds are pouring, and the rays of His sun are descending.

[#49]

24 January: Discourse on Spiritual Reality

Friday, 24 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text was originally taken down in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The translation (“Address of Abdul Baha given Friday January 24th at Paris – 30 Rue St. Didier. Translated from the Persian notes of Ahmad Sohrab”) originally comes from the Ahmad Sohrab papers, which are held at the National Bahá’í Archives of the United States. The translation has also been published in Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 305–07, from which the version below is taken.

* * *

Welcome! Welcome!

I have come again to Paris so that I may see if the seed I have sown last year has sprung up. Praise be to God, I can see that they have taken root. On this account I am very happy. I hope that this cause will not remain stationary but that day-by-day these seeds will take firmer root in the ground and that these meadows may become succulent and full of flowers. That this ideal illumination may become manifest.

Every creature is endowed with one aspect or reality. Man however possesses two aspects or realities – consider how these sentient beings whether they live upon the earth or in the air have only one aspect, for example: the earth, the mountains, the meadows and the dust have only one mineral aspect. These flowers and the trees enjoy the vegetable reality – the one vegetable aspect. These animals and the quadrupeds possess only the animal aspect, but man has a material aspect and a spiritual aspect, for man is different. His physical reality is captive to nature, is on a level with the animal kingdom while the veritable man is superior to the animals. By his spiritual reality he is distinguished from them. For we clearly observe that there is a power in man which the animals do not possess. In the animal there is only the animal power but in man we see not only the animal power but also the spiritual power. Although the physical reality of man is a prisoner of nature yet his spiritual reality controls nature. That is why the spiritual reality becomes the discoverer of the virtues of things. When the spiritual reality of man is trained and the powers of intellect are developed man reaches to such a high pinnacle of perfection that he can perceive the secrets of the realms of nature, unravels the mysteries of nature, unfolds the hidden purposes of the kingdoms, brings before our vision the accomplishments of past cycles and understands the things which will happen in the future.

Therefore it has become evident that there is a holy power in man. Reflect carefully and then you will realize to what extent man is physically a prisoner to the laws of Nature. The slightest draught, a little cold will make him ill or some heat will incommode him, a small mosquito-bite may become deadly for him. This is in relation to his physical reality, but his intellectual or his ideal reality is victorious over all phenomena and with that power he conquers the world of nature. The elephant as big as he is becomes his plaything. The lion, as fearless as he is, is put into a cage. A small Arab boy leads a thousand camels through the desert. How can he do it? Not by his own force. It is evident that if man with this small body of his is enabled physically to overcome these difficulties he surmounts them by his intellect. He dries up the land, then again he floods it. He breaks through the mountains and for geological discoveries he descends into the earth. He discovers the realities of all phenomena. Through the power of his genius he creates all sorts of industries and he also brings forth delicate arts and crafts. While in Europe he discovers America. While on this earth he explores the stars in the firmament. While in the East he receives in a few minutes news from the West. These illustrations make it evident that while man is physically weak, yet intellectually and spiritually he is powerful. From a physical stand point he cannot conquer a panther or a wolf

but by his spiritual, ideal power he subdues all the animals. This holy power in man is one of the Divine bestowals. It is a sign of the power of God.

Consider what power has brought us together in this meeting – the East and the West. It is evident that this is not through the material power – It is the ideal power, which brings us together. It is the ideal power, which establishes a bond between hearts. It is the ideal power, which makes us kinder to each other. It is the ideal power that brings nations together. The ideal power that organizes the heterogeneous people into a homogeneous whole. It is the ideal power that brings to us the world of the Spirit. It is the ideal power that explores the mystical regions of science. It is the ideal power that codifies laws and regulations. It is the ideal power that sets man a ruler over the domains of Nature. Corporeally man is not important, but spiritually he is mighty. The physical side of his life is weak and easily defeated but the ideal side of his life is the all-conqueror. The physical side of man is like an animal but the ideal aspect of his essence is humanistic. Physically man is aggressive, tyrannical, ignorant, overbearing, bloodthirsty; ideally he is just, gentle, wise, patient and benevolent. He is peaceful, he seeks unity. He bestows life; he is the cause of honour in the world of humanity. He is conducive to progress of mankind. In short these two realities are in man. His physical reality is in need of assistance. It needs food, water, sleep, and rest. And if it does not get these it will perish. Likewise if the ideal reality of man does not receive its sustenance it also shall die. The Holy, divine manifestations appeared so that the ideal reality of man may be fed, that his thoughts may take a higher flight, his intellect may expand, spiritual morals be revealed and extraordinary progress be made. Therefore, we cannot state that the ideal reality of man is not in need of sustenance, for his physical reality receives the material food. The food of the ideal reality of man is Divine Bestowals. The breath of the Holy Spirit and Heavenly confirmations.

I hope that you may become the recipients of this heavenly food so that the ideal reality may be strengthened, your spiritual powers increased, regeneration may be obtained and thus you may become radiant and the luminary angels of Heaven.

[#50]

25 January: Discourse on Focal Points in the World of Creation

Saturday, 25 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 310–11. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 January 1913. According to Sohrab, the remarks below were addressed to “two very

prominent Persians who were leaders in the recent [Persian Constitutional] revolution,” adding that “Naturally enough the discussion was turned upon events in Persia the short-sightedness of the leaders in making many mistakes and playing to the hands of Foreign Powers.”

* * *

“It is natural in man to oppress. When two individuals fight, they go before the civil court and settle their differences, but there is no law or court whereby the noxious may resort thereto and arbitrate their conflicting interests; therefore, when they arise to support each other's rights, there is no one to say ‘No.’ It is a natural tendency that every created being desires to gain superiority over others. Every plant desires to draw unto itself all the growing virtue of the land. Every animal aims to gain superiority over others. This is the requirement of the world of nature. Intelligence is of two kinds: divine intelligence and natural intelligence. Divine intelligence prompts man to justice, leads him to equity, teaches him pity and long-suffering; nay rather, it teaches him to prefer others to himself. But his natural intelligence prompts him to injustice, iniquity, and the practice of the survival of the fittest.”

Many other points were discussed. In one passage, He said: “All the doors were closed except this door of the Kingdom of Abhá.”

Again: “We are striving that the moral stamina of Persia be reinforced; her commerce increased, her system of education perfected, and her scientific attainment improved. It is easy to destroy, but it is difficult to build. God loves those souls who are the means of the upbuilding of a country. Man must become the well-wisher of the whole world.”

Again: “Morals are of two kinds: Civic morals as enjoyed by the Western people, and divine morals which are made possible through divine teachings and the love of God. If an average Westerner does not steal, or does not commit murder, he is afraid of civic punishment and the laws. Were it not [for] the fear of these laws, he might have done worse. But a person who is imbued with divine morals, he will not act against any human being because he loves God. Again: “If the Bahá'ís live and act for one year in accord with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, you will see the results!”

[#51]

25 January: Discourse on Focal Points in the World of Creation

Saturday, 25 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 310–11. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 January 1913.

* * *

In the world of genesis every power or energy has a focal centre. For example the centre of intelligence is the brain. The centre of vision is the eye. The centre of hearing is the ear. The centre of speech is the tongue. For the power of gravitation, there is a centre which is betwixt the heaven and earth. All the composite elements of this globe gravitate around that centre. Where is the centre of light? It is the Sun. Although there are many luminous objects; the fire is luminous; the lamp is radiant; some of the insects such as fire-flies are light-giving; even some of the plants are phosphorescent, yet the centre of light is the Sun. The moon is light-bestowing body, the planets in the solar system are radiant bodies. Yet they all receive their light from the sun. . .

However, the centres of Divine virtues are the Manifestations of God. Just as the Sun is the centre of lights, likewise each one of the prophets of God is the focal point of ideal perfections, the dawning-place of the creational virtues and the shining point of heavenly attributes. If this sun trains the earthly bodies; that sun educates the spiritual verities. If this sun is the centre of material lights; that sun is the centre of ideal lights. This is the Sun of Reality. Therefore, we must ever turn our faces to that spiritual Sun, so that we may acquire ideal perfections; so that the world of humanity may become illuminated; so that we may free ourselves from the vices of the world of nature, and be imbued with the excellences of humankind. Then the earthly soul will become heavenly; material susceptibilities will become divine; eternal life will be obtained; celestial happiness will be realized in the reality of man. Day unto day man will advance; the minds will develop; the souls will be refined; the world of morality will become illumined; humanity will discern the reality of phenomena, and will comprehend the mysteries of God. Then he will become the Perfect Man and will be unto the image and likeness of God.

[#52]

26 January: Words to Three Friends

Sunday, 26 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 January 1913.

* * *

Just as you are striving in [the] material sphere, work also in [the] spiritual sphere. Try to suffer the people to enter in the Kingdom of God. To tell them only about the history of the Cause brings no permanent result; make them Bahá’ís. There is a vast difference whether you hear about the light, see the light, or whether you live in the light. Persuade the people to live in the realm of light and not only be satisfied to hear about it.

When the people live in the realm of light, then their hearts will be illumined: then their spirits will be rejoiced with the divine Glad-Tidings, then these minds will become the receptacles of the Holy Spirit; then they shall be regenerated; then they shall enter in the Kingdom of Abhá.

[#53]

27 January: Discourse on the Four Criteria of Comprehension

Monday, 27 January 1913

Scott Residence, 17 rue de la Boissonnade
Paris, France

The following account was originally taken down in French by Hippolyte Dreyfus, who knew Persian well, and then translated into English by Peter Terry. The primary source is a typescript (“Lundi 27 Jan. Après midi, chez M. et Mme Scott”) held at the Bibliothèque Bahá’íe de France. Owing to the fact that only the first page of the original typescript is extant at this time (Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 320n754), the translation below is incomplete. Another discussion of this subject, for which a complete and authenticated transcript does exist in the original Persian, can be found in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Some Answered Questions*, ch. 83.

* * *

You are all welcome. I was very eager to see you. I thank God to have reunited us all. I remember reunions here, and it is a great joy to encounter you anew. I hope that you are also happy, that you feel the same joy. I left you in order to return to Egypt.

I was invited to America, and I decided to accept this invitation. It was physically difficult for me but my spirit wanted to do it. I was fifteen days on the sea, I arrived at New York, and I visited almost all the towns, I was two and three times in several of them.

I was in Los Angeles after having visited all of the towns on the way from New York. The standard of the Kingdom of God was unfurled.

I was able to explain the religious principles of Bahá'u'lláh. I spoke everywhere in the assemblies, or the churches, or the Jewish synagogues, in the universities, and the clubs of free-thinkers.

Thanks to God, to Bahá'u'lláh, I did not encounter an objection anywhere. In the synagogue where are found two-thousand Israelites I affirmed the message of the Christ, among the free-thinkers I demonstrated the existence of God. To the free-thinkers in one of my discourses I said: There are four means of knowing. Listen with attention as this is very important.

Among the contemporary philosophers, the means is general sensation. Every means is imperfect except for the means of the senses. Vision demonstrates to us that light exists, everything that impacts the senses is real, every other thing is nothing but imagination.

The reality is of the perceptible thing, and everything that is not perceptible is the subject of doubt. This is what the contemporary philosophers say, who rely upon the criterion of the senses.

Among the ancient philosophers it was reason upon which reliance was placed, all was dependent upon that criterion. That which reason did not accept was not true.

As for the religious people, their criterion was the sacred text, in the Bible one found this, in the Gospels that. The sacred book was the criterion of the pious folks. One was not permitted the least reflection, as the word of God is the truth.

The fourth criterion was inspiration. The occultists said – I had this revelation– the Platonists said –this thing was revealed to me. For them all that is outside this means was nothing but error. Thus we have cited the four criteria:

1. the senses

2. reasons

3. the sacred text

4. inspiration

There is no fifth one.

Speaking of the first criterion, that of the senses. Thus says the contemporary philosophy: One must see everything, without doing so one can not accept anything. We hear that God exists, but we do not see Him, thus He does not exist. The soul does not exist because we have not seen it.

Let us see if this philosophy is true or not.

The senses take a mirage as water, this is an error of the eyes. The eye sees the Sun in movement, and the earth without movement, whereas it is the opposite that takes place. The eye of man sees an immobile ship and everything else seems to flee, but it is the contrary.

It sees planets as points, when they have considerable dimensions. A luminous point made to rotate gives the impression of being a circle. There are lots of similar things, hence the senses are subject to error. How can we rely upon the senses?

The criterion of reason is also imperfect. The wise men who thought that all could be discerned through reason were not in agreement . . .

[#54]

**28 January: Paraphrased Remarks on the Incomprehensibility of God's
Essence**

Tuesday, 28 January 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 January 1913.

* * *

A quotation from the special Center of the Covenant issue of the *Star of the West* on the meanings of "He is God" brought forth a very brilliant exposition of divinity and the Manifestations of God.

“Man cannot comprehend the essence of God. He is limited and God's essence is unlimited. All the attributes referable to God—such as omnipotent, omniscient, merciful—are only qualifying attributes. They are only attributes negating imperfections in the essence of God. Otherwise God, being the Unnamable, we cannot refer to Him with any special names. Even the Word ‘God’ is, after all, a word which brings to our consciousness the realization of that Unfathomable Absolute Something. Therefore, all these names and attributes belong to the Manifestations of God. In order to understand an object, we must become greater than that object and then give it a name and define it with clear definition. Now when we come to God and His essence, we can never know anything about it; we come in touch with that divine ineffable "Something" only when we stand before the Manifestation. The difference between the Bahá'ís and certain past religious and sects is this: They believe that there is God and there are creatures. Some believe that the essence of God has to become vocal in a human personality; others believe that the essence of God is divided into myriads of particles . . . and in turn these do manifest themselves constantly in the human bodies. But the Bahá'ís believe there is the essence of God, the knowledge of which is unattainable by man; it is the Mystery of mysteries and the Essence of essences and the Light of lights. There is the Manifestation of God, the transparent Mirror, the clear Channel, the Perfect Man Who represents to us all the ideas of “God” that we can clearly grasp—Who reveals to us faint glimpses of that far-off Light, and Who opens our eyes to the majestic Glory of the Eternal Kingdom. These are creatures who receive the teachings and who try to live the life of purity and sanctity.”

He spoke a long time on this most wonderful subject, and as I think now I can remember some more points, but I tried to give you an idea of the subject rather than the talk.

[#55]

28 January: On The Duties of This Glorious Day

Tuesday, 28 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 January 1913.

* * *

“Now praise be to God that His Holiness Bahá’u’lláh has appeared. He has upraised the flag of divine civilization; He has opened the doors of the Kingdom of God; the Sun of Reality has shone forth; the lights of divine Favors have encircled us—unfolded every truth. Therefore, let us strive so that we may spread divine civilization; so that we may unfurl the Ensign of

knowledge; so that we may illumine the minds; so that we may enlighten the intellects. Awake! Awake! for the doors of the Kingdom of Abhá are open! for the Bestowals of God are infinite! If on such a day we fail, the end will be regret. If before this salubrious spring we remain thirsty, life will be without result. If we are still unaware of the Favors of this Most Great Day, we will always be portionless and without a share.”

Here He [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] looked at the audience; His voice become authoritative, His eyes were shining with the light of heaven, and His cry thrilled all. He fairly cried:

“We must raise the call of the Kingdom of Abhá. We must establish the basis of divine Civilization. We must transform this world into another world. We must illumine this dark globe. We must make these blind eyes see. We must suffer these deaf ears [to] hear. We must make these ones hear. Then out of this dark soil, which is the world of nature, variegated flowers and fragrant tulips will grow. Arise! Arise! For the Bounty of God is with us. Be hopeful! Be hopeful! For the rays of the Sun of Reality are towering over us! Rejoice! Rejoice! For the clouds of mercy are raining upon us. Awake! Awake! for the gates of the treasures of the Kingdom are opened before our faces. Shortcoming is not allowed at this time! Silence is not permissible at this hour! Now lukewarmness is not commendable! Now immobility is reprehensible!”

[#56]

28 January: A Comparison of Paris to a Slow-Growing Tree

Tuesday, 28 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 January 1913.

* * *

There are certain trees which grow and develop very quickly; other trees may take a long time before they put forth leaves and blossoms. It is evident that Paris is one of those trees which may take a long time to grow. It is [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] hope that it may give much fruits, Paris in reality is a very artistic city. It has many interesting sights for the tourists—many charming spots to intrigue the eyes. We might state that material civilization has pitched its tent in Paris, but the tent is so big that here and there are great patches of obscurities under it. It is His hope that every luminous lamp may be enkindled under this tent so that the darkness may be dispelled. These lamps are Bahá’ís. It is His hope that they may cast their rays all around,

that they may bestow lights, that they may become able to free these souls from the darkness of the world of nature.

[#57]

29 January: Words of Consolation to a Weeping Woman

Wednesday, 29 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier

Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 29 January 1913.

* * *

Be free from every tie. Do not attach thy heart to anything. Open thy wings and soar toward the infinite space of God. A bird whose wings are tied cannot fly. Now let thy wings be unloosed from these rusty feathers. Released thyself from every attachment to this ephemeral world. All these things are phantasmal appearances, passing soldier-like before our eyes. They are all unreal. Strengthen thy wings so that thou mayest soar above these ever changing conditions and reach to the world of Absolute Reality. These thou shall obtain a happiness which belongs to the Kingdom of Abhá: a happiness which is eternal just as the Kingdom of God is eternal. Be radiant! Be joyful! Be serene! Be free! Be free! Be free from sorrows! A person whose heart is attached to this world cannot progress. The Love of God makes man free. It is like unto the sword. It cuts all the chains. The Love of God is the remedy for every disease; the salve for every wound and freedom from every prison. I hope that thou wilt attain to those ideal worlds. Read the Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh. Study the Hidden Words. Then thou wilt become spiritual, illumined, godlike, divine. The glorious Sun of the Love of God shall arise from the horizon of Thy heart; thy eyes shall perceive the Light; thy ears shall hear the small voice and at last thou shalt behold the Glory of the Lord.

[#58]

30 January: Discourse on Soul, Mind, and Spirit

Thursday, 30 January 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text was originally transcribed in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The English translation was first published in "Soul, Mind and Spirit: Talk Given by Abdul-Baha, January 30, 1913, at 30 rue St. Didier, Paris: from Persian notes; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab," *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 2 (9 April 1913), 37-38.

* * *

One of the ladies present has asked me to speak on the subject of soul, mind and spirit. She desires an explanation of these terms.

The terminology of ancient philosophers differs from that of our own time. In later ages certain terms have developed through which we see these subjects in a different light. According to some ancient philosophers, the words soul, mind and spirit imply the underlying principles of life, expressing the various phases of one absolute reality. They were different names for the operations of one essence. For instance, we say a man sees, hears and speaks – seeing, hearing and speaking are the different performances of the same power which animates man. Different schools of thought have given different names to the various operations of the one essence. For instance, when some speak of the emotions of consciousness they call it soul; and when they express the discovering power of man they call it mind, and when they refer to the animating essence of the world of creation, they call it spirit.

The differentiation which we make of these subjects is as follows: By soul we mean that power which is the mover of this physical body which is entirely under the control and lives in accordance with its dictates. The soul that lives in the material world is dark for in the material world there is aggression, struggle, greed, vice and transgression. If the soul remains in this station, and moves along these paths it will receive no uplift, but if it becomes the recipient of the world of mind, its darkness will be transformed into light; its tyranny into justice, its ignorance into wisdom and its aggression into loving kindness. There will be no more struggle for existence and man will become free from egotism. He will be released from the material world and become the embodiment of justice, the personification of the virtues. He will become a sanctified soul and be the means of the illumination of the world of humanity and an honor to human kind. He will confer life upon the children of men so that all nations

will attain to the station of perfection. To such a person we may apply the name of “a holy soul.”

The soul in itself cannot unravel the mysteries; but the mind is superior to the soul. The mind is a power whereby man can investigate the reality of every object. It unfolds to his vision the secrets of existence and leads him on and on to the station of divine sublimity. It frees man from the fetters of self and causes him to ascend to the pure heaven of sanctity.

The third power of man is the power of the Spirit. It is an emanation from the Divine Bestower. It is the effulgence of the Sun of Reality, the radiation of the celestial world. In short it is the essence of the Spirit of Faith of which His Holiness Christ speaks when He says, “Those that are born of the flesh are flesh and those born of the spirit are spirit.” The spirit is the axis around which the eternal life revolves. It is conducive to everlasting glory; it is the cause of the exultation of the world of humanity. Again His Holiness Christ says, “Whosoever has not received a portion of the spirit is as dead. Let the dead bury their dead.” In another place Christ says, “You must be baptized with spirit.” This Spirit is the life of the world of humanity; the cause of eternal illumination. It inspires man to attain to the virtues and perfections of the divine world.

May each one of you become the recipient of the Spirit. This is my hope.

[#59]

31 January: Discourse on the Soul and Other Subjects

Friday, 31 January 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 332–33. The primary source for the main portion of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s discourse is a French typescript (“Vendredi matin, 31 Jan. 30 rue st. Didier”) held at the Bibliothèque Bahá’íe de France and translated into English by Peter Terry, while the closing remarks were originally recorded by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab in an unpublished diary letter addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 31 January 1913.

* * *

Today I am going to speak of a certain subject – the soul.

After the separation of the soul from the body what happens to it? It is a miniature subject, reflect much in order to understand it well. It is made up of what has a place, and what does not have a place.

The human body is in space. The soul has no place in space. Space is a quality of material things, that which is not material does not belong in space. The soul is an abstraction and it does not belong in space. Intelligence is not in space, it has a relation with the brain of man, it is not in the brain, make a study of the brain and you will not find intelligence there; intelligence resides in the brain but not materially, it depends thereon. In the same way the soul appears in the body, it is not inside the body. When man dies his relation with the body is deleted. We see the Sun reflected in a mirror, it has a relation with the mirror, the mirror conveys the light, the image of the Sun, but the Sun is not in the mirror, it does not enter nor does it exit the mirror: nevertheless we see it in the mirror. Thus the soul shows itself in the body, it neither enters nor does it exit. If the mirror is broken the Sun does not die. It is the same with the body. The soul experiences no change any more than does the Sun. The soul eternally resides in its own station.

For example consider the world of dreams where all the physical faculties are stopped. The soul lives there, it circulates, it sees, it hears, it speaks; meanwhile the faculties of the body are suspended. That makes us understand that once the body decomposes, the soul is not affected.

Let us speak of another question. All the peoples of the world have their own ways. Some are occupied with agriculture, others with the arts, others with commerce, politics, etc. Certain religionists think only of their own cult, they are attached to dogmas, they believe in a holy war to conquer the world, that all the other religionists are in error, and that one is obliged to torment them for their own good. The beliefs of the Bahá'ís are very different.

They believe that one must be on good terms with all the religionists, that one must love all of humanity, and ameliorate its condition. God is One, He is the true shepherd of all Creation. Be good with everyone, so as to unite the world, and spread affection everywhere. Be ready to give life, fortune, position, repose to cause to appear a new light, and to establish unity at the poles of the world. There are beings weaker than ourselves, we must raise them, ignorant ones that we must instruct, there are some in infancy, we must aid them to grow up, others that are ill, we must heal them. We must not despise them, we must be good for them, better for the diseased and the weak ones, better for the child. We must not humiliate them.

Bahá'u'lláh was the Sun of Reality, all humanity will be illumined under His protection.

* * *

The duties, the responsibilities of the Bahais are these: They must be kind to all the religions. They must love humankind with all their hearts and souls. They must work for the public welfare. They must know that God is one; the Real Shepherd is one and all humanity constitute the sheep of one flock. Therefore, they must be compassionate toward all. They must exert themselves to bring about the oneness of the world of humanity. They must put forth the

utmost effort to conciliate the hearts. They must be the means of the happiness and progress of the world. They must ever be ready to sacrifice their properties, their rest and their lives so that in the world of humanity divine illumination be spread, the banner of universal peace be upraised, and the Tabernacle of the Oneness of the world of humanity be pitched in the very centre of this globe.

[#60]

6 February: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Meets with Inayat Khan

Thursday, 6 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following translation is taken from Amín Egea, *Apostle of Peace*, vol. 2, pp. 117–19. The primary source is ‘Bahatism,’ *Bulletin mensuel de la Société Unitive* (Paris), Feb. 1913, pp. 58–61. The original text in French was translated by Elham Simmons.

* * *

We had the occasion of greeting in the name of the UNITIVE SOCIETY the venerable prophet Abdu'l-Baha during his current stay among us in Paris, and we had the good fortune to attend on the same evening, Thursday February 6th, a musical recital of Sufi poetry accompanied by the *vina* (guitar) and the *tabla* (drum) - offered by our friend and brother, the professor Inayat Khan, to the great leader of the Bahais.

Bahatism is *par excellence*, as we said, the religion of unity, love, devotion and brotherhood.

It makes a warm appeal to men of all races and all religions to gather themselves under the banner of unity and to bring forth today the Kingdom of God on earth, that is to say, a true and real brotherhood of all mankind.

The venerable prophet, having learned that we constituted ourselves precisely in the name of such UNITY, symbolized by our UNITIVE SOCIETY, was willing to give us some lofty thoughts about our beautiful doctrine.

Unity among men, he said, speaking through his devoted interpreter, Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, is manifested in four ways.

First there is the *Unity of the Family*, which cannot fail to be somewhat imperfect and subject to certain conditions and differing views.

Then there is the *Unity of the Nation*, represented by each nationality, which, unfortunately is also not always free of problems, such as civil war, for example.

There is still the *Unity of Race*, or parts of the world: that of Asia, Europe or America, for example, which generally provides only a weak equilibrium, with frequent convulsions and crises.

And finally, there is true unity, the *Spiritual and Conscious Unity*, which is based on the consciousness of the common origin of all Men, and that makes of Humanity even more of a bouquet than this one here – and the venerable prophet indicated the beautiful flowers that adorned the room – rather, *one single flower*, immense and indivisible.

This is really the only fixed and durable UNITY, he continued, the one for which those of us who have a consciousness of our being must work ceaselessly and in perfect agreement.

This is the unity that Baháism is establishing on the earth, and it is for this unity that your UNITIVE SOCIETY must also collaborate.

We deeply and warmly thanked the Master on behalf of all and assured him of our sincere and ardent collaboration in the common work of Unity, without distinctions or limitations of any kind.

Our distinguished honorary member Professor Inayat Khan, who was guided by the same feelings and beliefs as ours, and who was sympathetic to the revered prophet and with an even greater closeness, if possible, born of shared Eastern origins, kindly let us attend, afterwards, the interview and musical recital that followed.

Abdul-Baha first expressed some interesting thoughts on the materialist philosophy that makes a God of Nature and he recounted a conversation he had had with one of them on the ship that brought him back from America.

Only animals, he says, are deprived of the concept of the Creator and there is no cause for boasting about it when one is human and one suffers from this affliction.

If one but relies on the testimony of the senses one will be certain to remain in error: a mundane mirror does not show us, for example, an image as it looks to the eye, identical to reality. And don't some meteorological phenomena in the polar regions occasionally make one sun look like four?

So consider: to reason on the evidence provided by the senses is to reason as animals do, and so, using the forceful terms of the prophet, to reason 'like a cow who also has these five senses, and these five senses only'.

Then in a language rich with beautiful imagery, BAHĀ'U'LLĀH shows us our planet as a single atom in the grand immensity of the universe, and the very smallness of the scale implies its singleness, since the atom, itself, is one and indivisible.

With this beautiful image the philosophical interview was over, and Professor Inayat Khan, accompanied on the *plen* (Indian drum), and Mr Ramakrishna, with the *vina* (guitar), sang a repertoire of Persian poetry of great symbolism and spiritual elevation, borrowed from the works of the great Sufis.

It had been more than sixty years, the Prophet told us, since he had heard the songs of his homeland sung with the quality with which the professor sang them, and at that time he was only five or six years old.

Then the evening ended with a discussion of Persian and Eastern music, which covered more or less the following: Music is a great art to reach the emotional depths of the soul - and that is because it comes directly from the soul itself.

The voice that we hear, for example, can be material, but it comes from the 'sound of the abstract', *Anhad nada*, it comes directly from the soul to the body and to the thoughts of the one who expresses it through the intermediary of his material body.

As the Qur'an puts it: 'All things are of God and unto Him must all return.'

The music of the Greeks was very ancient, and the philosophers, who used to teach in public places, liked to present the science of music and to explain philosophy through it: music is the food of the soul, and as the soul is invisible, so must its food be invisible.

Long before the days of Islam, music was highly developed in Persia and considered one of the most essential arts and sciences. In Bukhara, music, in all its varieties, was the main topic of education. It was there that Avicenna, the famous disciple of Farabi, learned music.

During the splendour of Eastern civilization, music made its way to Spain through Arabia, and it was taught in the Arab University of Cordova.

This explains the introduction of Eastern 'color' in western music: which is found even today, to some extent, in Spanish music.

To this the Professor Inayat Khan replied that music had always been the chosen method for the Sufis to elevate their souls to the highest spiritual state . . .

[#61]

7 February: Discourse on Divine Music and Human Music

Friday, 7 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text was originally taken down in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The translation ("Instructions by Abdul Baha given in Paris 30 Rue St. Didier February 7 1913, translated from notes of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab") originally comes from the Ahmad Sohrab papers, which are held at the National Bahá'í Archives of the United States. The translation has also been published in Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 346–49, from which the version below is taken.

* * *

Last night a Hindou professor of music [Inayat Khan] came here bringing his musical instrument called the Vina with him and played for us certain oriental strains accompanying them with singing. Overhead our neighbour was playing the piano, but as soon as the professor began playing, the piano became silent; and when the Hindou had finished playing we heard again the sound of the piano. This illustrates a lesson, namely that when we listen to a most beautiful song we must forget inferior music, when a lover of music has listened to the enchanting notes of a great master his love of music will no longer be satisfied with the playing of the pupil. If he listens to him it would be a proof of ignorance and show a lack of artistic appreciation, moreover he would not receive any spiritual uplift. Let us suppose that the most accomplished artist of Paris is playing for us in this room, inspiring the hearts by immortal songs and charming our souls with sweet celestial harmonies. Is it possible therefore for anyone of us to leave this room afterwards and going through the streets to stop to listen to the crude notes of a hand organ. If we were to stop to listen to such sounds, it would indicate that we were unable to appreciate the wonderful melodies of the great-masters we had just listened to.

To-day there are many melodies are being heard in the world. From every studio divergent strains are floated in the air, but many of these melodies are become antiquated and covered with the moss of time. For thousands of years these notes have been heard and they have lost their original charm and purity, for the singers have grown old, are decrepit and have lost their voices. The songs of life have been so much changed with time that no longer any one can recognize them. In short from every direction these various melodies are being sounded. We must have appreciative ears to find out which one is the most beautiful and artistic. Let us find out the melody, the sweet strains of which will be taken up by angels and carried to the Supreme Concourse. Let us hearken to a Melody, which may stir the world of humanity, so

that they may dance with joy. Let us listen to a strain which gives life to man. Then we can obtain universal results. Then we shall receive a new spirit. Then we shall become illumined.

But if we want to listen to all different kinds of music we will have nothing but discord, for they are being played by inferior artists. If we want to run after such distracting sounds we will be lost in a wilderness of deprivation.

Therefore let us investigate a song, which is superior to all other songs, which develops the spirit and which unfolds the inner potentialities of life. Such a song produces harmony and exhilaration.

It has been proven that whenever this song is raised, the world of humanity is quickened with new vibrations and the realm of existence receives a new lease of life. The sphere of thought is rejuvenated, sciences are renovated, the world of morality is resuscitated, and humankind is ushered into a new era of civilisation and refinement. Again and again this has been experienced; its results are the records of past history. We must not run after untried melodies, the results of which are uncertain or we may fail in our pursuit. Perchance the effects of such music may not be praiseworthy; perhaps such melodies may not have the sweet qualities, which are the characteristic indications of a true melody. Therefore let us search and find out the one glorious song, which has run throughout all ages, with thousands of entrancing accompaniments, the effects of which have changed millions of human beings.

Often has the seed been sown and as a result many harvests have been gathered. Now is it well for us to overlook this good seed and try to sow another seed, which has never been tried before? For instead of a harvest we may reap only thorns and thistles. A course of treatment, which has been tried a thousand times and has always healed the sick ones; is it wise for us to relinquish it and go for consultation to charlatans? There is no result gained by trying all kinds of medicines when we know of a certainty that this course of treatment is beneficial. When the right medicine is prescribed and we have seen that others have been healed, why should we try unknown remedies?

It is evident and manifest that the world of humanity cannot be rejuvenated through weak instrumentalities, except through the power of God; humankind cannot be imbued as a whole with divine virtues. The surface of the earth cannot be warmed except by the rays of the Sun. There may be lamps, torches or electric lights and there are even the countless stars and the planets but notwithstanding all these lights, this globe in its entirety cannot be illumined. It is only through the rays of the Sun that the various kingdoms of life on this earth are being warmed and lighted. Therefore, let us follow the Sun so that we may become illumined.

There was a time when the sun appeared from the Eastern horizon, it was a time when the mantle of winter had fallen over the meadows and pastures. The soil was black, as soon as the sun rose from its dawning-place, flooding the regions with light, then the gentle breezes

wafted, the clouds of mercy poured down, winter was ended. Spring appeared. The meadows and prairies became verdant and all the trees were adorned with blossoms, multicoloured roses and hyacinths perfumed the air. The trees attained fruition and the world inhaled the fragrance of the flowers. The surface of the earth was transformed. This world became the mirror of the Kingdom and this lower sphere experienced the virtues of the higher world. These have always been the results whenever the Sun of Reality dawned.

Is it fitting that we turn our backs on the Sun and hold to the flickering dim light of a candle? Is it right to forget the boundless sea to run after a little brook? Is it good for us to neglect the luscious fruits of this tree and run wildly in the jungle collecting wild fruit? Is it not short sightedness on our part to fling away the quick healing remedy and take into our system a poisonous drug? Is it not madness to renounce the skilful physician and go to a charlatan?

Praise be to God, the Sun of Reality has shone forth, illuminating all the countries with its refulgent rays, warming all the cold bodies and causing vegetation in the Earth. The flowers of the Kingdom are springing up in the East, and the West, in the North and the South, now consider how very negligent are the people for they do not turn towards the Sun, but they try to illumine themselves with dim lamps. They have forgotten the waves of the most Great Sea and they try to allay their thirst at dried-up streams. They do not listen to the soul-stirring music of the Supreme Concourse but they run wild with joy over the jarring notes of a hand-organ.

Strive day and night, perchance these sleeping ones may be awakened, these blind ones may see, and the dead arise. Let us listen to the soft tender music, which is streaming down from the Kingdom of Abha!

[#62]

9 February: Discourse on Scientific Proofs for the Existence of God

Sunday, 9 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text was originally transcribed in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The English translation was first published in "The Will of the Creator is effected through the process of (voluntary) composition": Scientific Proof of the Existence of God. Address by Abdul-Baha delivered Sunday, February 9, 1913, at 30 rue St. Didier, Paris," *Star of the West*, vol. 6, no. 8 (1 August 1915), 62-64. A transcript of the original Persian text is published in *Najm-i-Bákh^{tar}* (Persian section of *Star of the West*), vol. 4, no. 16 (31 December 1913), 2-3.

* * *

Today some one asked a question regarding the existence of God. What are the proofs through which one can establish the existence of God?

People are divided into two sections, one which is satisfied with the knowledge of the attributes of divinity, and the other which strives to establish the existence of divinity, and be informed of the fundamental principles of divine philosophy.

Therefore today I will speak to you of the proofs which establish scientifically the existence of God.

I will not quote to you the scriptural proofs from the Old and the New Testament or the Koran, for you are more or less familiar with those ideas. Consequently I will deal with this subject from an intellectual standpoint. As it is an abstruse subject I request you to give your utmost attention.

When we look upon all forms of phenomena we observe that they are the results of composition. For example, certain single atoms are brought together through the inherent law of elective affinity existing between these various particles, the result of which is the human being. A number of primordial atoms have gone into the make up of a plant, the result of which is the flower.

Again looking into the mineral kingdom we observe that this law of cohesion is working in the same manner in that kingdom, for we see that many atoms go into the composition of a piece of stone which through purification may reach to the state of a mirror.

In short, the existence of life depends upon the composition and decomposition of phenomena. When the particles of a given composition are disintegrated this may be called non-existence, but the original simple atoms will go back to their primary elements and are ever existent.

For instance, the body of man being the resultant factor of the composition of these atoms, when this body becomes the subject of decomposition we call that death, but those atoms of which the body of man was composed, being simple and primordial, are indestructible. Consequently it is proved that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition and their mortality upon decomposition.

This is a scientific principle; science approves of it, because it is not a matter of belief. There is a great difference between theories upheld by belief, and facts which are substantiated by science.

Beliefs are the susceptibilities of conscience, but scientific facts are the deductions of reason and inexorable logic.

Therefore it is logically proven that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition and their destruction upon disintegration.

Now going back to our subject and the facts upheld by materialists. They state that inasmuch as it is proven and upheld by science that the life of phenomena depends upon composition and their destruction upon disintegration, then where comes in the need or necessity of a creator – the self-subsistent Lord.

For we see with our own eyes that these infinite beings go through myriads of compositions and in every composition appearing under a certain form showing certain characteristic virtues, then we are independent of any divine maker.

This is the argument of the materialists. On the other hand those who are informed of divine philosophy answer in the following terms:

Composition is of three kinds.

1. Accidental composition.
2. Involuntary composition.
3. Voluntary composition.

There is no fourth kind of composition. Composition is restricted to these three categories.

If we say that composition is accidental, this is philosophically a false theory, because then we have to believe in an effect without a cause, and philosophically no effect is conceivable without a cause. We cannot think of an effect without some primal cause, and composition being an effect, there must naturally be a cause behind it. As to the second composition, i.e., the involuntary composition. Involuntary composition means that each element has within it as an inherent function this power of composition. For example, certain elements have flowed towards each other, and as an inherent necessity of their being they are composed, that it is the imminent need of these elements to enter into composition.

For example, the inherent quality of fire is burning or heat. Heat is an original property of fire. Humidity is the inherent nature of water. You cannot conceive of H₂O which is the chemical form of water, without having humidity connected for that is its inherent quality, inseparable and indivisible.

Now as long as it is the inherent necessity of these elements to be composed, there should not be any decomposition. While we observe that after each composite organism there is a process of decomposition we learn that the composition of the organisms of life is neither accidental nor involuntary. Then what have we as a form of composition? It is the third, that is the voluntary composition. And that means that the infinite forms of organisms are composed through a superior will, the eternal will, the will of the living and self-subsistent Lord.

This is a rational proof, that the Will of the Creator is effected through the process of composition.

Ponder over this carefully. When you comprehend the significances of this subject you will then be able to convey it to others. The more you think over this the greater will be your comprehension.

Thank God that He has given you such a power through which you can comprehend these divine mysteries. Reflect deeply, ponder carefully, think minutely, and then the doors of knowledge shall be opened unto you.

[#63]

10 February: Summary of a Gathering at the Scott Residence

Monday, 10 February 1913
Scott Residence, 17 rue de la Boissonade
Paris, France

The following summary is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 360–61. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 10 February 1913.

* * *

When the Master arrived He asked one of the friends to speak. She spoke in French very eloquently and full of fire. Then the Master spoke on some of the prophecies of the Old and New Testaments which are fulfilled in this Revelation and asked the audience to thank God because they are of the chosen ones and not of those who are called. “Praise be to God,” He concluded His words of wisdom and life, “that the doors of the Kingdom of God are opened before your faces.” Then He rose from His seat, everyone got up, He began to shake hands with each, circulating amongst the crowd, His heavenly smile on His glorious countenance and continuing His remarks: The rays of the glorious Sun of Reality hath cast their effulgence in your hearts. Now he was in another corner of the room. The Breathes of the Holy Spirit have

influenced your souls. He shakes hands with an old man and puts His hands admiringly on his large flowing beard. "What beautiful beard you have. It is luminous white." Again, He soars to His lofty summit, Strive day and night that you may render adequate thanks to God for these graces. For this is the most great Bounty. This is the Light of the Kingdom of God. This is the sign of the Divine Bestowals." Then he comes before a child. He kisses his cheeks, shakes hands with the mother and goes on. "I am most pleased with you. I will pray for you that the Divine confirmations may descend upon you, the omnipotence of God become manifest, the lights of the Orb of Truth may shine, the traces of the almighty become apparent and the breathes of the Holy Spirit may quicken each one of you." By this time He had blessed every one.

Going into another room He related to us a story illustrating how the different religionists hate each other. Once upon a time three groups: Musulmans, Christians and Jews embarked on a steamer. While in the middle of the ocean a tempest broke out. The wind was blowing and the passengers were thrown in utmost consternation. The Christians began to blame the Mohamadans and cried out, 'O God! Destroy these Musulmans. As they are infidels and they have brought upon us this calamity. May they be punished! For they are the cause of all these vicissitudes.' The Mohamadans began to call down the Christians. 'O God! Destroy these Christians. They are most unworthy of Thy name. Cause them to sink to the bottom of the sea.' But the Jews huddled in one corner were silent. Some one asked their leader, 'Don't you have anything to say?' Then the rabbi with upraised hands said: 'O God! Answer the prayer of both the Musulmans and the Christians. Fulfil their supplications. We ask Thee by Thy name to answer their invocation!"

[#64]

11 February: Discourse on Love and Perfection

Tuesday, 11 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following notes were originally taken down in French and then translated into English by Peter Terry. The English translation is published in Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 362–63, from which the version below is taken. The original document, *Mardi matin, 11 Fev. 30 rue St. Didier*, is a typescript held at the Bibliothèque Bahá'íe de France.

* * *

God has created all creatures with wisdom. Nothing has been created without a special reason, every creature has a degree of perfection, and it must arrive at attaining this perfection. For example this flower was not created in vain, but for a special reason. Its perfection consists in

a harmonious coalescence of color and of perfume. In each kingdom of Nature there are degrees, thus each one should be cultivated in order to attain to [its] perfection. In the same way for man there is a state of perfection and a state of imperfection. The Sages wish that man should be educated so that he may attain to the rank of perfection, the rank of praise. The rank of imperfection is the rank of perdition. If man remains in the state of imperfection he remains unfaithful, if he perfects himself he is saved. Consider this flower, if it remains in the state of imperfection, it is because it is in the shadows, it must have light in order to perfect itself. The states are proportionate to the kingdoms. In man there is a different power. Take a man and an animal, if they are both imperfect, the man is still superior to the animal as his kingdom is superior. His perfection or his imperfection is superior. In comparison with man the perfection of a flower is insignificant. If man remains in imperfection he is the most infamous of the creatures. If he arrives to the world of perfections through the divine blessings, he is a perfect mirror in which the Beauty of God is reflected – he has eternal life – he participates in the blessings of the Sun of Reality. This is to show how considerable are the imperfections and perfections of man. The purpose of the Manifestations is to raise man to this degree of perfection, to illuminate him with the lights of the Kingdom, to transform ignorance into wisdom, injustice into equity, error into knowledge, cruelty into affection, powerlessness into progress. Briefly, to bring about the shining in man of all the perfections of existence. The greatest blessing of man is love. Love attracts man to God, ties men to one another, and gives eternal life, infinite joy. If the true love penetrates the heart of man all [his] powers will be realized; it is the divine power that carries him to divine stations. He will make no progress without being illumined with love. Make an effort to augment love in yourselves, the attraction of your hearts, to have more affection for your brothers, to create new relations. Above all be ready to sacrifice your life for one another, prefer the general well-being to your own, create relations that nothing can compromise, form an assembly that nothing can disassociate, have a spirit that never stops acquiring riches that nothing can destroy. If love did not exist what would remain? It is the love of God that makes man superior to the animal. All progress in this world is realized by love. All the superiorities of perfect men were acquired by love. That the lights of the divine perfections shine upon you. That is the glory and the progress of man. That is eternal life.

[#65]

12 February: Address to the Paris Esperanto Group

Wednesday, 12 February 1913
Hôtel Moderne, 10 Place de la République
Paris, France

The following text was originally recorded in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The English translation was first published in "Address Delivered in Paris. From Persian Notes; translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab," *Star of the West*, vol. 4 no. 2 (9 April 1913), pp. 36-37.

* * *

In the material world of existence, human undertakings are divided into two kinds – universal and specific. The result of every universal effort is infinite and the outcome of every specific effort is finite.

In this age, those human problems which create a general interest are universal; their results are likewise universal, for humanity has become interdependent. The international laws of today are of vast importance since international politics are bringing nations nearer to one another. It is a general axiom that in the world of human endeavor, every universal affair commands attention and its results and benefits are limitless. Therefore let us say that every universal cause is divine and every specific matter is human. The universal light for this planet is from the sun and the special light here tonight, which is electric, illumines this banquet hall through the invention of man. In like manner the activities which are trying to establish solidarity between the nations and infuse the spirit of universalism in the hearts of the children of men are like unto divine rays from the Sun of Reality, and the brightest ray is the coming of the universal language. Its achievement is the greatest virtue of the age, for such an instrument will remove misunderstandings from among the peoples of the earth and will cement their hearts together. This medium will enable each individual member of the human family to be informed of the scientific accomplishments of all his fellowmen.

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

No doubt you are aware that in the past ages a common language shared by various nations created a spirit of solidarity among them. For instance, 1,300 years ago, there were many divergent nationalities in the Orient. There were Copts in Egypt, Syrians in Syria, Assyrians and Babylonians in Bagdad and along the River Mesopotamia. There existed among these peoples rank hatred, but as they were gradually brought nearer through common protection

and common interests, the Arabic language grew to be the means of intercommunication, and they became as one nation. They all speak the Arabic language to this day. In Syria if you ask anyone of them he will say, "I am an Arab," though in reality he is not – some are Greeks, others Jews, etc.

We say "This man is a German, the other an Italian, a Frenchman, an Englishman," etc. All belong to the great human family, yet language is the barrier between them. The greatest working basis for bringing about unity and harmony among the nations is the teaching of a universal tongue. Writing on this subject, 50 years ago, His Holiness BAHÁ'O'LLAH said that complete union between the various sections of the world would be an unrealized dream as long as an international language was not established.

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

The people of the Orient are not fully informed of the events in the West and the West cannot put itself into sympathetic touch with the East. Their thoughts are closed in a casket – the universal language will be the master key to open it. Western books will be translated into that language and the Easterner will be informed of the contents; likewise Eastern lore will become the property of the West. Thus also will those misunderstandings which exist between the different religions be dispersed. Religious prejudices play havoc among the peoples and bring about warfare and strife and it is impossible to remove them without a language in common.

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

Praise be to God, that Dr. Zamenhof has constructed the Esperanto language. It has all the potential qualities of universal adoption. All of us must be grateful and thankful to him for his noble effort for in this matter he has served his fellowmen well. He has constructed a language which will bestow divine benefits on all peoples. With untiring efforts and self-sacrifice on the part of its devotees it gives promise of universal acceptance. Therefore everyone of us must study this language and make every effort to spread it so that each day it may receive a wider recognition, be accepted by all nations and governments or the world and become a part of the curriculum in all the public schools. I hope that the business of the future conferences and congresses will be carried on in Esperanto. In the future two languages will be taught in the

schools, one the native tongue, the other the international auxiliary language. Consider today how difficult is human communication. One may study 50 languages and yet travel through a country and still be at a loss. I, myself, know several of the Oriental languages, but know no Western tongue. Had this universal language pervaded the globe, I should have studied it and you would have been directly informed of my thoughts and I of yours and a special friendship would have been established between us.

Please send some teachers to Persia, if you can, so that they may teach Esperanto to the young people. I have written asking some of them to come here to study it.

I hope that it will be promulgated very rapidly—then the world of humanity will find eternal peace; all the nations will associate with one another like mothers and sisters, fathers and brothers, and each individual member of the body politic will be fully informed of the thoughts of all.

I am extremely grateful to you and thank you for these lofty aims, for you have gathered at this banquet to further this language. Your hope is to render a mighty service to the world of humanity and for this great aim I congratulate you from the depths of my heart.

[#66]

13 February: Address to the Theosophical Society of France

Thursday, 13 February 1913

Headquarters of the Theosophical Society of France, 59 Avenue de la Bourdonnais
Paris, France

The following text is taken from “Address by Abdul Baha to the Theosophical Society in Paris,” *Theosophy in Scotland* (Edinburgh), vol. 4 no. 1 (May 1913), 5–7.

* * *

When we look upon the world of genesis we observe that all forms of creation are endowed with life.

It was a theory held by the ancient men of learning that the mineral kingdom lacks life, but according to anatomical investigations carried on by physiologists on [the] one hand and biologists on the other hand, it has been discovered that the mineral kingdom has life. Our contemporary thinkers prove this matter by certain irrefutable deductions and evidences. Herein we will summarize them. As a premise to our discussion let us say that, in accord with scientific proofs and biological discoveries, all forms of phenomena have life, but their life and their energy is in keeping with their degree of environment and adaptation.

Life as an attribute of growth is manifest in the mineral kingdom, but its manifestation is very minute. Likewise life can be seen in the vegetable kingdom as an increasing power of growth, but compared to the animal kingdom it lacks instinct. This later quality is more powerfully manifested in the vegetable than in the mineral kingdom; and when we study the animal kingdom we observe that the power of life is expressing itself through more capable media, showing manifold attributes. Ascending to the human kingdom we observe that life or what is figuratively called Spirit, is manifesting itself in the utmost power and transcendency. The more man perseveres along the path of progress the greater will be the manifestation of life. The child when born to the mother manifests more of this element of life than while in her matrix. The display of the forces of life upon the arena of existence cannot be compared to the dark and narrow world in which the babe lived for nine months. And when life attains to the summit of maturity then its manifestations will be along many lines, and cover many fields.

From this you can understand that this essence of Spirit manifests itself to a greater extent in the human world than in the mineral, vegetable, and animal kingdoms. Therefore Spirit in the human world is the discoverer of the realities of phenomena. All the inventions which are made, all the sciences which are discovered, all the mysteries of nature which are brought to light, come through the power of this Spirit of life. While living in the Orient man organizes affairs in the Occident. While living on the earth he discovers the heavenly constellations.

All these things will show you that the Spirit of life is omnipotent, especially if it comes into communication with God and becomes the recipient of the eternal Light. Then it will be an effulgence of the radiance of the Sun of Reality.

This state is the greatest of all the states. In this connection the spirit of man is akin to a mirror, and the Sun of Reality is reflected in it. Then it becomes the collective centre of all the virtues. Its emanation is the bestowal of one of the bestowals of the Divine. Its perfections are the manifold Splendours of the infinite Luminary. Its sanctity is from the highest summit of heavenly holiness. This state is the state of inspiration; it is called the station of the Divine Grace. It signifies the rays of the Sun of Reality are resplendent in the mirror, and the virtues of the Sun of Reality are reflected therein. This is the last degree of human perfection, for the attainment of which all the thinkers and philosophers have longed and dreamed; it is the Mystery of Mysteries, and the Light of Lights. Therein the Spirit becomes eternal, self-subsistent, age-abiding, absolute, incomparable.

When we look upon the world of creation from another standpoint we observe that every given phenomenon is the result of the composition of many single atoms. In other words, these indivisible atoms through the law of affiliation have adhered together, and a being steps into the world of creation. Every single atom of these aggregate atoms has its myriad transferences through the infinite grades of life.

This is a self-evident proposition. It is not a mere theory; it has been proved by science that all phenomena are the resultant factors of the composition of individual atoms. Every single atom of these atoms has its coursings through all the kingdoms of life.

For instance the atom, which has gone into the composition of man was at one time in the mineral kingdom. It passed through all the degrees of the mineral kingdom, appearing under various forms and images, manifesting a peculiar property in each form or image. Then it ascended to the vegetable kingdom, again going through many experiences and adorned with a certain attribute in each experience. After this it entered the animal kingdom; it was incarnated throughout multitudes of animal forms, and in each form it showed evidence of distinct qualities. Finally it stepped into the human kingdom, travelling throughout endless forms of the world of humanity and in each form showing forth a particular character.

As the forms of phenomena are infinite, therefore the transference of this primordial atom throughout the degrees of the world of creation, embodying various images, is infinite. Consequently all phenomena are embodied in each separate phenomenon.

Consider what a transcendent unity exists, that from this standpoint, every atom of the atoms of life, is the expression of all life. This is the harmony, which underlies all creation. This is the law and order in the world of existence. What wonderful symmetry! What heavenly co-ordination! What divine union! Every phenomenon of the phenomena is a bounty of the Divine, therefore the Divine bounties are each infinite, unlimited and illimitable.

Look upward through this immeasurable space, and watch the majestic order of these colossal spheres. These luminous orbs are numberless. Behind our solar system there are many stellar systems. You may extend your vision beyond the fixed stars, and again you shall behold many spheres of light.

In brief, the creation of the Almighty is beyond the grasp of the intellect. Consider how this creative bounty of God is unlimited and not subject to suspension; then how much greater is the spiritual bounty of God!

While the physical bounty of the world of creation is infinite, how is it possible to circumscribe the spiritual bounty, which is the basis of Divine creation. It is proven that the spiritual world is greater than the physical world; the physical world is non-existent in comparison to the spiritual world.

Reflect that every human being is limited through his physical body, but his spirit is unlimited. The body of man may travel for a few miles and then be fatigued, but the spirit may travel throughout all the immensity of space. While walking on the earth, man may grasp in thought the motion of the heavenly bodies, and define their courses.

This will demonstrate to you how much greater man is in spirit than his physical environment. Although the Divine grace, whether physical or spiritual is unlimited, yet some ignorant souls through selfish desire limit the outpouring of the heavenly grace. How thoughtless they are! They say that the age of this world is for example 10,000 years; by this they mean that the descent of the Divine grace has been only 10,000 years in duration, while in reality the Divine grace is infinite. We cannot state reasonably that the world is 10,000,000 or 100,000 or 100,000,000 years old.

The Divine grace has ever descended upon man. The world of creation has had no beginning, and will have no end, because it is the arena upon which the attributes and qualities of the Spirit are being manifested. Can we limit God and His power? In the same manner we cannot limit virtues and perfections.

Just as the Reality of Humanity is unlimited, likewise His grace and bounties are unlimited. The greatest Divine bounty is the appearance of the holy heavenly Manifestations of God. How can we ever limit and circumscribe this bestowal, while in reality it is the greatest of the spiritual gifts?

If the scientists have proven that an atom is an aggregate of myriads of molecules, and the molecule in turn is the result of infinite electrons, how then can the sun be limited? If the drop is infinite in its particles, how much more the sea? If the material world is infinite with regard to its manifestations of life, can the spiritual world become finite? Therefore the gifts of God which are the appearances of the holy, Divine Manifestations, have ever been in the past, and will ever be in the future.

Where was Adam when God was exercising His Divinity? Where was this petty infinitesimal world of ours when God was bestowing His bounties upon this infinite universe? Can we ever limit the bestowals of God? If we limit the Divine bestowal then it is equal to limiting God Himself.

The world of humanity has ever been in a state of anticipation for the coming of the holy, Divine Manifestations. Each religion expected the coming of the Promised One, and longingly prayed for the dawn of the Sun of Reality. A thousand times, alas! when He appeared they remained heedless, and did not turn their faces towards Him. Pitiful indeed is there condition! They were praying for the dawn of the glorious Sun of Reality but when it appeared from the eastern horizon they cried clamorously "Where is the sun? We do not see it."

For instance the Israelitish nation expected the coming of the Messiah. Day and night they were praying in the Temple, lamenting and bemoaning in the Holy of Hollies, saying, "O God, send to us the Messiah, our Deliverer and Redeemer." Thus they were hoping for the arrival of their Promised One. But when His Holiness the Christ appeared, they turned away from Him. When the Orb of Reality dawned they could not see it, for their eyes were covered with

the veils of superstition and dogma; they did not become the recipients of that bestowal, they did not hearken to the call of God, they did not drink from the chalice of love, they did not behold the rays of the Sun of Reality. It is now nearly 2000 years since their Messiah appeared, and still they are waiting!

Consequently let our eyes be always open, the windows of our minds flung wide, so that when the holy, Divine Manifestations appear we may not become deprived of their bounty by the veils of dogmas; so that when the heavenly Herald shouts the Word of God we may not be deaf; so that when the holy perfumes of the paradise of the Almighty are diffused our nostrils may not be afflicted as by a cold. Then we will be enabled to inhale the holy fragrance, to behold the Divine splendours, to hearken to the voice of God, and to be regenerated with the new spirit. Then our life will be renewed, we shall enjoy eternal existence, we shall be quickened with the breath of the Holy Spirit and become informed of the mysteries of creation. Then we will be inspired to upraise the standard of the oneness of the world of humanity, we shall take a portion from the Divine grace, and we shall become illumined with the rays of the heavenly Luminary. Then the world of humanity will mirror forth the attributes of the Kingdom and the human race will become like unto a sea; each individual composing the body politic will be considered as one wave of this sea. As we look at the sea it is the sea of God; as we look upon the waves they are the souls of humanity. The sun is one, the rays emanating from it are one, and they are shining upon all beings. When we look upon the light it is one light, but when we look upon the phenomena they are numerous.

This century is the century of the oneness of the world of humanity, this century is the century of love, this century is the century of universal peace. This is the century of the dawn of the Sun of Reality, this century will see the establishment of the Kingdom of God upon earth; therefore let us take every means so that the federation of the world may be organized, and that we may become benefited by the infinite bounties of God. We observe that today the means of unity are brought about. This in itself is evidence that the divine confirmations are with us. One of the principles of the oneness of the world of humanity is the invention of the international auxiliary language Esperanto. We observe that this language is spreading daily, and its advocates are increasing; it is indubitable that the international auxiliary language will become instrumental in wiping away the present misunderstanding, and each individual will be able to be informed of the thought of all humanity. Therefore we must all strive to spread amongst our fellow-men this language. This international auxiliary language will be an introduction to the establishment of the oneness of the world of humanity. The greatest effort must be displayed in this direction.

[#67]

13 February: A Story from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Childhood

Thursday, 13 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 13 February 1913.

* * *

Where Bahá’u’lláh returned from His pilgrimage to Karbalá, the brother of the Grand Vizír, ‘Abbás Qulí Khán, according to the custom of the country, invited Him to stay with him the first few days of his arrival. Bahá’u’lláh accepted the invitation and took possession of the quarters which were prepared for him. This was at the time when the Bahá’í Cause was under the greatest condemnation and the Grand Vizír and his brothers were at the height of their Power. The morning after Bahá’u’lláh’s arrival, He was sitting in the drawing room receiving the callers. Many prominent people were present. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at that time, still young, was watching people coming and going. Suddenly it was announced that the brother of the Grand Vizír was coming. As soon as he appeared at the door, he was so impressed by the majestic presence of Bahá’u’lláh that he knelt down before Him in the presence of all those people. This was a cause of astonishment to all. Then the Master added the appearance of the Blessed Perfection was awe-inspiring. Those who came into His presence knelt down against their own will. They could not help themselves. They were awe-struck by the wonderful power and authority which emanated from Him.

[#68]

**14 February: Anecdote on Bahá’u’lláh and the School of
Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí**

Friday, 14 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 384–85. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 February 1913. Another version of this anecdote has been published in H.M. Balyuzi, *Bahá’u’lláh: The King of Glory*, 22.

* * *

The Blessed Perfection was very young. He was in the early years of life. At that time he was going to Mazanderan. As he was travelling from stage to stage, he arrived at a town called Yall-Roud [Yálrúd]. There was in this town a celebrated thinker and lecturer who attracted to his courses of lectures people from all parts of Persia. Thus he was very famous. At night Baha-ollah called on this thinker and found his room filled with many students and theologians, especially four of them were the followers of the school of Mirza Mohamad Taki. As Baha-ollah was very young and he had not on his head the insignia of learning which is [a] “turban” no one gave any attention to Him. The lecturer after awhile proposed a tradition to the audience to be interpreted. It was this: “Verily Fatima was the best woman in the world, except that woman which was born of Mary.” Everyone gave his own interpretation but the lecturer waved it aside. Then Baha-ollah to the amazement of all arose from his seat and asked permission to be allowed to give the interpretation of the tradition. Immediately all the eyes were turned to him in an incredulous manner. He said, “The second sentence in this verse is an affirmative negation, because it says 'except that woman which was born of Mary' and as we know to Mary was born no girl, therefore it is impossible to find another woman equal to Fatima. She is a peerless according to this tradition. When writers desire to say that such a person is better than all the rest of the world, they express their conviction with these literary expressions. For example we might say: This King is the greatest of all the Kings of the past except that King which came down from heaven. And as we know well, no King has ever come down from heaven, therefore, he is unique and peerless.” When the lecturer heard these wonderful explanations he remained silent and the audience realizing their defeat shifted uncomfortably. Baha-ollah tactfully withdrew from the room. Then the lecturer addressed his students that he had greater hope from them. He thought it was a disgrace to the learned class that a youth with the hat of a layman on his head should so eloquently explain the real significance of the tradition while the students after years of study were ignorant of it.

[#69]

14 February: A Young ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Prescribes a Remedy

Friday, 14 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 February 1913.

* * *

At one point [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] said that, when He was very young, He was travelling with Bahá’u’lláh and His family. They reached the city of Kirmánsháhán. Here they took quarters in a caravanserai. A poor boy came to assist them in unloading, carrying to them water, etc. At night, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave him a full dish of polow and meat and watched him eat. He was enjoying it very much. It was as though he had never eaten polow. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá conversed with him. Little by little he divulged his childlike dream: "I never had eaten such a royal dish in all my life, and I fully believe (he sighed deeply) that if I could have such a dinner for three successive nights, I would become a king, but you are going to leave tomorrow (anxiously). Are you not?"

Another story which may be of interest to the physicians may be related. There was a man stricken with dysenteries. He had hemorrhoids. He got so sick that his bowels worked from 40 to 60 times and he lost quantities of blood. This man is now living in ‘Akká. At the time the illness attacked him, he sent for a well-known physician in Beirut. The Doctor charged 300 Sterling for 6 days to come to attend to him. He arrived on the scene and after two days attendance, he told the relatives of the patient that he may eat anything because he could not live more than two days. The relatives came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá weeping and in a state of utmost expectation saying that the Doctor told them that the patient was going to die in two days! "O Lord assist us"! They cried. The Master went to see the patient. He was indeed at the door of death. He prescribed a simple remedy. He said: "Go and get the skins of unripe sour pomegranates; brew them in a pot and let him drink the juice." They did so and he got much better. The doctor, who was of course European and knew nothing about this natural treatment, was astounded when he heard the patient was recovering. In an incredulous manner, he entered the room of the sick and saw him sitting up in his head. "What did you do to get well? By all calculation you must have been dead at this very time," he said in a mystified manner. "I took the juice of the unripe skin of sour pomegranates," the answer came distinctly from the patient. He was wonderstruck. He had never heard in his life of such a medicine and such an immediate recovery. In order not to lose any of his professional dignity, he got up from his seat; took his hat in his hand; and, straightening himself, said: "Such kind of treatment is not found in our *materia medica*! Alláh protect you!"

[#70]

14 February: Discourse on the Two Kinds of Personality

Friday, 14 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier

Paris, France

The following text was originally transcribed in Persian and translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. The English translation was first published in “Individuality and Personality: Address by Abdul-Baha, February 14, 1913, at 30 rue St. Didier, Paris,” *Star of the West*, vol. 4 no. 2 (9 April 1913), 38–40.

* * *

Today one of those present asked a question on personality. From what source does it come? What are its attributes? What are its characteristics features or aspects?

Personality is one of two kinds. One is the natural or God-given personality which the Western thinkers call individuality. Individuality is the inner aspect of man which is not subject to change.

The second is personality. Personality is the acquired virtues and perfections, with which man is adorned.

When the individuality of man, i.e., his God-given natural virtues, is adorned with acquired virtues and perfections then we have character. When the infinite effulgences of God are revealed in the individual, then divine perfections which are invisible in all creation will become manifest in him.

For instance, one man is the manifester of knowledge, i.e., divine knowledge is revealed to him. Another man is the dawning place of power, a third is wealthy, another is generous. Again a person is faithful, and another with whom you come in touch, is merciful. All these attributes are God-given and natural in man.

These are the manifestations of the unchangeable individuality. All of them are praiseworthy, because they are divine in origin. All these qualifications are created by God, they are loved by every one, for they are the significances of His names and attributes. The rays of His names and attributes have illuminated the very essence of these qualifications.

As regards the personality which is the result of acquired virtues, that is also good. For instance this mirror had once an individuality of rock. The rock going through the processes of purification, has reached to its present status of transparency. Now the rock in its original

state was praiseworthy but having acquired the second state which is personality, it has become a mirror. In the beginning it was a piece of black stone, now it has become a pure looking-glass.

Therefore you can easily see that the personality or the acquired virtue has become the means of the appearance of greater perfections, which perfections are clearly visible in the mirror.

The rock was endowed by God with a distinct individuality. It acquired personality through the process of education. The individuality of all people is laudable, for every thing God creates is based upon divine wisdom. In the creation of God there is no defect. However, personality has no element of permanence in it, it is a shifting, changeable quality in man which can be turned either way.

For instance, when man is the manifestor of virtues it strengthens the individuality, and suffers his hidden forces to come into active play. But if he acquires defects the beauty and simplicity of the individuality will be lost, and its God-given qualities will be stifled in the foul atmosphere of these imperfections. It is self-evidently manifest that every human being created by God is original; that is, those heavenly attributes which are the distinguishing features of the individuality are created by God and deposited in man.

But if later on the personality acquires sciences, he will become a wise man. If he is engaged in praise-worthy deeds he will be appreciated. If he strives in the study of knowledges he will become perfect. If, on the contrary, he runs after blameworthy vices he will be adorned with exactly the same attributes.

For instance, God has created man to be just; if he does not practice justice, he has gone against the attributes of his individuality. God has created man to be merciful, but he becomes a tyrant. God has created man to be kind to all the children of men; on the contrary he is inimical and hateful. God has created man to confer life, but he becomes conducive to the destruction of life.

All of these are the perversions of the characteristics of the individuality and they are blameworthy, and disliked by all.

Personality is obtained through the effort of man, and through training and education. If a fruitless tree comes under the influence of a wise gardener, through the process of training it becomes fruitful.

If a piece of rock comes under the hand of a sculptor it will become a beautiful piece of statuary. The ruined places are built up by captains of industry. The ignorant children learn the secrets of phenomena under the tutorship of a wise teacher. The crooked branch becomes straight through the influence of the gardener.

Consequently it is evident that we have two modes for the expression of life – Individuality and Personality.

The former is the handiwork of God and the latter that of man. In short, the personality of some people is illumined, that of others is dark – the personality of some is the manifestation of divine justice, while that of others is the embodiment of infinite tyranny. The personality of some is guidance, while that of others is error. That which was hidden in the capability of these souls has been manifest. For instance, when you sow a seed, that which is hidden in the reality of that seed will become revealed and unfolded – the trunk, the branches, the leaves and the blossoms and the fruits which are in the seed as potentialities.

When pupils are being reared under the tutorship of a teacher, education will bring out what is hidden in their beings.

The clouds pour down, the sun shines, and all that which was hidden in the bosom of the earth will come forth.

Therefore the personality of man is developed through education, while the individuality, which is divine and heavenly, is praiseworthy in origin.

God has created poison and has shown that it is harmful to man. On the other hand sweet things are created by Him and are enjoyed by man. Thus it is in the nature of man to be harmed by poison, and to find enjoyment in sweets; but he changes his nature to such an extent that he takes poison, such as opium and arsenic in the form of a drug, and he accustoms himself to it to such an extent that if he does not receive it he may die.

Therefore man is capable of subjecting his individuality to such a degree that poison which was the means of death, becomes the means of life. His nature becomes so degraded and his individuality so distorted that he will long for the poison if it is not given to him in time.

What is the cause of the change in the individuality? It is the acquirement of evil habits.

God benignly endows man with an individuality which enjoys the sweet and shuns the poison, but man through evil habits changes the creation of God, and transforms the divine illumination into satanic darkness.

So long as man is a captive of nature, submerged in the sea of materialism, pursuing the dictates of self and desire, he is vanquished and defeated. This passionate ego takes the reins from his hands, and changes him into an animal. He will fall so low that he will be unable to judge good from evil. He will not be able to distinguish light from darkness, neither will he be able to behold the angelic attributes.

Therefore this acquire individuality which is the result of evil customs becomes the dominant note of his life.

I hope that all of you may be freed from these dangers, delivered from the world of nature, enter into the realm of light, and become divine, radiant, merciful, God-like and confirmed.

[#71]

14 February: Address on the Four Proofs of the Manifestations of God

Friday, 14 February 1913
Dreyfus-Barney Residence, 15 rue Greuze
Paris, France

The following text originally appeared in the Dwight Barstow Collection, no. 147. The name of the translator is not provided. The text has also been published in Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 391–95, from which the version below is taken.

* * *

Whenever the Holy Manifestations of God appear in this world they establish their validity with certain proofs. One of their proofs is the prophecies given by former Manifestations. The second is the wonderful traces which emanate from their personality. The third proof is their own deeds. The fourth proof is their teachings.

The first proof which deals with the prophecies of the former Manifestations are only acceptable to believers. For example, it is recorded in Daniel that 70 weeks after the destruction of the Temple; according to prophetic reckoning when we turn these 70 weeks into days, we have 490 days. In accord with the scriptural idea every day is a year, therefore this makes 490 years, which date comes very near the date of the ascension of Christ. From this prophecy we understand that during the interval of 490 years Nebuchadnezzar came, destroyed the Temple, carried away many prisoners and toward the end His Holiness the Christ appeared, and after the second period of his ministry he passed away. The evangelist will put forth a proof like unto this from the old Testament to establish the validity of Christ, and we who believe in Christ accept such a proof. In short the prophecies which are recorded in the books of the former Manifestations are satisfactory proofs for the believers, especially the conditions which are explained in the books concerning the subsequent Manifestations. For instance it is recorded in the Old Testament that the Messiah should come down from heaven, should be as a king etc. Consequently those who are believers finding the fulfillment of these prophecies acknowledge the Prophethood of Christ.

The second proof is the miracles of the Prophets. For instance the miracles which were performed by Moses. It is recorded in oriental history that His Holiness Abraham was thrown on a burning pile, but he was protected and was unhurt, and that Moses divided the sea into two, changed the rod into a serpent. And caused the descent of manna from heaven; under the smiting of his rod water gushed forth from the rock. This kind of proof is always for the believer. A Buddhist will not be convinced by these proofs, they are convincing as far as the orthodox Jews are concerned because they believed in Moses. On the other hand the miracles which are attributed to Jesus Christ are only proofs for the Christians. This is to show you that these two proofs are not final.

The third proof consists of the deeds of the manifestations. When we consider the deeds of the Founders of Religions we are confronted with certain irrefutable facts. For instance, His Holiness Moses founded a Cause singly and alone. No one else could have performed such a great feat. He appeared when the Jews were in the lowest depths of depredation and ignorance, – He caused them to ascend to the highest station of honor and knowledge. The Israelites were downtrodden in Egypt, they were captives and laborers. Their morality was in a degree of baseness to such an extent that they were considered worse than animals. His Holiness Moses through the Power of God was enabled to raise this ignorant and dark nation to the summit of right and knowledge. This is an evident proof of his prophethood because a single man cannot accomplish such a wonderful universal work, to exalt a lowly humiliated nation to the highest horizon of prosperity and success amongst all people. It is incontestable that this work is accomplished through the Divine Power, no just person can deny this. For instance, His Holiness Christ was quite alone, He was a Jew from among the Jews. At a time when the Israelites were under the yoke of the Romans Christ appeared. Those souls who believed in Him attained to the summit of everlasting glory. Through his Teachings the Chaldeans, the Syrian, the Assyrians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Egyptians became united. He renewed the world of humanity, it was transformed from one state into a higher state. He was able to accomplish this alone through the Divine Power. His Holiness Mohammed appeared among the tribes of peninsular Arabia. The Arabs were in the lowest degree of savagery and barbarism. Mohammed alone and without assistance educated these wild tribes and suffered them to attain to the acme of progress and advancement. One cannot accomplish such a mighty work through physical power. His Holiness Baha Ollah appeared with an extraordinary supernatural power. At a time when the East was immersed in a sea of darkness and superstition, the people were in a state of hatred and ignorance, Baha Ollah like unto the sun shone forth from the Eastern horizon. He flooded those regions with His Glorious Light. The oriental nations rose against Him and strove to extinguish His Light. Without any outward power or influence He withstood their attacks. He willingly accepted every trial, vicissitude and tribulation till His Banner was upraised and the banner of all the rest brought low. Under the chains He unfurled the flag of oneness of the world of humanity. In the prison He spread the principles of universal peace and brotherhood. From behind the barrack He wrote His

famous epistles to the kings and rulers of the earth. Some of these sovereigns were arraigned severely, the fall of others was predicted, which came to pass a few years after. One of them was Napoleon, he did not answer the first epistle, so Baha Ollah wrote again. These letters were printed and published in the book called "*Surat Ul Hykl*" [Súriy-i-Haykal], 22 years ago in Bombay, India. In this letter He says: "I have written to thee an epistle, but thou didst not heed it, therefore thy dominion shall be uptorn, this earthly glory has made thee proud, but I see humiliation is hastening after thee, the foundation of thy sovereignty shall be shaken, and thou shalt be subject to great humiliation." Baha Ollah wrote this from His prison. Likewise He wrote another epistle to the Sultan of Turkey Abdul Aziz saying: "Thou art become haughty through thy power, thou art relying too much on thy sovereignty, thou hast heaped upon us tribulation and persecution. Know thou of a certainty that the basis of thy dominion shall be destroyed. In Constantinople there will be great confusion and thy glory shall be taken from thy hand, and it shall fall into the hands of others." These events of today are clear proofs of the validity of these prophecies. This Tablet was printed in the above mentioned book before the downfall of Abdul Aziz. Likewise He wrote an epistle to Naser-id Shah of Persia , saying: "Thy kingship has prevented thee from belief in this Movement. Thou art thinking that thy sovereignty is eternal. This sovereignty of thine shall be disturbed and in Teheran there will be a great constitutional movement. The pillars of the sovereignty of Persia shall be shaken as by an earthquake, and great commotion and agitation appear" . For the last few years all these prophecies foretold by Baha Ollah more than 40 years ago have come to pass. They are irrefutable.

While Baha Ollah lived in prison He carried Himself with the utmost majesty and independence. Before Him every one was humble. Everyone who presented himself in the presence of Baha Ollah would come out impressed with His spiritual power and authority. Even His enemies bore testimony to this fact. They wrote after meeting Baha Ollah "This is a miraculous personage, but we do not believe in Him, we are not following Him because he is against our ideas of religion. In brief the deeds and actions of the Divine Manifestations are their greatest proofs. The proof of the sun is its rays and heat. There is need of no further proof; the proof of this lamp before us is its brilliancy. Notwithstanding this there are many other proofs concerning Baha Ollah, many miraculous deeds appeared from Him, but as they cannot be proofs for those who have not seen, therefore we do not mention them. For if the people of the present day had lived in the days of Baha Ollah they would have been proofs for them, but if we mention them nowadays, some people might deny them, and others who have exceeding love may accept.

The fourth proof of the Holy Divine Manifestations is the Teachings. For instance, the Teachings of His Holiness Christ are sufficient proof, there is no greater proof than these teachings, because they were the light of that century, and the spirit of that age. Everything that He said in those days was in accord with the need of the time. His teachings were peerless and unique and matchless.

Consider His Holiness Baha Ollah and His teachings. They are the spirit of this cycle, the light of this century, and they illumine the dark corners of humanity. Whosoever has heard them has confessed that these teachings are in accord with the spirit of this period. Those who deny the station of Baha Ollah and likewise those who believe in His claim bear testimony to this fact.

While in America and London I explained fully in my various addresses these teachings. Everyone praised them, and all acknowledged that the world of humanity is like unto a body and these Teachings are like the spirit animating that body. No one offered any contradiction, everyone believed that these principles are the remedy of every ailment, the balm for every wound, and the means of the prosperity for the world of humanity. Without the inculcation of these principles mutual understanding and conciliation between the nations will not be realized. For instance the greatest evil of this century is war. In the Bahai teaching war is prohibited. The greatest need of this century is universal peace. Baha Ollah has instituted it. The most urgent need of humankind is the declaration of the oneness of the world of humanity, this is the first principle of the Bahai Teachings.

That which will illumine the human world is love, the abandonment of dogma and the forgetfulness of religious and national hatred. These teachings are inculcated in the religion of Baha Ollah. Therefore you observe that these Teachings are the greatest proofs of His claim. Such power appeared from Him, sufficient to convince the whole world – The proof of the sun is its light and heat.

[#72]

15 February: Conversation with Théophile Cart

Saturday, 15 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text was originally written in Esperanto by Théophile Cart,* the eminent Esperantist who had this conversation with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It was translated into French by Frédéric Autret, and that French rendering was translated into English by Van Vu Lee. The English translation is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 398–99. Another English translation appears in Amín Egea, *Apostle of Peace*, vol. 2, pp. 246–47.

* Excerpts of the conversation were published in Esperanto in: Th. C., “Unu vizito al Abdul Baha,” *Lingvo internacia* (Paris) t. 18 no. 3 (Marto 1913), pp. 105–107 and later reprinted in Théophile Cart, *Vortoj de Profesoro Th. Cart* (Jasło, [Poland]: Esperantista Vocho, 1927), pp. 188–190. Théophile Cart (1851–1931) was an ardent Esperantist and president of the Société française pour la propagation de l'espéranto (1909–1912). He was also a professor at the École libre des sciences politiques in Paris (1893–1931), and director of *Lingvo internacia*.

* * *

On February 15th at 4 p.m. one of my students, an Iranian, from the School of Political Science, was kind enough to drive me to 'Abdu'l Bahá's place for an intimate and personal interview.

He [the aforementioned student] acted as my interpreter. In a cheerfully-decorated living-room where there were also a few Iranians drinking tea from little glass cups, for almost an hour I was able to interview the famous mystic figure on diverse subjects and essentially on Esperanto.

His replies were very long and definitely eloquent. Unfortunately, due to their lengths, my young friend, who out of respect did not want to interrupt him, often had to shorten the translation. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, of advanced age, was tired but did not show it during our interview. He spoke loudly and clearly and he was in a good mood. He told us many anecdotes while laughing.

"In what way do you think a universal language will help bring about universal peace?" I asked.

"Thank God the international relations are getting easier and easier. The more people get to know one another, the more profoundly they will understand one another. They will notice that, underneath their diverse outfits, they are actually the same, and that our religions have many points in common. For example, Muslims are much closer to Christians than we generally think. Due to the difference in languages, we mainly see the difference between beliefs, customs, and aspirations. But once we have a common second language besides our own mother tongue we will also see the essential similitude between all languages. For example, in the East and in North Africa the Arabic-speaking community got rid of most of its mistrust prevalent before the war, which resulted mainly from the diversity in languages."

The same thing will occur once all races and nations could use the same language.

"Do people in the East learn Esperanto easily?"

"Yes. They learn English or French quickly enough. Why should they have great difficulty with Esperanto which is much easier?"

"Do you think the Bahá'ís will accept to learn this language following your advice?"

"Yes. Naturally this won't be the main thing for them but when they understand the importance of a common language in the realization of our ideal they will joyfully obey my command and they will work on the propagation of Esperanto not only in the East but also in the United States where there are a very large number of Bahá'ís."

“Did you meet many Esperantists during your trip?”

“Yes. They kindly received me in Edinburgh as well as right here in Paris a couple of days ago. I now intend to go to Germany where I will likely visit them. They are very nice to me.”

“Another thing, what should our attitude be towards unjust attacks? Should we stay silent or answer back?”

“We should simply say the truth, but never attack and most of all never seek personal vengeance against someone.”

“What if society remains indifferent?”

“We have to wait patiently. Truth, happiness and justice will win and peace will triumph in the end.”

After all these words, I asked for permission to withdraw. Abdu'l-Baha listened to me then cordially thanked me for my sympathy towards his young compatriots who were persecuted in his country, for he loved them with all his heart.

[#73]

16 February: On the Wondrous Vastness of God's Creation

Sunday, 16 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 16 February 1913.

* * *

How large is the Creation of God! How stupendous His machinery! How infinite His dominion! How majestic His divine system! How imperial His Holy Court! Were it possible to build a heavenly railway; were it possible to construct an aeroplane and establish communication between the various planets, many marvellous discoveries would have been achieved! Then the inhabitants of the earth could associate with the denizens of other spheres. They could learn from them many things. They could then realize the grandeur and infinity of the universe. They would see with their own eyes how stupendous and magnificent are these shining stars. They would behold the wonders of the Almighty treasured in His universal Creation!

[#74]

16 February: Comments on Race

Sunday, 16 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 16 February 1913.

* * *

... a colored man speaking the French language came to pay his homage. The Master said: The race problem in America is very intense. Its non-solution will end in danger and war. The colored people in the United States have advanced much intellectually. They have many schools, colleges, universities and churches. They invited Him to Howard University. There were many hundreds of colored students but a few of white people could be seen here and there. In the second meeting, there were more white, in the third meeting white and colored associating with each other! -this made Him very happy. He advised both races and they became very friendly. He gave them many illustrations of variety and unity from the mineral, vegetable and animal Kingdoms. There was a colored pugilist, Jack Johnson who defeated in an athletic fight a white man. This created much resentment against the colored race. In reality we are all the servants of God. We are all His children, whether white or black. These color lines are mere superstitions. They are the phantasmal shadows of a prejudiced mind. They have no foundation.

[#75]

16 February: Conversation with Henri Monnier

Sunday, 16 February 1913*

Faculté de théologie protestante de Paris, 83 boulevard Arago
Paris, France

* The heading accompanying the original Persian transcript of this talk (*Khīṭábát* 737) indicates that this conversation took place on Monday, 17 February—as does Balyuzi, who may have been relying on that source—but Sohrab’s contemporaneous account makes it clear that it actually happened on Sunday, 16 February. It could not possibly have been Monday, the 17th because ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was giving an address to the gathering of the Bahá’ís at the Scott residence, which met every Monday evening, at that time (a partial record of His address that night follows this transcript). In light of this clear record, Zarqání’s account of the occasion—which places it at Saturday, 15 February—must simply be taken as yet another error.

This important conversation between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Henri Monnier was originally recorded in Persian; a transcript, later authenticated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Himself, has been published in *Majmú ‘iy-i-Khiṭábát-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá* (Hofheim-Langenhain: Bahá’í-Verlag, 1984), 737–747.* An English translation was first published in Isabel Fraser Chamberlain (1916), *Abdul Baha on Divine Philosophy*, chapter V: “Abdul Baha Answers Many Questions asked by Theologians of Paris” (147–58). A revised and annotated translation was produced by Khazeh Fananapazir (1993) under the title “‘Abdu'l-Bahá on Christ and Christianity: An interview with Pasteur Monnier on the relationship between the Bahá’í Faith and Christianity, Paris” and published in *Bahá’í Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, 7–17,[†] along with an introduction by Seena Fazel.[‡] What follows is a lightly-edited, more reader-friendly version of Fananapazir’s translation prepared by Arjen Bolhuis (2020).[§]

* * *

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

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: One endowed with the power of hearing shall hear the mysteries of God from all things, and all creation will convey to him the divine message.

Pasteur Monnier: If you permit us, we would like to ask a question: As we are students of theology, and in the rank of clergy, we would like to know your belief about Christ; who he was and what he was?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Our belief in regard to Christ is exactly what is recorded in the New Testament; however, we elucidate this matter and do not speak literally or in a manner based merely on blind belief. For instance, it is recorded in the Gospel of St. John, "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." The Christians accept these assertions on mere hearing, but we give an explanation which is accepted by reason, an explanation that no one need find occasion to reject.

* The original Persian transcript starts with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressing the interpreter, asking: "Please ask how the gentlemen are." The Bishop replies: "Praise be to God we are well and happy that you have honoured us with your visit." ‘Abdu’l-Bahá responds: "I too am very happy to meet you."

[†] The full text of Fananapazir’s original translation is available online here:

https://bahai-library.com/abdulbaha_christ_christianity_monnier

[‡] Available online here: https://bahai-library.com/fazel_abdulbaha_christ_christianity

[§] Taken from here: https://bahai-library.com/pdf/a/abdulbaha_christ_christianity_monnier.pdf

** Pasteur Henri Monnier (b. 1871) was the "Professor á la Faculté libre de théologie protestante de Paris", Vice-president of the Protestant Federation of France and Pastor of the Etoile Church (from *International Who's Who*, 1st ed.). Among his many works are "Qu'est-ce que la Bible?", "La Loi de sacrifice", and "Le Paradis socialiste et le ciel" (see *Catalogue General des Livres Imprimés de la Bibliotheque Nationale*. Vol. CXVII. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1932, pp. 5440–43).

The Christians have made this statement the foundation of the trinity, but philosophers deny it, stating that the trinity is impossible; and, in turn, the Christians do not give a satisfactory explanation and interpretation that can be accepted by the philosophers, as this matter is only based on semantics and belief; the latter do not accept it, saying, "Is it possible to have three in one and one in three?"

We explain this subject as follows: This priority and pre-existence is not in time for, if this priority were in time, the Word would become contingent on time not eternal and changeless. The world of existent beings is like the letters and all human beings as individual letters, a letter individually has no meaning, no independent significance, but the station of Christ is the station of the word, which has a completely self-sufficient and independent meaning. That is why we say Christ is the word. By complete significance we mean that the bounties of divine perfections are manifest in Christ. It is obvious that the perfections of souls other than Christ are partial and are not derived from themselves but from another, but the perfections of the Christ are universal, or the whole. The Reality of Christ possesses complete and self-sufficient perfections.

For example, this lamp sheds light, the moon also illumines the night with its silvery beams, but their light is not self created, they receive their light from another source; but Christ is like unto the sun; his light issued forth from his own identity. He has not received it through another person, therefore we give him the comprehensive title of the "word". That is an all-comprehending reality having all perfections. This word has a priority in honour and rank, and not a beginning in time. For instance, we say, this person has precedence over all. This precedence comes to him through the station and honour which he now holds in life, but it is not a precedence in time. In reality the "word" has neither a beginning nor ending. It means those perfections which appeared in Christ and not his physical body. Those perfections were from God. It is similar to the rays of the sun which are reflected in a clear mirror. The perfections of Christ were effulgent from God. It is evident that these qualities were ever with God, even at this time they are with him, they are inseparable from him, because divinity is not subject to division. Division is a sign of imperfection, and God is the perfect one.

It is clear that the perfections of divinity are co-equal and co-existent with the essence. In that station there is absolute unity. This in brief is the exposition of the station of Christ. We do not postulate three hypostases in the Essence of Divinity by merely asserting that in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God and the Word was Christ. Rather we elaborate it.

Pasteur Monnier: What is the similarity between the Cause of Christ and that of Bahá'u'lláh? And what relation do they hold towards each other?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: The foundation of the religion of God is one. The same basis which was laid by Christ, and later on was forgotten, has been renewed by Bahá'u'lláh. Each divine revelation is divided into two parts. The first part is essential, and belongs to the world of morality. It is the exposition of significances and realities. It is the expression of the love of God, the knowledge of God. This is one in all the religions, unchangeable and immutable. The second part is inessential. It belongs to practical life, to transactions and business, and changes according to the requirements of the time of each prophet.

These moral laws are the reflections on this plane of the divine laws, and they become the medium for transmuted the thought of man into his reality. The moral laws change as the horizon of man extends.

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

According to the exigencies of the time, Moses revealed ten laws for capital punishment. It was impossible at that time to protect the community and preserve social security without these severe measures, for the children of Israel lived in the wilderness of Tah [Sinai], and they could not protect their rights and establish safety without these severe measures. But they were not needed in the time of Christ, and were abolished. The difference in the second part of religion is unimportant because it belongs to the customs of life only but the foundation of the religion is one, and Bahá'u'lláh has renewed that foundation.

The cause of Christ was wholly spiritual. He did not change anything save the Sabbath, certain laws of conduct, and the law of divorce.

All the sayings of Christ deal with the knowledge of God, with the oneness of the world of humanity, the moral relations between the hearts and spiritual susceptibilities. Bahá'u'lláh created these merciful sentiments in the most complete form and deposited them in the hearts of men. This is in keeping with the teachings of Christ, because it is the reality, and the reality does not change. Is it possible to say that divine unity is divisible, or the knowledge of God, the oneness of the world of humanity, universal love, and the solidarity of the human race - are they ever subject to transformation?

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

Pasteur Monnier: What is the relationship of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh with God?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Christ said: "The Father is in me." This we must understand through logical and scientific evidences, for if we do not conform religious principles with science and reason, they do not inspire the heart with confidence and assurance.

It is said that once John of Chrysostom* was walking along the seashore, thinking over the question of the trinity, trying to reconcile it with finite reason. Suddenly his attention was attracted by a boy sitting on the shore, putting water into a cup. Approaching him, he asked, "My child, what art thou doing?" "I am trying to put the sea into this cup" he answered. "How foolish art thou," John replied, "in trying to do the impossible." The child rejoined, "Thy work is stranger than mine, for thou art labouring to bring within the grasp of human intellect the conception of the trinity." And so Chrysostom understood that it was not possible to harmonise this problem with mind and reason. And yet one should bring into agreement everything to reason and science. Otherwise how could one accept it? If I say something and your mind cannot accept it how could you accept it? So we should make every matter to be in agreement with reason and science.

Let us investigate independently the reality of this matter. What is the meaning of the father and the son. How is the Father in the Son?

We say that this fatherhood and sonship are allegorical and symbolical. The Reality of the Christ is the mirror through which the Sun of Divinity has reflected. If this mirror expresses, "The light is in me" - it is sincere in its claim, therefore Jesus was truthful when he said "The Father is in me". And based on this explanation there is no need to postulate plurality or multiplicity.

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

Let us investigate reality and not follow imitations. The Jews were expecting the coming of the Messiah, lamenting day and night, saying: "O God, send to us our deliverer!" But as they walked

in the path of dogmas, rather than reality, when the Messiah appeared they denied him. Had they been investigators of reality, they would not have crucified, but would have worshipped Him instantly.

* John of Chrysostom (c. 344-407) was Bishop of Constantinople. The original adds that this is not John the Baptist.

Pasteur Monnier: Is the unification of religion possible? If so, when and how and through what channel will it be realised?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: When the devotees of religion cast aside their dogmas and ritualism, the unification of religion will be in sight, and the realities of the holy books will become unveiled. In these days misunderstandings are rife, but when these misunderstandings and blind imitations are relinquished, the sun of reality shall dawn.

When in San Francisco* I was invited to speak in a Jewish synagogue. I said, *"For about two thousand years, between you and the Christians, there have been friction and opposition, owing to the misunderstandings which today have blinded the eyes. You conceive that Christ was the enemy of Moses, the destroyer of the laws of the Pentateuch, the abrogator of the commandments of the Bible. When we investigate the reality we observe that Christ appeared at a time when according to your own historians, the laws of the Torah were forgotten; the foundation of religion and faith was shaken. Nebuchadnezzar had come, burnt the whole Torah, and taking into captivity many Jewish tribes. Alexander the Great came for the second time, and Titus, the Roman general, devastated the land for the third time, killed the Jews, pillaged their property and imprisoned their children.*

At such a time, under such gloomy conditions, Christ appeared. The first thing he said was: 'The Torah is the divine book; Moses is the man of God; Aaron, Solomon, Isaiah, Zechariah and all the prophets of Israel are valid and true.' Through all regions he spread the Old Testament, which for fifteen hundred years had not been sent out of Palestine, but Christ promulgated it in all countries. Were it not for Christ the name of Moses and his book would not have reached America; for during fifteen hundred years the Torah had been translated but once. It was Christ's seal of approval which caused it to be translated into six hundred languages. Now be just, was Christ the friend or the enemy of Moses?

You say he abrogated the Torah, but I say he promulgated the Torah, the ten commandments and all the questions which belong to its moral world. But he changed the following: That for a small theft one must cut off the hand.† If a person blind another, he must be blinded, or if he breaks another's teeth, his teeth must be broken. Is it possible nowadays to establish the archaic laws of an eye for an eye, and a

* 'Abdu'l-Bahá is referring to His talk of 12 October 1912 at Temple Emmanu-El. See *Promulgation* 361–370.

† 'Abdu'l-Bahá also made the statement that Mosaic Law punished theft by amputating the hand of the offender in two talks to Jewish audiences in America (see *Promulgation* 365, 404, *Paris Talks* 142). As the Hebrew Bible does not contain this specific penalty for theft, what 'Abdu'l-Bahá calls Mosaic Law may be referring to Rabbinic tradition, the Talmud (the "Oral Torah"), which according to Jews is as important as the Torah. Alternatively, 'Abdu'l-Bahá may be using what Shoghi Effendi called His "method of exaggerated emphasis" (letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, dated 20 February 1950) in order to make the point that Mosaic Laws were now too severe for the modern age (for a discussion of the method of exaggerated emphasis in the Bahá'í Writings, see Fazel and Fananapazir, "Some Interpretive Principles in the Bahá'í Writings" in *The Bahá'í Studies Review* 2.1.1992, p. 8). A further possibility is that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is referring to an Islamic tradition on the nature of Jewish Law. The influence of Islamic traditions is suggested by the following statement in *The Secret of Divine Civilization* (Wilmette: BPT, 1990), "it is a fact attested by the writings of all the Islamic schools that . . . the cutting off of the right hand as punishment for theft, formed no part of Abraham's Law" (29).

tooth for a tooth? Christ changed only that part of the Mosaic religion which did not accord with the spirit of his time. He had no desire to abolish the Torah.

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

Today the enmity and rivalry existing between the religions are on mere names. It is an established fact that the followers of all the religions believe in a reality, the benefits of which are universal; which reality is a medium between God and man. The Jews call that reality Moses, the Christians Christ, the Muslims Muhammad, the Buddhists Buddha, and the Zoroastrians Zoroaster. Now mark well that none of these religionists have ever seen the founders; they have only heard his name. If they overlooked these names they would realize that they all believed in a perfect reality which is an intermediary* between the Almighty and the creatures.

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

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

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

God has founded religion so that it might be the bond of amity and mutual association between the peoples. Christ did not sacrifice his life so that the people might believe the doctrine that he is the word of God;† nay, rather he gave his life so that he might bestow the consciousness

* See Galatians 3:20, 1 Timothy 2:5, Deuteronomy 5:5, and Galatians 3:19.

† cf. "The holy, divine Manifestations did not reveal themselves for the purpose of founding a nation, sect or faction. They did not declare Their heavenly mission and message in order to lay the foundation for a religious belief. Even Christ did not become manifest that we should merely believe in Him as the Christ, follow Him and adore His mention. All these are limited in scope and requirement, whereas the reality of Christ is an unlimited

of eternal life to the world of humanity. That is why he said, "Jesus, the son of man, is come to give life to the world."

This reality has been forgotten by the people, and the doctrine* of the father, son and holy spirit has been substituted. The original foundation has been lost sight of. Christ said, "if one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also." Is there any relation between this commandment and bloody events taking place today in the Balkans?

The religious differences between the Catholics and Protestants have caused a deluge of bloodshed in which 900,000 people were killed. What relation have these events with the statement of Christ when he addressed Peter: "Put thy sword into the sheath"? When we hold fast to the foundations of the religions of God, differences will be dispelled.

Pasteur Monnier: Is your aim to found a new religion?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Our aim is to free the foundations of the religion of God from the clouds of dogmas for the sun of reality is prevented from shining forth. We desire to dispel these black impenetrable fogs, so that the regions of the world may be flooded and illumined. May these foul clouds never return, may the rays of the sun of reality encircle all countries, for the sun has not beginning in time and no ending.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá arose)

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

'Abdu'l-Bahá: May that unity be established between us that is not ended by separation.

essence. The infinite and unlimited Reality cannot be bounded by any limitation. Nay, rather, Christ appeared in order to illumine the world of humanity, to render the earthly world celestial, to make the human kingdom a realm of angels, to unite the hearts, to enkindle the light of love in human souls" (*Promulgation* 443).

* Literally "the names".

[#76]

17 February: Address at the Scott Residence

Monday, 17 February 1913
Scott Residence, 17 rue de la Boissonnade
Paris, France

This account is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, p. 413. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 17 February 1913.

* * *

The studio was crowded. [‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] subject was on the equality of man and woman citing the example of some Persian women who were firm and steadfast under sever trials and ordeals. Toward the end of [H]is address he said: “Whenever I hear that such women are found amongst you I will be made very happy.”

He stops and began to shake hands, circulating amongst the audience, smiling here, nodding approvingly there but continuing [H]is talk.

“This is the work. All else save this has no result. Humanity must become illumined with the light of the kingdom; otherwise all our efforts will remain fruitless. Man spends his time in the pursuit of shadowy objects. When man leaves this world then no relations, no family, no friends will benefit him. He will leave them all behind. His wealth, his possessions, his dominion and even his sovereignty will not satisfy him. Nay rather all these things will be the cause of his remorse and regret, for he sees that he must leave them and go away empty-handed. But if he possess merciful susceptibilities, and if he is quickened with the divine spirit and if he realizes that he has attained to the eternal life – then these things, will confer upon him a happiness which shall last throughout eternity.”

[#77]

18 February: A Conversation with Mrs. Henlay

Tuesday, 18 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 February 1913.

* * *

Mrs Henlay - You sent word to me through Isabel Fraser that you desired for me a high state of spirituality. Will you please explain to me just what is meant by that and how one can attain unto it?

The Master - By attaching no importance to material things. According to the laws which bind us to this planet, everyone is tied to the gratification of self, to the satisfying of desires. What I meant for you is that you may be freed - that you may become the embodiment of spirit - that you may become an angel.

Mrs Henlay - But for me detachment is difficult. I desire to make for myself a name in the theatrical world. How can one attain to the state in the theatrical world?

The Master - Even the theatrical world would not prevent you from becoming what I desire you to become. You can engage in work of an uplifting kind - the kind that will tend to lift one out of the sense world into the world of art, not the kind that is degrading. Strive for that which prompts you to the personification of dignity and art. The theatrical world need not prevent your development.

Mrs Henlay - How can I attain to greater stability? I feel terribly depressed and discouraged at times.

The Master - Whenever you feel depressed, go alone into the secret chamber, read one of the Hidden Words and with the utmost supplication beg of Bahá'u'lláh to impart [to] you that happiness which is essential for the future. Pray with great humbleness: "O God! Free me from these fetters. Release me from all these toils. Make me pure and sanctified. Illumine me. Fill my heart with thy love and attach me to Thyself - so that I may become a captive to your love. May I not seek aught but Thee! May I not search but for Thy love, and may I walk always in Thy path!" Then you will attain to a glorious state - then you will obtain a condition which you would not exchange for the whole world.

Mrs Henlay - My great desire is to have more faith.

The Master - This very prayer will bring you the pearl of great price.

[#78]

19 February: Two Stories from the Baghdád Days

Wednesday, 19 February 1913

Exact location unknown

Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 19 February 1913.

* * *

Later while walking, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] related a humorous story about a Bahá’í whose name was Mírzá Javád. He was a very learned and literary personage but he had queer and fantastic habits, besides having a temper that even the angels could not endure him. While the Bahá’ís lived in Baghdád, this Mírzá Javád was living with them. He had a melancholic and disconsolate disposition, he got angry very quietly. It was impossible for any man to associate with him for one day without having a quarrel. His disposition was most bitter and his temper something terrific. With him ‘Abdu’l-Bahá associated very advisably for eight years. Notwithstanding his knowledge he had many strange superstitions. For example he firmly believed that when he grew very old he will suddenly be rejuvenated and become youthful as handsome as "Joseph". He also believed because the Báb had divided the year into 19 months, in the future something will happen to the moon that instead of rising and setting 28 days in the month, it will rise and set only 19 times. When he became angry, he would be attacked with such facial contortions that were positively ludicrous. For instance his beard would get crooked, his moustaches, one would go up, the other down and his eyes bloodshot. Once he came home very angry roundly cursing himself. He was shaken by such white rage that for a long time he could not find the keyhole to open the door. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went to his help and asked him what was the matter? He was so furious that he could not answer. At last he gave ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the cause of his anger. It was about someone whom he thought had insulted him six months ago, but he remembered it now. The friends always tried to argue with and refute him. But when he came to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with his theories of moon and rejuvenation he would smile and say: Very good! Very good! God willing you will renew your life!

The Master told us another story in which Bahá’u’lláh appeared as a judge. It so happened that while in Baghdád, during the season that the pilgrims arrived from all over the Islamic world

to visit the Holy Shrines of the Muḥammadans, Bahá'u'lláh entered a neighboring city, called Samereh. Samereh was much frequented by the pilgrims of various nationalities and the Arab landlords charge exorbitant prices for their rooms. One of these landlords who knew Bahá'u'lláh rented a room to a Persian nobleman for two weeks at the price of 30 dollars. This Persian roomer would call the Arab every morning to drink tea with him and he would have him always at dinner and supper; for he cooked various Persian dishes, rice, chicken etc. After two weeks, the Persian gave him the rent but the Arab asked for more, and inasmuch as he could speak out a few Persian words, he was unable to make himself understood; therefore he went to Bahá'u'lláh and pleaded for justice, saying that during two weeks this man gave him a whole lot of trouble. Every morning, every morning he would ask him to drink tea, to eat chicken at noon and pilaw at night! And now he has given him only thirty dollars! Bahá'u'lláh laughed heartily and the Master did not tell us in what way he smoothed the ruffled feelings of the Arab.

[#79]

20 February: On the Greatness of the American Journey

Thursday, 20 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 February 1913.

* * *

The greatness of the American journey is not now known. Ere long its glories shall fill all the books and pamphlets of the world. There will be no other mention except this. Do you see this French Republic with all its wealth and position? Its duration is limited but the efficacy and significance of that trip are unlimited. You must appreciate adequately the value of these divine bestowals. For example thou cannot comprehend fully at present the significance and freshness of thy trip to Nile and thy mission there. In the future it will become evident. If thou couldst measure the height and depth of the marvelous events which have transpired and are transpiring in the Cause, thou wouldst write down every word I utter with the pen of diamond upon the page of gold.

[#80]

20 February: On the Need for Spirituality in Civilization

Thursday, 20 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 February 1913.

* * *

Now Europe in reality is in the utmost beauty and adornment. Material civilization has advanced greatly. It is a body in the utmost of comeliness, but regrettable it is not animated by the Spirit. How pitiful that it has not the heavenly illumination! How sad that it does not enjoy the breaths of the Holy Spirit! It is a mirror in the utmost of transparency but a thousand times alas! that the rays of the Sun of Reality are not reflected thereon! It is a tree most verdant and elegant but alas! it produces no fruits. Come! Will you? Come ye together! Concentrate your spiritual forces! Arise with much fervor and enthusiasm! Show ye a united effort! Let a new attraction take possession of your hearts! Let a new spirit sweep over your temples, so that the Fire of the Love of God which is enkindled in your holy of holies may flame forth, setting a spiritual conflagration to the whole of Europe. You must not rest day and night until you have breathed in this body a new spirit and ignited a light in this lamp.

[#81]

21 February: On Pride and Haughtiness

Friday, 21 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 21 February 1913.

* * *

Pride and haughtiness are the worst qualities. If a person becomes the possessor of the whole world he must not become proud. Humility is the most shining star in the crown of man. Inasmuch as we are all created from the same substance, why should we prefer ourselves above others? We are all humans. We are all the children of one Father; the sheep of one

Shepherd; the members of one family; the birds of one orchard, the flowers of one rose-garden, the waves of one sea, the rays of one Sun; the stars of one heaven and the servants of One God. Let us all be humble before the signs of God and treat each other as brothers.

[#82]

**21 February: Remarks to a Persian Prince on Mírzá Taqí Khán
(Amír Kabír)**

Friday, 21 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 21 February 1913. The remarks paraphrased below were addressed to the Nuşratu’d-Dawlih, a Persian prince.

* * *

The Master related a story to illustrate his point stating that Mírzá Taqí Khán was the ablest and most astute statesman that Persia had produced for a long time. Although he committed the greatest mistake of his life when he ordered the martyrdom of the Báb and the Bahá’ís, yet as we always remember the ability of even our worst enemy and never overlook justice, therefore we acknowledge the public services of this patriotic man. After the martyrdom of the Báb he himself confessed that he had two errors in his public career. One was the death of the Báb: the other the appointment of a poor prince to the governor-generalship of one of the Provinces of Persia, for he swallowed up all the taxes. In short, Mírzá Taqí Khán was a master of system and organization. Within the short space of two years he drilled and fitted one hundred regiments—a disciplined army. He systematized all the departments and established their foundations upon a solid basis. Although he had never been in Europe, yet he introduced many wonderful social and political reforms. One of the most puzzling questions of that time and even today was the proper distribution of the salaries of the government employees. Often the arrears would accumulate to such an extent that the Minister of Finance would reduce them to a third or a fourth. This caused a great many complaints and dissatisfaction on the part of the clerks and the employees. For whom they did not receive their salaries in time, they borrowed according to the sum which the government owed them and the sudden reduction brought the creditors to their doors. However this prime minister so reorganized the finances of the country that the first day of every month, every employee received a small package with his name written on it, containing his full salary. This in itself was considered nothing short than miracles. But the ministers, fearing his control and power, poisoned the

mind of the Shah that this man was ambitious and desired to usurp the throne. The Shah believed them and caused him to be killed in the most atrocious manner.

[#83]

21 February: Address to the Alliance Spiritualiste

Friday, 21 February 1913

Hall of the Union Chrétienne de Jeunes Gens (YMCA), 14 rue de Trévis
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 429–35. Refer also to *Abdul Baha on Divine Philosophy*, pp. 174–84, and Amín Egea, *The Apostle of Peace*, vol. 2, pp. 331–36.

* * *

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

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

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

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

History informs us that every age has its special ties which bind the people together; but the strongest tie of all ages, the unbreakable tie which binds the hearts together, is the tie of true religion. Religion has been the means of uniting contending nations and harmonizing warring tribes. There is no agency on this planet more potent than the power of religion. Consider for a moment that in the era of Christ there were many nations who were thirsty for one another's blood, carrying at intervals fire and sword over the borderlines. There were the Romans, the

Greeks, Chaldeans, Assyrians and Egyptians. It was impossible to unite these conflicting tribes and peoples; but when the power of religion came into action it swept away all these barriers and cemented these nations that for ages had been waging war.

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

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

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

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

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

How short-sighted we would be should we try to divide a room into the eastern and western corners. The geographical division of this world is an exact parallel. Through our ignorance and lack of viewpoint we divide this common home, we divide the members of this family into various races, we divide religion into different sects and then with these suppositional divisions we wage war against one another; we shed one another's blood and we pillage one

another's possessions. Is not this unpardonable ignorance? Is this not the height of injustice? Were we just and could we observe without prejudice we would realize that there are no fundamental differences. For the last six thousand years there have been wars and contentions between the various nations and in every age we have had some great culminating catastrophe.

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

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

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

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

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

The governments of the east arose with great determination to exterminate this cause. They held councils and said, "We must uproot the tree of this community and abolish the foundation of this palace of universal peace which these people desire to found"; they said,

“We want to carry conquest to other countries, we desire to make other nations captive, we wish to extend the boundary of our dominions and defend our frontiers. How are we going to do all these things except through militarism? And as Baha’o’llah's aim is to prevent war we must destroy him and his followers so that his ideals may not take root and flourish.”

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

Today in the Orient those souls from amongst the various sects, religions and nations who have accepted the teachings of Baha’o’llah are cemented together with the power of affinity and love. Were you to enter any of their conferences in the Orient you would behold the Mussulmans, Buddhists, Jews, Christians and Zoroastrians associating together in a spirit of unity and brotherhood to such degree that no one could differentiate one race from another. It is as though they had previously been opposing forces and were now welded into one consciousness.

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

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

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

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

become diffusers of light; create love between the hearts; establish communion between the spirits and bring together the people of the east and the west.

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

The world of existence is like unto an orchard and humanity is like unto the trees. All these trees are planted in the same orchard, reared through the heat of one sun, watered with one rain. We must be the cause of the adornment of this orchard. The world of humanity is like unto a rose garden and the various races, tongues and people are like unto contrasting flowers. The diversity of colors in a rose-garden adds to the charm and beauty of the scene as variety enhances unity. Why should we not look upon the human world with rose-colored vision?

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

What sublime happiness! What God-inspired progress! What a heavenly ideal! What a divine disposal! I request that each one of you work for this great end and hold fast to every means of harmony, that this blood-thirstiness may be forever quenched; that the horizons of the world may become illumined by the rays of a divine humanity and the east and the west become radiant with the light of its Lord.

[#84]

22 February: Anecdote on a Kurdish Bahá’í

Saturday, 22 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 436–38. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 22 February 1913.

* * *

At the time that His Holiness Baha-ollah was in the mountains of Suleymanieh one of the young ragged, illiterate Kurds inhabiting in the valleys came to see Him. The Blessed Perfection was kind to him and his love grew for Baha-o-llah. His name was Mollah Ali Mardan. Although he had the title “Mullah” yet he was illiterate. He did not know anything about “faith” but ardently he adored Baha-ollah. Everyday he would leave his flock and go to the cave to hear the Blessed Perfection speak. Finally the time came that Baha-ollah through the pleadings of the friends returned to Bagdad and a new life and hope were infused in their bodies. Shortly after the return of Baha-ollah, the father of Mulla Ali Mardan told him “I see thee in depression and gloomy. If thou desirest to go to the ‘Holy Man,’ you mayest go.” The young man was beside himself with joy and leaves his humble home instantly. When he arrived in Bagdad he came right to Baha-ollah. He had a round felt hat on his head and rough woolen-camel clothes, very picturesque. As he was a most simple man he mixed his Persian with Kurdish dialect and the result was very amusing. Baha-ollah received him with graciousness and open arms. As the Inspector of the customhouse was a devoted follower of the Blessed Perfection He sent for him. When he arrived, Baha-ollah pointed Mulla Ali Mardan to him. “This is my friend,” He said “I hope you will give him a position in the custom house.

“Very well,” the inspector respectfully answered and the “friend” of Baha-ollah was properly installed in work with fair wages. Little by little he advanced and all his associates liked him because, he was willing to serve and to learn. One day he came to Baha-ollah and said, “My father and mother and my relations are in great need and poverty. I must assist them.” The Blessed Perfection, told him be confident, God will greatly assist thee and will make thee prosperous.” The inspector next day increased his wages and made with him an agreement that of the profits he makes, he will give him 3 per cent. The first year Mulla Ali Mardan made a net sum of \$8000. Then he sent seventy mule-loads of clothes and utensils, and rice, candy, tea, coffee, etc. to his family. The next step was his partnership with the inspector. The latter, however, getting old in service and desiring to retire from the field officiating was looking around for an able successor. The “friend” of Baha-ollah answered all his requirements and

to the amazement of all the people of Bagdad, Mulla Ali Mardan was one day given the official position of the Inspector of the Custom House. Who is this illiterate Kurd who is constantly climbing up? Everybody was curiously inquiring. But he managed the Custom affairs very dexterously and introduced many reforms in the administration. Later he bought a house and remodeled it and sent for his family. At the time, there was a great merchant in Bagdad who had one daughter. There were many suitors for her hand all of them were rejected. One day Mulla Ali Mardan came to Baha-ollah and without any introduction he says, "I desire to get married with the daughter of this merchant." No one would have believed for a moment that such a thing was possible, but strangely enough, the merchant accepted him as his son-in-law. Great preparations were made for the marriage ceremony. The bridegroom expended several thousand dollars; arranged several feasts for the poor of the city. The marriage was one of the capital events of the city. After sometime a child was born to him and he became very famous throughout those parts. He served the government in a deal with a Jew and as a reward; he was decorated and received a title. Many people knowing that he is Bahai would claim, that they are Bahais and in this fashion get either reduction on duties or cause them to be free. When Baha-ollah heard about this he asked him does he rely upon the mere statements of these people? He said, "because they mention your name, the name of the Blessed Perfection, I do not want them to be disappointed; otherwise I know that that they are not telling the truth." He would come often to the Presence of Baha-ollah and say "Oh My Lord, through Your Mercy and bounty I have become a King! Where it not for your tender care and protection I would have now been living in the mountains, tending to my flock but now I am a King; a King, because I have acquired all this wealth; a greater king; because I have your love. With this love I am greater than all the Kings of the world."

[#85]

24 February: An Analogy for Building "the Temple of Humanity"

Monday, 24 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 24 February 1913.

* * *

When a person desires to destroy his house to build a new one on its site, first of all, he must make the plan ready, then the bricks, the stones, the lime etc, and then engage in the demolition of the old building. It is true that the present day religions are like dilapidated houses. The religion of Bahá-o-llah is preparing slowly yet assuredly the materials out of

which the Temple of Humanity shall be constructed. What are the materials? They are Faith in God, the love of God, the Knowledge of God, and trust in God. It will also use in the construction of new Temple all the good materials which are found in the old buildings. It will indeed be a glorious palace of God wherein all His children shall abide forever in peace, joy and love.

[#86]

24 February: Discourse on Words and Deeds

Monday, 24 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following summary of the words ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke on this occasion is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 441–42. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 24 February 1913.

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In the Bahai Dispensation, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] emphasized [H]is point by rising from [H]is chair, near the window, and walking back and forth, the question of deed is most important. Confession and acknowledgment do not mean Faith. Faith means Deeds and in turn Deeds mean Faith. If a Bahai is confirmed in Deeds, he is accepted. His faith in and acknowledgement of the station of Baha-o-llah do not bring him in the rank of the people of the Kingdom of Abha. In order to be accounted as a Bahai, he must live in accord with the Teachings of Baha-o-llah; he must become a center of merciful emotions; the rays of the sun of perfections must emanate from him; he must be kind to all the inhabitants of the earth; he must strive to become a cause of general welfare; he must consider his enemies as his friends; he must return justice for injustice; he must look upon all humanity – the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant, the high and the low, the aristocrat and the democrat, the employer and the employee, those who live in Mansions and those dwell in dark, cold, wretched tenement houses, those who are well-fed and those who have no bread to eat, – as members of his own family; he must know and believe that the whole earth is his native land, he must be sympathetic with all the people. He [must] cheer up and sympathize with those souls who are in sorrow and carry laughter and the sunbeams of happiness in the hearts of all the children of humanity. To the sick, he must become a nurse. For the oppressed, he must be a shelter. To the extent of his ability, he must assist and take care of the poor ones in the community. He must give a share and a portion to those who are deprived. He must be a balm of healing to every wounded one and a breath of spirit to every dead one. In short he must demonstrate his love for all the people through every loving means. Just as light appear through an illumined

lamp, likewise these deeds must appear from a person who calls himself a Bahai; otherwise one does not become a Bahai by merely acknowledging the station of Baha-o-llah. . . These are the qualities of a Bahai. If such lights emanate from a person, he is a Bahai; if these rays do not emanate from him he is only a Bahai by name.

When we say “Man,” immediately we imagine in our mind certain attributes with which the “Man” is imbued! When we say “star,” by this word we designate a light-giving stellar body. When we say “tree,” it must yield fruits. When we say the word “perfection” we look forward to its manifestations. Otherwise it is a word without meaning, a name without significance.

[#87]

24 February: Two Anecdotes from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Monday, 24 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 24 February 1913.

* * *

The inhabitants of one of the provinces in Persia desired to get rid of the burden of military conscription, laid upon them by the Minister of war. A man said, he will do something and exempt the provinces from this law. The people became naturally delighted. Now in Tīhrán, there is a military square in the center of which they have mounted on a platform, a great cannon; so this man got a hearse and bringing it near this platform stationed himself beside it and started to cry, bemoan and lament. The passersby asked him, what is the matter? He said: This friend of mine dropped dead here. He was a poor man, please contribute something for his burials. Everybody gave him something. But the hearse was empty. At twelve o'clock the Minister of war came out of his office and seeing a crowd went to investigate. When the man saw the Minister of war approaching he increased cries and lamentations. "What is this?", the Minister inquired. Your Highness, this man from the province of -- dropped dead here. He was a stranger amongst us and I am trying to collect a fund from these noble citizens for the expenses of his burials. "How it did happen that he died in this place?" Your highness, it is a very sad story. It shows the tender sensibility of this man which was a marked characteristic of the inhabitants of the province of [—]. As he passed by the soldiers were practicing. He heard the noise of the first gun and his whole frame shook. He heard the noise for the second time and he fell to the ground. The third booming of the cannon caused his

death. The Minister placed five francs in the man's hand and went away. Tomorrow a law was promulgated that the province of [—] was exempt from military conscription.

* * *

There were three persons who started to journey together. One was from the province of Tabríz, the other from the province of Işfahán and the third from the province of Káshán. On their way, they were discussing the probability of being attacked by the highwaymen. The man from Tabríz said, if we are attacked by the robbers, he will unsheathe his sword and kill as many as he can. The man from Işfahán said "I will make a big bluff, if you kill four, I will brandish my sword and cry out why, I am going to put an end to all of them by killing ten." The man from Káshán said, he will open the baggage, spread the table and have a feast. It so happened that they were attacked by the robbers. The Tabrízí killed four, the Esphahani commenced a big demonstration that he will do this and that and the Káshání was calmly eating. The robbers seeing this, reasoned amongst themselves: If the first man killed four; the second man must be more terrible, for he is boasting that he will kill every one of us, and what will the third man not do when he has finished eating! He will certainly be a dreadful foe! Let us take to our heels.

[#88]

25 February: A Story about Manúchíhr Khán

Tuesday, 25 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 February 1913.

* * *

This morning when we entered the room to pay our daily homage to [‘Abdu’l-Bahá], He spoke about the life of the Báb. When his Holiness the Báb, He said, arrived in Işfahán, Manúchíhr Khán, who had been converted from Christianity to the Muḥammadan religion, was the governor of the city. From the beginning he was attracted to the Cause, but one day something happened that made him a believer. The Báb was present in a meeting with the governor when suddenly the arrival of the son of the Chief of the ‘Ulamás of the City is announced. Having met the Báb he wanted to show his superior knowledge by propounding a question. He said, "There are certain statements in the Qur’án. Are they addressed to those who were present or are they addressed to those who are absent? If they are addressed to those who were present, then they do not apply to us, we are free from any responsibilities; but if they were intended

for those who were yet unborn, we were not there. How is it possible that God addresses those who are absent? Is this right? Is he going to punish us for non-compliance? How can you account for this contradiction?" The Báb simply answered, "In the presence of God, there is no past, present, or Future. There is an Eternal Now." The Mullá finding himself completely defeated by this matchless simple answer said, "My father does not teach this way." The governor seeing that he was going to launch on the sea of vituperation said, "It is enough!" This was the beginning of his belief. Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá went on explaining the life and story of this Governor who did so much to protect the life of the Báb, otherwise, the ‘Ulamás would have killed him in Işfahán and the history of the Bahá’í Movement may have been written otherwise.

[#89]

26 February: Conversation with Albert Jounet

Wednesday, 26 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following record of a conversation between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and Albert Jounet, president of the Alliance Spiritualiste, is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 447–49. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 February 1913.

* * *

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s] voice was low, tender, and yet vibrating with strength. “You must” looking at [Albert Jounet] and smiling, “sow the seed of love. They destroy, you construct. They take life, you confer life. Now is the time for work! To spread the law of Love at such a time is the greatest of all the works. Strive that the benign influence of Love permeate through the hearts of all men. They are thinking and waging war, you practice Peace and conciliation.”

Albert Jounet: “There are many advocates of universal love. But there are some newspapers subsidized by the manufacturers of cannons and powders to write all the time of war and the glories of conquests.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Never mind! The Will of God in this century is the promotion of Love amongst mankind. We must not look at the petty contrivances of the Militarists. These things shall pass away and the Will of God will become victorious. Those who serve the Cause of Love are confirmed. Let nothing discourage you. Cry out the word Peace. Push ahead. Seest thou not the light?”

Albert Jounet: “In France the educated and cultured class 'desire' peace and love.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá: “To 'desire' a thing and to 'work' for a thing are two different stories. There is an individual of the army who sits in his own house, eats, sleeps, and enjoys himself and talks about war. There is another member of the army who is in the battlefield, fighting the enemy and all the time gaining new laurels. The Bahais are the army who are in the thick of the fight all the time. Now in the right wing, again in the left, and anon in the center. They do not rest one moment. The battlefield is crimsoned with the blood of more than 20 000 lives. Generals are drilling new recruits all over the world.

Albert Jounet: “Amongst the mass of every nation there are always some whose aim is international Peace but their number has been so far in the minority.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá: “Universal Peace cannot be established with the power of thought. One cannot make people love each other by the power of thought. Neither through scientific attainment or political sagacity can the aim be obtained. This can only be accomplished through the power of the Divine Spirit. It is impossible to bring this about through any other means. If you strike one blow in the face of a peace-loving Westerner he will not only get angry but he will either draw his revolver or dagger.”

Albert Jounet: “According to the old custom of feudalism, gentlemen when insulted by each other, fought duels but this is now forbidden by law.”

'Abdu'l-Bahá: The Russian Emperor was the Western Monarch to send out his famous declaration of Universal Arbitration, the result of which was the organization of the First Hague Conference. He invited all the nations to that Conference, therefore he was the Organizer of the Congress. But after the termination of the Conference, the first person proclaiming war was him. That is why it is impossible to put universal Peace on a solid foundation without the assistance of the Divine Spirit. Thought is not a ruler over men. It often happens that the ego becomes the ruler. The Thought is one way, the deed just the opposite way. For example, his thought is that justice is good, but the ego steps in whispers in his ears and he commits injustice. Science cannot become a governor over man; for we often witness that a man acts contrary to his knowledge. For example, he is a Doctor. He knows that a certain food is not good for him yet he eats. Therefore, Spirit alone governs the body. Man is captive in the hands of Spirit. Man by his power alone cannot establish universal Peace; until the Divine Spirit has taken complete possession of the world of humanity. When the Congress of La Hague was organized, they asked me what is your opinion in regard to it? Will there be any beneficial results issuing from it? I answered that the members of this Conference are like unto bar-keepers who may convene a convention in which they discuss the harms of wine-drinking, condemn intoxication, favor temperance and pass eloquent resolutions at their last session. But as soon as they come out of their gathering, they go right ahead, open

their bars and boom up their business. For we have seen that no sooner these worthy representatives come home with their resolutions, their governments pigeon-hole them, and went on adding yearly to their expenditures as though there was no Hague Congress at all.”

Albert Jounet: “It is true! We are really very unfortunately situated in France. Those people who love Peace, brotherhood, fellowship are ether Socialists, freethinkers or agnostics. They have abandoned God and religion, but they are philanthropists, social reformers and they think through their path the regeneration of the world is possible. On the other hand, the part of the community which are religious, their religions thoughts are antiquated and out of time with the spirit of the time. Therefore those who have so-called religion are thinking of the God of battle, rather than the God of Peace and those who have no religion are trying to bring about brotherhood and unity, but they are unable because they lack religious fire, enthusiasm, dynamic energy which are found in the Bahai Revelation.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: “Whosoever thinks of God will never think of war. These religions are the counterfeits. People are walking in the footsteps of their ancestors. On the other hand the person who has not advanced toward God, will never be a peace-loving fellow man, he may state it verbally, but when the occasion comes up, he will be the first one to throw down the gauntlet. The Freemasons believe in brotherhood. When the Germans besieged Paris, there were Freemasons on both sides whose principle was peace and brotherhood. Bismark and the Emperor of Germany were Freemasons but how did they come up in action? The French people, one morning, raised the Freemason flag on the Forts. The Germans fired at them with their cannons.”

[#90]

27 February: An Anecdote from the Baghdád Days

Thursday, 27 February 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 27 February 1913.

* * *

Several Bahá’ís lived in a hall room so small that one could hardly move in it. But they did not care for these outward comforts, and having the joy of heaven in their hearts when in the evening they returned from their works; all night long they sung and chanted communes—so that their neighbors who had every comfort, envied them. At that time, a Persian who

outwardly claimed to be a Bahá'í arrived in Baghdád. As he was not going to be permanently located in the city—he came and stayed with our friends in the small crowded room. Of course they did not mind him and hailed him as a brother, they expected he will enter into the spirit of their joy. But no, he started to criticize everything and make remarks on their congested quarter and its shabby appearance. One of these men, who was a simple Káshání, composed a verse addressing him:

O thou our honored guest! God has given us an imperial palace! Look at its lofty dome!

I wonder! What is the cause of thy rankling soul!

[#91]

28 February: Three Stories Told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

Friday, 28 February 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier

Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 February 1913.

* * *

A young man who was graduated from the College applied for a position of teaching in a village far away from civilization. When he arrived at the village, the elders got together and consulted with each other how should they really know that this man was right in his claims. Finally one of them said, "I know how to find out." After his arrival, the elders called on the young man. The man who was going find out whether he was educated asked him to write "cow" on the slate. He wrote it. This is not the "cow" at all; I will show you how to write "cow" and forthwith he started to draw the picture of a cow. When he finished it he asked his friends, "Now look here" he said "I will let you to be the judges. I asked this young upstart to write "cow" and he wrote this small word here. In order to show him that he was a fraud and ignorant, I wrote one myself. Now which is the cow?" The verdict was against the poor, young teacher and he lost the position.

* * *

There was once a Sufi in Baghdád who on a hot summer day went to the Euphrates river with his water pitcher to carry water to his wife and children. Having arrived in the front of the river, he thought it will be well to bathe himself for a few minutes. He took off his clothes and went into the river. He had one dip under the water but when he raised his head, he saw

himself in the river Nile in Egypt. He got out of the river, borrowed some clothes from the nearby villages and entered the City of Cairo. He lived there for 15 years, married and had seven children. One day he went to the bank of the Nile with other friends to bathe. When he entered in the cool water, one of his friends got near and pushed him under the current. He struggled to get above the water and when out of danger, he saw himself in the Euphrates, his clothes and water-pitcher standing just where he had them 15 years [ago]. Calmly he got out of the river, putting on his clothes, filling the water-pitcher and going toward his home. Here he found his wife was waiting for the water. She received it without any murmur or surprise. After one year the Egyptian wife with his seven children, travelling from Cairo arrived safely in Baghdád and found the husband and the father to their great delight and happiness.

* * *

There was once a Persian Bahá'í who was very hospitable and always entertained new guests. Although he was poor and did not have much, yet everything he made he spent over such entertainments. One day a man called on him under the name of Bahá'í and he received him with open arms. This man stayed in the house one week, two weeks, three weeks, four weeks and he never went out. The host somehow found out that his guest was not really a Bahá'í, otherwise he would not spent his time lazily, for Bahá'u'lláh has commanded everyone to work. Finally one morning he went to him and told him that he had stayed long enough, that he would like to entertain other guests; if he like to work, he will find for him something to do and if he desires to leave the city, he will give him his travelling expenses. "No, I do not want to do anything of the kind but I will tell you a secret. The holy spirit inspired my heart to stay in your home." The poor man did not say anything and left the house. In the evening he returned with a big stick and went for the man. "Oh for God's sake, what are you doing!" the guest pleaded, "Just half an hour ago, the Holy Spirit inspired me to go and get this big stick and drive you out of my house. There is no use for pleading. I must obey the command of the Holy Spirit."

The man had to leave the house.

[#92]

1 March: On the Blessings and Greatness of This Day

Saturday, 1 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 1 March 1913.

* * *

For the present, in Paris we are all enjoyed in mentioning the name of the True One. We are all beneath the protection of the Blessed Perfection. During the life of Christ, those who believed in Him were counted of little importance and the enemies ridiculed the Apostles. They said: This man had come and all that he could do was to mislead a fisherman here or a tax gatherer there. They laughed and scoffed at Christ. Now they can realize the importance of those days. We cannot at present conceive the greatness of this day, how we are protected beneath the outstretching hands of Bahá'u'lláh. In the future we will long for the recurrence of one minute of these days and it will be unobtainable.

In short, be ye mindful, be ye awake! Be ye engaged in the mention of God. You are beneath the protection of the Blessed Perfection. You have taken a share and a portion from his Kingdom. Today all the eyes are blind! All the ears are deaf! All the tongues are tied. Praise be to God that you are beneath the shade of His Banner; you are firm in the Covenant. Thank God a hundred thousand times at every moment that you have become the recipient of such bounties. You must make yourselves ready so as to receive more and more of these heavenly graces.

[#93]

2 March: Remarks on the Worthlessness of the Physical Body and the Importance of the Spirit

Sunday, 2 March 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 2 March 1913.

* * *

The physical body is accidental and the inherent quality of every accidental composition is decomposition. For example, the inherent quality of this house demands that someday it be destroyed. It cannot stand forever. The inherent attribute of this body requires its ultimate return of each element to its origin, after its disintegration. Neither through the power of thought nor prayer can this physical, natural body become permanent. But the spirit being composed of no elements, being already an abstract entity, shall live forever. It is not subject to change and transmutation. The body is the cage, the spirit is the nightingale. Once the doors of the cage are opened, once the fetters of that prison-house are broken, the nightingale will

soar toward the Rose-garden of Eternity and on the branches of the Tree of Life, it shall perch, singing sweetly the songs of Freedom and Peace. Once the nightingale is out of the cage, it will not even look at it. What does the free bird want to do with a shuttered cage, even if it is made of gold? Do you want to keep the nightingale of your spirit always within the confines of this narrow cage-body? Within the breast of this nightingale, a hundred thousand heart-rejoicing songs are hidden! Once out of the cage, it shall wing its way toward the Horizon of Everlasting Glory and there join its heavenly voice with the celestial choir, ever singing, ever singing, never dreaming of return.

* * *

Although my body is ill, my spirit is happy. My hope is for the illumination, the spiritual motion and rejuvenation of Paris. The world of materialism has enveloped these regions. People are submerged in this sea. I hope that these fish who unbendingly survive in the ocean, may raise their heads out of the water and see the things which are in the outer world. I find the Parisians like these fish who are living in the sea of materialism. They are unaware that outside of the sea, there are many wonderful things. Although they are as fish I hope that they may be changed into the birds and soar upward toward the immensity of this glorious space. Then they will behold nature in all its ravishing beauty. They will see the shining sun, the silver-beaming moon, the brilliant stars and all the infinite creations of God. This state will not be brought about except through the exertion of the Bahá'ís.

[#94]

4 March: Anecdote on Bahá'u'lláh at the Conference of Badasht

Tuesday, 4 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 466–67. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 4 March 1913.

* * *

The more we thank Baha-ollah for these Bounties with which He has encircled us, the greater will they become. When Baha-ollah in the early history of the Cause desired to test any one he would say something contrary to his opinion. When He was in the plain of Badasht, there was a man who was very religious and prayed for hours. Then Baha-ollah in order to break this custom of excessive praying ordered Korratoul-Ain [Qurratu’l-‘Ayn, or Ṭáhirih] to upbraid the

man. While he was engaged in prayer she came and began to talk with him most vehemently that this is the day of work, Action. Get up and do something. This day of prayer is not now. The Man was so astonished at this sudden attack that he began to tremble and sat down weeping. He left the place without saying a word but he returned tomorrow with a cheerful full face. He was ready for action. In those days the tests were so great that out of three hundred and fifty believers only a handful remained but later they returned.

[#95]

4 March: An Appeal for Spirituality

Tuesday, 4 March 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, p. 467. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 4 March 1913.

* * *

You are most welcome. I have had a sickness for the last few days, but I am always pleased to meet you. I beg from the Favors of God to illumine each one of you with the rays of His Love, suffer you to enter into His Kingdom and make you favored at His Threshold. For the Graces of God are unlimited and this world is very dark. The material world has gained the upper hand, the ideals of life are forgotten. There is no divine Illumination. The material world is animalistic; it is not human. The human world is spiritual and is these spiritual susceptibilities are not realized, it is lower than the animal. Therefore for you I desire this spiritual state, the ideal progress and the entrance into the Kingdom of Abha. May you ascend to such a world that you may behold all creation beneath you! May you behold such light that is eternal! May you be assisted with such power that is never-ending. May you obtain such a life which is everlasting!

[#96]

5 March: A Brief Address to Gathered Friends

Wednesday, 5 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 5 March 1913.

* * *

You are very welcomed. I am always glad to meet you and associate with you. But the weather of Paris did not agree with me and caused me this illness. Therefore today I cannot speak too long but my ideal tongue will converse with you and my heart will hold communion with you and my spirit will talk with you. Without the instrumentality of lips I explain to you the Mysteries of the Kingdom. Whosoever has a listening ear he shall hear my voice. For by day and by night, my call is "Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá", summoning the people to the Kingdom of Abhá. The Knowing hearts comprehend these significances. The souls who turn their faces toward God will behold the lights of the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. But if they are not attentive all that they have will yield no result. It will be like playing violin to a deaf. Praise be to God that your hearts are informed, your ears are unstopped and your souls turned toward the Kingdom of Abhá. I hope that you will hear always my voice and comprehend the glorification of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. In this world of existence I have no other work except to raise the name of Bahá'u'lláh, proclaim the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh and explain the Mysteries of the Book of Bahá'u'lláh. Therefore I hope the sweet stories of this music will have an abiding effect in your hearts.

[#97]

5 March: The Books of Bahá'u'lláh Hold the Solution to Every Problem

Wednesday, 5 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 5 March 1913.

* * *

In the books of Bahá'u'lláh one finds the solution of every problem. For instance the Hidden Words contains the moral precepts and spiritual advices; the "Seven Valleys" is for the mystic advancement of the spirit through successive unfoldment; the Book of Aqdas is for the application of civic laws and government; the Ṭarázát and Tajallíyát are divine ordinances for the economic and social progress of the nation. Likewise there are Tablets on philosophy, metaphysic[s], etc. Every person more or less was interested in one or the other school of thought, and he would find the principles of that school highly developed in the Bahá'í Revelation.

[#98]

7 March: Discourse on Spiritual Perception

Friday, 7 March 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 471–72. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 7 March 1913.

* * *

You are welcome! I constantly pray for you and beg for each the divine Confirmations, so that the eyes of your insight may be opened and thus be enabled to see those objects which are not seen by others, to feel these susceptibilities which are not felt by others, to be reinforced by the invisible powers, to become cognizant of the worlds of God, because the divine worlds are infinite. Any soul who is deprived of the graces of the worlds of God will remain portionless. He is like unto a child who does not possess objectively the irradiations of the intellect. He is like unto a piece of stone which is devoid of any human susceptibilities. How pitiful is the condition of that soul who is uninformed with the Graces of the worlds of God. Therefore I entreat and supplicate toward God to open the eyes of your insight so that you may behold the effulgences of the divine worlds, to be informed with the Mysteries of the Kingdom, to attain to the highest degree of perfection, to take a portion and a share from the waves of the Sea of the Bounties of Baha-ollah which is set in motion and has encircled the East and the West. But a thousand times, alas that the eyes are blind and the ears are deaf and the intellects are weak. Therefore, they are deprived of these heavenly, inexhaustible Graces. But I have destined this lofty station for you; therefore I counsel you to turn your faces toward the Kingdom of Abha, and think of God and become informed with the mysteries of the Kingdom.

[#99]

8 March: Discourse on Sufi Belief versus Bahá'í Belief

Saturday, 8 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 473–74. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 8 March 1913.

* * *

I have explained the philosophical aspect of this subject. It is this: in Sufism there are only two stations; God and His creatures. In turn, the creatures are not considered as the emanations of God, but they are taken as parts of the essence of God. In other words pantheism is the basis upon which the Sufi philosophy is built with slight variations here and there. The essence of God is likened by them unto a sea and the infinite procession of creatures are the waves of the sea. In a wave you find all the potential attributes of sea. The individual members of the world of humanity are therefore distinct waves which are temporarily cut off from the sea. They are parts of the sea again and partake of all the attributes of the infinite Ocean.

However, in the Bahai cause there are three stations. The station of Divinity, the station of the Will and the station of creatures. The long procession of phenomena as a body proceeds through the Will of the Almighty. They do not form parts of the essence of God. They are the creation of His Will. . . It is not through the philosophical interpretation of this or that subject that the souls are attracted to the Kingdom of Abha. Philosophy withers the spirit. We must stir the souls by proclaiming boldly the Glad-tidings of the Kingdom so that the souls may become cheered and breathe the fresh zephyr, wafting from the Paradise of Joy. We must intoxicate the people with the wine of the Love of God. We must say: “O ye people! Do ye know in what radiant day you are living? Do you realize in what peerless age you are existing? Awake! Awake! This is the century of Our glorious Lord! Be mindful! Be mindful! This is the period of the King of Kings! Arise! Arise! This is the dispensation of the Light of Lights! Be active! Be active! This is the sovereign of all ages! Be illumined! Be illumined! The lights of the Sun of Reality are pouring down! Sleep! Why are ye [a]sleep! Negligent! Why are ye negligent! In this age the prophesies of all the holy books are fulfilled. The desire of all the nations hath come! Haste ye! Haste ye! And come! Hasten ye! Hasten ye! And gather around His banner! Sing the songs of triumph! Raise your rich melodious voices toward the Supreme Concourse! All the prophets of the past have longed for this day! This day is yours! The doors of opportunities are opened before your faces! Be stirred with the Glad-tidings of Abha! Shake away this slumber! Serve your God! Spread to all parts His glorious message. Be inspired with

His wondrous revelations! Let your voices be heard by all the nations of the world! Be ye filled with the joy of the Kingdom! Listen to the voice of the Shepherd. Is He not calling His flock together around Himself? He is tender! He is loving! He is merciful! He is compassionate!”

[#100]

9 March: A Prayer for Paris

Sunday, 9 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 476–77. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 9 March 1913.

* * *

. . . Although I am not meeting you as I would like, yet I am ever engaged in your commemoration. In the middle of nights, I supplicate and pray for each one of you. Entreating at the throne of the Almighty I say:

O God! This Paris is a lamp in the utmost transparency but it is in need of the light. It is a body in the greatest of comeliness but it is in need of the spirit. O God, illumine this lamp. And confer life upon this body. It is a pity that Paris be deprived of Your eternal bestowals. It is a pity that a great city like unto this be prevented from obtaining the splendours of the sun of Thy mercy. O God! Awaken these souls. Make them mindful. Perfume their nostrils with the sweet fragrances of Thy spiritual rose-garden. Enlighten their eyes by the shafts of light which are streaming down from the central Sun of Thy Majesty. In order that their hearts may become purified mirrors reflecting the rays of the Sun of Reality. O God! We are weak and Thou art the Powerful! We are needy but Thou art Independent and the Most High! Although we have no ability and capacity, yet Thy infinite bounty is inexhaustible. Do Thou not look upon our deeds! Deal with us through Thy mercy and forgiveness. If Thy bestowals descend, the ignorant will become wise the dead will be quickened, the deaf will become hearing and the blind shall see. But if Thy bounties are not coming, the seeing ones are blinded. If the light of Thy guidance is not vouchsafed the wise ones will become ignorant, O God! We are all sick and Thou art the kind physician! Heal our spiritual diseases! Lead us toward the road of Thy Kingdom! Reliever us from the vices of the world of nature and adorn our beings with the virtues of Thy Kingdom. O God! Verily Thou art the Kind. O God! Thou art the Forgiver, the Pardonner! O God! Thou art the Generous and the Giver! This is my prayer in the middle of the nights and I ever beg for you divine confirmation and assistance.

[#101]

10 March: A Story about a Greek General and a Monk

Monday, 10 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 10 March 1913.

* * *

. . . These objectives are always raised against the truth but the truth will march towards its ultimate goal of triumph. When the Bahá’ís were exiled from Ṭihrán to Baghdád they could not find one single Bahá’í on the way to Baghdád but see now how many Bahá’ís are in each one of those cities! When Sulṭán Muḥammad II, the Victor of Constantinople besieged the city and his army was constantly commanding the walls and the fortresses, one of the Greek generals entered into a cloister and saw a monk busy writing. He asked him, what are you doing? He said, I am writing a refutation against the religion of Muḥammad. The general got furious and kicked the monk out of his cloister. "Get out of here, you idiot! When the banner of Muḥammad was waving in Arabia, then it was the time to write a book against his religion but now that the noise of his cannons are booming behind our walls and fortifications what good will thy book achieve?" . . .

[#102]

10 March: Discourse on the Glad-Tidings of the Kingdom

Monday, 10 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The opening remarks in the first paragraph are taken from Jan Jasion, ‘*Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, p. 479. The primary source is a carbon typescript held at the Bibliothéque Bahá’íe de France.

The remainder of the transcript is taken from “The Glad-Tidings of the Kingdom,” *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 6 (24 June 1913), p. 98.

* * *

Today I feel a little better. For the last few days I have not been speaking to you, what I said was most brief, and said with much difficulty, but today as I feel better I desire to speak to you. I wish to awaken you out of your deep slumbers.

DO YOU know in what Day you are living? Do you realize in what Dispensation you are alive? Have you not read in the Holy Scriptures that at the Consummation of the Ages there shall appear a Day which is the Sun of all the past Days? This is the DAY in which the LORD OF HOSTS has come down from Heaven on the Clouds of Glory! This is the DAY in which the inhabitants of all the world shall enter under the Tent of the WORD OF GOD.

This is the DAY whose real sovereign is His Highness THE ALMIGHTY. This is the DAY when the East and the West shall embrace each other like unto two lovers. This is the DAY in which war and contention shall be forgotten. This is the DAY in which nations and governments will enter into an eternal bond of amity and conciliation. This Century is the fulfillment of the Promised Century.

This DAY is the dawn of the appearances of the traces of the glorious visions of the past prophets and sages.

Now is the dawn; ere long the Effulgent Sun shall rise, and shall station itself in the meridian of its majesty. Then ye shall observe the effects of the Sun. Then ye shall behold what heavenly illumination has become manifest. Then ye shall comprehend that these are the infinite Bestowals of GOD! Then ye shall see that this world has become another world. Then ye shall perceive that the Teachings of GOD have universally spread.

Rest ye assured that this darkness shall be dispelled and these impenetrable clouds which have darkened the horizon will be scattered, and the Sun of Reality shall appear in its full splendor. Its rays shall melt the icebergs of hatred and differences which have transformed the moving sea of humanity into hard frozen immensity. The vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes, and the lights of the excellences of the divine realm shall appear.

The principles of His Holiness BAHÁ'O'LLAH, like unto the spirit, shall penetrate the body of the world, and the Love of GOD, like unto an artery, shall beat through the heart of the five continents.

The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity.

In this Day the rest of the world are asleep. Praise be to GOD! that you are awake! They are all uninformed, but, praise be GOD! you are informed of the mysteries of GOD. Thank ye GOD that in this arena ye have preceded others. I hope that each one of you may become a pillar of the

palace of the oneness of the world of humanity. May each one of you become a luminous star of this heaven, thus lighting the path of those who are seeking the goal of human perfection.

[#103]

14 March: Two Anecdotes at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment

Friday, 14 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following texts are taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 486–87. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 March 1913.

* * *

In Acca there was a Persian Bahai. He was a very good believer. One of the Arabs who was very much attracted to the Cause became his friend. Their friendship grew to such an extent that they called each other 'brother'. They loved each other very much and they were seen most of the time in each others company. They served and were ready to sacrifice their lives for each other in case of necessity. It happened that the Persian was stricken one day with fever. It was a kind of intermittent fever. His Arab friend was deeply grieved over the news and could not rest before seeing him. Once a day he entered the house with a big jar of cold water in his hand. He was led to the room of the patient. He sat the jar of water beside the bed and inquired about the health of the patient. "How are you?" "Oh! I am not feeling well." He put his hand inside of the bed. "Oh! Please do not let thy hand touch body because I am shivering with cold." "I will not do anything of the kind." And without any sign of joking, with the greatest amount of dignity he raised the jar of icy water and pours over the patient. Bewildered with the sudden shock, like a wild animal, he sprang out of his bed. The Arab ran away. The patient is running after him. Finally he is caught, thrown on the ground and given a good beating. Then the Arab cried out, "My brother, why do you beat me? Have I not treated you?" "Treated me! Shame on you! To call yourself my 'brother'." The noise and the confusion brought many people to the rescue. Now the patient is soaked with water, shuddering with cold and swearing aloud and beating the poor Arab! A most ludicrous appearance. Finally they are separated and dry clothes given to the patient. Strange to say he never had and more fever and the Arab and the Persian became better friends and brothers!

* * *

I remember that during my childhood we had a colored servant whose name was Mubarek. He was very big and strong. At that time I was six or seven years. We were travelling and Mubarek was with us. At one of the stages, he was stricken down with fever. In Orient it is customary that when a person is feverish, he faces and sits in the sunshine. Mubarek had a big fur coat. He puts on the fur coat and lies down in the sun. His fever was so severe that he would shake and tremble like the leaf of a tree. There were several children amongst them myself. We would hide ourselves and watch Mubarek going toward the sunshine and lie down. His trembling was so vibrant that even the fur coat was trembling. Then quietly, on tip-toe we would approach him and one by one sit on him. When my turn came and I sat on him, he had such a violent fit that down I came. In short he took several quinine pills with no result. Finally he told all the children you come early tomorrow morning and I will show you how I am going to heal myself. Early morning we all went and saw Mubarek sitting in the sunshine shaking as usual but with a big basket of prunes before him. He started to eat the prunes and at every moment he was shaking more and more. After this treatment he became well and never had any more attacks of fever.

[#104]

14 March: On the Authenticity of the Bible

Friday, 14 March 1913

'Abdu'l-Bahá's Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text are taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 March 1913.

* * *

It is evident that the five books which are generally attributed to Moses were written by Ezra the high priest. Only the Tablets and the Commandments belong to Moses. The contents of the Books will bear out this argument, because many events were recorded which transpired long after Moses's death. There was a school of philosophers today in Europe who deny, not only the authenticity of the Bible but try to prove there was not such person as Jesus Christ; that the Christ was an Ideal invented by the apostles that the Evangelists in writing the Gospels stole the utterances of the ancient sages and Rabbis and attributed them to this Ideal Christ. But all these are mere assertions and they cannot be proven.

[#105]

15 March: On the Three Ancient Bibles

Saturday, 15 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 15 March 1913.

* * *

There are three ancient Bibles. 1st the Jewish Bible, 2nd the Sanhedrein Bible which was translated by the seventy wisest Rabbis into Greek at the time of Ptolemy, 3rd the Samaritan Bible. These three Bibles differ a great deal from each other on historical ground[s]. For instance, in one Bible you read the age of a certain patriarch was 120 yrs; in another Bible it says he was 80 yrs. old and in the third Bible sixty. It is most difficult to say which one of these three Bible is correct, for each [???]* holding fast to his own Bible claiming it to be the only authoritative one and the other two as unreliable. Therefore, all the historical parts of the Bible were written by historians, and the commandments and the Decalogue belong to Moses.

[#106]

16 March: A Discourse on Motion

Sunday, 16 March 1913

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Apartment, 30 rue Saint-Didier
Paris, France

The following text is taken from ‘*Abdu’l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, pp. 124–126.

* * *

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

There are different degrees of motion. There is a motion of transit, that is from place to place. For example, the revolution of the earth around the sun; a bird flies from branch to branch. Another kind is the motion of inherent growth, like that of man from the condition of childhood to the estate of manhood, or the development of a tree from the seedling to its full

* This handwritten text was illegible to the present compiler.

fruition. The third is the motion of condition — the sick man passes from the stage of sickness to the state of health. The fourth motion is that of the spirit. For instance, the child while in the mother's womb has all the potential qualities of the spirit, but those qualities begin to unfold little by little as the child is born and grows and develops, finally manifesting all the attributes and qualities of the spirit. The fifth is the motion of the intellect whereby the ignorant become wise; the indifferent, alert; the dark, illuminated and the carnally-minded, spiritual.

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

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

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

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

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

[#107]

21 March: Naw-Rúz Wishes and a Story from the Baghdád Days

Friday, 21 March 1913
Dreyfus-Barney Residence, 15 rue Greuze
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 21 March 1913.

* * *

['Abdu'l-Bahá] said that in this day the Bahá'ís throughout the world celebrate the Feast of Naw-Rúz and spend the hours in great rejoicing and happiness. He prayed that this fête be blessed to all the friends in America! May each one of them become a mighty teacher in this Cause and spread the Glad-tidings of the Kingdom! In about ten years this Cause will be promoted most marvellously in America. He was ever expecting to see the appearance of a few souls upon the arena of action—souls who are detached, attracted, enkindled, devout and active, then this will be no doubt the majority of the people will become Bahá'ís. This Cause will be promoted through severance from all else save God. Our capital is severance. He hoped each one of us may become the embodiment of this attribute.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was in Baghdád He had a coat which He wore over His shirt. It was made of very cheap stuff, the whole thing costing only one dollar. Having not the means to buy another, He wore it till it was threadbare, and He associated with all the friends and strangers while wearing it; notwithstanding this He was full of happiness, full of severance, and His joy had no bound[s]. In Baghdád the severance of the believers of God was a subject of discussion in all the circles. There were ten people living in one small room and often they did not have any other food then a few dates, yet from sunset till midnight and long after that hour they chanted prayers, sang and showed a merry heart, forgetting their outward circumstances and living only in spiritual atmosphere, full of sweet communion and delightful converse. Once there arose a dispute between the members of a family about the division of inheritance. The litigation dragged along and day by day the difference became more acute. When they realized that even the court will not do them any justice, they came to Bahá'u'lláh and pleaded Him for a verdict and the readjustments of their claims. Bahá'u'lláh at first refused to discuss the case but they implored so persistently that finally He delegated 'Abdu'l-Bahá to go and settle their case in one day. 'Abdu'l-Bahá went and after reconciling the various factions divided the property into two parts. When noon arrived He went out and returned in an hour. He observed that the inheritors had divided the two parts into three parts. He inquired the reason. They said, that the third part was for him, in other words His fee. At the hour, He wore his threadbare coat on. He looked at the pile of all those objects and then He looked at His coat;

He saw that He was independent of these things and He refused to accept. They insisted and He resisted. Finally 'Abdu'l-Bahá observed that it was useless to argue any longer with them. He said, all right; put all these things in one room. They did. He made them lock the door and seal it with wax. He got the key and went straight to Bahá'u'lláh. He related to Him the transaction and begged Him in case they came to Him for further pleading to allow this third part to go to another member of the family who was disinherited through no fault of his own. Soon they arrived and started their pleading that 'Abdu'l-Bahá must accept His share—it was no more than right. On that day Bahá'u'lláh did not give them any definite answer; but they continued to come for several days, always urging the acceptance of the third part. Finally one day Bahá'u'lláh told them: 'Abdu'l-Bahá will accept his share unconditionally, that He must have the right to dispose of it as He is pleased; he may throw it into the sea or commit it to fire. They accepted this condition and Bahá'u'lláh, calling in the disinherited man, gave him the key of the room wherein the objects and the documents were stored by 'Abdu'l-Bahá on that eventful day.

[#108]

21 March: Naw-Rúz Address

Friday, 21 March 1913

Dreyfus-Barney Residence, 15 rue Greuze
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 504–05. It has also been published in *'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, pp. 74–76. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 21 March 1913.

* * *

I am extremely glad to see you on this Naurooz occasion. This day is considered holy by the Persians. . . . From time immemorial this day has been consecrated for in this there is a symbol.

At this moment the sun appears in the meridian and the day and night are equal. Until today the North Pole has been in darkness. Today the sun appears on the horizon of the North Pole. Today the sun rises and sets at the equator and the two hemispheres are equally illumined. This sacred day, when the sun illumines equally is called the equinox, and the equinox is the symbol of the Manifestation of God. The Sun of Truth rises on the horizon of Divine Mercy and sends forth its rays. This day is consecrated to commemorate it. It is the beginning of spring. When the sun appears at the equinox, it causes moment in all living things. The mineral world is set in motion, plants begin to shoot, the desert is changed into a prairie, trees bud and every living thing responds, including the bodies of animals and men.

The rising of the sun at the equinox is the symbol of life, and likewise it is the symbol of the Divine Manifestations of God, for the rising of the Sun of Truth in the Heaven of Divine Bounty established the sign of Life for the world. The human reality begins to live, our thoughts are transformed and our intelligence is quickened. The sun of Truth bestows Eternal Life, just as the solar sun is the cause of terrestrial life.

The day of the appearance of God's Manifestations on earth must be a sacred day when man must commemorate God in prayer and praise. Among the ancient Persians this day was looked upon as the holy day of the year and on it hospitals and charitable institutions were founded. Collections for the poor are made on this day and every effort is put forth so that it may not be allowed to pass without leaving some divine traces. Throughout Persia one sees the historical traces of this sacred day by the many good works that have commemorated it.

I am spending the New Year's day in Paris. I hope for considerable results from this fact. I hope that a perfect influence may remain in your hearts, signs of eternal joy and happiness that will illuminate the lights of the Kingdom in this city. May the breezes of the Holy Spirit breathe upon you that your intelligence may progress and your souls be joyful in God. Thus will you become real and eternal beings, shining in the Divine Kingdom.

[#109]

23 March: Conversation with Stanwood Cobb

Sunday, 23 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston

Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 507–08. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 March 1913.

* * *

Stanwood Cobb: I am journeying through Europe with a travelling school.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Do you take them once in a while on an excursion through the worlds of the Kingdom?

Stanwood Cobb: I have spoke [sic] with Prof. Sargent about the Movement and have read the Paris talks to the students. They are all anxious to see the Master. Prof. Sargent has written a poem to Abdul Baha.

(Here the poem was produced and read.)

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Excellent. Very good indeed. I am seeking continually after a person like unto him. God willing, through thy effort he will become spiritual, divine and illumined.

Stanwood Cobb: I pray for him every night. He is a remarkable personality, a genius in many ways, but he does not believe in religion. He is just now in great trouble and needs spiritual assistance. He is really a lover of the world of humanity.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: God willing the window of his heart will be opened and the sun of hope shall shine upon him. Hope is made possible through turning one's face toward God. If all the benefits of the world are made possible for man and he has no hope, he will not enjoy them. When man is surrounded with the difficulties and troubles, the only thing that will pull him through is the hope of the dawn of better days.

Stanwood Cobb: While in Germany I spoke with a woman who is the President of a college for girls. The mental abilities and spiritual susceptibilities are combined in her. I told her about the Cause and gave her the *Paris talks*. That night she read them to her pupils and when I called again, they all expressed great pleasure. I found amongst them a girl who has heard about the Cause in America from Miss Louise Stopfer (Mrs. Maxwell's friend).

'Abdu'l-Bahá: God willing through thy effort she will become fully informed with this Cause. I hope she will become divine and obtain the heavenly Bestowals, and may make ideal advancement, and become the means of the illumination of those girls. It is very good that thy breath is very effective. No matter with whomsoever thou speakest about the Cause, he will be impressed and accept the revelation. This because thou art seeking the good-pleasure of the Lord. Thou art not serving the Cause for fame but to be drawn near unto God. I hope that thou mayest become embodied spirit and personified light. Rest thou assured that thou wilt become confirmed and assisted. I give thee the glad-tiding that thou will become inspired, thy heart will become illumined, thy thought will be enlarged. I give thee again the glad-tiding. Strive and strive that thou mayest become a pure light and a sanctified ray.

[#110]

23 March: Comments on War and Peace

Sunday, 23 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston

Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 March 1913.

* * *

The Beloved spoke earnestly on war and Peace. Ignorance and prejudice have encircled the nations of the earth and they are attacking each other with weapons of death instead of love. God has created man for the exercise of love; the will of God is spelled in letters of love but man acts against this will and presumptuously addresses God: "God, Thou dost not know the results of war. War leads us on to victory, to glory, to conquest, to prosperity. War is the path to honour. We love war, but Thou dost tell us war is evil. We cannot believe in Thy word." Thus mankind is immersed in the sea of ignorance and blindness.

While 'Abdu'l-Bahá was living in 'Akká, He was always able to establish peace amongst the Christians, the Jews and the Muḥammadans, but when an orthodox priest or a Mullá or Rabbi would come to head these various sects, immediately the fire of hatred would be ignited by them. Because each one of them would think that if he anathematized another religion, calling its followers infidels and heathens, his own station would be raised in the estimation of his people. These prejudices reached to such a high degree that the people killed each other in Zeitoun not long ago. Strange!

The leaders of religions must teach their followers love and fellowship; they must exhort them to unity and agreement. They must show the greatest exertion in their direction. They must address the people and say! O ye people! What is this strife! What is this strangeness! What is this hatred! Verily, verily your God is one God! You are all his sheep. He is the kind shepherd! Let go of this dissension! Forget this animosity. Relinquish war! Follow peace. Now the nations of the world are adding daily to the means of warfare and have become military lunatics. These are their thoughts. God has also His thoughts. Let us wait and watch to see whose thoughts will gain the upper hand!

[#111]

24 March: On Spiritual Brotherhood and Sisterhood

Monday, 24 March 1913
Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from *'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, pp. 112–13. It has been adapted from passages originally recorded in an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 24 March 1913.

* * *

Brotherhood and sisterhood that is founded on a universal love is precious. It is not like the material kind which is soon forgotten and, perhaps, changed to hatred before this life is over. Material brothers and sisters seldom have lasting affection for each other, but this divine relationship is eternal. In the world of God it will become more clear and manifest.

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

[#112]

25 March: The Spiritual Conflagration in America

Tuesday, 25 March 1913
Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 March 1913.

* * *

I have set a conflagration throughout America. Its results will become known later. Wait for a few years and you will behold the appearance of many traces. I do not like to talk about these

things for the present because the people cannot understand them but you be patient for a little while and you will see what I have done in America. It took three hundred years for the Cause of Christ to be spread but in the first century the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh will be promoted everywhere. We who are so weak are carrying constant conquests while others notwithstanding their greatness and power are being defeated, therefore it is evident that the Confirmations of God are with us.

[#113]

28 March: On the Wisdom of Natural Disasters

Friday, 28 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 March 1913. Sohrab writes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made these remarks that morning after receiving news of cyclones and floods in America and the "appalling loss of life" that had occurred as a result.

* * *

Although outwardly these cataclysmal disaster[s] are hard to bear yet inwardly there lies a great wisdom behind them which will appear later. All the visible, material events are inter-related with invisible, spiritual forces. The infinite phenomena of creation are interdependent with each other as the many links in a chain. When certain links become rusty they are broken by unseen forces to be replaced by newer and better ones. On the other hand, there are certain colossal events which transpire in the world of humanity, which colossal events are required by the nature of the time. For example, the requirement of winter, snow, storm, hail, rain etc. We cannot call a winter a winter unless these events do come to pass. But the birds or the animals whose span of life is only for six months or a year cannot realize the wisdom of the winter; they chide and lament and are discontented. They raise a howl saying: "Why this winter? Why this awful frost? Why this hail and storm? Why not the balmy weather? Why not eternal spring time? Why this injustice on the part of the Creator? Why this suffering? What have we done to be meted out with this catastrophe?" However those souls who have lived many years and have had much experiences and weathered many severe winters, they realize that in order to enjoy the coming spring they must have this cold winter. The bird living only this month does not know there is a spring. Man alone knows that after every hard winter, the spring with its thousand vary-colored flowers will bloom forth. After the velocity of the gale the soul-refreshing breeze will waft. After the sterility and apparent death; fertility and life will manifest. After the hurricane and storm, quietness and calmness will reign. After the

silence of the birds in winter they will all break forth into joyous songs of spring. Now the wisdom of this American disaster is not known to the many people of this generation, because they are too much absorbed in the immediate sufferings and hardships that it has brought in its train. When the flood is subside[d] and people shake off the temporary gloom, they will then realize that after this destruction, there is construction; after this suffering there will be blessing; after this death there will be life; after this darkness there will be light; after this loss there will be profit; after this devastation there will be up building; after this havoc there will be prosperity; after this failure there will be success and after this war of elements there will be glorious peace and greater civilization.

[#114]

28 March: Counsels to a French Poet

Friday, 28 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 March 1913.

* * *

In the afternoon a French poet came to see the Master and He spoke to him thus: Man must spend his talent in a cause the result of which is eternal. If we spend our talent in the Cause of God its outcome will be everlasting, but if we waste it over worldly affairs, it was like drawing pictures over the surface of the water. For example if he wrote a book, it may perpetuate his name for a thousand or 2000 years and it will be forgotten afterwards. But if he breathed one breath in the path of God, it will immortalize him through him throughout ages and cycles. If he composed a poem or wrote a book on the Cause of God they will bring forth eternal fruits. Therefore man must devote his talents to such causes which spell service to the Kingdom of God. Consequently let him consecrate his poetic imagination to the Cause of God. The end of all these undertaking[s] that you observe is ruin except service to the Kingdom of Abhá. Every building that man construct[s] will be destroyed someday except the palace of the cause of God. The palace built by Christ is and will ever be indestructible, likewise the mansions of His Apostles. Now 'Abdu'l-Bahá desired that he may likewise lay the foundation of such a palace which will stand the attack of the accidents of all time. He was sure that God will confirm and assist him.

[#115]

28 March: Conversations on Various Subjects

Friday, 28 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston

Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 March 1913.

* * *

Mr. [Stanwood] Cobb asked whether there will be any clergy in the Bahá'í Cause? Immediately the Beloved said: No. And continued: in this movement there will never be any paid ministers, no appointed clergy, no bishops, no cardinals, no popes, no ceremonies. A clergy, assuming that he is ordained to his ministry, thinks that he knows more about God, while in reality the humble unordained man in his congregation or in the street may know more. The sacerdotal and theological position makes many a clergy proud and haughty! But there is one thing in this Cause. Some people may become greater than the rest not through appointment but through the purity of their hearts, their unselfish deeds, their heroic sacrifices and their knowledge of God. Such illumined souls like unto the kind fathers or teachers will guide and teach those less fortunate. They are the elder brothers of the members of the community. They do not arrogate unto themselves any title or any position. You will know them by their humility, sincerity, deeds, severance, knowledge, spirituality, and attraction.

Another question was asked by someone present about marriage relations, whether there will be any modifications. He said that there are two relations between man and wife, one real, the other unreal. The real relation which is based upon spiritual love and companionship will ever remain the same; the other relation which is unreal will be done away with. The love between man and wife must ever be kept sacred and holy. Marriage was necessary. It was a command of God. Humanity was continued through the practice of this law but the life in the family must be loved as an art soul-elevating so that the children may breathe the uncontaminated atmosphere of joy and the love of their parents may be a great example to them.

Someone asked about divorce. He said that when there exists incompatibility of temper and complete antipathy between the man and wife, then divorce was permitted. For if they live together under such stifling conditions it will be worse than hell.

Another person asked about the future of the science of aviation and the Master promptly answered: The science of aviation will make great progress in the immediate future and people will travel at ease from one city to another without any danger. Aeroplanes will become as

popular as automobiles. Just as now every well to do person has an automobile then he will have an aeroplane. Although for the present it is not yet perfected but ere long it will be within the reach of everyone to have a ride through the air.

[#116]

29 March: On Coming into Closer Relation with God

Saturday, 29 March 1913
Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 29 March 1913. According to Sohrab, 'Abdu'l-Bahá made these remarks to one of four women who called on Him that day, all of whom were longtime residents of London and friends of Lady Blomfield.

* * *

Any soul entering the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh will enjoy an eternal communion with God. It is my hope that each one of you become thirsty for the water of Reality. May you become hungry for the Bread of the Kingdom! It was in this instance that His Holiness Christ said: "He that drinketh of this water shall never thirst!" This means the infinite bestowals of God, the virtues of the divine world, the perfections of the world of humanity, and the ideals of the heavenly realm. May you receive day unto day these bounties. May you draw nearer unto God day unto day! May you be submerged in the sea of these iridescent lights! May you be characterized with these praiseworthy virtues! This is the ultimate result of human life! This is the fruit of existence! This is the brilliant pearl of cosmic consciousness! This is the shining star of spiritual destiny!

[#117]

29 March: On the Receptivity and Potential of the English People

Saturday, 29 March 1913
Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 29 March 1913.

* * *

Did [you] say that [you are] from England? In reality we are all one nation—England, France, Germany, Persia, America, they are all one country. However, this much can be said. It often happened that the inhabitants of a given country were more receptive to truth than other parts. Since we have arrived in France, there has been much interest in the Bahá'í Cause but not as much as in England or in America. While in London many people were attracted and large meetings were organized. The English people were sincere, truth-loving, determined and seekers of reality. They were thirsty after knowledge. They explored the furthest ends of the earth in order to throw light upon puzzling problems. They were a determined, persevering nation. They were enterprising and investigators of reality. In the immediate future, much interest will be aroused in France about the Bahá'í Cause. They will see that there were so many Bahá'ís in other parts and they will follow their example.

[#118]

**29 March: Extract from an Interview Given to S.S. Chamberlain, Editor of
*The London Budget***

Saturday, 29 March 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from *'Abdu'l-Bahá on Divine Philosophy*, pp. 185–188.

* * *

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[#119]

30 March: Paraphrased Words to a Frenchman

Sunday, 30 March 1913
Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 30 March 1913.

* * *

Being Sunday many people came to be blessed by the Master. Amongst them there was a Frenchman of unusual attainment and capacity. When he entered the room the Beloved was writing. He raised His noble head and welcomed the newcomer. He told him that: Just as that moment he was thinking of him. He was most welcomed. Let him be happy for he has heard the Call of the Kingdom of Abhá. This is indeed a great privilege! Its importance is not known at this time. It will become evident in the future. The Apostles of Christ attained to the greatest station in life, yet they were vilified and scorned in their days because they were followers of the humble Nazarene and thus considered as the most despised and ignorant! But now the brilliant lights of their stations have flooded the whole world with knowledge and wisdom. Each one of the Apostles is shining like unto a star from the horizon of Eternal Glory. Now it has become evident to what a glorious station they reached in their own days! Likewise no one can adequately express the greatness of the station of the friends of God in their Dispensation. The glorious possibilities of this station will become manifest in the future. It is 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hope that in Paris the Frenchmen may become ignited like unto a candle and arouse the people with the Call of God—so that in reality they may become Bahá'ís and practice the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. He was made most happy to have seen him because in his face he saw the light of the Love of Bahá'u'lláh! He will give him a ring over which the name of the Blessed Perfection is engraved. He loved him very much. Later the greatness of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's love for him will become clear. He expected to hear good news from him—that his heart is so illumined and that he has guided many souls in Paris.

Germany

[#120]

2 April: Counsels to Two Actors

Wednesday, 2 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt
Stuttgart, Germany

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 2 April 1913.

* * *

The plays should endeavor to elevate the ideals of humanity and not degrade them. The theatre is like unto a school and the playwright must ever think how to educate his audience through the characterizations of noble ideals and personalities. The actors must embody in their uttered words and deeds, which in their roles, the noblest emotions, the highest motives, the most delicate art, the tenderest feelings and the most attractive appearances. The chief aim of the theatres should become the spiritualization of humanity.

[#121]

2 April: Address at the Herrigel Residence

Wednesday, 2 April 1913
Herrigel Residence, Hölderlinstraße 35
Stuttgart, Germany

The following notes were originally taken down in German by Margarethe Döring and Annemarie Schweizer, and then translated into English by Charles Ioas. The English translation was published in *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 4 (17 May 1913), 67. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's interpreters on this occasion were Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, who translated the address into English, and Wilhelm Herrigel, who translated Sohrab's English interpretation into German.

* * *

Praise be to God! that I have come to Stuttgart,* that I could meet with you. Praise be to God! because your faces are radiant with the light of the Glory of God; your hearts are attracted to the Kingdom of ABHA. Thank God that you have heard the call of God. You are living in the day

* Where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had arrived just the night before.

of the Lord. You are living in the days of the radiances of the Sun of Reality. The rays of this Sun have poured into your hearts and souls. Your hearts are illuminated, your inner vision clear. Your spirit rejoiced in the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. Thank God that you are the elect of God. He has elected you because of His own love. The mercies of God have surrounded you. You must live in accordance with the teachings of BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH. Be loving to all mankind. Consort with all religions in amity and fragrance. You must be the cause of the education of the world of humanity. At present the world is still very dark. From one side there threatens the darkness of ignorance; from another side black enmity is visible; from the other side we hear of war and rumors of war. We must, like a candle, shine with the light of BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH, in order that through your efforts this darkness may be dispelled. The light of the love of God can illumine the East and the West. It can change hatred and enmity into love and friendship. The clouds which veil the rays of the Sun of Reality must be dispelled and made to disappear. The world must be rejuvenated. Eternal life must be made possible. The rays of the Kingdom must shine forth. The breath of the Holy Spirit can quicken the dead. I shall always pray for you and I shall supplicate for divine confirmations for each one of you, in order that ye may become more enkindled day by day, more attracted, so that each one of you will become a herald of the Kingdom. This is the eternal glory. This is the eternal life. This is the entrance into the Kingdom of God, the dominion which will last forever.

I am very glad to be here. It is my hope that through the bounty of God you may become givers of life at this time. May God bless you all! May the blessings pour down upon you!

[#122]

3 April: Address at the Bürgermuseum

Thursday, 3 April 1913
 Bürgermuseum, Calwer Straße (now Hospitalstraße 27)
 Stuttgart, Germany

The following text was originally taken down stenographically in German by F.R. and M. Schweizer and then translated into English by Charles Ioas. The English translation was published in *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 4 (17 May 1913), 68–69. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interpreters on this occasion were Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, who translated the address into English, and Adolf Eckstein, who translated Sohrab’s English interpretation into German.

* * *

I came from a distant land. I have travelled twenty thousand miles until I came to you in Stuttgart. Forty years I was a prisoner. I was young when I was put into prison and my hair was white when the prison doors opened. After all these long years of the sufferings of prison

life I willingly took upon myself all the hardships of a long journey. Now I am here in order to be united with you, in order to meet you. My purpose is that perchance you may illumine the world of humanity; that all men may unite in perfect love and friendship; that religious prejudices, national prejudices, race distinctions, all may be completely abandoned. The religions of today consist of dogmas. Because these dogmas differ from each other, discord and even hatred is manifest. Religion must be the basis of all good fellowship. Think of the turmoil that today exists in the Balkans; how much blood is shed; how many thousands of mothers have lost their sons, how many children have become orphans, and how many buildings, villages, and cities have been destroyed! The Balkan states have become a volcano. All this ruin originates from the prejudices created by the different dogmas, called forth by superstitions and race prejudices.

The essence of the religion of God is love, and the Holy Books bear testimony to that, for the essence of the religion of God is the light of the world of humanity; but mankind today has forgotten what constitutes true religion. Each nation and each people today hold to some definite dogma.

Everything in the world is subject to change. But this transmutation and change are requirements of life. See, for instance, these flowers before us. They come forth from a seed. They grow to perfection, but when they have reached the state of perfection they go back again. This is the invariable law of creation. Likewise man develops until he has grown to maturity. When he reaches beyond the state of maturity he begins to decline. All religions of God are subject to this same law. They are founded in order to blossom out and develop and fulfill their mission. They reach their zenith and then decline and come to an end. So a few thousand years ago came Moses. He promulgated the ten commandments. Later these laws were changed, and this change was so complete that of the original nothing more was visible. Then God sent the Roman Empire to destroy the Holy Land, because the Jews had forgotten the law of God. They had in the end only a bundle of superstitions. When this religion had sunk to such a depth, God sent his Holiness Jesus Christ. His Holiness Christ appeared as the Light of the Sun, and He founded anew the religion of God. He revived the light which had been given by Moses and fulfilled that law.

This should show you that religion is subject to change. So, also, religion is full of superstition. There is today nothing more than tradition to feed upon. Therefore our souls must strive day and night in order that the foundations of divine religion may again be newly revived. These traditions and these dogmas are like the husks surrounding the kernel. We must release the kernel from the husk. The world of humanity is in the dark. Our aim is to illumine mankind. It is natural that after the darkness of every night the brilliant day will come. It is our hope that this darkness may be dispelled and that the rays of the Sun of Reality will shine again. We are confident that the darkness will again be followed by the brightness of the day. It is our hope that after the cold winter a new spring will come, giving new life to nature, so that the

trees of humanity will again sprout and become verdant in the gardens, so that they may bring forth leaves and blossoms and fruit. Thanks be to God, the illumined century has dawned. Thank God that this spiritual spring has come. Thanks be to God that the reality of all things has been revealed. This century is the century of light. This period is the period of science. This cycle is the cycle of reality. This age is the age of progress and freedom of thought. This day is the greatest day of the Lord. This time is the time of eternal life. This age is the age of the breath of the Holy Spirit. This time is the time in which all is resurrected into new life. Therefore, I desire that all may be united in harmony. Strive and work so that the standard of the world of human Oneness may be raised among men, so that the lights of universal peace may shine and the East and the West embrace, and the material world become a mirror of the Kingdom of God, that eternal light may shine forth and that the day break which will not be followed by the night.

In this age every face must turn to God, so that spiritual enlightenment will go hand in hand with material education. Material education alone cannot make the world happy. Spiritual civilization must assist the material civilization. The men of science and philosophy are the founders of the material education, but His Holiness Christ was the founder of the spiritual, divine civilization. Material civilization serves the world of men, but the spiritual civilization founds the world of morals. These two kinds of civilization must go hand in hand. The material civilization is like the lamp, but the spiritual civilization is like the light in the lamp. This lamp without the light is a useless thing. Therefore, in our day philosophy and science must go hand in hand with the spiritual civilization. The material civilization is like the body; the spiritual civilization is like the spirit which is the life to the body. So long as the spirit gives life to the body, we behold a living thing, but a body without spirit is dead. It is my desire that ye all may reach the state of spiritual civilization. Like as ye have made great progress in material science, so may ye also progress in the spiritual world. Then the light of the Kingdom of God will shine through all the world. May the Sun of Reality illumine the East and the West.

[#123]

4 April: On Becoming “Divine Farmers”

Friday, 4 April 1913
 Hotel Marquardt
 Stuttgart, Germany

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 4 April 1913.

* * *

Someone said, if we have worked in the Cause a hundred years we could not attract so many different elements to the Cause; only 'Abdu'l-Bahá can do that. He answered: He hoped that each one of them may become a divine farmer and each one may cultivate a large blessed form. The real Bahá'í farming is through deeds. May they become adorned and confirmed with such deeds and actions that they may become the pure seeds. The Bahá'ís must be known by their deeds. That is why His Holiness the Christ says: "Ye shall know the trees by their fruits." God has chosen the Bahá'ís from amongst the people and has opened the doors of His Kingdom before their faces. Therefore they must appreciate the value of this gift so that each one of them may become a lamp lighted with the Fire of the Love of God; day unto day may they be driven nearer unto God in order that their hearts be inspired with divine inspirations. May they become as fruitful trees producing luscious fruits for all the seasons. He has desired this station for them. The majority of the people are the lovers of shells, praise be to God the Bahá'ís are lovers of the kernel. The people are deprived of reality but the friends have reached the home of Truth!

[#124]

5 April: Words to Adolf Eckstein

Saturday, 5 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 5 April 1913.

* * *

A thirsty man will run after every fountain, he may drink bitter and stagnant water but at last he will reach to the sweet spring. Now praise be to God that you have attained. All these roads are narrow and will end either to precipices or wild jungles but the highway of truth is clear and all the smaller roads converge into it. The Bahá'í Cause is the sweet spring of water which is never dried up. It is the great highway which leads man to the glorious palace of the King of Kings. It is the limitless sea and all the lakes and rivers are limited. In other words, all the religions and societies find their principles not only unfolded in this Dispensation but well-developed.

[#125]

6 April: Words to Bahá'ís from Esslingen

Sunday, 6 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt
Stuttgart, Germany

The following paraphrase is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 6 April 1913.

* * *

Just then a large number of the believers from Esslingen came and the Beloved ever kind and compassionate received them. He said: They were welcome. They must thank God that meeting like unto this is being held, for this meeting cannot be compared with other meetings. This meeting is for bringing together those souls which are illumined. This meeting is through the power of the Glad-tidings of God. This meeting is for the people of the Kingdom. This meeting is like unto the magnet and the iron. This meeting is like unto the meeting of the rain and the earth. This meeting is like unto the meeting of the fire and the oil. This meeting is like unto the meeting of the breeze and the trees. Therefore it contains many important results. Now its fruits are not seen. When the rain is falling, the wise man will see the transformation of the earth into verdant meadows and flowers. At present it is not known what forces are set to work, ere long it will become apparent. The results of this meeting are the change of the hearts into sweet and verdant flower-gardens; the out flux of the fire of the Love of God, the discovery of the mysteries of the Kingdom; the enfoldment of the knowledge of God; the attainment to eternal life; entrance into the mount of transfiguration; the effulgence of rays of the Sun of Reality; the acquirement of the excellences of the worlds of humanity and the realization of everlasting felicity. He hoped that through this system of Bahá'í education may become the light reflecting lamps of the assemblage of mankind.

[#126]

6 April: Address at the Obere Museum

Sunday, 6 April 1913
Obere Museum
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text was originally taken down stenographically in German by F.R. and M. Schweizer and then translated into English by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ioas in Chicago. The English translation is published in *Star of the West*, vol. 4, no. 9, 156-58. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's

interpreters on this occasion were Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, who translated the address into English, and Adolf Eckstein, who translated Sohrab's English interpretation into German.

* * *

ABOUT 250 persons were present. The hall was very prettily decorated. Miss Alma S. Knobloch read a prayer. Miss Julie Staebler favored the audience with several beautiful songs and during the singing of one of them Abdul-Baha entered. The assembly arose, showing him great respect. The following are a few extracts from the introductory remarks of Consul Schwarz:

INTRODUCTION BY CONSUL SCHWARZ

“Dear Friends: I have been asked this evening to speak a few words of welcome, which I am very glad to do, and especially so as I see in your happy faces the great impression which the presence of Abdul-Baha has made upon you.

“Seeking after Truth is as old as mankind. In accordance with the prophecies of the Old Testament, Jesus Christ came, bringing light, love, and truth; but the world recognized Him not and He and His followers were despised and rejected of men. Again, as in the days of old, is the world submerged in a sea of materialism and all things are influenced by it. The spiritual favors are neglected and suppressed. And now, in fulfillment of all prophecy, BAHÁ'O'LLAH has come and has brought the rejuvenation of Religion—not a new religion, but Religion renewed. He has come to awaken the world from the sleep of negligence and to bestow upon it the divine favor. Let us not, like those of 2,000 years ago, be blind to the light, but let us accept and appreciate the heavenly favors which have been so freely bestowed upon us, and let us hasten to spread the glad-tidings among our relatives and friends, that they, too, may partake of the heavenly feast. Look at the Son of BAHÁ'O'LLAH, Abdul-Baha, the Servant of God! Who can turn from his loving eyes or from the kindness of his words! He calls himself 'The Servant of God.' We recognize in him an Ambassador of God, who has come to teach us truth, light and love. O! let us remember his words and tell them to our children and our children's children! Let us receive the blessing of Abdul-Baha—it will sanctify our lives. Blessed be this hour to us!”

ADDRESS BY ABDUL-BAHA.

Many meetings are organized and established in all parts of the world; societies and organizations for the extension of general intercourse and extension of industry. These are societies in the interest of arts, and political parties are formed in different lands to watch the interest of the party. The establishment of all these societies is, in reality, only for the material life. Praise be to God! This illuminated assembly has no other purpose than to serve God. It is established to bring about the oneness of the human societies, it is organized to establish the companionship among different nations and races, to promulgate universal peace, so that all religions may again find the foundation of unity, so that all nations may come under the

shelter of mercy, for the foundation of all religion is brotherhood, comradeship and friendship to all. But alas, a thousand times alas! Religion, which should serve to promote oneness and love among men, has become an instrument of animosity and hatred. Religion, which was established to build up and gladden hearts, has become a means of darkening the world. All the prophets appeared that oneness of men might be taught. How much suffering these prophets had to endure to unfold this illumination among men. His Holiness Jesus Christ offered His life. He endured the greatest humiliation; His head was crowned with a crown of thorns. He endured all things so that the world might again unite and that He might cement the hearts of men through His love. But today the first duties of religion are neglected. The first duty and the basis of each religion is the love of God. Love has vanished and hate and animosity have taken its place. Instead of these simple principles we now have dogmas and imitations, and because the dogmas and imitations differ we have constantly strife and war. Fanaticism is the only aim. These fanatics are actually thirsty for their brother's blood, they condemned one another and considered each other unclean.

When this darkness encompassed the horizon of the East, there appeared in the Orient, BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH, who illuminated the East. He proclaimed the oneness of mankind. He announced that all humanity are the sheep of One Shepherd, and God is the only true Shepherd of these sheep. He is a kind and true Shepherd. He could not be kind toward His sheep had He not created them. If He did not love them He would not take care of them. Now if God loves all, why should we be unkind to each other instead of loving one another? BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH proclaimed the ideal of universal peace among religions. The fundamental principle of religion is one and the same—all the prophets guided mankind to divine love. They have called them to the knowledge of God. They have taught them the unity of the human race. They have summoned them to the furtherance of human virtues. They have enlightened the fundamental law of morality. The differences of the various religions are the results of dogmas and imitations, so we must give up dogmas and turn our faces to the foundation of religion. Dogmas have always been the cause of strife, while religion was always the cause of Unity. BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH proclaimed that religion will again bring love and friendship to mankind; if it does not fulfil this duty, then is it a failure. Religion must be the antidote for all illness. If the medicine makes the sickness worse, then it is better not to take it.

BAHÁ'Ó'LLAH also said that religious prejudice is the destroyer of the foundation of material well being. All the messengers and prophets of God were the servants of ethics. The greatest to which man can attain is love. Love is the principle of creation. Love is the cause of illumination to the world of humanity. Love brings happiness and peace to men. That is why Christ said "God is love." The first and greatest command of religion is love. The best divine service is to announce and promulgate love among mankind.

Women used to be oppressed in the Orient. They were in every respect humiliated. They were deprived of the opportunity to gain knowledge. They could not study science or art, and in

politics they had no voice at all. Men did not consider them their equal. BAHÁ'O'LLAH announced that women have the same right as men. He uplifted their conditions. He said, "The world of humanity has two wings, the one is man, the other woman." As long as both are not sufficiently strong, the bird cannot soar to the highest summit of the mountain. When women once have the advantage of education and improvement, then will mankind reach perfection. The women in the Orient have made great progress. Many schools for girls have been established, in which they are taught sciences and arts. They now have the possibility of endless progress. In this short time many wonderful women among the Bahais have shown that they are equally entitled to those achievements.

There are many wonderful teachings in the writings of BAHÁ'O'LLAH which have been published in book form. They are such as will bring great blessing to the world and will be the means of establishing peace among mankind. In Persia many meetings are being held in which different religions are represented, Jewish, Christian, Mohammedan and Zoroastrian. There is harmony and friendship among them. They are at all times ready to sacrifice their lives for one another. They serve with heart and soul in the cause of international peace. For the spread of this cause more than twenty thousand persons have sacrificed their lives, because the old despotic rulers have opposed the ideal of peace. All the followers of those religions were such fanatics that they were always ready to shed the blood of others.

Such occurrences as we hear of in the Balkans at present, and the blood which flows there, is only the outcome of religious prejudices. Both parties, the Christians as well as the Mohammedans, declare it is a holy war, and thus religion, which should be the cause of peace, has become the cause of strife. Religion, which should be the cause of uplifting humanity, has become the cause of her destruction. Religion, which is the giver of life, has become the cause of death.

In short, all these associations which are organized for the gain of the country or extension of commerce or the interest of parties, bring only limited blessings. But the result of this assemblage will be everlasting, its favors are boundless, for it is established upon love. Its fundamental principle is that we should turn our faces toward the kingdom of God; its aim is that God may breathe upon us. It is our hope that the world of humanity may be united and I hope this assembly may become a fountain uniting the different religions, sects and nations, Truly, I say, Stuttgart ought to be very happy. I have seldom seen a more beautiful city. I have visited many large cities, such as Paris, London, etc., but never a place which is so pretty and attractive as Stuttgart. Wherever I go I see flowers and trees and fruit trees laden with blossoms, and I must not fail to mention, among other important things, her citizens. The administration here seems to be correct and kind and for that reason the people have great possibilities. It is my greatest desire that the inhabitants of this city may become the cause of spreading friendship and brotherly love throughout the world so that the light of brotherhood may shine from here, so that the world of humanity may become the abode of peace.

Hungary

[#127]

11 April: Conversation with O.M.A. Frosell

Friday, 11 April 1913

Exact location not specified; possibly the Hotel Ritz, Apáczai Csere János utca 12–14
Budapest, Hungary

The following conversation between ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and a young man by the name of O.M.A. Frosell is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 11 April 1913. Sohrab writes that Frosell “had travelled throughout the world and spoke many languages.”

* * *

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Now that you have seen many parts of the world, I hope you will also make a voyage to the country of Baha.

Mr. Frosell: I have never heard the name of such a country in my life.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: How strange! There are thousands of people who have been there and upon their return have given glowing accounts of their experiences.

Mr. Frosell: Have they written any books?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: I think they have. But they could not find adequate words to describe their impressions.

Mr. Frosell: Have you seen any of these travellers after their return from the city of Baha.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Yes.

Mr. Frosell: What do they say?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: They say, the country of Baha is the most beautiful and artistic city they have ever seen.

Mr. Frosell: I would like to get some particulars about it. Where could I inform myself? I may decide to go there if it is worthwhile.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: They have reported that the country of Baha has the most equitable weather, perennial spring reigns throughout all the seasons; there is neither the heat of the summer nor the forlorn outlook of autumn or the frost of the winter. Its gardens are ever abloom, its fragrant flowers are imperishable, its fountains are at all time flowing, its birds are always singing, its happiness is not alloyed with sorrow, its sun is never set, its stars are ever twinkling, its day is not followed by any night, its moon is eternally full.

Mr. Frosell: Oh! How wonderful! I would like to go there! It must be an ideal country!

'Abdu'l-Bahá: It is a very extraordinary country. Its inhabitants are all angels and they speak one universal language.

Mr. Frosell: Then everybody understands each other? It is not like Hungary where one must speak many languages? How can I reach there quick?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Come! Come! I will be thy guide. I will take thee through its broad avenues shaded by verdant, never-fading trees. I will unfold before thy vision, the most heavenly panorama, the like of which thou hast never seen. I will little by little teach thee the secrets of the ever-changing hues of its flowers, the murmuring of its breezes and the divine notes of its music. I will take thee through its imperial palaces and will show thee the most wonderful scenes.

Mr. Frosell: When should I make myself ready to start with you.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Now.

Mr. Frosell: I believe my brother would like to accompany us. May I go and fetch him?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: All right.

* * *

An addendum to this anecdote is included in Sohrab's diary letter to Harriet Magee dated 15 April 1913: "I forgot rather a very important point in writing the story of the 'country of Baha.' In the place where the Master says 'Come, come and I will be thy guide' the following sentence is to be inserted: 'I have come from that country. I am a native of that land and will return to it. All the Bahais are the denizens of that country.'"

[#128]

11 April: Address at the Old Parliament Building

Friday, 11 April 1913
Old Parliament Building, Bródy Sándor utca 8
Budapest, Hungary

The following report was published under the title “A Szeretet prófétája” [“The Prophet of Love”] in the Hungarian periodical *Budapest* (12 April 1913), 7–8. The version below is taken from Amín Egea, *The Apostle of Peace: A Survey of References to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Western Press 1871–1921*, vol. 2 (Oxford, England: George Ronald, 2018), pp. 140–43.

* * *

In the course of his world tour, an old gentleman dressed in caftan, has come to Budapest with the godly intention of delivering a lecture here on the only blissful love and world peace. Abdul Beha is the name of this modern Persian prophet, who follows the saints of the ancient world with sacred conviction and fanatic faith, and while proclaiming new words as well as seemingly strange teachings, he is roving the world in order to teach mankind to love each other and make each other happy.

Abdul Beha, this mystic evangelist of the 20th century, got here from the faraway treasure-rich Persia. He does not claim himself to be God’s prophet, but still appears to follow the path of Jesus. He is a prophet of this world, which is enlightened although rotten in its morals. He is not riding on donkey to preach the words of God, but rushes along on the Orient Express from one country to the other and rallies his believers from among the millions converting them to behaism, which means godly eternal love.

No doubt, however, Abdul Beha is the child of the modern age and this is manifest in his teachings among other things. While voicing the sacred words of God, he often refers to modern ideals as well. In addition to eternal love and happiness, he wholeheartedly is a propagandist of the cause of world peace and, with more enthusiasm than even the suffragettes, he demands the right for women to vote and equality between man and women.

The noble and unselfish work of this Persian sage is worthy of respect and deserves the great sympathy by which he has been welcomed in his world tour [...]

The public who came to hear the prophet Abdul Beha filled to capacity the large hall of the Old Parliament. He has come to this country, fittingly called “the country of hatred”, to teach people to love each other. There was an unusually great interest in this aged and respectful apostle of peace, who was led into the auditorium by the papal prelate Sándor Giesswein and who was received by a huge applause from the public. Giesswein affectionately greeted this

sage of the Orient, who, as he put it, is touring the world in the name of sacred idealism, holding high the olive branch of peace. He came to us to win followers to his sacred and noble ideals. Then, through an interpreter, he asked Abdul Beha to deliver his lecture which was translated into Hungarian by Professor Dr. Gyula Germanus of the Oriental Academy.

Abdul Beha first expressed his thanks for the great respect extended to him by the people of Budapest and then he said he was grateful to God that he had found such a high grade of ideals in the West. He expressed his strong conviction that this century will mark the advent of equality and fraternity and that the hostility that has caused the decay of peoples would come to an end. There are two powers in man, he went on, the intellectual and the beastly powers and until now it has always been the beastly one which prevailed. World wars originate from the beastly instincts of man and these helped the spread of barbarism, wildness and crime in the world. So man should not despise animals just because they wish to tear each other apart, for that comes from the very nature of animals. If wolves would not tear lambs apart, they would starve to death, so beasts cannot be blamed for their violence and bloodlust. And still, man does not give mercy to wolves when he catches them, but kills them mercilessly, although the teeth of the wolves are shaped in a way that they are fit only for eating live animals and not plants. All these prove that man is more bloodthirsty than wolves, because man kills deliberately. And while the beasts kill one or two of their fellow creatures a day, in order to quench their hunger, man, created on the image of God, may well kill 100 men a day while at war. Ever since the beginning of the world, hostilities among men have always been great. Thousands of civilized towns were destroyed, whole countries were annihilated, but mankind has gained nothing. Wars have been going on for six thousand years among men and it is now time for general world peace to replace wars. Until now, people have destined the fruit of their tiresome-labour largely to military purposes, while in a state of world peace all the nations could take their rest and can work, peacefully, for noble aims.

The scholar said: God can find joy only if there is peace and therefore we do please God if we promote world peace. A means of achieving general peace is the creation of a world language, so that everybody could understand each other. If everyone would speak one and the same language then misunderstandings and discords will fade away... He expressed his confidence that in the future will bring a uniform language which will link East and West. He said he was pleased to see that there was already such a language, the Esperanto, and if that would spread all over the world, then it will bring general affection and friendship.

Then he spoke with great affection about women and praised them as the enthusiastic protectors of love and faith. In midst of great applause, he stated that in every country women have matured to enjoy equal voting rights with men. He said that if women would be granted the right of voting then there won't be any more wars in the world. A tender mother, were this decision depend on her, wouldn't allow her son to go and get slaughtered on the

battleground. The mother, whose most beautiful creature is her son, will prevent him from dying on the battlefield.

Equality between men and women is prerequisite and promoter of general peace; until it is achieved the world would remain imperfect. The world consists of two parts, the sage argued; the worlds of women and men are bound to unite sooner or later in order to fulfil their common devotion. This world is like a bird; it has two wings, the man and the woman, but now the wings are unbalanced and thus it cannot soar towards love and happiness. The world cannot progress until man and woman become equal. Man's first educator is the woman, so if mothers are left in ignorance and oppression, their children cannot be perfect either. So, if we wish to live in a perfect world, we have to make women perfect and have to give them the right of voting.

He then talked about the horrors of the war in the Balkans and spoke with regret on the massacre of the population of those vast and fertile lands, on the destruction of so many towns and the annihilation of so much wealth. One hundred thousand people killed another one hundred thousand, and thousands of mothers and widows are mourning their children and husbands. Mankind would surely have stood up if animals would have carried out such cruelties. Animals have never organized armies in order to murder each other, and it is only man, the so called superior being, who can murder without mercy.

This globe, he said concluding his interesting lecture, is a single piece of land and thus the human race has to be one family, too. All the religions in the world have one basis, and this is love. Let us be religious, let us love each other and follow the words of God. Let us struggle for the good and against war in order to find happiness. The audience received the interesting lecture with enormous applause, after which Sándor Giesswein expressed his thanks to Abdul Beha, who blessed Hungary and wished happiness to the people of the capital.

[#129]

11 April: Words to a French-speaking Hungarian

Friday, 11 April 1913
The Hotel Ritz, Apáczai Csere János utca 12-14
Budapest, Hungary

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 11 April 1913.

* * *

A Hungarian who spoke French fluently asked about love and God. The Master promptly told him that, if he desires to love God, let him love his fellowmen. In them he can see the image and likeness of God. If he was eager to serve God, let him serve mankind, let him lose his self in the Self of God. When the aerial mariner steers his airship skyward, little by little, the inharmony and incongruity of the world of nature are lost—and before his astonished eyes he sees, widespread, the wonderful, harmonious panorama of God's creation. Likewise when the student of the path of reality has attained to the loftiest summit of divine love, he will not look upon the ugliness and misery of mankind, he will not observe any differences, he will not see any racial and patriotic misfits, but he will look upon humanity with the glorified vision of a seer and a prophet. Let us all strive that we may attain to this highest pinnacle of ideal and spiritual life.

[#130]

12 April: 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Remarks to Alajos Paikert, Executive Vice-President of the Turanian Society

Saturday, 12 April 1913

The Hotel Ritz, Apáczai Csere János utca 12–14
Budapest, Hungary

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 12 April 1913.

* * *

“Your aim, of course, is the realization of universal peace,” ‘Abdu'l-Bahá said, “but with what power or with what executive force will you be able to bring it about?” He hoped that the president will find this propelling power so that he would be assisted. In the matter of universal peace, a great, universal power was necessary, which we may name a "Universal Collective Center."* In the past there have appeared several "Collective Centers". These "Collective Centers" not being general in their various aspects have given only limited results. One of the "Collective Centers" has been and is yet considered the "spirit of nationalism". This "spirit" has brought together the various individual members of different tribes and communities into one "Collective Center" called a "nation". For example the different petty principalities of Germany for a long time worked against each other's interests, jealously protecting their so-called "freedom". The "spirit of nationalism" which was meant to become a most powerful "Collective Center" was born through the genius of Bismarck. Again the birth

* The term “collective center” was probably *jahat-i-jámi'ih* (جهت جامعه) in the original Persian, which Shoghi Effendi later translated as “all-unifying agency.”

of this "spirit" was evidenced in America in the union of the States through the wisdom of Washington, Franklin and Jefferson. In like manner other nations have come into being at various period of human history when the "spirit" of nationalism was born and the existence of the "Collective Center" felt essential. Another "Collective Center" is "patriotism", the watchword and the battle-cry of the present nations. A third "Collective Center" is politics. It is evident that the interest of one nation is in the loss to another and we can see that as long as these three "Collective Centers" are dominant in the affairs of the world, universal Peace will not be realized. These "nations" look upon each other with the eyes of difference; they try to improve the conditions of their native countries at the expense of others and their interests clash and come within the range of conflict. Therefore all these "collective centers" instead of helping the cause of international Peace, they prevent its realization. Consequently in this illumined century, the intellectual evolution of humanity has advanced far enough as to create a "Universal Collective Center" around which all the nations may revolve, thus sacrificing their petty interests for the progress of the whole.

[#131]

13 April: On the Effect of Powerful Stories

Sunday, 13 April 1913

The Hotel Ritz, Apáczai Csere János utca 12-14
Budapest, Hungary

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 13 April 1913.

* * *

If the speaker's intention be pure, if his heart be transparent, no matter through how many translators the words may go, the audience will be touched.

After Muḥammad, many great orators appeared in the Islamic religion. One of these orators who wielded a tremendous power over his audience, swaying their emotions towards any direction he intended, was Ḥasan Kharaqání. This orator had a son who had studied philosophy and sciences and considered himself secretly greater than his father. He marveled at the simple words of his father, playing such wonderful effect upon the hearts of his hearers. Then he said to himself, if these people were so touched by the simple preaching of his father, how greatly will they be affected if he preached to them. Then he asked his father to give him permission to go and preach in his stead. The father gladly assented. The son, then ascending the platform, took as his text one of the most difficult verses of the Qur'án, and round it he wove many subtle interpretations, philosophic axioms, etc. The audience was not only not

moved but to distraction bored at such a dry sermon and instead listening to him they began to speak amongst themselves. He was disgusted and having the platform went home angry with himself and the stupid people. The father knew this but did not say anything. Next day he took the hand of his son and went to the Mosque to preach. As soon as the people saw Ḥasan Kḥaraqání was going to preach, a deep silence fell upon them. Ḥasan went up to the pulpit and after looking tenderly into the eyes of his audience, he said: My friends! Last night something very important transpired in our quarter. We have a neighbor, a very old woman. She is eighty years old; laden with age. She is a holy woman. She prays all night and serves the people all day. She had a goat and her milk was the source of her livelihood. She had no other means of support. Now, my dear friends, she is sorely tried, because the she-goat died and she is left all alone and helpless in this world. He went on to picture her saintly life, and her unselfish deeds. The audience was so moved by this simple story that not only many wept but a crowd came forward offering aid and assistance. When Ḥasan left the mosque with his son, he turned to him and said: Did you see how a simple story stirred the audience to its depths? You must purify your heart. This is the most important thing, otherwise all your learning and philosophy will not assist you.

Now in Budapest the Confirmations of God are with us, otherwise how could a large audience like last night be moved and interested through two translators?

[#132]

13 April: On the Qualities of Bahá'u'lláh

Sunday, 13 April 1913

En route to the apartment of Sardar Umrao Singh
Budapest, Hungary

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 13 April 1913.

* * *

For nine years [Bahá'u'lláh] did not see a green leaf. He loved nature. His sensibilities and powers of observation were miraculous! The tips of his fingers were the most sensitive parts of his holy temple. His sense of smell was most keen. If He walked along this avenue, although His mind was occupied with other thoughts, He would, on His arrival home, relate most profitably every small detail of the throbbing life. Often He would order us to go and prepare tea five or six miles away from the city because one could see there a patch of green or a pine tree. He would cut a cucumber into two pieces and smell only its odor and enjoy it as though He had eaten it. While dictating Tablets to his secretary [Mírzá Áqá Ján] at a rapid rate, He had

papers in His hand and writing on some entirely different topic and now and then carried an interesting conversation with those who were present, and suddenly He would raise His head and point to us from the window a wonderful tall, noble tree in a garden far away. One occupation never prevented him from attending to other things.

[#133]

14 April: Words to the Ottoman Consul General

Monday, 14 April 1913
Home of the Turkish Consul General
Budapest, Hungary

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 April 1913.

* * *

Today the armies of Europe, well-drilled, well-provisioned, phalanx-like are similar unto the waves of the ocean-pounding against the shores of Asia. Asia in her present state cannot stand before these irresistible, victory-inspired armies. There is not only the army of war to contend with; there are other more influential, economic armies that surround the Eastern countries. There is an army of commerce, an army of industry, an army of agriculture, an army of sciences and arts. All these well-disciplined hosts, supplied with the latest modern methods and instruments are bent upon great conquests in their respective fields. They are constantly gathering greater momentum to carry their final assault. Asia is pressed from all sides and no matter toward what horizon she may look anxiously for a ray of hope- so that she may be delivered from this death- she cannot see but threatening clouds. The only deliverer for her in this day is the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh. Because this movement teaches the oneness of the world of humanity and universal Peace. The Asiatic nations must become united together, not against the West, not on the basis of antagonism and religious prejudice. They must become united on the principle of reality, forget all their dogmas and hold fast to one divine Reality. A union of all the Asiatic countries on such a basis of friendship and co-operation with all humanity will be welcomed by the Western nations. But an offensive and defensive union will fail to accomplish this purpose. The greatest means of such a union is the universal language. It is most certain and indubitable that the universal language will completely wipe away all the differences from amongst mankind. This is clear and does not need any proof.

[#134]

14 April: Address to the Turanian Society

Monday, 14 April 1913
Old Parliament Building, Bródy Sándor utca 8
Budapest, Hungary

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khiṭábát-i-Ḥadrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 95–100. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

The present compiler has received confirmation from the Research Department that a transcript of the talk itself, written in the hand of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, is available in the Archives at the Bahá’í World Center, and that the text published in *Khiṭábát*, vol. 3, is an authentic record of the talk.

The heading preceding this talk in *Khiṭábát*, vol. 3 indicates that this talk was given on 15 April 1913, but this is incorrect, as the chronicles of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání and Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, as well as Hungarian sources, all attest that it was actually given on 14 April 1913.

* * *

He is God

What a source of pride this is for humanity—that in Budapest, which is in the West, a society should be formed for the advancement and improvement of the condition of the Easterners. It can be likened to the birds of the Western meadow thinking of the nests of the Eastern birds. Hence, I thank God that I am present at such a gathering as this.*

At one time, Túrán was the most prosperous of all nations.† A large portion thereof is now under the control of the Russian government, and with the Russian railroad, that land can be

* The published original literally reads, “Hence, we thank God that I am present at such a gathering as this,” but the usage of *shukr mīkunám* (“we thank”) in the transcript, rather than *shukr mīkunam* (“I thank”), might be a typographical error. Another possibility is that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was, in fact, referring to Himself in the first-person plural as is common even among today’s speakers of Persian.

† With regard to statements like this one—as well as another attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, “The Túrán once had a high and most developed culture, but, alas, in the course of time it was destroyed by religious disharmony and conflicts” (Alice Schwarz-Solivo, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Budapest”)—György Lederer writes, “Everyone—including the [Hungarian] press—took this statement as a reference to what was then supposed to have been a former Turanian state. However, according to modern Hungarian scholarship, no such state has ever existed” (György Lederer, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá in Budapest,” published in Peter Smith (ed.), *Bahá’ís in the West* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 2004), p. 113). In reality, Turan, now an obsolete term, is a historical region that roughly corresponds to present-day Central Asia.

crossed in the span of two days and two nights. Observe what a land this is! Its soil is potent to the utmost, its air is exquisite as can be, and it has many rivers. In former times, there were fourteen cities in that land, each of them comparable to Budapest or Paris. Among these were the cities of Nasaf, * Termez, † Nesa, ‡ Abivard, § Gurgan, and Marv. ** All these lands flourished; all their villages were populous and their fields cultivated.

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, civilization, science, industry, and commerce had progressed there to the utmost. Many Eastern writers came from that place. Now, however, it has become “a barren plain.”†† There is neither city nor town, neither lushness nor verdure. It is a desert which is home and haven to ferocious animals. All these ruins came about as a result of religious prejudices, as well as war and conflict between the Sunnis and Shí’ihs. How grateful we must be that, in this city, a society has been convened for the advancement of the Turanians! There is no precedent for such a thing as this, that in Europe a society for the betterment of the condition of Asia should be formed. This is one of the wonders of this luminous age. Thus, I hope that complete success may be achieved and that great effects may be produced from the efforts of this society, that the mention of Budapest may endure eternally.

From the beginning of the world’s history till the present time, that which has conduced to reconstruction and progress have been love and fellowship among humanity. It is for harmony and unity that all the Prophets have appeared. It is for amity and oneness that all the heavenly scriptures have been revealed. All the philosophers have rendered service to mankind. The divine religions are the cause of fellowship and unity, inasmuch as the basis of all these religions is one. The foundations laid by Moses, Christ, and Muḥammad are all one and the same.

Every religion consists of two aspects. There is the fundamental aspect, which calls for service to the world of humanity and comprises the virtues of mankind. Included therein are the

* Now Qarshi, a city in present-day Uzbekistan.

† A city in present-day Uzbekistan. In the published original transcript of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk, this reads “Termed,” but given the orthographic similarity of the letters D and DH (the latter often here rendered with a Z, as here) in the Arabic script, this is probably an error.

‡ Probably a reference to what is known in the Turkmen language as “Nusaý Gala,” the ruins of the old Parthian capital near Ashgabat (Ishqábád) in present-day Turkmenistan. In the published original transcript of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s talk, this reads “Tesa” or “Tasa,” but given the orthographic similarity of the letters T and N in the Arabic script, this is probably an error. Another possibility is that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was referring to Tasa, an area in the historical region of Khurásán (not to be confused with today’s Iranian provinces by that name) which is mentioned by the geographer Yáqút al-Ḥamawí. For more, see S.L. Volin and V.V. Struve, *Материалы по истории туркмен и Туркмении, том 1 (Materials on the History of Turkmens and Turkmenia, vol. 1)*, Moscow: Izd-vo Akademii nauk SSSR, 1938-1939. The present translator is grateful to Aleksey Sopyyev for sharing this information on both the ruins of Nusaý Gala and the region of Tasa.

§ An ancient Sassanid city in present-day Turkmenistan, located two days’ journey from Nesa.

** Now Mary, a city in present-day Turkmenistan.

†† Qur’án 20:106.

knowledge of God, divine philosophy, the oneness of the human race, spiritual developments, discovering the realities of things, and happiness and love among the human race. With regard to this aspect, there are no discrepancies; it consists [only] of the message of the religion of Moses, the basis of the teachings of Christ, and the root of the creed of Muḥammad.

As to the second aspect, which is peripheral and pertains to one's dealings, this consists of subordinate matters which change according to the exigencies of time and place. For instance, in the time of Moses, the Israelites had no prison in the desert. If a crime was committed, it was necessary to inflict a punishment. In accordance with the exigencies of that place, the hand [of a thief] would be cut off for stealing [the equivalent of] five francs. Similarly, it was the law of the Torah that if one blinded the eye of another, his own eye was to be blinded in return; if one broke another's tooth, his own tooth would be broken in kind. Now in Europe today, is it possible to cut off a hand for stealing [even] a million [francs]?

Since these circumstances were no longer applicable to the time of Christ, this second aspect was changed. There are ten laws pertaining to murder in the Torah. Is it possible to execute them today? It is for this reason that Christ abrogated these sorts of laws. In the time of Moses, divorce was acceptable, but in the time of Christ it became unacceptable; hence, a change occurred, and it was this new way that became applicable. The point is that the differences lie in the secondary matters, while the root and foundation of the divine religions is one. Accordingly, every Messenger has foretold the Prophet who will succeed Him, and every Prophet affirmed the Messenger who preceded Him. All the Prophets were at peace with one another; they had [only] love for each other. Why, then, should their followers dispute? In San Francisco, I gave a talk at a synagogue;* I said to them [the Jews], "There is misunderstanding between you and the Christians, and as a result you have suffered for two thousand years. You imagine Christ to be the enemy of Moses, notwithstanding that Moses had no greater friend than Christ. Christ uplifted the name of Moses; He spread the Torah throughout the world; He brought fame to the Prophets of the house of Israel. Were it not for Christ, how would the Torah have been spread in Europe or disseminated in America? Thus, Christ was the Friend of Moses. Now the Christians say that Moses was a Prophet of God. What harm is there in that? You, too, [should] say that Christ was the Word of God, that this two-thousand-year-long dispute may come to an end. For two thousand years you have suffered all this pain because of this one statement. If you were to say only that much, that Christ is the Word of God, you would live in perfect peace and fellowship."

Likewise, Christ is mentioned in the Qur'án with the utmost sanctity. I speak not of history, rather the explicit [text of the] Qur'án stating that Christ was the Word of God, Christ was the Spirit of God, Christ was of the Holy Spirit. There is a Súrih in the Qur'án devoted specifically to Mary, where it is said that she was always at the Holy of Holies and engaged in constant

* Refer to notes from a talk given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá at Temple Emmanu-El in San Francisco on 12 October 1912, published in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*: <http://www.bahai.org/r/586533574>

worship. Eventually, a banquet-table was sent down to her from heaven, and as soon as Christ was born, He spoke. Truly, in the Qur'án there are praises of Christ which are entirely absent from the Gospel.

It has been made clear, then, that the Prophets of God were at the utmost peace with one another and that the foundation of the divine religions is one. Each and every one of the Prophets acknowledged the holiness of the other. Given that this was their conduct, why should we be at odds? This despite the fact that, if we were to investigate the truth, we would see that the foundations laid by Moses, Zoroaster, Christ, and Muḥammad were all one, and that these differences [we see today] stem from blind imitations. It is these blind imitations which have caused conflict and contention, and resulted in bloodshed and murder. Therefore, we must dispense with these imitations. We must investigate the foundation of the divine religions so we may become united, and this bloodshed be turned into fellowship and love—so that these darkneses may be changed into light, the instruments of death into the means of life, and this ferocious bestiality into peaceful humanity.

When you consider history, you will see what quantities of blood have been shed in the world of man. Every span of the earth has been caked with human gore. Such savageries have taken place in the world of humanity as have never occurred in the animal kingdom, for every beast preys on one animal a day [for its sustenance], but a group of animals does not kill another group all of a sudden. They do not plunder each other's possessions; they do not destroy each other's dwellings; they do not take the children and family of others as their captives. A ruthless person, however, can kill and rob a hundred thousand people or subject them to captivity in a single day. The wars that have broken out among people, from the beginning of history to the present time, have always resulted from religious prejudice, racial prejudice, national prejudice, or political prejudice, and all of these prejudices are sheer illusion, inasmuch as the religions are the foundation of fellowship and love, all humanity is of one race and belongs to one family, and the earth is one country. Thus, these wars, these sheddings of blood, are all born of prejudice.

When the horizon of the East was dark, and the gloom of prejudice and strife enveloped all religions and kindreds, the peoples shunned one another; they would not associate with each other at all. It was at such a time as this that Bahá'u'lláh, even as a sun, rose above the horizon of the East.

First, He proclaimed the oneness of humanity—that all mankind are the divine flock, and God is the True Shepherd, kind unto all. Since He is kind to everyone, why should we be unkind?

Second, He promoted universal peace, writing to all the rulers of the earth that war is the destroyer of the foundation of God, and that anyone who destroys this foundation will be accountable to Him.

Third, religion must be the cause of love and fellowship. If religion conduces to conflict and enmity, it would certainly be better not to have it.

Fourth, religion must accord with science and sound reason. If it runs counter to these, it is superstition, for reality is [made evident through] science. If any matter of religion is contrary to science and reason, it is an illusion. True knowledge is light, and its opposite is necessarily darkness. Therefore, religion, science, and reason must all accord, and it follows that, because these blind imitations current among the peoples run counter to science and reason, they have given rise to dissension and vain imaginings. Hence, we must independently investigate the truth, arriving at the fact of every matter by weighing spiritual questions against science and reason. Were this to be done, all the religions would become a single creed, for the basis of them all is the truth, and the truth is one.

Fifth, He declared that religious and sectarian prejudice, national prejudice, racial prejudice, and political prejudice lay waste to the foundation of humanity, and He addressed the kindreds of the earth [with these words]: “O peoples of the world! Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch.”

Sixth, He spoke of the equality of men and women. It is mentioned in the Torah that God said, “Let us make man in Our image, after Our likeness,”* and in a certain tradition the Apostle [Muḥammad] stated, “God created Adam in His image.” What is meant by this image is the divine image, which is to say that the human being is the image of God and the embodiment of His attributes. God is alive; people are also alive. God is seeing; people are also seeing. God is hearing; people are also hearing. God is powerful; people are also powerful. Hence, the human being is the sign of God, the image and likeness of the divine. This applies to everyone; it is not confined to men and exclusive of women, since in the estimation of God there is no distinction between men and women. Whoever is more perfect is closer [to Him], be they man or woman. Until now, however, women have not been educated as men have. Were they to be educated in that way, they would become like men.

When we look at history, we see how many renowned people were women, whether in the realm of religion or that of politics. Where religion is concerned, a single woman saved the Israelites and brought about their victories.† In the world of Christianity, Mary Magdalene caused the Apostles to remain firm. All the Apostles became distressed after [the crucifixion of] Jesus Christ, but Mary Magdalene continued to persevere like a lioness. In the time of Muḥammad, there were two women who were more knowledgeable than the other women,

* Genesis 1:26.

† Probably a reference to Esther, who has been credited with saving the Jews of Persia in the fifth century BC. See Esther 8.

and they became the promoters of Islám.* It has been made clear, then, that there are people of great renown among women, too.

With regard to the realm of politics, you have certainly heard the account of Zenobia[†] of Palmyra, who shook the Roman Empire [to its foundations]. When it was time to move, she would don her crown, put on purple clothing, tousle her hair, take hold of her sword, and command in such a way as to crush the opposing army. Eventually, the emperor[‡] himself had no choice but to personally participate in the war. For two years, he laid siege to Palmyra, but ultimately he could not conquer it with his courage. When [her] provisions ran out, she surrendered. Observe how brave she was, that in the span of two years the emperor was not able to defeat her [in battle]! Similarly, you have heard the story of Cleopatra and others like her.

In the Bahá'í Cause, too, there was Qurratu'l-'Ayn [Ṭáhirih]. Her verses and writings, eloquent and articulate to the utmost, are available today. Many eloquent ones of the East have praised her. So impressive was she that she would always be victorious in her debates with the 'ulamá; they did not dare dispute with her. Since she was a promoter of this Cause, the government imprisoned and persecuted her, but this did not silence her in the least. While imprisoned, she would lift up her voice and guide the people. Eventually, she was condemned to death, but she, evincing the greatest possible courage, did not falter in the slightest. She was confined in the home of the mayor of the city; it so happened that a wedding was taking place there, and that various implements for merriment and music-making, eating and drinking, had all been prepared. Qurratu'l-'Ayn, however, unloosed her tongue in such a way that those present set aside all these instruments of revelry and gathered around her. No one paid any attention to the wedding, and she was the only person speaking. Although the Sháh had condemned her to death, she, who in her entire life had not once adorned herself, did so on that day. All were bewildered; they said to her, "What are you doing?", and she replied, "This is my wedding." She went to that garden with consummate dignity and composure. Everyone said that they were going to kill her, but she continued to cry out just as she had before, declaring, "I am

* The identities of these two women are not clear. Possible candidates include Fátimih, daughter of the Prophet Muḥammad; *Khadíjih*, a wife of the Prophet Muḥammad; 'Á'ishá bint Abú Bakr, a prolific narrator of *ḥadīths* and a *muftia* in Medina; and Umm Salama, also a prolific narrator of *ḥadīths* and a political advisor to the Prophet Muḥammad. Another possibility, to quote Ismael Velasco, is that "the mystery may in fact be the point. Naming the two remarkable women would have led to sectarian controversy and distraction, or silly debates as to why this one is more meritorious than that one, among extraordinary beings, and lose the primary point. Saying instead two women distinguished themselves as *murawwij* [promoter] of the Islamic revelation, means that every reader, including us, instantly tries to think of outstanding women from the heroic age of Islam, likely coming up with more than two. The result of this rhetorical device is we are left, not just with two incredible women, but with many, and are primed or encouraged to think of the capacities and distinction of women in Islam more generally. Rather than arrive at *the* two women, perhaps the point is to realize that many more than two women fit the mark, and think of the implications for our approach to Islam, women and history, in that perspective" (private correspondence dated 7 September 2021, shared here with permission).

[†] In the published original transcript of this talk, Zenobia's name has been erroneously transcribed as "Renobia."

[‡] Aurelian (r. 270–75 CE).

that trumpet-call mentioned in the Gospel!" It was in this state that she was martyred in that garden and cast into a well.

In short, there are many of these teachings, and the objective and foundation of all the divine religions is one: love and unity among the human race. In a similar vein, the philosophers and all the well-wishers of humanity have been the promoters of the oneness of mankind and universal peace. Thus, we must strive to spread this oneness and peace among all humanity.

Austria

[#135]

20 April: Remarks to Wilhelm Herrigel

Sunday, 20 April 1913
Grand Hotel Wien, Kärntner Ring 9
Vienna, Austria

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 April 1913.

* * *

This morning, the Beloved [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] sent several telegrams to various cities of the orient giving the news of His safe arrival in Vienna. After drinking tea, He said to Mr. Herrigel:

The City of Vienna will become a center for the Cause of God; only after my departure the friends must not remain inactive. They must work with greater zeal and enthusiasm. They must not say, “Now that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is gone, let us take a rest first and then work.” There is no such a thing as rest in the Bahá’í Cause in its present stage. Ceaseless activity, continuous teaching must be our watchword. Every Bahá’í must become a trumpet of the Cause. All the ears must become filled with its voice. What is the use of a voiceless trumpet? A Bahá’í must be like a sweet-fragrant rose, diffusing perfume all around. This period must be dedicated to the promotion of the principles of Bahá’u’lláh! You must be exceedingly kind to the Theosophists. When you meet them, tell them that they are freed from blind dogmas, that they are investigating reality, that they are very near to the Bahá’í Cause. From time to time, the believers of Stuttgart must come to Wien [Vienna] and give addresses on the Revelation. Last night I observed spiritual motion and ecstasy in the Theosophical Society. They were very alive.

Mr. Herrigel said that he has translated our Beloved’s address in the Jewish synagogue of San Francisco into German and expects to read it at a public meeting. The Master said:

See to it that it is also published in a German newspaper and later in a pamphlet. This address is very useful for the Christians, because some of the ministers have recently spread the rumor that the Bahá’ís are the enemies of Christ. Now they will see that in a Jewish synagogue, we have established the validity of Jesus Christ—that we are lovers of Christ. If today the mob took hold of a thousand average ministers of the Gospel and brought them into the public square and addressed them, “You must either deny Christ

or you will be killed," I wonder how many of them will remain firm! When Napoleon wanted to marry again, he applied to the Pope for permission. The Pope said it is impossible! Then Napoleon put him in prison. Not being able to stand the ignominy of prison, he gave the permission. But if, on the other hand, they took us to the public square and with the sword of [the] executioner commanded us to state that Christ was only the prophet of God and then be free, we will cry out: "Verily, Christ was the Word of God and the Spirit of God, and we will most joyfully give up our lives for Christ."

[#136]

20 April: On the Unique Nature of the Bahá'í Cause

Sunday, 20 April 1913
Grand Hotel Wien, Kärntner Ring 9
Vienna, Austria

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 April 1913.

* * *

Someone asked: "I have been told that the objects of the Bahá'í Movement and the Theosophical Society are one and the same. If so, why there should be two names, two distinct organizations, two modes of expression?"

The Master:

Well said, you have brought up a good point. According to our Faith, whosoever investigates independently the reality, he is a Bahá'í although he may not know this himself. We do not desire to add another name or word to the already many names. Our aim is to spread the knowledge of reality, and diffuse the fragrance of the rose. Because there are two or many roses of the same color and perfume, can we say that one of them is not necessary? Let us have all the sweet roses we can get. We can never have enough roses. Can we? . . . The Bahá'í Movement is the spirit of this age. It is everywhere. It has no geographical limits. It is the essence of all the highest ideals of this century. A person may claim to be a Bahá'í or may be known as a Bahá'í for all his life and may not know at all what a Bahá'í means. Another person may never have heard the name of Bahá'í and may at the same time practice all the attributes which are necessary to make one a Bahá'í. That is why his holiness Christ says, those who are not against us are with us. You must know the tree by its fruits. Now to answer your question from another standpoint. Everyone knows that in a seed, there lay enveloped

the young plant, the root, the tree, the branches, the blossoms, and the fruits. This simple knowledge is however not sufficient. There must need a gardener to plant the seed in a pure ground to water it, to take care of it, till it reaches to the stages of fruition. There must need the power of the Holy Spirit to put into practice the divine principles. All that his holiness Bahá'u'lláh has written are today practiced by the Bahá'ís. More than 20,000 people have sacrificed their lives. One of the principles of Bahá'u'lláh is universal peace amongst the religious. In the Orient, the religious were inimical toward each other; now through this power they are united. In the world of existence every understanding is dependent upon the realization of three things. First Knowledge. 2nd Decision. 3rd Executive power. For example in building this hotel, first the plan was drawn, 2nd the company approved and decided upon the plan, 3rd the Capitalists put their money together to build it. Again the Bahá'í Cause is an all-inclusive Movement, the teachings of all the religions and societies are found here. The Christians, the Buddhists, the Zoroastrians, the Theosophists, the Freemasons, the Spiritualists, etc. find their highest aims in this Cause, while this cannot be applied to other religious sects and societies. Even the Socialists and philosophers find their theories fully developed in this movement.

The Master spoke at length about a famine in Persia where the rich Bahá'ís gave up willingly all their possessions so that the members of the community may be protected.

The question of monkhood and celibacy was touched, and the Beloved dwelt upon this subject, giving instances as to how an unproductive life, such as the one led in most of the monasteries and convents, is not commendable; that we must be useful members of human society, that we must serve our fellow men in a practical way. He told them of the nunnery and convent in Mount Carmel, of a big monastery in Russia with more than 5,000 monks. The lives of these people are spent in prayers and worship while God has created them to work for the betterment of humanity.

[#137]

22 April: Conversation with a Representative of *Die Zeit*

Tuesday, 22 April 1913
Grand Hotel Wien, Kärntner Ring 9
Vienna, Austria

The following conversation between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and an unidentified representative of *Die Zeit*, an Austrian newspaper—and also the quotations in the closing portion underneath it—are taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 22 April 1913. Sohrab writes that the representative began by asking 'Abdu'l-

Bahá whether He was the leader of the Theosophists, as His speaking engagements in Vienna up to that point had only been with them, and that this question prompted the dialogue below.

* * *

'Abdu'l-Bahá: We are Bahais but on certain questions we find ourselves in agreement with the Theosophists.

Representative: In which part of the world this Cause is more spread?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: In Persia, although there are many of them in America.

Representative: Is this a Mohamadan sect?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: This movement is neither a sect nor an Islamic denomination. It is the religion of love and brotherhood toward all humanity!

Representative: I have read the principles of your movement and find everything in it reasonable.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: In these parts no one as yet is completely informed of the Bahai Cause. If a person learns all the teachings of Baha-ollah he will acknowledge that they are the spirit of this age, the light of this century.

Representative: Are there Bahais all over the world?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: Yes.

Representative: Where do you come from?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: I come now from Budapest. I have been in America where I have travelled through many large cities and spoke in many churches. After nearly 8 months, returning from California to N.Y. I sailed for Liverpool, then London, Bristol, Edinburgh, Paris, Stuttgart, Mergentheim, Budapest and now in your delightful city.

Representative: You are wonderful to travel so much at this age!

'Abdu'l-Bahá: The power of God assists me.

Representative: How long are you going to stay here?

'Abdu'l-Bahá: I will leave for Paris in a day or two.

Representative: Do you find many people are interested in your Cause?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: Now it is the beginning of this movement in Europe but it will be soon spread to all parts.

Representative: How long have you been travelling for the propagation of your principles?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá: It is now 2 yrs and half.

* * *

When the representative then asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to tell him something about the Bahá’í teachings, “the Master told him, how previous to the coming of Baha-ollah darkness and ignorance prevailed amongst all the religions and nations of the east, how Baha-ollah like unto a glorious sun appeared and established certain teachings.” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá “enumerated these principles, 1st Investigation of reality, 2d the oneness of the world of humanity, 3d religion must be the cause of love and amity, 4th universal peace, 6th economic plan, 7th equality of man and woman etc. etc.,” and then gave the representative “an exposition of natural and divine civilization.”

When the representative then asked a question about the American people, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied: “They are very progressive and well-established in modern civilization. They are the investigators of reality and thirsty for every salubrious water. They have a vast and unlimited continent, capable of undreamed of development. They are ever pushing forward. One must move and push and be alert and active in America, otherwise it is not his place.”

After some conversation on “the exile and imprisonment of Baha-ollah” and “the limitation of material civilization,” Sohrab writes that “the reporter left the presence of the Beloved impressed not only with the teachings but with [H]is wonderful personality.”

[#138]

23 April: The Love of God as the Greatest Consolation for the Heart

Wednesday, 23 April 1913
Grand Hotel Wien, Kärntner Ring 9
Vienna, Austria

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 April 1913.

* * *

The greatest consolation for the heart is the Love of God. This is the balm for every wound and the remedy for every ailment. This world is full of pain and afflictions. Therefore the

foundation upon which the eternal consolation of the human heart is based is the love of God. Every new day brings in its train new difficulties and ordeals. The world is very dark and the only light which is capable to penetrate through this darkness is the light of love of God and entrance into the Kingdom of Bahá'u'lláh. This is the cause of happiness! This is the means of consolation! The glory of man is through the love of God, entrance into His Kingdom, and being imbued with His divine characteristics.

[#139]

23 April: Conversation with Baroness Bertha von Suttner

Wednesday, 23 April 1913
Grand Hotel Wien, Kärntner Ring 9
Vienna, Austria

The following conversation between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Baroness Bertha von Suttner, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 April 1913.

* * *

Before [von Suttner's] arrival, the Beloved sent to her a large bouquet of roses, lilacs and lily of the valley. As she entered the room she expressed sorrow over the events of the past few months, a note of hopelessness, of pessimism and of despondency of her tongue. The Master came back with hope. "Ah," [H]e said, "the day of hope hath dawned! After every sorrow there is joy, after every night there is the glorious day. God willing through your efforts we will succeed. I have heard much of your name and your unselfish services to the cause of peace. I testify that you are a lover of humanity."

von Suttner: I am very grateful for your words of encouragement and inspiration. I have done very little and with less results.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: You have sown the seeds and God shall cause them to grow.

von Suttner: I hope so.

'Abdu'l-Bahá: I have been looking forward to this visit. While I was in Chicago and Omaha you were there at the same time but it was not destined that we meet each other. I had to come to Austria to pay you a visit.

von Suttner: I was very sorry that I could not meet you in America for I have always heard of this movement.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: Yes! One of the greatest teachings of Baha-ollah is in regard to international peace. We must not lose our hope and courage. The beginning of a downpour of rain is only a few drops. In the early dawn, the sun rises slowly, giving us here and there a few feeble rays but it is sure that before long it will be stationed in the meridian of its glory. Truly I say the spirit of this age is universal peace. In every age a great, impelling idea has been born and developed. There has been an age of scholasticism, another age belonging to the development of philosophy and natural sciences. The last age was the age of freedom and the march of democracy throughout many lands. But this 20th century is the century of the promotion of international peace, the proclamation of the oneness of the world of humanity, the brotherhood of men, the union of religions, the solidarity of various nations and the universalization of all the great ideals, common to the children of men. All the people are the sheep and God is the real Shepherd of this flock and is kind to all. The earth is one sphere. These geographical boundaries are made by men, calling one piece of land Austria, another Germany, a third French, a fourth England and so forth. The dogs in oriental cities instinctively divide the various quarters amongst themselves and if by chance one of the dogs crosses the boundary of another, he will be attacked. But these boundaries lines are all imaginary. They have no real existence.

von Suttner: I had never heard this before. But I suppose those dogs are not aggressive. They are satisfied with their own domain and do not carry fire and sword in their neighbour's home.

‘Abdu'l-Bahá: You are right! Aggression is the attribute of men and the ferocious beasts but the domestic animals never fight.

Return to Germany

[#140]

25 April: A Story about an Encounter with Robbers in Baghdád

Friday, 25 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 April 1913.

* * *

During the first year of our arrival in Baghdád one day Mírzá Javád asked me to go out with him to an outlying district. At this time, Arabian robbers frequented the roads and no one dared to go out of the tavern. In the morning we two started to walk to that district. Having spent part of the day, toward the evening we started to return. However, before leaving Baghdád, Mírzá Javád took for precaution's sake an old rifle he had carried around for many years. As we were walking back toward the city we spied, in the far off horizon, several horsemen coming toward us. Seeing we were all alone, they galloped toward our left and right and back so that we may not run away, and in front of us three men appeared with rifles in their hands. Mírzá Javád was much agitated. He got hold of his rifle but to his further confusion he realized that he had neither powder nor cartridges so his rifle was more useless than a piece of stick. Then I told him take your rifle in your hand, keeping it in a position as though he was going to aim at them. Don't heed them at all. Don't look at them. Walk straight. Laugh and speak with me. The three men ahead of us cried out "down with your rifle!" Mírzá Javád did not give any attention to them. They were amazed at our audacity! "Down with your arm!" they cried all at once. No result. They were cowered and paced back a few steps. In this way we walked and laughed and talked till we reached the gate of the city and all the time our "friends" going backward. When the horsemen saw the futility of their pursuit, they spied another pedestrian on the road and galloped toward him. This man seeing us coming with a rifle in hand hastened towards us and cried for protection from the robbers. Meanwhile the gate was opened and our "friends" realizing the hopelessness of their case hide back into the darkness. We did not have anything but the other man had some money and was grateful to us because we saved him. Addressing Mírzá Javád he said, "I am glad you did not kill them. The way you took your rifle in your hands I thought every [any] moment you will shoot at them." Here the Master had a hearty laugh and added, "And all this time our rifle was empty."

[#141]

25 April: On the Great Expenses of the Western Trip

Friday, 25 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 25 April 1913.

* * *

The believers of Persia made the greatest self-sacrifice and this trip was made possible. They made large and small contributions, and as this was for the sake of the promotion of the Word of God, we in turn did not observe the dictates of economy. In every matter, first of all I consider the glory of the Cause of God. All these expenses which are being made are for the promulgation of the Bahá'í principles in the world. We do not charge anything for them. Freely we have received, freely we give. For two years and half we have been travelling and we hope to finish this tour with joy and fragrance and the great glorification of the Cause of God. My affairs are very strange and few can understand my motives. For example, for the last 2 years and half I have not sent one dollar to my own family to buy clothes with, neither have I bought for them one yard of cloth, but I bought this winter more than one hundred overcoats for the poor of 'Akká. One who may hear these things may not believe in them but nevertheless they are true.

[#142]

25 April: Excerpts from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Talk at the Bürgermuseum

Friday, 25 April 1913
The Bürgermuseum
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from Jennifer Redson Wiebers, *Alma Sedonia Knobloch*, pp. 224–25. The primary sources are:

- Washington DC Bahá'í Archives, Hannen-Knobloch Collection, Box 7: Letter from Alma Knobloch in Stuttgart to “my precious sister Pauline,” 28 April 1913
- Alice Schwarz-Solivo, “Report to the Friends in the East and West,” in *Sonne der Wahrheit*, Jahrgang 4, Heft 7 (September 1924), pp. 107–8

* * *

I was not feeling well, but I came for your sake. It is my greatest hope that you are all very happy and that the divine Bounties may surround you. I have a great love for you. I am exceedingly happy to be able to be here in this illumined assembly tonight. Not being well, I beg of you to excuse me in not giving a detailed talk. It is this! That in every age there is a great movement set in motion. The 19th century is marked as a cycle of Monarchy and Republic freedom. But the greatest cycle, in reality, is the cycle of Universal Peace. This century is the century of light. This age is the age of knowledge. Therefore, the results of this cycle should be international peace and perfection. Be assured, that the banner of international freedom will be raised in this century. Because the spirit of this age is to realize this great peace . . .

I ask God to strengthen me to be able to open your eyes to the truth. May I become the means of your happiness.

At a time when war was carried on in the Orient, when conflict among the different religions and hatred among the different sects took place, when there was a constant fight between the different communities and nations fought against one another, when the nations of the East did not love each other, but hated one another, Bahá'u'lláh appeared like a sun.

He proclaimed the unity of men. He taught harmony among the religions and instructed them to be kind to each other. All the nations of the Orient, which have adopted the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, are working to-day with the greatest love for the whole humanity. Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, Buddhists have forgotten their former hatred and have become good friends, always ready to sacrifice their life for one another. Persians and Arabians, Indians and Turks, who have adopted the doctrines of Bahá'u'lláh, are working together in greatest love in the service of humanity.

I don't feel well enough to say more than this, therefore I will finish this short address and state once more, that Germany—thank God—is a country of the highest purity and clearness. The government is very just. The nation stands for the highest culture and civilization. Therefore I hope that the light of universal peace will spread from Germany over the whole world. I shall pray for the German nation and for this government. I shall ask God to help them, so that every one of you may be a means for the happiness of humanity.

[#143]

26 April: On Fighting the Spiritual War

Saturday, 26 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt?
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 April 1913. Passages from this text are also published in two issues of *Star of the West*: vol. 4, no. 4 (17 May 1913), p. 72; and vol. 7, no. 16 (31 December 1916), p. 157.

* * *

What did the people say last night? Were they not dissatisfied? Did they not exclaim, "What this Persian has to do with us? Why has he come to Germany? What do we want to do with these pacific principles? Let peace be for the weaker nations but war is for the mighty! Germany is a warlike, demonstrative nation!" This morning looking down from the window, I saw a regiment of soldiers passing by in fine shape. They were ready to fight for the fatherland. How barbarous and foolish it is to send men who know not each other at all to the battlefield and order them to shoot down each other and cut one another's throat.

But friends, let us talk about our own war. Our Grand Army consists of the invisible angels of the Supreme Concourse; our swords are the swords of light. Our armaments are the invincible armaments of heaven. We are fighting against the forces of darkness. Oh! My soldiers! My beloved soldiers, forward! Forward! Have no fear of defeat! Have no failing hearts! Our Supreme Commander is Bahá'u'lláh! From the height of His glory He is directing this dramatic engagement. He commands us. Push onwards, push forward! Show the strength of your arms! Ye shall scatter the powers of ignorance! Your war confers life, theirs brings death. Your war is the cause of the illumination of humankind; theirs is the means of the darkness of the hearts. Your war is victory upon victory; their war is defeat upon defeat. Your war is the source of construction; their war is the origin of destruction. There are no dangers before you. Push forward! Fire! Fire! Attack the enemy! Your efforts shall be crowned with the diadem of eternal peace and brotherhood! See ye not the crown of victory shining from the Kingdom of Abhá? His Holiness the Christ was fighting even upon the cross and His triumphs have continued throughout all centuries and cycles!

[#144]

26 April: On the Future of the Cause in Germany, Hungary, and Austria

Saturday, 26 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt?
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 April 1913.

* * *

The future of the Cause in Germany is very bright. Likewise Budapest and Vienna will become Bahá'í Centres. One could never have believed that such whole and pure souls will be found in those cities. The Cause of God will be spread in all those countries. The progress of the Cause is like unto the coming of the spring and its early signs. Suddenly one sees here a tree is putting forth leaves, there a bush being adorned with roses, the nightingales are singing and the meadows are seen!

[#145]

26 April: Stories of Hardship from the Baghdád Days

Saturday, 26 April 1913
Hotel Marquardt?
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 April 1913.

* * *

When I was in Baghdád, one day I was walking through the poor quarter of the city. I saw an old Arab standing in front of store. He had neither hat nor shoes and wore only a long tattered coat over his naked body. He had no shirt. Between his coat and his skin, he had a loaf of coarse black bread. His appearance attracted my attention and I stopped in a corner to watch him what he is going to do. As I stood there I saw him putting his hand in his breast, taking out a piece of bread, looking at it with the utmost satisfaction and smile then raising his head toward the sky, saying 'O God, I thank Thee for this, Thy favor' and then eating it. He continued to do the same thing for every piece of bread he did put in his mouth with the utmost simplicity and trust. This thanksgiving of him attracted me very much and I went to him and

invited him to dinner. Having given him the address, I returned home and ordered the preparation of polow and chicken. When he came and the table was spread before him he looked at the various dishes with wonder in his eyes. "Come, sit down and eat. This dinner is prepared for thee," I said. "Really," he said, "this is the food of Paradise but it lacks one thing." "What is it?" "Sour milk." "All right. You shall get that too," and I sent someone to get it for him. When everything was ready, I told him: "Now start eating, but with the same thankfulness you ate your bread yesterday." I did not need to say that, he would have done it anyway, but we enjoyed seeing him so thankful. . . .

(Speaking about the progress of the Cause, [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] said:)

Many blessed and holy souls have appeared in this Cause who have been the essence of essences. That is why the Cause is so wonderfully spread all over the world. These holy souls were the means of upraising the Bahá’í standard. The Islands of Java, Sumatra, and one other contains millions of inhabitants and many of them were converted from idolatry to [the] Muḥammadan religion by one single person. Just think of that Muḥammadan missionary’s attraction and of accomplishing such a mighty task! When he finished his work he left the islands for an unknown destination and after that no one heard anything about him. Even his name is not known. Now it is evident that one single soul was greater than a million of the present day. Whereas for he worked for God and not for fame or name or wealth. There is the proverb that "one man is equal to one thousand"; one man may be the cause of the illumination of one city filling it with his services and his impersonal humanity. For example the city of [—] in Persia was formerly very active and alive in the Cause, but today it is as though entirely extinct. This is because at that time there was one real, genuine, enthusiastic Bahá’í and he kept all the friends in a state of enkindlement and activity. When he passed away from this life, the fire was extinguished and there was no one in his place to keep the wheels rolling. . . .

(Speaking about the journey of Bahá’u’lláh from Baghdád to Constantinople, He said:)

There were 60 stages from Baghdád to Sámsún and the trip was made under the most difficult circumstances. It was a time of famine and scarcity of food. We had beside, more than 70 people in the party and nearly 30 horses and other animals. These horses had to be fed and as it was most difficult for others to feed straw, grass, barley for the animals and food for the men, I appointed myself at the head of commissions department. As soon as we reached the end of one stage, I would go all alone in the villages and amongst the wild tribes of Kurds and Arabs, and with the greatest amount of persuasion, I would make them sell me the necessary provisions for horses and men. I always first thought about the feed for the animals. Once they were provided I would think of the men. With gold in hand, often I was refused provision. They would tell me roughly, "We do not have straw or barley!" I would answer, "Are we not your guests passing through your country, and has not the Prophet said, 'Be ye kind to your

guest even though he be an infidel'?" They would then frown and say, "We will not sell you anything." I answer, "All right. Then, give them to me, gratis!"

Often from afternoon till midnight I was going from one village to another trying to find food and provision and on my return, I was so tired that I could not stand on my feet. Then I had to supervise the division of the provision for the animals so that no one may take more than his share. By this time I was so tired that I would go to sleep without eating anything. The Blessed Perfection travelled in "Kajave" but we had a horse for Him and sometimes, He would ride. From Baghdád to the first stage He was on horseback while in 'Akká, we had a wonderful white donkey which belonged to Him. The name of the donkey was "Barq," lightning. When we arrived at Kharput, whose present name is "Ma'múratu'l-'Azíz," I was at a loss how to get food and provision when I saw a gentleman coming toward me and behind him there were many labourers carrying loads on their shoulders. He said, "'Izzat Páshá has offered thee presents for Bahá'u'lláh and humbly prays him to accept them." The presents consisted of barley, straw, forage, rice, sugar, bread, tea, butter, etc., a large quantity of each. For the first time after many nights and days of worry I felt relieved. I asked one of the believers to look over the delivery of these goods, thanked the gentleman, and went straight to sleep. I slept all that afternoon, all that night, and all the next morning till noon. We stayed 8 days in Kharput and I did hardly anything else but sleeping because we had everything supplied.

[#146]

27 April: Excerpts from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Address to the Women's Club

Sunday, 27 April 1913
Frauenklub, Kanzleistraße 24
Stuttgart, Germany

The following text is taken from Jennifer Redson Wiebers, *Alma Sedonia Knobloch*, pp. 227–28. The primary source is a letter from Alma Knobloch to Pauline Hannen-Knobloch dated 28 April 1913 (Washington DC Bahá'í Archives, Hannen-Knobloch Collection, Box 7).

* * *

Consider how many meetings are held in the world. There are the different parties which gather in the political civilization, many such industrial institutions, commercial associations, many such movements are held, none of these meetings are eternal or last for 2000 years, but the Supper that was held by His Holiness Christ, the results of that meeting are eternal . . . strive that your meeting may be the meeting of the kingdom. Whenever you enter such a meeting, cleanse your hearts from every thought, be purified from all natural and physical

emotion. In the utmost spirituality and sanctity with the greatest light and purity be engaged in mentioning God. Study the Holy books, hearken unto the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, so that you may be free from all else save God. So that your spirit may fly, your thoughts be extended, spiritual susceptibilities may develop, and you may be entirely free from the abstruse form of the natural emotions and your susceptibility enlarged, so that there may be room for the entrance of the Breath of God.

En Route from Germany to France

[#147]

1 May: Remarks to H.E. Warneke on the American People

Thursday, 1 May 1913

On board the train from Stuttgart to Paris

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 541–42. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 1 May 1913.

* * *

The American people . . . are not satisfied with their present day civilization. It is true that they have built a marvellous civilization of their own through giant-like forces and energy which in many respects is superior to the European civilization, yet they are striving for higher things, nobler ideals and universal principles. Look at the majority of the French people. How complacently satisfied they are. They think they have reached the highest acme of civilization and there is no further step to take. But with the Americans it is different. They may be proud of their civilization, because they have made the desert blossom like unto the rose, but they are not satisfied with it, they are seeking after new solutions of old and modern problems, they are thirsty for salubrious water, they are hungry for the bread of life, they are investigating the reality of everything. Their hearts are open, their minds receptive and in discussion never overbearing. They believe there is always a place on the top and so they go forward and upward. They never look backward or downward. They say, what we have accomplished in the past may be 'all right,' but we are going to 'the good' and after that, there is 'the better' and then 'the best' and is there any end of the 'best'? For every 'best' is followed by another 'best' which is 'better' than the former 'best'.

When you observe carefully you shall see that the economic prosperity of a community or a nation is maintained by reciprocity and co-operation. In the whole world, you do not find one man, no matter how varied in his accomplishments who can be sufficient unto himself. All that he can do is to contribute one-thousandth share to the well being of the nation. He studies for ten or 20 yrs and then he is able to co-operate with the other thousands of his fellowmen to make them happier. He supplies them with part of their needs and as a reciprocal action, they supply him with all his needs.

But on the other hand, take the example of the honeybee. The bee is an independent self-sufficient member of the bee-community. In itself it is the source of supply and demand. It

gives the sweet honey and it does not require anything in return, similarly the little ant is an individualist and can live and support itself without the assistance of others. From this standpoint the bee and the ant must be then very happy and enjoy all the privileges of greatness, because they are self-satisfied. However, the glory of men is not in these things. Man becomes man through ideal virtues, through the excellence of the world of humanity, through intellectual superiority, through the knowledge of God and the illumination of the heart. If he is imbued with these qualities, he is man; otherwise he is lower than the animal.

Return to France

[#148]

3 May: Address on Investigating the Centre of Every Undertaking

Saturday, 3 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 548–49. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 3 May 1913.

* * *

['Abdu'l-Bahá] said:

On this journey many souls were set aglow with the Fire of the Love of God and they became exceedingly attracted to the Cause. I hope that you may also become the means of transplanting the indifference and shallowness of Paris. While staying in those cities we came in contact with many sects and many religions, each one holding fast to his own dogmas and superstitions. Each one investigates the reality according to his own thought and each person was happy to cling to his notions no matter how much how fantastic. We spoke with many such people. We presented to them irrefutable proofs and evidences as regards to certain divine principles. We asked of the Theosophists: 'How long is it that you believe in this system of thought? What has been the results of the activities of your society?' They answered: 'We have our own beliefs, our secret doctrines, our theories. We come together every week and speak about these things and initiate the inquirers.' The spiritualists answered: 'We have materialization séances; we communicate with the spirits and we bring into closer relationship the visible with the invisible.' In short we found the majority of these people follow blindly what others teach them and they are submerged in the sea of blind dogmas. We told them, 'In the world of existence there is a centre for every great undertaking. You must investigate that centre and once you have got hold of it, it will make you independent of all else save God. For example, the planets have a centre. Through that centre the whole world is illumined. Now the stars have also lights but it is borrowed. There are many light-giving bodies but they can only illumine a small place. Then sun shines upon all earth and its light is unlimited. Consequently there are many affairs in this world which are beneficial to the human society but are not universal in their results. These different interests need a common centre around which they may revolve. The great universal Centre in this age is the Law of God and the Knowledge of God. Now,

you must throw away all your own thoughts and turn your attention to this Centre. Then all your conflicting ideas shall be reconciled and perfect assurance will be obtained. The lights of this lamp or those stars are not sufficient for you but the light of the Sun shall make you independent. The wires which conduct the electric energy, the globes which confer lustre to the lights will someday be broken but the brilliancy of the Sun is eternal, its bestowals are everlasting, its heat is never-ending.

Then He raised His hands full of longing and desire for action, for great service in the Cause. His voice was full, throbbing with life-vibrations:

Flame forth! Flame forth! Be a torch! Be a torch! Be not silent! Be not silent! Shine! Shine! Unless each one of you become a burning torch, the Cause will not be spread, the influence of the Words will not be felt, the souls will not be attracted, the hearts will not be moved. Unless you get wings, you cannot fly; and soar heavenward. Hold the torches of the love of God in your hands! Let your wings grow! I expect these things from you and I beg and entreat that in Paris you may become the brilliant lamps of the divine guidance!

[#149]

3 May: Remarks on the Materialism of Paris

Saturday, 3 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 550–51. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 3 May 1913.

* * *

An hour ago I took a slow automobile ride through the streets and boulevards of this city. I looked hard into the faces of the people but could not find the least sign of spirituality. They were all submerged in the sea of nature. There was not one luminous countenance to be seen. All were engulfed in the ocean of materialism. I observed most of them are as busy as ants and bees, trying to bring together the means of their comfort and livelihood. These people have studied many years to prepare themselves for their various vocations but the bees and ants are ready to occupy themselves with their duties as soon as they are born. An architect must study several years before he can practice but the bee without any study is a perfect architect. Therefore this highest summit of economic independence and happiness that man strives to

attain has already been scaled without any exertion on the part of the bee and the ant. Just think of the perfect architectural plan of the bee which builds its hexagonal combs with such precision and exactitude that one is astonished! Its food is the extract of flowers and its independence is so complete that it does not require any assistance from others but it assists others by giving them a quantity of sweet honey. But man must study hard, many years and then labour night and day in order to be able to build a house, prepare a table which may or [may] not be as perfect architecturally as the honey-comb; and as luscious as honey; thus man desires to become as low in his ambitions as the bees and ants.

The bee ever hops from one bush to another, thoughtless and carefree, inhaling the fragrances of the variegated flowers and never thinking of tomorrow. If such is the highest state of human happiness and virtue, then the bees and the ants are the happiest and most virtuous! Therefore, the happiness of man and the eternal prosperity of the people lie in the Knowledge of God, the Love of God the virtue of the world of humanity and the ideal of perfections. If man obtains these virtues, he is superior to the animals, otherwise he is inferior to them.

When I was in Acca one day I went into a garden and I sat on the veranda. My attention was attracted by a spider which was building its nest. I watched it and was so amazed at the dexterity that the spider was going on making such perfect triangles and many geometrical forms, all equal to each other, and many wonderful paralleling lines. These lines were so perfect geometrically that it would no doubt have taken two days for an architect with all his instruments to make the same amount of work. Then I thought to myself, 'How civilized and cultured is this spider. Let all the geometricians come and learn from it.'

Civilization is beneficial! Perfection in every line is praiseworthy whether material or spiritual. But the natural civilization must not prevent us from the Graces of the spiritual civilization. We must not let ourselves be so drowned in the sea of materialism as there may not remain any chance of salvation and be deprived of all the bounties and Favors of the Kingdom.

God has deposited in man a holy power which is the discoverer of the phenomena. Which transcends the regulations of Nature and which rules over the powers of the physical world. Through that power man is distinguished from animals. Is it not regretful that man loses his great opportunity to use this power properly and like unto the worms may go deeper and deeper below the earth. I hope that you may become the means of the quickening of the people, that they may be drawn unto the Kingdom; their susceptibilities become spiritual, the world of morality became illumined, the perfections of humanity be revealed and the divine attributes become manifest. I will pray for you.

[#150]

3 May: On the Administration of Proper Punishment

Saturday, 3 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 3 May 1913.

* * *

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá] spoke about the sensitiveness of the plants and how they have a degree of "feeling" according to their environments. There are various degrees of sensitiveness in all the kingdoms of creation. Often one word may reform a man, while on the other hand, all the processes of criminal laws may fail to readjust the moral life of another. One man may be highly sensitized and responds quickly to all advices and exhortations, but another may need sharper measures. This was illustrated in the case of a prime minister of Persia who, having a wonderfully intelligent and keen man in his service, rebuked him one day for some slight thing which he had done unwittingly. This man left the presence of the prime minister and for a long time was sick through the effect of that one rebuke. Later on another prime minister was appointed. The police reported to him of the notorious deeds of a rough criminal who was making life miserable to the inhabitants of one of the sections of the city. "Bring him to me; I know how to punish him."

When they brought the criminal, in order to walk in the footsteps of his predecessor, he started to advise him, to threaten him, and to show him with gentle words the evils of criminal actions. Hoping that this moral lesson will be sufficient, he let him go free. After a few days, they brought him the news that this man has committed worse crimes than ever. He was perplexed and he did not know what to do, because in this case a moral persuasion proved a failure. He went to the ex-prime minister and explained the situation. "Ask the police to bring him here. I know how to punish him," the former minister said. As soon as the man was brought he ordered the *farrashes* to bring the bastinadoes, his feet were raised up in the air and with fresh sticks just gotten from the trees, he was severely beaten. He was then taken afterwards to the prison and for some time vigorously handled. When the term of his prison life came to an end and was given freedom, he never dared to commit another crime. "You must reach that man through the soles of his feet and not moral persuasion," one day remarked the retired prime minister to his successor.

[#151]

4 May: Anecdote on a Fervent Believer Who Went to Káshán

Sunday, 4 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 555–56. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 4 May 1913.

* * *

When I sense the love and unity of the friends I gain health and fresh strength. I have heard that thou art speaking in the meetings and read the prayers. Read always the supplications. . . always thy attention toward God. Be always stirred with divine Fragrances; then eternal happiness will be thy share. The everlasting bliss inspires the heart of man to sing and dance and be happy even under the sword of the executioner.

Once there was a Bahai teacher who went to the city of Khashan [Káshán]. Wherever he went he taught this revelation, till one day he was invited to a large meeting. No sooner he sat down than he began to teach the Cause. The people objected and the guests complained to the host to stop him. It was winter and according to Oriental custom a brazier of live burning charcoal was in the middle of the room. He said to the assembled guests and his host: I cannot stop. I cannot remain silent. I want to be quiet but an invisible force impels me to speak. It has taken the rein out of my hand. I am unconscious! I have lost myself. I have forgotten all my conditions. One of the enemies then addressed him: 'If thou art unconscious put thy hand in the fire!' While he was speaking to them he extended his hand and put it on the fire. His hand was burning and he was teaching the Cause; he was laughing and happy. Some one told him. For heaven's sake! It is enough! Take out thy hand from the fire! He said: 'No! Let it burn! I am enjoying it! This is the day of my happiness! Let me continue to tell you about Baha-ollah and his life and his teachings! Then another person jumped from his seat and by force took his hand out of the fire. It was very much burned. This man – this Bahai – was so immersed in the sea of spiritual susceptibilities that he did not feel the pain and suffering. I hope that all the believers of God may attain to this exalted station and be so engulfed in the ocean of super-human emotions as to forget themselves and the world; this opening the eloquent tongue and receiving the successive assistance of the Kingdom of Abha.

[#152]

5 May: The Story of Mírzá Aḥmad Káshání

Monday, 5 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 5 May 1913.

* * *

This morning the Master served tea with his own hand, and apropos of the weather He grew reminiscent and gave us some interesting side-light upon the history of the Cause in Adrianople:

When we were exiled again from Baghdád . . . in our company there was a Bahá'í by the name Mírzá Aḥmad Káshání. He accompanied Bahá'u'lláh to Constantinople and later on to Adrianople. One night we were invited to a feast. The guests were divided into two and when the supper time came each company was served with a dish of rice and one chicken. It so happened that I was made the partner of Mírzá Aḥmad. As we sat around the table to eat, my partner humorously remarked to get a wing from the chicken of our neighbor, a piece of breast from another company, a leg from a third and so on. I did so, thinking that he will in turn decide our chicken amongst the believers; instead of doing this he ate all and everybody was most amused. He ate also my share. He was your namesake (the Master turned to me laughing). I had given him the title of "geometrician", because he liked to get the first of everything and in order to gain his aim, he would devise many humorous plans, calculated to make anybody laugh. When he entered a meeting, he would look all around and then sit a place where the "hubb-bubble" would be served first. When the tea was prepared by one of the believers, he would go to him in a hurried fashion. "I have a most important affair to attend to and I must go out now. I cannot wait any longer. Please have a glass of tea." All these innocent plans, he would resort to, in order to drink a cup of tea before anybody else; because he believed all the aroma of the tea was in the first cup. One day he asked, why do you call me "geometrician?" I know not even the first principle of geometry." I told him that I will answer his question in the form of a story. Once upon a time a rich merchant was passing by a slave-market. The noise and tumult attracted his attention and he joined the crowd. He saw the slave-trader was sanctioning a slave and mentioning "accounting" as one of his talents. The merchant said to himself, "I have an accountant in my office to whom I pay \$100 a month. Now I will buy this slave for a few hundred dollars and will have him for life—thus saving much money." He

then bought the slave and brought him to his home, rejoicing in his heart that he has been today a shrewd business man. He sat in his room and as the slave was standing near the door, he told him to go and bring him a glass of water. The slave did not move from his place but made several motions with his fingers (here the Master represented the motions). The merchant, getting out of his patience, told angrily to the slave, "What do you mean by disobeying me?" The slave said, "I was counting just now with my hands that first, I must go and bring the water; second, I must return; third, I must stand a long time till you drink; fourth, I must take back the empty glass; fifth, I must return to my place. But you can save three times if you go, drink the water, and come back." The merchant was white with rage. "Is this the way you are an accountant?" "Yes", the submissive slave answered.

The first winter we spent in Adrianople was severely cold and this Mírzá Aḥmad Káshání not being accustomed to hard climate suffered very much. In fact all of us endured the most difficult hardship. Having lived all our lives in moderate and warm climate, the rigorous air of Adrianople was unendurable. The weather was so cold that the water was frozen in copper jars and vases and as a result, they were broken to pieces. One morning I wanted to open the door. My fingers were congealed to the bar of iron and when I tried to push them back the skin was torn off. As the home where the women lived was a little far, whenever I wanted to call on them, I would cover all my head and face with the *abá*, leaving only a small hole for one of my eye to see my way. Notwithstanding this, the cold was so bitter, the wind so biting, that it was as though someone drove a sword, a dagger, or an arrow into my eye. Although we had several rooms in the house, we decided that twelve of us stay in one room to get warmer. We did not have any heavy clothing and the one who had even a light overcoat was considered most fortunate. In this one room we had a tin-plate oven and we made fire to keep us warm. The oven would get as red as fire. Near it we would put two or three bottles of water to be kept warm for drinking. When we got up after midnight to drink, the fire of the oven had naturally given out and the water in the bottles was frozen. We had to make fire, thaw the ice, and drink a glass of the water. That year a flock of sheep with their shepherd were frozen to death in the country. The inhabitants said they had never seen such a winter in their lives. In short, through the assistance of Bahá'u'lláh we lived through it, and when the spring came around the country became verdant and the hearts were made glad.

[#153]

6 May: Remarks on Thoughtlessness in Eastern Nations

Tuesday, 6 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 6 May 1913.

* * *

These sad events . . . which are transpiring in the East and the results of thoughtlessness. Thoughtlessness is the worst calamity of the human race. When constitution was declared in Turkey, the people demonstrated their joy and happiness in thousands of ways. They decorated the streets and the beggars with flags and buntings. They thought that the magic, words of liberty, equality and fraternity will immediately adjust all the accumulated wrongs of the past regime. The governor of 'Akká after our freedom asked my opinion as regards to the success of the Constitutional government in Turkey. I told him so far as we are concerned, we are grateful to the young Turks because they have given us our liberty but their own future is fraught with danger and instability. It is good for a country's development to have two or more political parties, for they check and oppose each other's excesses. But if these parties become selfish and inimical toward each other, they will destroy the happiness of the people. The political organizations must pledge themselves in the sight of God to work for the general progress of the country irrespective of party line and party allegiance. A person becomes the member of a political party in order that he may become a more useful citizen of the country. In short, the political parties in Turkey and Persia failed deplorably, because as they were fundamentally antagonistic to each other, they assisted substantially the downfall of their countries.

[#154]

7 May: Remarks to a Scottish Art Student

Wednesday, 7 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 7 May 1913. Sohrab notes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made these remarks to a young girl from Scotland who was studying painting in Paris.

* * *

His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has commanded the study of arts and crafts, that when we undertake the study of any branch of arts we must perfect ourselves in it and strive to master its technicalities and expressions, but the study of art must not hinder the unfoldment of the sweet flowers of our spiritual life. One must become a complement to the other. Art without the subtle music of the spirit which is only heard by the still small voice; art without the spiritual inspiration of the higher spheres; art without the infinite waves and vibrations of the super-human; art without the tender messages of the anemones and hyacinths of the spiritual rose-garden is not art but artifice. Therefore you must make an effort to master both branches of art.

The Prophets of God who are the Masters of the spiritual art school teach men how to paint on the canvas of the spirits, the ideal images and virtues of the world of humanity. From time to time these masterpieces are exhibited in the wonderful Gallery of Sacrifice—on the Mount of divine Transfiguration. There and only there you are allowed to witness these life-like dramatic exhibitions. It is a marvellous gallery! The Principal of this Gallery today is Bahá'u'lláh and up to this time more than 20,000 portraits have been painted. Would you like to see these tragic, and dramatic life-size portraits? . . .

When Bahá'u'lláh appeared, the moral life of the people was degraded, they were not living like unto human beings. There was no trace of love, sincerity and good-fellowship but through his Teachings, the Fragrances of God were diffused, people were educated to such an extent that a child of 12 years old while under the sword cried out "Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá". You must likewise strive to become more perfect day unto day. His Holiness the Báb has said, a believer must review his deeds every evening to see what has he done and accomplished during the day. If he has done something worthy and noble, if his spiritual susceptibilities are increased he must be thankful to God; if not, repent and try to live a better life tomorrow.

[#155]

7 May: Words to Edwin and Josephine Scott

Wednesday, 7 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 7 May 1913.

* * *

You are the flowers of Paris and the cause of my happiness. All the inhabitants of this city are either thinking of industry or wealth, as they are chasing after the worldly pleasures, except the few Bahá'ís who are thinking of God. In a very large impenetrable jungle we have found a few fruit-bearing trees; therefore you are very much loved. When we were exiled from Tīhrán to Baghdád although we were one month on the way, we did not find a single Bahá'í and upon our arrival in Baghdád we found only three friends; notwithstanding this we were made very happy.

The other day I desired to come to your meeting but I was not feeling well. Your meetings are very spiritual. They will progress in the future. Do not look at the present. The greatest meeting held during the day of Christ was the Lord's Supper. There were only twelve. The meeting was held in a very humble quarter with no table, no chairs and no rugs. They sat around a simple wooden board and spoke on the glad-tidings of the Kingdom. Now consider the results of that one supper. One end of the Christ's table is in the East, the other is in the West, and many nations and tongues are sitting around it!

[#156]

8 May: Discourse on Music in Ancient Persia

Thursday, 8 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 573–75. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 8 May 1913.

* * *

Music is an ancient art in Persia. The old People of Persia loved music very much and their artists contributed to its development. When the Arabs conquered Persia after the appearance of Mohamad, they learned from the Persians the notes and measures and brought back with them to Bagdad, the seat of the Arabian Kalifate of the time. The Persian Music had rich and various harmonies known by the names of the cities, because every city had a different school of singing and they taught their artists the special harmony which belonged to themselves. Persian music became very much in vogue in Bagdad and its fame was spread far and wide. From Bagdad the Arabs carried it to Cordova, Andelusia in Spain, where they had Universities. Here many European students studied the Persian school of music and made it as a foundation for their future and more original compositions. Thus Persian Music has contributed to European Music, although this is not quite well-known.

Besides these historical testimonies, the word 'Music' is Persian. It come from 'Musik' and the word 'Musik' comes from the word 'Musighar' a sweet singing bird. The beak of this bird is so made as to contain many holes, and as it respire, various and different sounds issue from each hole, thus making a combination of pleasant sounds.

The first musician of Persia was Barbad who lived about 2000 yrs ago. He was the first man who translated these pleasant sounds into the voice of man. He divided the music into twelve measures giving to each measure a particular name. He became famous and well-known at that time for his great service to the musical world. The second musical genius of Persia was Faraby who lived 1000 yrs ago and invented the musical notes. The Europeans claim that they are the ones who originated the notes but the book of Faraby was found in the Arabian Library of Spain and sets at naught such a claim. Faraby taught music to his pupils by the motion of his hands. For example the right hand was taken as the harmony and the left had the measures. When the pupil came to him for a lesson he would sit on a chair and move his right or left hand, the pupil ever following these motions.

There is a story in connection with the life of Barbad and his struggle to get royal recognition that I would like to tell you. When he invented the twelve measures of music he was a poor bard and no one knew anything about him. He tried every means to reach the royal Court and play for the King but he failed every time; the court musicians ever blocking his way. They feared his talent. Finally he eluded them and one night entered the Imperial Park hiding himself under the bushes till long after midnight. Then slowly he crept out and walked toward the Palace where the King was sleeping. He spied a tall tree near the King's Apartment and ascended to the top. He carried along of course the musical instrument invented by himself. About dawn he began to play and sing and little by little he added to the richness and volume of his voice till it filled the whole Park. The King was awakened out of his sleep, his heart enraptured with the sweet music. He came out of his Apartment with several Courtiers who were also awakened and together they started to search for the Artist They were at last under the tree on the top of which Barbad was filling the space with his ethereal music. The King and the Courtiers thought a heavenly angel had come down. At last they asked him, 'Art thou human or divine?' He said, 'I am Barbad.' 'Come down, then.' He came down. 'Why did you go on the top of this tree to sing?' The King asked. 'Because your court musicians through jealousy did not let me have an audience with my King, therefore finding no other way and being determined to sing for you, I decided to follow this plan.' The King was most pleased with him and kept him afterwards with himself.

[#157]

9 May: All the Sleeping Must Arise

Friday, 9 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 9 May 1913.

* * *

All the people are sleeping! Why are they so negligent and neglectful of the glorious destiny which His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh has appointed for them? The time has come when they must turn their faces toward the Kingdom of Abhá; instead they are asleep upon the bed of unawareness. The Sun of Reality is in the height of its power and majesty but they prefer dark rooms and the light of the candles. The Bahá'ís all over the world must awaken them with the trumpets of the Word of God. This is the time of real, active work! We must arise with great energy and fire to quicken the souls.

[#158]

9 May: On Body and Spirit

Friday, 9 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 9 May 1913.

* * *

Under all circumstances, I am happy and well. I am never unwell. The body of man is the result of the composition of the elements and these elements are constantly at war with each other. They wage such a bitter war on each other that at last both sides come to defeat and disintegration. But the spirit of man is from the world of God. In the world of God there is no strife. It is a world of simplicity and absolute unity. There is no war and no alteration. There is absolute peace and pure reconciliation.

[#159]

9 May: Remarks on the Melodies of Heavenly Birds

Friday, 9 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 576–77. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 9 May 1913.

* * *

My sweet-singing birds are your hearts, for they sing the songs of the Kingdom. Through this I am made very happy. The twittering of the birds is good for some people but we have sharpened our ears to listen to the songs of the birds of Paradise. The rich notes of this melody is eternal. I love to hear the 'Song of the Heart' which is streaming down from the Kingdom of Abha, stirring the hearts of men with deeper and purer emotions. Have you never thought that the heavenly song which issued from the sweet mouth of Christ found millions of echoes in the hearts of men and women through out ages and cycles and has grown into thousand rich accompaniments? That was a real melody; all others were imitations. We must sing such a melody, the effect of which is lasting. The songs of the birds are the result of the vibrations which are set in motion in the air. They reach the tympanum of our ears and are forgotten after a few minutes. If you hear the songs of the birds continually you will be annoyed. This thing happened in Montclair N. J. when I was there. There were so many birds that the people did not know what to do. They complained to the local authority, because their sounds at night disturbed their sleep. Now you must think of the melody of the Kingdom and that is the Call of God.

There is a station destined for man that if he reaches to it, he will find all the created phenomena holding conversation with him; he will see that everything is speaking with him. For example, when he looks upon the Sun, it will speak with him and addressing him in the most eloquent language as follows: 'O Son of Man! Behold How light is good! I am a body composed of mineral elements! There is no importance in the mineral but as I am as a light-giving body, I am educating the whole world. I am developing all the minerals in the bowels of the earth. I am the cause of all these luxuriant vegetations. I am the means of the continuation of life in the animal and the human kingdoms. I render all these services because I am an illumined body. Therefore, O thou man! Strive that thou mayest likewise become enlightened, thus becoming the means of general education and the upliftment of humanity.'

[#160]

10 May: On the Advancement of Persian Bahá'í Women

Saturday, 10 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 10 May 1913.

* * *

About 9 o'clock [Monsieur] Richard arrived and the Master took Him to His room. He spoke about the ideal freedom of the Persian Bahá'í women, how they are being educated and the new ideals spread amongst them. Their hearts and consciences are free. They move in a calm, spiritual atmosphere. Their intuitions are developed very marvellously. They have received moral and ethical education. Bahá'u'lláh has made the Oriental women free from the fetters of bondage and captivity. They are the equals of men. Man and wife are partners and life companions and not master and slave. Of course, the progress of one fundamental law must not be lost sight of, and that is this: the complete intellectual freedom and social and civic equality of women in Oriental countries must come about by intelligent, normal evolution and not in a haphazard abnormal revolution. The men are cooperating with their sisters to open schools for girls and introduce scientific courses for their instructions. All this will take time and continued vigilance and activity. The Bahá'ís are doing everything in their power to further these high ideals, and the authorities of the School of Tarbíyat in Tíhrán have opened a girl's school and have an American teacher. The future of the Oriental woman is bright but she is now in a period of transition. She is trying to discard the old, archaic garments and putting on the new and modern garments of spiritual and intellectual thoughts. She is striving. She is looking forward. She is searching for the new light. Valiantly she is going ahead and at every step she is removing from her path new and unexpected stumbling-blocks; thus she is paving the road for her sisters yet unborn. With the lantern of Bahá'u'lláh in her hand, fearlessly she walks abroad while the night of ignorance is inky dark; the winds of prejudices howling; the hobgoblins of illiteracy intimidating; the fanaticism of the Mullás surging; the nightmare of unexpected attacks growling; the powers of darkness surrounding and Oriental nugatory staring in the eyes. But our "new Oriental woman" like unto her "new Occidental sister" has seen the light and her star-like destiny. With unwavering courage and indomitable energy she has resolved to reach her glorious destination and no power can stop her from achieving her exalted mission of ideal and practical emancipation. It is very clear that in the immediate future woman shall play a great role in the progress of civilization. There is a surging unrest in the woman's world. The seed of the new ideals which have been sown in the

soil of their hearts are beginning to push out their tender heads and soon they will grow and develop and produce luscious fruits. We are at the most interesting period of woman's development. While they are acquiring virtues, studying sciences, equipping themselves with artistic careers and entering upon the field of active work, the old foundations are tottering, the old earth is passing away and the new heaven appearing. May the stars of this new heaven increase daily in number and in brilliancy.

[#161]

10 May: On the Power of the Covenant

Saturday, 10 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 10 May 1913.

* * *

Consider the Power of the Covenant! Where is 'Akká and where is Los Angeles! Yet the Power of the Covenant of Bahá'u'lláh has united these two distant points! As people in Southern California are religious, the Cause shall advance there, and many people will become attracted and the Word of God will be promoted. In order to preserve the unity of the Cause and to spread the religion of God, Bahá'u'lláh established this Covenant and Testament. Were it not for the power of the Covenant, you would have witnessed the dispersion of the believers and the total disappearance of the Cause of God. When I say the Covenant, I mean the power and the authority of Bahá'u'lláh given to me. In this station the consideration of sonship and fatherhood is forgotten. Bahá'u'lláh did not appoint 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Center of His Covenant because he was his son but because he was the purest and the readiest channel on the face of the earth to carry on this work. The believers must realize that the Power of the Covenant is for the protection of the Cause of God, the promulgation of the religion of God and the brotherhood of the East and the West.

[#162]

10 May: Another Discourse on Sufi Belief versus Bahá'í Belief

Saturday, 10 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 581–82. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 10 May 1913.

* * *

Sohrab offers this summary of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's remarks:

The difference between the Sufi system of thought and the Bahai revelation was dwelt on by the Master in detail in the most clear and logical manner. He quoted the philosophic apothegms of the Sufi leaders stating that the Sufi idea about God is pantheistic—the One supreme essence individualizing itself in all the succession of phenomena. One of them says: 'the creatures are as a mass of congealed ice, but God the essence of God is the water. When the ice is thawed down—or when we shuffle off this mortal coil—it will become part of the water again. Another Sufi poet says: 'The Sea—God—has been from time immemorial and is eternal but these contingencies and creatures are the waves and the ripples there of.' Another celebrated Sufi poet Attar portrays this idea of pantheism in a long wonderful poem called the "Parliament of birds."* The poem is written allegorically. It is said that Hodhad [Hudhud] a very beautiful bird came one day to all the other birds and said, 'let us all gather together and make a pilgrimage to the Mountain of Gaff [Qáf] where the king of birds Seymorg [Símurgh] dwells on a lofty peak. (Now Seymorg is a fabulous mythological bird in the ancient literature of Persia, but it means literally 30 birds. 'Sey' [sí] means 30, 'Morg' [murgh] bird). Then Hodhad sent out messengers to all parts of the world to announce the approaching departure of the birds for the Mountain of Gaff. Millions of birds joined the Caravan. At last they were ready and started on their long journey. They had to cross many waste deserts and many desolated valleys. They flew over many high mountains. For days they could get neither food nor water. Consequently many of them died on the way and the rays of the sun burned and scorched the wings and feathers of many thousand and they fell on the desert strewing the trail with their dead bodies. Finally the large army was woefully decimated and only 30 birds reached the

* Known today in English translation as *The Conference of the Birds*.

mountain of Gaff. Having attained to the summit they did not find any Seymorg but looking around they saw they are the Seymorg themselves.

Sohrab then records ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s words as follows:

Now it is evident that the Sufis believe in two stations—God and creatures. They express this pantheism in the simile of the sea and the waves. This is the foundation of the school of the Sufi philosophy by which runs under various aspects throughout all the higher structures of their idealism. They consider all phenomena as parts and parcels of God but limited in their own influences. For example they say, this wave is limited but the ocean in comparison to a single wave is unlimited, but just the same, the wave is part of the sea. This will naturally bring them to the preposterous declaration that the Eternal will become accidental and the Powerful, the weak. They say, that the reality of divinity descends into the world appearing and reappearing under infinite forms. But the Bahais say there is God, the Creatures and the medium. They state that the Reality of Divinity is Absolute Independence; if it comes within the circle of Necessity, it is not Divinity, the reality of Divinity is Absolute Perfection but the creatures are pure imperfection. Consequently there are channels between God and man. These channels are the Holy Divine Manifestations.

[#163]

11 May: Miscellaneous Conversations at the Baltimore Hotel

Sunday, 11 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 609–13. All of the words attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá originally come from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 11 May 1913.

* * *

In the morning [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] spoke about:

“How the countenance is the mirror of the heart. If you have the perceptive power, as soon as you look in the faces of the people, you can observe what ideals are reigning in their hearts. The other day I walked through the avenues but did not find one face reflecting the spiritual ideals of the heart. In America it is different. Mighty thoughts of philanthropy and illumined ideals of humanitarianism are set in motion and you find their reflection in the faces, because

they are lodged in the hearts. One woman told me, she was working day and night to abolish the law of capital punishment, another person told me she desired to have a uniform inter-state divorce law; a third was devoting his time to the betterment of the conditions of criminals in the penitentiaries, another was trying to introduce a new system of education, etc etc. I found these noble ideals have permeated throughout all the classes of America. Civilized and refining influences are working. Everyone is thinking in the terms of progress, upward march. In the strictest sense there is no reactionary movement in America. What is called reactionary there is radical progressiveness in other parts of the world.”

In regard to the overwhelming amount of correspondence which He received, He said:

“I read all of them, but I have no time to send answers to each one. It is impossible. Some of the friends may think they are the only ones who write to me and so wonder why they do not receive answers but it is simply beyond any human possibility to answer all the letters.”

Laura Dreyfus called with a large bunch of red roses. It was a common practice for visitors to bring flowers and the salon was always filled with a large variety of flowers.

At the meeting Horace Holley was present. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá enquired about his forthcoming book. He was told it would be printed in about four weeks. Then ‘Abdu'l-Bahá remarked:

“I was thinking that during the days of Christ not one word was written about him. We have at present time in our hands 4 Gospels, two of these written 60 yrs after Christ; but today there are ever so many books written on the Cause, proving its authority and greatness. In this day, the most useful books are those which demonstrate the validity of the Cause with logical proofs, intellectual evidences and spiritual arguments.”

In answer to a question put by Horace Holley, He said:

“In the spiritual mirror, the virtues of the world of humanity are visible. Just as the intellectual law unravels the mysteries of phenomena, similarly the spiritual law acquires the ideal principles of humanity. Just as in the world of nature the “survival of the fittest”, likewise in the spiritual world there are the perfections of the divine realm. Just as order and peace are continued in a community through the strong hand of law, in the same manner the world of humanity exists through the acquirement of divine and spiritual virtues. The struggle for existence insures the growth and development of the species, likewise the spiritual law secures the unfoldment and progress of the spirit.”

In answer to another question He said:

“The greatest prison is the material world. Prison is the antithesis of freedom. Now man is a prisoner of food, of sleep, of comfort and thousand other similar prisons. Therefore the

material body of man is a prisoner of these things and he cannot free himself from them. On the other hand, he is also a prisoner of greed, of rapacity, of tyranny, of ill-feeling against others, of envy, of jealousy, etc. He can free himself from these things. He is able to free his heart from the love of this world. He is able to release himself from anger, greed, ego, passion, and, all the vices of the material world. How is he enabled to free himself from these vices? He can render this service unto himself and then unto others through the influence of the Divine Law. The Divine Law warns man from falling into these black pitfalls and yawning precipices and frees him from the fetters of self. Whereas formerly he was dark, he is made illumined. Whereas formerly he was limited, he becomes unlimited. Whereas formerly he was withered, he becomes enkindled. Whereas formerly he was blind, deaf and mute, he becomes seeing, hearing and the power of speech is given unto him. Whereas formerly he was dead, he becomes alive! This is the real freedom.”

Someone asked about spiritual happiness. He answered:

“There are three paths through which man obtains spiritual happiness. The first path is the path of ordeals, trials and difficulties. His feet are torn with thorns and thistles, he goes through many pains and torments but finally he reaches his destination. The second path is a pleasant path but then He advances surely but slowly. Step by step he comes nearer and nearer to the goal. It, may take many years but the persevering, determined, cheerful traveller goes on and on. The third path is the path of faith. With one step the traveller finds himself in the Kingdom; even less than the twinkling of an eye the change is wrought. In one moment he travels from the world of negation into the world of affirmation. We have seen this with our own eyes. A man who has been the collective center of all the vices, having become a Bahai is changed completely in less than a second. He becomes another man. He has entered a new world of light.”

In answer to the questions of others, He spoke in detail on the non-existence of time and space.

On the importance of the affairs of life, He said:

“Different things are considered by us as of supreme importance – while in reality it has a relative importance – at our various stages of development. For example when we were children, we considered play as of supreme importance, but now that we are grown up more important matters engage our attention, a toothache may be considered as of supreme importance to some, while giving up life itself is of no importance whatsoever in the estimation of others. The martyrs in this Cause gave up their lives rejoicingly without any hesitation but if one of our hands is pricked with a thorn we run to the doctor and are worried and anxious about it. When the doll is broken, the little girl mourns and laments as though her living child is dead, but when she grows up she may break the doll herself.”

Someone asked about the feelings of the martyrs: whether they are conscious of any pain when they are tortured. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered:

“Baha-ollah in one of His Tablets says ‘Therefore I will explain for your benefit certain luminous and shining mysteries, whereby you will become so attracted toward the loftiest station as to forget completely the world and all that contains therein. Then you will feel only the Presence of the Almighty. If you reach to this station you will be in the station of abstraction and you will see nothing else except God. Once living in this great station, if the enemies tear you to pieces, you do not feel the pain and suffering. This is the station of submission. It is as though man is submerged in the sea. He knows nothing of the outside condition of life.’”

After speaking some more, 'Abdu'l-Bahá went for a long walk and this time alone.

[#164]

12 May: Words to a Friend from Scotland

Monday, 12 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 12 May 1913.

* * *

We have many friends in Scotland; many devoted friends; amongst them is Mrs. Whyte. I was most pleased with my visit to that country. Scotland's weather is very invigorating. The city of Edinburgh is beautiful and its inhabitants progressive and deeply religious. Theirs is a firm and strong character. They are thirsty for spiritual water. They are not dogmatic but they feel a heartfelt sincerity about their religion. This is good. They have a deep sense for spiritual ideals. While there, they asked me many questions; and several large meetings were organized and we delivered addresses. The people of Edinburgh are intelligent and critical. They investigate. They do not accept anything on blind faith. All their questions were dignified and based upon a desire to learn.

A meeting was held in Mrs. Whyte's house for the Oriental students. They were from China, Japan, Persia, India, Turkey, Syria, Arabia, etc. It was a wonderful demonstration of the union of the East and of the West. These were strong, purposeful young men. Another meeting was organized by the Esperantists and one by the Theosophists. Both these meetings were marvelous. Mr. Page the Secretary of the Esperanto Association and Mr. Graham Pole, the

General Secretary of the Theosophical Society was most intelligent and sympathetic. They were very kind and hospitable. In short I met many people in Edinburgh whom I shall never forget. There are certain souls whose thirst is never allayed, while others are satisfied with one drop. The larger the vase the greater its capacity to hold water, but when the vase is small, there will be very little water in it. When His Holiness Christ appeared, the Jews said: 'We have enough water in our vases. We do not need the fountain of Christ. We have been blessed with many prophets during the Jewish history. These prophets have been the divine Cup-bearers. We have quaffed the pure water from their hands. Are we going to run after this new spring?' But those souls who were really blessed and glorious they drunk deeply from the fountain of Christ and yet were they thirsty, yet were they seeking. His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh says in one of his Tablets: if you drink all the seas of the earth there must be no sign of wetness on your lips. You must be always thirsty for the water of significances. The more the circle of your information is widened, the greater must become your search. Only through this open attitude man will become perfect, but a soul whose cup is filled with a few drops will never become perfect.

[#165]

12 May: Positive Remarks on Intermarriage

Monday, 12 May 1913
 Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 12 May 1913. Sohrab writes that 'Abdu'l-Bahá made these remarks to Mírzá Faḍlu'lláh, the brother of Dr. Youness Khan Afroukhteh; Faḍlu'lláh called on Him at 5:00pm with "his newly-wedded French wife," and 'Abdu'l-Bahá "greeted them cordially and with happiness radiating from his face."

* * *

You are welcomed; you are welcome! I am most pleased with your marriage. For this is a marriage between the East and the West. The more inter-marriage between the Europeans, Americans and Persians the better for the world! I like to see intermarriages between the inhabitants of these parts of the world increasing. In our country whenever there is a long-standing feud between two tribes, in order to remove it they intermarry. In reality, it has a wonderful effect. In Persia there are many of the nomadic tribes who pass all their lives under the tent, in the open air. Often between two tribes there has existed enmity and hatred for many years. They have fought against each other; pillaged each other's property, and people were killed on both sides. Now if an outside disinterested influence came in and try to

reconcile these two contending parties he will use the same old eternal rule. The son of the chief of one tribe will marry the daughter of the chief of the other tribe. Immediately enmity is changed into amity and hatred into love. This rule has been tried again and again and has not been found wanting! It has a great efficacy. Now that the Persians and the Americans, the Americans and the Persians, the Europeans and the Persians and the Persians and the Europeans have begun to give daughters and sons unto each other, I hope that the bond of affection and unity between the East and the West will be reinforced and spiritual communication many living them into closer relationships. May this union flood the unexplored regions of the hearts with the rays of the Love of God! May such happy events hasten the day of the oneness of the world of humanity! Every movement which increases love and affection amongst the children of men is a divine movement and any cause creating alienation or even ill-feeling is diabolic in origin. In reality the world of humanity is one family but these ignorant fellows have come and divided it into French and German, Austrian and Italian, Persian and Arabs etc. How sweet will it be to see the French marrying with the English the English with the German and vice-versa. This will be the means of a greater and more lasting unity, agreement and concord. God has created all the phenomena as pairs—male and female. Therefore marriage is a divine and natural institute. There is no celibacy in the Bahá'í Cause. I am most pleased with your union and I hope that in the utmost of kindness you shall live together the rest of your days. May you be ever happy and the means of comfort and joy be ever prepared for you. May God pour upon you His blessing and shower you with His benediction! You will be always under the shelter of the Almighty! And you will be encircled with His preservation.

[#166]

12 May: A Story about Christ Fleeing from a Fool

Monday, 12 May 1913
 Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, p. 586. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 12 May 1913.

* * *

There is a story attributed to Christ in the oriental literature that is not found in any of four gospels. It is reported that one day a number of people saw Christ flying away with great haste. They asked him, why art thou hurrying away with such rapidity? He did not give them any answer but continued to run. Finally they caught him in his flight and told him. 'Why this

haste? Are you flying away from the ferocity of a lion or a panther or a leopard or wolf or bear? There are no such wild beasts in this vicinity and we do not see any logical reason for this precipitous flight!' Then Christ said 'I am flying away from a fool.' They were astonished at this declaration. 'Art thou not the Christ? Breathe then with the Power of the Holy Spirit over this man and he will be free from his foolishness.' Christ said, 'With the same breath of the Holy Spirit that I blew over the ignorant and he became wise; the deaf became hearing, the blind seeing, the mute speaking, the sick became well and the dead received a new life—I blew the same breath of the holy spirit more than one thousand times over this fool and there was no result; consequently I am flying away from him.'

[#167]

14 May: Counsels to Forsake Materialism and Embrace Spirituality

Wednesday, 14 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 May 1913.

* * *

The world of matter is full of vices and the people of these regions are engaged too much in chasing material things. They are thinking too much of money and the tinsels and playthings they can buy with it. The precious hours of the day and the night are devoted to thinking and speaking in terms of France; what should they eat today; how can they buy that special dress tomorrow; when can they go to the ballroom and have a dizzy whirl around; what time can they attend the latest sensation in the theatrical world! If these people are so captivated in the claws of senses, they are less than the animals. God has distinguished man through his spiritual and intellectual powers. He has conferred upon him the invisible forces of conception and ideation - so that he may become celestial, just, intelligent, and attracted to the Kingdom of God! You must make these people understand these ideal principles so that they became aware and mindful! Tell them: you have tried the material world and its intriguing seductive pleasures; now come and travel with us for a while through the spiritual world. If the experiences are pleasing, continue to travel with us; if they are not, you can return easily to your ways. Let us together fly toward the realm of light; if the lights are too strong for you, you may come back to your black cell. How do you like this plan of teaching? Is that a good bargain? This way speak ye to the materialists. But address the religionists as follows: O ye people! How long, how long are ye submerged in deep slumber! O ye brothers! How long, how long are ye satisfied with traditions and dogmas! The Sun of Righteousness has arisen. Awake

ye! The morn of Eternity has appeared! Shake off from your bodies this spiritual lethargy. The portals of the celestial Kingdom are open, enter ye therein! The divine Treasury is rediscovered, enrich yourselves! The Merciful Graces are all encircling, avail the opportunity! Awake! Awake! This is the day of wakefulness and not sleep! This is the century of deeds and not words! This is the age of production and not sterility. This is the period of conflagration and not extinction! This is the time of contagious enthusiasm and not lukewarmness. Gird ye up the lions of endeavor, band ye together! Be ye loving towards each other! Banish, banish the nightmare of differences and ill-feeling. Your Maker has created you for love's sake! Arise, arise, for the glorious Luminary has arisen and has healing in its royal wings! Be ye as balls of fire! Be ye as torches of guidance! Increase your love daily! Add to your affection hourly! Ye are the children of God and He has endowed you with the possibilities of infinite progress.

[#168]

16 May: Exhortations to Virtue and a Story about Mullá Husayn and Quddús

Friday, 16 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 16 May 1913.

* * *

Whosoever schemes in this Cause will come to no good end. Above all other things we must be honest to our consciences and not dissimulate. We must not speak against each other either publicly or privately. We must not belittle the services rendered by others because they are not so fortunately situated as ourselves. We must be humble. We must not have the spirit of destructive criticism. Before making any statement we must investigate it first thoroughly, whether it is true or not. We must not make the hearts of others sad. We must speak with gentleness and brotherliness. We must not backbite. We must speak about each other with consideration and infinite courtesy. We must adorn our temples with extreme politeness. We must not be rude to any human being. We must judge the people by their inborn spiritual qualities. Let no one raise his tongue in intentional or unintentional malice against his brother or sister. We must watch our tongues. This Cause is great and the circle of our patience must be very wide. Let every man write this sentence, "Watch thy tongue," on the tablet of his heart.

Let me relate to you a story which shows you more than anything else that we must ever look beyond the outward appearance and form and judge a person by his spiritual worth. After the appearance of the Báb, the disciple who succeeded Him was called "Bábu'l-Báb".* The believers of God at that time gave him the greatest homage and respect. When Bábu'l-Báb was in the fortress of Ṭabarsí surrounded by thousands of enemies, Quddús, another great teacher, was in the company of the 360 Bábís who were to be seized in this fortress. No one gave any importance to Quddús; he was one amongst the brothers. No one looked upon him with any deference. He mingled with all the friends, and always when Bábu'l-Báb was sitting, he was standing reverently before him. However, one day there was observed a great change. The friends found Quddús sitting and Bábu'l-Báb standing before him far away near the door. Of course everyone was astonished. Then Bábu'l-Báb, addressing the believers, said in hushed voices, "I did not know before the station of Quddús. Tonight I realized that I am less than the dust under his feet." From that time on he served Quddús like a servant and later on Quddús receiving a fracture of tooth through the passing of a rifle cartridge, Bábu'l-Báb came to him and begged him to let him go out of the fortress and sacrifice his life in his path, and he did so.

[#169]

18 May: Discourse on Willpower

Sunday, 18 May 1913
 Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 604–7. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 May 1913.

* * *

The will-power exists both in animal and man. The animals enjoy only a physical will-power which is limited in the sphere of its activity, while man holds in his grasp two kinds of will-power, the physical will-power which is circumscribed by certain limitations, and the spiritual will-power which transcends all human obstacles. The spiritual will-power is susceptible of such limitless progress that man will disregard his comfort, endure smilingly all difficulties and forfeit his very life for the public weal. Strive that you may obtain this will-power. God has deposited in the brain of man, the seed of such a wonderful will-power, that once grown into full stature, it will not be satisfied with anything. It will spur its possessor to rise higher

* "The gate of the Gate," a title of Mullá Ḥusayn.

and higher, to study more and more, to gain more knowledge and success. Its thirst is never allayed. This is a sign of the signs of God. The bird may rise toward heaven, but there is a limit beyond which it cannot soar. It must return to earth once reached that height. But for the flight of the will-power of man, there is no limit. The higher man soars toward the immensity of space, the greater will be the unfoldment of his will-power. How can we develop our will-power? We develop our will-power through the divine unrest which causes us to long for the better and noble ideals of life. We must not stop from our search, neither curb our spiritual ambitions. We may spur our physical will-power to the point of walking ten miles instead of our accustomed two miles but then we are overpowered by a complete exhaustion. On the other hand, if you meet any one whom you are not fond of, after ten minutes or half an hour conversation, you start to rub your eyes and try to banish away the ennui and sleep, but if you love the same person, you may talk with him for hours and when the time of departure comes around, you would not like to leave. Now just as the exercise of the influence of the spiritual will-power is unlimited so the scope of our search and “divine unrest” must be measureless. It is only through the display of the spiritual will-power that man is distinguished above the animals. All the sciences and inventions, all the colossal undertakings and great achievements have been brought into being through the exercise of will-power in the properly-directed channels. That is why Christ says “Thy will be done and not mine,”* because in the appearance of the will of the Father, all our hopes and longings are obtained.

It is written in the Bible: let us create man in our image and likeness.[†] What does this mean? It means that the Reality of Divinity is the Collective Centre of all the consummate Virtues. Now the primal Intelligence—God—willed to create man and make him a “particular Collective Centre” of all his own infinite virtues. For example, one of the virtues of God is Knowledge. He deposited a sign of His knowledge in the temple of man. Another virtue of God is life. He has conferred upon man a trace of this virtue. One of His virtues is power. He has made man powerful. He is the all-seeing. He has granted man the power of sight. Another virtue of Divinity is will-power. He has created within man a symbol of this all comprehending power. In short, just as these virtues are infinite in the Reality of Divinity, man must likewise strive to become that embodiment of the signs of their infinite virtues. One of the virtues of God is Love. Man must make an effort to make himself the personification of love. Similarly the signs of all the divine attributes of Divinity must become fully revealed in man in order that he may become the perfect representative of the Virtues of God. Strive always that your will-power may be expanded in philanthropic channels. Except humanitarian aims nothing is productive of any results. The formation of all the sovereign dynasties of the world have been made possible through the determined exercise of the will-power, but as they have not been formed by disinterested people, they are today tottering to the ground. On the other hand, the blessed souls who arose to serve the Cause of God and had no other will except the will of God, they

* Mark 14:36, Matthew 26:42, Luke 22:42.

† Genesis 1:26.

became eternal and everlasting. Their will-power became the will-power of God. Their traces will become the traces of God, and their thoughts will become the thoughts of God. Ponder over these explanations and the doors of many significances will be opened unto you.

Why there is not rest in the world? Why there is so much bloodshed and discord? Why so much tyranny and oppression? All these are because the people do not live according to the will of God. If they lived according to His will, undoubtedly the world would have become illumined and these difficulties would have been removed. In the world of existence there is nothing more productive of results than the co-operation of the will-powers of men. If the will-powers of two men co-ordinate with each other the action will be greater in effect and scope. Likewise if the will-powers of the nations of today co-ordinate with each other in international [cooperation] and unification, the happiness of mankind will become unveiled.

Just at this time why do we enjoy so much security and safety in Paris? Because the majority of the French people have co-ordinated together in establishing a system of government—Republican—which is exercising control over the inhabitants through their own consent. But as soon as the balance of the will-power of the majority is disturbed, public order will take flight. This is the result of the co-ordination of the will-power of men along political lines, but if their will-powers co-ordinate together along all lines you can conceive what will be the glorious results. The holy divine Manifestations have come to teach men how to develop their will-powers, so that the souls may be united together and put in practice these principles which will be conducive to the prosperity of the world of humanity.

[#170]

18 May: Comments to Lucy Moore on Green Acre

Sunday, 18 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 May 1913.

* * *

How [is] Green Acre? . . . When the season will be opened? Green Acre is a most delightful spot. I enjoyed my visit to that charming place. If I ever go to America, I will pay a second visit to Green Acre. It is a most ideal spot for the dissemination of lofty principles. In Green Acre you must concentrate all your thoughts around the one all-important fact—the investigation of Reality. You must expend all your thoughts on this thing—so that the union of opinions and expressions may be obtained. Green Acre at this juncture needs a person who has a great

organizing capacity. He must collect all the scattered forces and ideals around one common center and wield them into one mighty, active dynamic force. He must be an extraordinary man; he must have a reconciling spirit, he must be a lover of the whole world, he must upraise the standard of peace and reconciliation, he must protect the newcomers from the confusing theories and unproductive thoughts. Green Acre needs a superior general, a wonderful commander a general that can scatter the forces of darkness and traditions. An army without a general cannot achieve signal victories. If the circle of the activities of Green Acre is so expanded as to have every year, the leaders of every religion and thought so that they may associate with each other with perfect love and amity, it will be very good. The aim of those souls who deliver the principal addresses or who take part in the discussion must be solely for the investigation of reality and not the presentation of dogmas and unprofitable antiquated theories. They must never enter into any altercation. The chief objects of Green Acre conferences must be:—the furtherance of universal Peace, investigation of Reality, brotherhood, tolerance, sympathy to all mankind, the cultivation of better understanding between the nations of the world, the spread of spiritual culture, the elimination of dogmas and superficialities, the illumination of the hearts with the Light of Truth, mutual assistance and cooperation, social service, the study of the fundamental principles of all the religions and their comparative co-ordination. Green Acre must carry away this palm of victory. The Trustees must not let this wonderful opportunities slip out of their hands. They must forget their personal likes and dislikes and work for the benefit of the Cause. Personal ambition must be thrown to the wind and all the available will-powers be exercised toward the realization of these universal objects. If you outline such a practical, universal, all-inclusive program and then invite Me I will come again to Green Acre. You must lay such a foundation so that the influence of the confederation of religions and sects may permeate to all parts of the world from Green Acre and Green Acre for all the future ages and cycles may become the standard-bearers of the oneness of the world of humanity. I will pray for the fulfillment of this truth!

[#171]

18 May: On the Appearance of Manifestations in the East

Sunday, 18 May 1913
 Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 May 1913.

* * *

The dawning-point of these lights have been always in the East. The holy, divine Manifestations, the philosophers and thinkers have had their birth-places in the Orient. There is an intangible ineffable something in the atmosphere of the Orient that causes the increase of spiritual susceptibilities. On the other hand, material thoughts are predominant in Europe. Life in the Orient is very simple, very charming, while in the Occident it has become very complex and wheels within wheels. In the Eastern countries, the hearts are undisturbed and calm but in these regions the minds of men are engaged with the solution of civilizing problems. Man is not created by God so that he may live a material life like unto the animals. The Almighty has destined for him eternal life, spiritual existence, the perfections of the divine world and the virtues of the celestial realm.

[#172]

18 May: On the Indissoluble Bonds of Spirituality

Sunday, 18 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 18 May 1913.

* * *

My primal object in this life is to see the hearts ideally related together. There are two kinds of relations. First: material relations. This is not important. Its equilibrium is disturbed by the slightest mishap. But the ideal relation is permanent. How many seemingly irrefragable treaties have been established between the various governments, but as soon as their material interests came into conflict, the promises given in these treaties were not of any worth in their estimation. Likewise there are people who have lived with each other for a long time but having no spiritual relation, they are separated for the least cause. But the denizens of the Kingdom, enjoying the spiritual relation are never separated. This relation is ever-existent. It is not like the relation which exists between these bouquets of flowers which no sooner faded, they are separated but it is like the relation which exists between the stars of Pleiades. For ages and cycles they have been clustered and held together. My hope is to establish such a relation between the people of the East and of the West, a relation which is cordial and heartfelt.

[#173]

19 May: Conversations with a Certain Mrs. Noel

Monday, 19 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, pp. 609–13. All of the words attributed to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá originally come from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 19 May 1913.

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. . . a Mrs. Noel called. Mrs. Noel expressed that she had an intellectual grasp of religion but not a spiritual one.

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:] “The more your faith grows in Baha-ollah, the greater will be the illumination of your heart because the spirit of man is strengthened and reinforced through the utterances and the love of Baha-ollah. Just as the body receives force through food, so the spirit is in need of the spiritual food. What is the food of the spirit? It is the love of God and the knowledge of God – the praiseworthy attributes. Endeavour that thou mayst adorn thyself with these heavenly virtues, be attracted to the Kingdom of Abha and arise with the greatest joy to serve thy fellowmen, As long as thy aim is pure thou shalt become confirmed. If our object is unselfish, one must feel assured that the highest desire of our hearts shall be obtained. I will pray for thee. . . My prayers are sometimes universal and sometimes particular. I will specially pray for thee.”

Sohrab states that she was so happy that she wept with joy. She said:

“Often I have glimpses of truth but at other times I am left in darkness.”

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:] “Thou must strive to enter into the spiritual state and be established in the Kingdom. Once there, you are eternally submerged in a sea of light. There will be no unhappiness and no sadness.”

She asked about renunciation. “Do we attain to the state of renunciation after we have realized God and His Causes or we must renounce our desires before our attainment to this spiritual condition?”

[‘Abdu’l-Bahá replied:] “First we must make ourselves receptive, then the bounties of God descend upon us. The mirror must become clear from rust first, then the sun with all its glory

will be reflected therein. Prepare your apartment first before you invite the guests. Therefore, first we must become severed and detached, then we will obtain the divine bounties. Renunciation or severance does not mean to suppress your noble feelings, to shun the activities of life and to shift the responsibilities that God has laid upon our shoulders. It means to overcome the dark powers of nature, to be freed from the promptings of self . . .”

[#174]

20 May: Discourse on How People Are Like Children

Tuesday, 20 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 618–19. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 May 1913.

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Some people are like unto the children. The most unimportant event gives them happiness and the most trifling incident saddens their hearts. For example, if you give one franc to a child, it will make him very happy, but if he loses it he is sorrow-stricken. If you carry a doll to a little girl, she flies to the heaven of joy and if the doll is stolen by her playmates, she is cast to the depth of despair. In short, an infinitesimal incident gives happiness to some and the most inconsequential event makes others sad. In the morning, they are boiling over with the exuberance of joyousness, and in the evening they have simmered down to the point of despondency and sheer disappointment. This is a sign of the weakness of their character and the feebleness of their faith. But a wisely-directed soul, a person whose heart is illumined with the Light of God, who is imbued with the quality of radiant acquiescence and who is informed with the open mysteries of the divine world, is always in the same condition and is never upset by the constantly changing events of life. His inspiration is continual because his heart is attached to the Spring of All; his happiness is eternal, because it comes from God; his rejoicing is perpetual because it is based upon the eternal rock of knowledge of God. His attitude is never-failing, because it is emanated from the virtues of the world of humanity. This joy undergoes no change and transformation. This happiness is age-abiding. If a person is thirsty for the water of the knowledge of God, his happiness is unailing. If a soul is interested in humanitarian deeds, his joy is perennial. Therefore, the happiness that comes through God is a light that is not followed by any darkness; a healing which is not eroded by any disease; a glory which is not consummated by any shame. Consequently, we must search diligently after the everlasting and not temporary happiness.

[#175]

20 May: Discourse on the Mistreatment and Repudiation of Christ

Tuesday, 20 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 617–18. The primary source is the Fanny Knobloch papers, held at the Bahá'í Archives in Washington, D.C.

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. . . When His holiness Christ appeared in Palestine, He was surrounded by Jewish tribes & communities. All the Jews sneered & scoffed at Him & heaped upon Him calumnies. This accounts for Christ's living most of the time in seclusion in Palestine in the wilderness, so that few of the people knew Him. Why, the Jews entered into an agreement by which in return for a stated sum of money Judas Iscariot promised to point Him out – betraying His Lord by kissing Him, thus the Jews would know Him. All this because Christ was constantly persecuted. Then they seized Him, they heaped upon Him every indignity. They crowned Him with thorns, they jeered Him in the streets, they spat upon Him. They laughed at Him saying: Peace be unto Him, the King of the Jews who both said: Jerusalem shall be destroyed and built again in three days. In this way the Jews blindly mistreated Christ in Palestine, while the philosophers and seers of Greece were flourishing, and searching for the Truth of God, but the Jews were arrogant. They said: We are independent of all this. This Man, who claims to be the Messiah, speaks contrary to the teachings of our Prophets. WE have investigated and we deny the Christ. We do not need philosophers and seers from other lands, we know all that is worth knowing, building their argument upon shifting sands.

Afterwards it became evident that all of them needed Him. In short, all the teachings brought forth at that time, afterwards made it evident that they needed Christ. Thus it came about that we know glorify Christ. Consider for one moment how Christ and His Cause were considered so unimportant and infinitesimally small that not even one of the Leaders of that time considered His Cause worthy of consideration and thought, then, when He was crucified, the burial in the cemetery was denied Him. They said: We can not have this apostate buried in our cemetery, and as you know, Judas Iscariot was given certain money for betraying his Lord, but afterwards realizing the awfulness of his deed, he returned the money, and with this a piece of ground was bought some distance from the City, where Jesus was buried. This ground is known as Potters Field.

Ever the holy Manifestations have been scoffed at and derided and they have not been accepted during their lifetime. In reading your Bible you will find all the Manifestations of God were made to suffer greatly. Some were martyred, some exiled or imprisoned, others banished from their country. But how strange is human nature, after killing the bodies of these holy ones, they erect Temples of worship in their honor. How many millions of statues and pictures of the crucified Christ do we know find in homes and churches of the people. Yet, while the Holy Divine Manifestation lived amongst them they abused them. After their departure they revere and worship them. Bless God, and give praise unto Him, for you have recognized His Manifestation. You should be very happy.”

[#176]

22 May: Three Kinds of Light

Thursday, 22 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 22 May 1913.

* * *

There are three kinds of light. The light of the sun has only one function and that is to make things manifest. This light is not important; it is only the result of ethereal vibrations. The second light is the light of the eye which has two functions: it is the manifester of phenomena and the seer of phenomena. The third light is the light of intellect. This has three functions: it is the manifester, the, seer and the comprehender of phenomena. The light which is mentioned in the Holy Books is therefore the light of the intellect.

[#177]

23 May: Anecdote from the Baghdád Days

Friday, 23 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 627–28. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 May 1913.

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We know things by their opposites. Knowledge is more appreciated when we observe the stultifying influence of ignorance. Sight and hearing is more thought of when we see the conditions of the blind and the deaf, a flowing river all his life does not know what thirst is.

When we were travelling from Bagdad toward Constantinople, one day we thought we go ahead of the family, pitch the tent and prepare everything till Baho-llah and the rest of the party arrive. There were twenty-three of us, all on horses. When we got away several miles from the main body, the sun rose high in the heavens and it shone dazzling upon our heads. We became aware that in our hurry to get away quickly we had forgotten to bring with us any drinking water. We looked around us and there was nothing visible but a wilderness of hot sand and getting hotter every hour. We asked our guide whether there is any spring in the vicinity and he said 'No. We cannot not have any water before we reach the next station, which is sixteen miles away.' What could we do now? Our lips are parched with thirst. Some of us almost to the point of fainting. I told to the rest, 'Onward, my friends. Spur your horses!' We galloped several miles and we were nearly succumbing to the awful heat when in the far off horizon, we observed several black tents of the nomads. Those black tents to my eyes were at that time greater than the palaces of the kings. We hastened toward the tents and reached them literally half-dead. There was no human being visible, so I called out loudly, 'Water!' An old woman came out of one of the tents and shook her head, meaning that she had no water. Then I asked her: 'Have you Daug?' (sour milk diluted with water). She answered in the affirmative. She took us to a tripod made of wood over which was hanging a black skin of mutton which was filled with 'Daug'. She opened its aperture and each one of us drunk a cup. It was cold as ice. In this part of the world, there is a wind blowing at this season which is hot as fire. It scorches one's face and lips and peels the skin; it makes the earth so dry that it is impossible to describe, but when it passes by a jar of water or a skin of 'Daug' it makes them as cold as ice. This wind is called sometimes 'Sam' and at other times 'Eastern'. In short we drunk [sic] three skinfuls of 'Daug' and then we laid down our bodies, some under the shade of the tents, others right under the sunshine. We could not go into the tents, because these people live with their cattle. When we awoke we were very much refreshed and continued our journey. Experience teaches us many lessons that we are not apt to forget.

[#178]

23 May: A Story about Muḥammad

Friday, 23 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 May 1913.

* * *

The real enjoyment of the world of humanity consists in the fact that every individual may think of the wellbeing of others and sacrifice his own rest for the rest of his fellowman. Then and not until then will he be really happy. I hope that all of you will attain to this station. Then you will be real Bahá'ís. During the lifetime of Muḥammad, one day his son-in-law, 'Alí, his wife and two sons kept fast. Now, according to the Muḥammadan law, a person fasting must not eat or drink anything from sunrise to sunset. In order to break their fasts after sunset, 'Alí had prepared four small loaves of bread. They had nothing else. Just before sunset poor people knocked at the door and begged for alms. 'Alí gave them all the loaves of bread. The four continued to fast next day without eating anything. Four other loaves were prepared and they were again given away to a number of orphans who called about sunset time. The sun rose on the third day and they continued to fast without eating anything. They prepared for the third time four loaves of bread and just before eating a few strangers passed by the house and the loaves were given them. When Muḥammad heard of the self-sacrifice of his son-in-law, His daughter, and His two grandsons, He sent them special food and asked them to eat themselves.

Man, therefore must be self-sacrificing to such an extent; otherwise if he seeks after his own interest, he is like unto an animal. Strive that ye may assist the children of men both materially and spiritually, and be the means of their guidance and illumination.

[#179]

23 May: Anecdote on Bahá'u'lláh and “the City of God”

Friday, 23 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, 628–29. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 23 May 1913.

* * *

One day Baha-ollah was walking beside the bank of the Euphrates in Bagdad. One of the learned men of that city who had never seen Baha-ollah passed and was greatly impressed by His majestic bearing and divine Face. He came to Him with great reverence and humility and asked, “Sir! Which country do you come from?” “I come from the country of Baha.” The man was puzzled. “In which part of the world is it situated?” he hesitatingly inquired. “It is in the Eastern direction.” “What temperature?” the man asked. “Always moderate.” “What kind of country is it?” he interrogated with evident curiosity. “It is a most marvellous country; its inhabitants are angelic; its spring is for all the four seasons; its trees are always green; its fruits luscious; its flowers imperishable and of many hues; its roses ever spreading sweet fragrances; its meadows are perennially verdant; its sun has no setting; its star always shining; its moon is ever full; its denizens enjoy eternal youth; its gardens are always abloom; its sweet-singing birds ever melodiously warbling; its wine imparting everlasting exhilaration and its beauties and blessings limitless.” “Sir!”, he gasped with astonishment, “I have never heard of such a country. It is not on the old maps.” “Well,” Baha-ollah answered, “you may find it on another map.” “But how can one reach there?” “The guide to that country is One. If you follow Him you shall enter the portals of that country,” the Blessed Perfection answered him and passed by.

[#180]

**23 May: Discourse at the Dreyfus-Barney Residence
on the Declaration of the Báb**

Friday, 23 May 1913
Dreyfus-Barney Residence, 15 rue Greuze
Paris, France

The following text of this occasion is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 630–32. The primary source is Isabel Fraser Chamberlain, *Abdul Baha on Divine Philosophy*, 51–54.

* * *

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

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

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

Abdul Baha entered. We all rose. He said:

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

He said, “O my glorious Lord, I sacrifice myself entirely to thee. My only desire is to be martyred for thy love. Thou doth [sic] suffice me!” The Bab’s desire was to be realized,

* Probably Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání.

† *Munáját*, a prayer.

for the glorious crown of martyrdom was placed upon His head. The gems light the whole world.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[#181]

26 May: One Must Never Feel Superior to Another

Monday, 26 May 1913
Baltimore Hotel, 88bis avenue Kléber
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, p. 640. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 26 May 1913.

* * *

One must never feel superior to anyone else. This feeling of superiority destroys all vestiges of friendship and love. I give thee this will to be remembered throughout all thy life: Whenever thou seest that a person feels to the measure of one atom superior to another or prefers himself to his brother or sister, have no hope in him. He is deprived of the bounties and mercies of God.

[#182]

29 May: Remarks on the Meaning of Nirvana

Thursday, 29 May 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, p. 640. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 29 May 1913.

* * *

To attain to Nirvana means to reach to perfection. This is made possible through the Bestowals of God. When these are vouchsafed, then man attains to the summit of perfection. A seed has reached to the state of Nirvana once it springs out of the earth, it grows, putting forth trunk, branches, leaves, blossoms and finally luscious ripe fruits. The fruit is the Nirvana of the tree. This comes through the training of the gardener. Man attains to perfection through the education of the divine Instructor. His injustice is changed into justice; his greed into trust; his hard heartedness into pity and charity in short he will be adorned with all the divine characteristics. The more he acquires, the nearer his spirit will be to perfection according to our terminology; but according to Christians he will be close to salvation and according to Hindus he will attain to Nirvana. The object in each case is the same, but the interpretation differs.

[#183]

2 June: Words of Exhortation at the Scott Residence

Monday, 2 June 1913

Scott Residence, 17 rue de la Boissonade
Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 648. The primary source is a translation produced by Ḥishmatu'lláh Qurayshí and held at the Bibliothèque Bahá'íe de France.

* * *

The days of my departure [from Paris] are nigh. So I wish to say farewell to you. In Paris I have stayed more than in any other city. In whatever city I proclaimed the Kingdom of Abha, in a

few days the cry of the Kingdom rose on high; the fire of the love of God flared forth, and the light of the Sun of Truth shone bright; the country was quickened and stirred and the Command of God given in all the Assemblies. I arrived in Paris. It was my great hope that here the flame of the Cause of God should rise higher, and the brilliance of the light of Reality be greater; the signs of the Kingdom of God should become widely known, and the spreading of the breezes of God be speeded. This was the wisdom of my long stay in Paris. It is my hope that after me such confirmation and enthusiasm may obtain that the pillars of Paris may shake, and the fire of the love of God burn with great brilliance. The other subject of which it is necessary for me to speak to you is this, that at every particular time a certain power moves the people. But the power that is moving the world to-day is the power of the Covenant. If you wish to bring motion and ecstasy to Paris (if you wish to see it) illumined and rest under the effulgence of the light of the Kingdom then call it to the Covenant. Be firm and enthusiastic in the Covenant, and then you will behold that Paris would become another Paris, it would be quickened with another soul, it would have another life, the fire of the love of the Good within it would have another flame and the people would fall into a different commotion, and a different ecstasy.

[#184]

3 June: Parting Words to the Schwarzes in Paris

Tuesday, 3 June 1913
 Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, 649–50. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 3 June 1913.

* * *

Convey my wonderful Abha greeting to each and all the believers of God and say: His Holiness Christ states that people shall come from all parts of the world, from remote countries and enter into the Kingdom but the sons of the Kingdom shall go out. Now how many inhabitants of Persia are deprived of the Graces of His Holiness Baha-ollah and you who are from the remote places of the earth have entered in the Kingdom of the Blessed Perfection. Therefore you must render thanksgiving unto the Lord of mankind that ye are in the utmost state of joy and happiness and that God through his own mercy hath chosen you and granted you entrance into his divine Kingdom. The value of this Bestowal is not known at present; it will

become appreciated in the future. The spiritual station of the Apostles who entered in the Kingdom of Christ was not known in their own days. When Mary Magdelaine embraced the Cause of Christ no [one] gave any importance to her, no one even mentioned her name. Outwardly not the least importance was attached to them; but it became known afterwards and the great privilege of entrance into the Kingdom of Christ was appreciated. Similarly because you have entered in the Kingdom of Baha-olla in this day, your station is not understood. It will be however fully understood in the future. When the seeds are hidden beneath the soil there is nothing to attract the attention of the passers-bys, but when these seeds grow into well laden sheafs and when many harvests are gathered, then it will become manifest. I hope to receive always good news from you; such glad news that may impart joy to the hearts of the friends in the Orient; so that they may speak about your good services in their assemblies. May you be drawn nearer unto God day unto day! May you become more illumined day unto day! May your number increase day unto day! May your love and affection be augmented day unto day! The attainment to this Supreme and ultimate station depends upon firmness in the Covenant of God in this day! Therefore I exhort you to be steadfast in the divine Covenant. You are always in my mind. Your attraction, enkindlement, and sincerity in the Cause are never to be forgotten. Your faces are in my heart. I will remember you always and ever pray at the Threshold of Baha-ollah for your assistance and Confirmation.

[#185]

7 June: The Power of the Holy Spirit

Saturday, 7 June 1913
 Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
 Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 7 June 1913. An excerpt from it was previously published in *Star of the West*, vol. 9, no. 3 (28 April 1918), p. 40.

* * *

Today, it is evident that the promotion of the word of God depends upon teaching and awakening the souls. For the execution of this great deed Bahá'u'lláh has given us a heavenly Power. It is with this Power that the Bahá'ís are attracting the people of all races and nations to the Kingdom of Abhá! They have no other instrument except this. For the last ninety years the Western Missionaries have gone to Orumieh. They have built schools, hospitals and other charitable institutions in order to convert people to our so-called Christianity but during all this time they have not been able to attract one soul. This is because they have the machine

but not the spirit. In Tiberias the Missionaries have built a modern hospital and clinics. The doctor has been serving there for 32 years. At least every year one thousand Jews enter the hospital and go out healed, but none of them become Christian. The doctor used to tell me that he was at his wit's end in thinking out the reason of the success of the Bahá'ís in the propagation of their teachings. Without any means at the disposal they succeed to make these Jews Bahá'ís but with all these hospitals and schools and charity we don't seem to succeed. Why is this? I told him: Think for one moment over this singular fact. The Jews who became Christians after the Apostolic age were not attracted to the Christian doctrine by hospital and schools because they had more of these. On the contrary, they were beaten, persecuted and killed. Notwithstanding these things they accepted Christ. Why was this? Because these early teachers possessed the "heavenly power". With that power they were enabled to carry the Gospel into distant lands. Now in this day the Bahá'ís are teaching the people with the same divine Power. They are baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit, have forgotten ego, and are soaring toward the Kingdom of Sanctity. The most efficient capital of the Bahá'í teacher is the divine power. Through that alone he can conquer the cities of the hearts.

[#186]

11 June: Explanation of a Passage in *The Seven Valleys*

Wednesday, 11 June 1913

Martha-Pension Family Hotel, 97 rue Lauriston
Paris, France

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 11 June 1913. Here, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is explaining the meaning of these words from Bahá'u'lláh revealed in *The Seven Valleys*: "and the heart is endowed with four stages, which would be recounted should be a kindred soul be found."

* * *

A Bahá'í asked that she has read in some of the Holy writing that there were four degrees or pillars for the progress of the soul. What are these four degrees? The Master said: Bahá'u'lláh says: When the soul has travelled through many valleys it reaches to the city of love. That city contains four pillars and whenever I find a hearing ear, I shall explain what these four pillars are. During the life of Bahá'u'lláh no one asked the explanation of this matter but now you ask and I will elucidate it for you. The first station is the station of Divinity; the Second is the station of Prophethood or manifestation; the third is the station of Sanctification and the fourth is the station of Servitude."

She said: “We must work real hard to reach to the station of Servitude.”

“It is evident,” He said, “the station of Servitude is very great.”

“It is the brilliant crown of everlasting glory,” she answered promptly, and everyone was pleased with her aptitude and inspiration.

Voyage to Egypt

[#187]

13 June: Conversation with a Young Indian Lawyer

Friday, 13 June 1913

En route to Port Sa'íd, on board the *Himalaya*

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 668–69. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 13 June 1913.

* * *

On the upper deck 'Abdu'l-Bahá met a young Indian lawyer [Nawabzada Mohammad Yousaf] returning to India to start his practice and spoke to him:

The Eastern people must become united; they must relinquish their prejudices. We are all the children of one Father, the inhabitants of one fatherland. God is the real Shepherd. We are all his sheep.

He then reiterated some of the Bahá'í principles, and then continued:

I have been everywhere. I have been travelling for three years. Now I want to go to India to create love and fellowship amongst the various religions. Wherever I have been I have made men love each other.

The young Indian lawyer replied:

It is very necessary for these Teachings to be promulgated throughout India. If you come to my state I will do everything in my power to serve you.

Again 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke about the fundamental unity of all religions. The Indian replied:

It is very strange! Your ideas are so much similar to the ideas of a great movement I know as Bahai religion. I have read some of the books and am much interested in it.

He was informed by Ahmad Sohrab, who was interpreting that he was in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

What! I am in the presence of Abdul Baha about whom I have heard so much! What a privilege! What a rare fortune! What a wondrous joy!

Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá said to him:

I hope we will see each other often and speak about these teachings so that when you reach home you may carry to them this great gift and establish better feelings amongst the Hindus and Musulmans.

From Ahmad Sohrab the young lawyer received a copy of the California newspaper *The Palo Altan*.

After lunch, 'Abdu'l-Bahá invited this lawyer to have tea with Him.

[#188]

14 June: A Story about Bahá'u'lláh and a Chief in Baghdád

Saturday, 14 June 1913

En route to Port Sa'íd, on board the *Himalaya*

The following text is taken from *Star of the West*, vol. 9, no. 18 (7 February 1919), p. 209. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 June 1913.

* * *

There was a man in Bagdad who was the chief of a thousand warriors. These men were not in the regular army, but the Government gave the chief \$2,000 a month to divide amongst them with the stipulation that whenever war broke out, this chief with his one thousand strong warriors would join the army. But instead of paying two dollars to his men monthly, he would give them each one dollar and pocket the balance. He abused his soldiers continually. He had also ten colored men in his personal service, but treated them shamefully. He would say: "As the colored people are more faithful, therefore I employ them." One day this man with his evil reputation came to see BAHÁ'O'LLAH, and afterward came frequently. He gave ear to all his advices and exhortations. Little by little the magical change was wrought; and one day he called together his thousand men and told them that for several years past he had been depriving them every month of half their pay, but that now he had realized his mistake and sought their pardon. From now on they were to receive their full pay of two dollars a month. His men were wild with joy and from that moment they nicknamed him, "The-darling-of-our-heart." Then he went to his home and called together his ten negro servants and told them he was extremely sorry for his treatment of them, that he now knew better; that he would try to amend the past by being kind to them and would treat them as if they were his real sons. Often I called upon him and enjoyed the intimate relation which existed between this man and his "negro sons." They adored him. Then, before his death, he incorporated a clause in his will that his "negro sons" should be free, and bequeathed to them a quarter of all his possessions.

By relating to you this story I want to impress upon your minds what miracles the love of BAHÁ'O'LLAH can accomplish. This man was not a Bahai—he did not believe in BAHÁ'O'LLAH—he simply loved him. We who believe in him must most naturally do a hundred times more than this simple man. We must be ever ready to sacrifice our lives through the power of faith.

[#189]

14 June: Counsels to a Young Indian Lawyer

Saturday, 14 June 1913

En route to Port Sa'íd, on board the *Himalaya*

The following counsels to the aforementioned Nawabzada Mohammad Yousaf are taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 14 June 1913.

* * *

As long as these antiquated social customs and religious ceremonies hold sway in India, complete progress will not be obtained. This age is the age of light. This century is the radiant century. This cycle is the cycle of love. This period is the period of sciences. This epoch is the epoch of universal civilization. How long have we endured these blighting superstitions, these barren theological hair-splitting useless discussions! We must abandon entirely these things, we must free ourselves from these intolerable burdens, we must shake off this atrophy and lethargy, we must come into full possession of all our God-given powers, we must soar towards the infinite altitude of Divine Beauty. We must discard these fantastic traditions which have been handed down to us as precious heirlooms from ancestors and forefathers. Let us sing the Song of Unity and the anthem of the human solidarity. His Holiness Baha'o'llah has unified various religions and sects and illumined the sphere of the heart. In the realization of this spiritual work He was reinforced by the Divine Power. It is only with the assistance of the Divine Power that we shall succeed to unify mankind. No other power on earth is mighty enough to render this universal service. We must get hold of this Power. We must embrace a Cause which creates love and amity in the hearts and not hatred and prejudice. There are today many people in the world who hate each other heartily, but outwardly they express love and friendship. We must do something, so that real love may be born in the hearts and strangeness be removed.

[#190]

16 June: Discourse Given on the *Himalaya*

Monday, 16 June 1913

En route to Port Sa'íd, on board the *Himalaya*

The following text is taken from Jan Jasion, *'Abdu'l-Bahá in France*, pp. 673–74. The primary source is an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 16 June 1913.

* * *

Today the greatest of all affairs is to teach the Cause of God and promote the Glad-tidings of the appearance of the Lord of Hosts, Baha-ollah! This work precedes all other works. This work is confirmed by the Holy Spirit! From amongst all the friends of God I need most rest and besides my advancing age and the weakness of the body I must remain in the headquarters of the Cause and from there direct the affairs of the Cause. Notwithstanding this, I do not rest one moment; I am constantly travelling and all the time teaching, perchance I might become assisted to render a service to the Threshold of the Beauty of Abha! Now after a long and arduous journey tomorrow night we shall sleep in Port Said. Wherever we have been, praise be to God that the confirmations of the Blessed Perfection reached us and the victory of the Kingdom of Abha was vouchsafed. That is why he hath said: 'We shall make victorious whosoever shall arise in the service of my Cause with a cohorts from the Supreme Concourse and an army of the favored Angels.'

And now do you think I will remain in Port Said! Far from it! As soon as I have arranged the affairs of the Cause I will commence travelling again – so that I may diffuse the Fragrances of the Kingdom of Abha. One must arise to spread the word of God with a supernatural force and energy. I shall not rest one second as long as life lasts in this body. I will not seek comfort for one moment. This the day of teaching the Cause of God. This is the day of spreading the Message of the Kingdom! This is the day of crying out at the top of our voices, the Glad-tidings of the rise of the Sun of Reality. I cross vast deserts, I traverse through great oceans to make the inhabitants of the earth hear this Call. The friends of God must learn from me. The duty of every Bahai is to awaken the souls, to promulgate the Cause, to make mindful those who are headless and to create spiritual susceptibilities in the hearts. If they had let me, I would have travelled and taught the Cause from my early youth, but they confined me to the fortress town of Acca. However as soon as I received my freedom I started to travel and teach. Therefore let in this day the watchword of every Bahai be: Teach the Cause, spread the message, raise the call of the Kingdom of Abha. We must not sit down. We must rise and act, act and act, then the conformations of the Blessed Beauty shall encircle us.

Egypt

[#191]

19 June: On the Prevailing Power of the Cause

Thursday, 19 June 1913
On the Roof of the Hotel Sulṭání
Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khiṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 76–78. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

As the first few sentences of the original Persian text of this talk are recorded in the second volume of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání’s chronicle, it seems reasonable to assume that he was the one who transcribed the full talk.

* * *

He is God

It is wondrous indeed that a gathering as grand as this one has been convened in Port Sa‘íd. It would be good if the kings [of ages past] were to lift up their heads from beneath the dust to behold how the ensigns of truth have been hoisted high and the banners of oppression hauled down! In Baghdád, a *mujtahid* by the name of Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn [Ṭíhrání] would secretly impart certain things whenever the opportunity presented itself, but the Blessed Beauty would respond. Among the things that man imparted was the following:

One night, he said to his intimate companions, “I saw in a dream that the king of Iran was sitting beneath a dome. He said to me, ‘Jináb-i-Shaykh, rest assured that my sword will exterminate the Bahá’ís.’ On that dome was inscribed ‘the Verse of the Throne’* in Latin characters.”

* A reference to Qur’án 2:255, Rodwell’s translation of which reads: “God! There is no God but He; the Living, the Eternal; Nor slumber seizeth Him, nor sleep; His, whatsoever is in the Heavens and whatsoever is in the Earth! Who is he that can intercede with Him but by His own permission? He knoweth what hath been before them and what shall be after them; yet nought of His knowledge shall they grasp, save what He willeth. His Throne reacheth over the Heavens and the Earth, and the upholding of both burdeneth Him not; and He is the High, the Great.”

Through Zaynu’l-‘Ábidin Khán (the Fakhr’d-Dawlih), the Blessed Beauty relayed this message: “This was a genuine dream, for the Verse of the Throne was that same verse, even though it was written with Latin characters. That is, the Bahá’í Cause is that same divine Cause of Islám, but its script has changed—which is to say that the words have been altered, but their truth and meaning are unchanged. As to that dome, it represents the Cause of God. It encompasses and is ascendant over the king, who is himself in its shadow, and it will certainly prevail.”

Where now are that king and that shaykh, that they might behold how in the city of Port Sa’íd, in the country of Egypt, a gathering such as this has come together underneath this tent, and see what a fine tent it is! It is most exquisite. Our opposers wished to wipe out the Cause of God, but that Cause only grew more exalted. “Fain would they put out the light of God with their mouths! But God hath willed to perfect His light,”* for God manifests His Cause, reveals His light, and perfects His bounty.

To continue, Baghdád was quickly thrown into a frenzy. A number of *mujtahids*—including Mírzá ‘Alí-Naqí, Siyyid Muḥammad, Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn, and Shaykh Muḥammad-Ḥusayn—selected a well-known individual named Mírzá Ḥasan ‘Amú and sent him to meet with Bahá’u’lláh, whose presence he attained through [the intermediation of] Zaynu’l-‘Ábidin Khán. He first posed scholarly questions and received sufficient answers. He then said, “When it comes to scholarly matters, it [your knowledge] is indisputably clear. No one has any objection; all the clerics admit to it and are satisfied. However, these clerics have sent me to elicit things which are supernatural, in order to set their minds at ease.” “Very well,” Bahá’u’lláh replied, “But the Cause of God is not the plaything of children, just as it was revealed in the Qur’án through the tongue of cavillers, ‘They say: “By no means will we believe in Thee [Muḥammad] till Thou cause a fountain to gush forth for us from the earth . . . or Thou have a house of gold,”’† and elsewhere, ‘Or bring Thou God and the angels to vouch for Thee,’‡ and again, ‘Or Thou ascend to heaven, but [even then] we shall not believe in Thine ascent until thou send down to us a book.’§ The response to all this was thus: ‘Say: Praise be to My Lord! Am I more than a man, an apostle?’** And yet I say, ‘Very well.’ You all, however, must reach a consensus and choose one thing which, if demonstrated, would leave no room for doubt on your part. Put this in writing, seal it, and submit it. I will then send someone to perform that thing.”

* Qur’án 9:32.

† Qur’án 17:90 and 17:93.

‡ Qur’án 17:92.

§ Qur’án 17:93.

** Qur’án 17:93.

Mírzá Ḥasan ‘Amú was satisfied, and he remarked, “I have nothing more to say.” With difficulty, he kissed the hand of Bahá’u’lláh, took his leave, and informed the clerics—but they did not consent [to Bahá’u’lláh’s proposal], suspecting that He might be a sorcerer. However much Mírzá Ḥasan ‘Amú said, “O clerics! You are the ones who sent me, you are the ones who wanted this, and now you have disgraced us,” it was of no avail. All are aware of this episode.

A while thereafter, Mírzá Ḥasan ‘Amú went to Kirmánsháh, where he reported this matter, in full, at a gathering held by the ‘Imádu’d-Dawlih, the governor of that province. When one of those present, the dervish Mírzá Ghawghá—a secret believer [in the Cause] and spiritual mentor to the ‘Imádu’d-Dawlih—heard this account, he wrote [about it] to Baghdád and the other areas in its vicinity. The aforementioned Mírzá Ḥasan [‘Amú] similarly gave a complete report of the matter at a gathering in Ṭihrán held by Mírzá Sa’íd Khán, the foreign minister—and since the late Mírzá Riḍá-Qulí was in attendance, he wrote down the account.

My object is to show that these kinds of insidious messages [by Shaykh ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn] and the opposition of the king bore no fruit; the Cause of God prevailed. Now praised be God that the East is illumined and the West perfumed! When we were departing Ṭihrán for Baghdád, there was not a single believer along the way. On this journey,* however, whichever city in the West we passed through, we found Bahá’ís there. In places that had not heard it before—such as Denver, Dublin, Buffalo, Boston, Brooklyn, Montclair, Montreal, and so on—the call of God was raised:

No tumult in the town or city’s there
 But for the curling lock of the Friend’s hair
 No stir in all the world does one find now
 Except the curve of that Companion’s brow†

The call of God was raised in such a way that every ear relished it—every soul was stirred by it and every mind astonished at it—inquiring, “What call is this that has been raised? What star is this that is rising?” One soul would be astounded, another would investigate, and yet another would adduce proofs. They would all declare that the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh are truly without peer—that they are the spirit of this age and the light of this century.

At most, one would object that the Gospel includes similar teachings, to which we would reply, “Among these teachings is the oneness of humanity; in which of the Books [of the New Testament] can this be found? Show us! And universal peace—in what Book is this written? And that religion must be the cause of love and fellowship, and that without these the lack of

* ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is referring to His travels to the United States and several countries in Europe, which He had just concluded about a week earlier.

† A verse from an ode by Sa’dí.

religion would be preferable—in which Book is this stated? And that religion must accord with sound reason and accurate science—in what Book is this mentioned? And equality between men and women—in which Book does one find this? And the abandonment of sectarian, religious, national, political, and racial prejudices—what Book contains this?” And so on and so forth.

That is all!

[#192]

20 June: Anecdote from the Last Days of Bahá’u’lláh’s Earthly Life

Friday, 20 June 1913
The Residence of Consul Ahmad Effendí Yazdí
Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 20 June 1913.

* * *

A few days before [H]is departure, Baha-ullah called me into [H]is bedroom and commanded me to gather together all [H]is writings and Tablets, telling me that: ‘they shall belong to thee!’ This command agitated me and I was very sad at heart, because I understood the days of [H]is ascension were drawing nigh. My agitation was so keen that it was as though the spirit had taken its flight from the body. As [H]e looked into my face [H]e saw my condition and said: ‘Rest thou assured! Let not thy heart be troubled. I am with thee always. My confirmation shall always reach thee.’ This promise which was more than an assurance has been the cause of my consolation. The Blessed Perfection is with me. What else do I need? After the ascension, Mohamad Ali* stole all the writings which were entrusted to me; likewise he did steal twenty-five blessed seals which belonged to Baha-ullah, thinking that by so doing, his station will be exalted. What was the result? Utter humiliation and degradation. If one possesses all the Tablets and writings of Bahauallah and possesses not Baha-u-llah, they will do him no good; but if he does not possess one word of Baha-ullah, yet possesses Him, he is independent of all else. Now the Blessed Beauty is with me and I need nothing. . . .

Whosoever has the Blessed Perfection as I have will never be silenced. Through this confirmation alone I have stirred the East and the West. Notwithstanding this, some of the

* Mírzá Muḥammad-‘Alí, half-brother of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and arch-breaker of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh.

weak-minded desire to stand in my path and obscure the Sun of Verity. How negligent they are!

[#193]

21 June: On the Spiritual Unawareness of the Iranians

Saturday, 21 June 1913

The Residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí

Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khīṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 103–04. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

As a few sentences from the original Persian text of this talk are recorded in the second volume of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání’s chronicle, it seems reasonable to assume that he was the one who transcribed the full talk.

* * *

Although you all have waited very long, praise be to God that the circumstances for us to meet were brought about. I, too, very much wished to meet with you.

Praised be God that you have come—that you had the privilege of making pilgrimage to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, that Sacred Spot, and perfuming yourselves therewith! To make pilgrimage to the sacred Threshold in this day is like attaining to the blessed Presence Himself; there is no difference whatsoever. All the souls circle round that Spot; indeed, the souls of the Supreme Concourse circumambulate the Shrines of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh. Praise be to God that you have reached them!

The people of Iran have now wakened. They know where they come from—that God has accorded them such a peerless bestowal as this, that He has ordained for them such a bounty as this, that He has placed on their heads such a crown as this. It is not yet known, but in time the gift that God has given Iran and the Iranian people will become apparent. Should the

Iranians become aware of this, they would perpetually pride themselves on it and soar with fervent delight.*

Jesus Christ appeared amidst the Jews. At first, they strove to keep their distance from Him; they scorned Him and rejoiced at His misfortune. Only later did they realize what a bounty they had lost. It was only when the people of Europe professed their belief in Him that the Jews realized that they had been given so precious a bounty, only to have lost it for nothing.

The present condition of the Iranians is much the same; they do not know what a bounty has been given them. It has ever been the highest hope of all humanity to attain the presence of a blessed Soul. Praised be God that you all were alive at the time of the Blessed Beauty—a time when the splendors of the Most Great Luminary were shining, the showers of mercy were raining, and the breeze of bounty was blowing. Be thankful to God for this. Exert yourselves and teach the Cause! Strive to awaken the Iranians! Say to them:

“O Iranians! Are you at all aware of what a Star has ascended the horizon of Iran? O Iranians! Are you at all aware of what a blessed Tree has been planted in your midst? O Iranians! Are you at all aware of what an Ocean has billowed among you? Arise, arise from your slumber! How long will you persist in your heedlessness? How long will you stay silent? How long will you remain unaware of this gift? Now is the time for awakening; now is the time for vigilance!”

[#194]

21 June: An Anecdote from the Life of Bahá'u'lláh

Saturday, 21 June 1913

The Residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí
Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 21 June 1913.

* * *

* This paragraph seems inconsistent and may have been printed erroneously in *Khiṭábát*. An alternative version of this passage—transcribed by Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání and published in *Badáyi‘u’l-Áthár*, vol. 2, p. 358—appears to be more correct: “Now that you are returning, guide your compatriots and say to them: ‘Do you know what land you come from? Do you know what a bounty has been granted you? Do you know how esteemed is the crown that rests on your heads, or what gifts and favors have been bestowed on you?’ The value of these bounties is not yet known; only later will it be made abundantly clear. Were the Iranians to appreciate that value, they would soar with fervent delight” (provisional translation by the present compiler).

When Bahá'u'lláh left Baghdád and without the knowledge of the friends went to Sulaymáníyyih, one day He met a boy in the street weeping. He approached and asked him: "Why art thou weeping?" He answered: "My father took me to school, but this morning the teacher called me and said, 'Boy! Thou art very ugly, so extremely ugly that I cannot look into thy face; take thy books and go home and let me not see thee anymore.' Oh! I am so eager to learn and have lost my chance. What else can I do but weep?" Bahá'u'lláh asked him, "What is thy name?" "My name is 'Azíz," he answered. "Come with me; I will be thy teacher." Bahá'u'lláh then taught him so well that within a short while 'Azíz became well-known for his intelligence. They asked him who was his teacher, and he naively pointed out Bahá'u'lláh. Then all the learned and wise men of the town gathered around Him, and when He found that these men were taking all His time, He returned to the mountains where nobody could reach Him.

[#195]

22 June: A Wish for Solitude and A Story

Sunday, 22 June 1913

The Residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí
Port Sa'íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 22 June 1913.

* * *

How I long to be far away from people for two months, somewhere where I have not to read letters, answer questions and always associate with men. Can you deliver me from all this work so that I may rest for a while? I hope the work of no man will go beyond the limit of his time. However, we must work. As soon as we go to the other house, we must work day and night. I must have three secretaries to read all these Persian letters, making digest of their contents in order to dispatch the work. . . .

One of the Oriental kings going to hunt was unavoidably separated from his army. As he was going along the road, riding on his charger, he saw a man carrying on his back a load of wood, and walking lamely. "Why art thou lame?" the king asked. "Because in my foot there is a thorn," the poor man answered. "Why dost thou not take it out?" the king questioned him again. "If I put down my load there will be no one there to help me to put it again on my back." "I will help you," and coming down from his horse he did so. Afterward the king making a few

inquiries about him found him quite honest, so he bought for him a village and offered [it to] him as a gift. In time, enjoying quite a large income, he builds a villa, surrounds himself with royal comfort and luxury, servants and numerous attendants. Many years rolled on and one day the king passing by the village made up his mind to call on his old friend. He knocked at the door, the servants opened it and brought him into the waiting room. The king said, “I desire to see your master.” They made obeisance and said, “We are extremely sorry that you cannot see our master today. He is in bed.” “Oh!” the king said, “What has happened to him?” They answered, “Yesterday there was held a festival of the battle of the thornless roses between our master and his friends in the royal park, and as they were throwing at him the petals of roses, his tender body was bruised.” The king, remembering the man with the load on his back and the big thorn in his foot many years ago, walking painfully along the road, laughed at the changed circumstances and told one of the servants, “Go and tell your master that so-and-so is here and desires to see you.” The man came out immediately and, not knowing what to say, he hesitatingly muttered profuse apology, that really there was nothing the matter with him, but he desired to keep up the dignity of the station conferred upon him by his Imperial Majesty.

[#196]

23 June: Story about a Haughty Cardinal

Monday, 23 June 1913

Exact location unknown; probably the residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí
Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The authenticated Persian text of this talk has been published on the Bahá’í Reference Library* and provisionally rendered into English and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

* * *

At a time when the government ruled with tyranny, the Covenant-breakers were a hindrance, and problems both internal and external were present—it was in the midst of all this turmoil that I built[†] the Shrine of the Báb in such a way that few buildings of its firmness are seen in that region. It was an exceedingly difficult undertaking, one that seemed absolutely

* At this link: <http://www.bahai.org/r/808058135>.

† Which is to say that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá planned and supervised the construction of the Shrine of the Báb.

impossible to accomplish. Constant telegrams from ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd* would arrive, asking, “What is happening?”

I came here strictly for your sakes. I wished to visit certain places in those parts;† I had not finished my business. My desire was to go to Berlin and Italy, especially Rome, which is the center of the Papacy.‡ Setting all this aside, I came to see you. My intention was to make a journey to Rome and appear at the center of the Papacy. After the Pope himself, there are ranks occupied by those who serve under him. They are called “cardinals,” who are like the ministers of the Pope. One of these cardinals was in America and he hounded me very much. He made remarks at gatherings and assemblages,§ but I would say nothing in response. People would come and tell me that he had said such and such; I would remain silent and give no reply.

I was even invited by the Consul General of Persia** in New York, one of the prominent individuals of that place who has a grand hotel where the kings of various nations and functionaries of different governments take up lodging. As a result of meeting with me, he was deeply stirred and roused, and a measure of affection was instilled within him. He was with me on the verge of my departure and requested that I go to his hotel, but I refused. The aforementioned cardinal was staying at his hotel, and when he left, he acted in a way indicating that he would never return.††

This episode passed, and in the course of my journey toward California, I reached the city of Denver, where a new Catholic church had just finished being built.** The aforementioned cardinal went there to officially open it. When I arrived there, some people said that a most magnificent display had taken place. “What has happened?” I asked. They replied, “A cardinal came and dedicated the church. With a jewel-studded crown on his head, golden brocades on his body, and a scepter of gold in his hand, he arrived with the utmost grandeur, majesty, and glory, entering the church as banners were being hoisted before him and wondrously strange ceremonies were conducted. While the cardinal was walking in the street with this splendor, fifteen thousand spectators prostrated themselves.”

* ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd II, who reigned as the 34th sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1876 to 1909.

† Meaning the West, or perhaps Western Europe more specifically.

‡ Vatican City.

§ “This Cardinal had heard about the Master and had spoken about the false Christ, thus he was often mentioned by the Master in His meetings” (Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, *Maḥmúd’s Diary*, 29 September 1912).

** H.H. Topakyan.

†† Perhaps because the cardinal felt that even a hotel as grand as that one was beneath him.

** ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is describing the dedication of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Denver, Colorado, “which occurred on 27 October 1912” and “in which 20,000 people participated” (Jan Jasion, *‘Abdu’l-Bahá in France*, p. 490, note 1167).

At any rate, I was going to speak at a gathering when I came to that city and saw that there was an uproar. I asked, "What is going on?" They replied, "A religious display was held. A cardinal has come on behalf of the Pope and opened a new church." They then gave an account of what happened, and I said, "Very good! It was an excellent display, for it was exactly the same one that Christ held. Christ held a religious display in a bygone age, and now this cardinal has held another display. Both were religious displays, but there is a 'minor' difference between them, which is that one of these displays was held at a church with consummate majesty and grandeur, whereas the display of Christ was held on the cross in the utmost humiliation, torment, and cruelty. In one of these displays, the cardinal had a jewel-studded crown on his head, while in the other display, Christ wore a crown of thorns. One of these displays was held with the greatest festivity and magnificence, the other with abject oppression. In one of these displays, fifteen thousand people fell prostrate on the ground; in the other, the Apostles were subjected to taunting, cursing, and reviling. In one display, the 'honorable' cardinal was dressed in silken clothing, while in the other, Christ was naked on the gallows. In one of these displays, the cardinal had a scepter of gold in his hand; in the other display, Christ did not have so much as a plank of wood. This is the difference between these two religious displays."

[#197]

24 June: Maxims on Various Virtues

Tuesday, 24 June 1913

Exact location unknown; probably the residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí
Port Sa'íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished collection of pilgrim's notes (apparently the Leroy Ioas Papers) held at the U.S. Bahá'í National Archives.*

* * *

Perfection is impossible without humility;
Humility unattainable without the love of God;
The love of man is essential to the love of God;
The love of God is inaccessible without the love of humanity;
The love of humanity is a glittering generality without social service;
Social service is a mere watch-word without sacrifice and severance.

* See here: https://bahai-library.com/pdf/p/pilgrims_notes_us-archives_1913.pdf#page=4

[**#198**]**27 June: On the Great Effects of Spiritual Gatherings**

Friday, 27 June 1913
 On the Roof of the Hotel Sulṭání
 Port Sa‘íd, Egypt

The following transcript was originally recorded, in Persian, in *Khiṭábát-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 3, pp. 29–30. It has been rendered into English provisionally and annotated by the present compiler. This rendering has not yet been reviewed or approved by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice.

As a few sentences from the original Persian text of this talk are recorded in the second volume of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání’s chronicle, it seems reasonable to assume that he was the one who transcribed the full talk.

* * *

He is God

This is indeed a good gathering; it does not get any better than this. With rapt attention to God, His loved ones in attendance here are seated next to one another. Our hearts are in a state of utmost love, fellowship, and joy, and Áqá Mírzá Ja‘far* is serving as our kind host.

They call this “the place where the two seas meet,”[†] and in the Qur’án there is mention of the letting loose of the two seas.[‡] This refers to the place where Moses and Joshua met a great personage,[§] of whom God says “We had instructed [him] with Our knowledge”^{**} when the dead fish came back to life,^{††} and this has a new and wondrous meaning.

* Áqá Mírzá Ja‘far Shírání Hádíoff, builder of the pilgrim-house in Haifa. Surnamed “Raḥmání” by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Mírzá Ja‘far Shírání was a Bahá’í businessman who was originally from Shíráz and later moved to ‘Ishqábád, eventually settling in Kokand in today’s Uzbekistan. A biography of Mírzá Ja‘far Shírání in Persian has been published in Hádí Raḥmání Shírání, “Sharḥ-i-Aḥvál-i-Mutaṣá‘id ila’lláh Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Ja‘far-i-Hádíoff Raḥmání-i-Shírání,” *Áhang-i-Badí’*, year 28, nos. 11 and 12 (Bahman–Isfand 1352, corresponding to February–March 1974), pp. 6–21; available online here: <https://bahai-library.com/bahailib/1166.pdf>

† Qur’án 18:60.

‡ Qur’án 25:53 and 55:19.

§ Typically believed to be the prophet-like figure Khiḍr, mentioned in a previous note. There are passages from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá which indicate that Khiḍr was the “higher reality” of Moses, or the personification of the “station of unity” common to all the Manifestations of God. Refer to Fádíl Mázandarání, *Amr va Khalq*, vol. 2 (Hofheim, Germany: Bahá’í-Verlag, 1985), pp. 201–05.

** Qur’án 18:65.

†† Qur’án 18:61.

I hope that, God willing, hidden confirmations may descend successively, and that gatherings like this one may be held again and again. These gatherings have great effects in the world of being; cognizant souls recognize what effects and fruits they will yield. In the dispensation of Christ, His Apostles gathered on top of a mountain; if observed closely, everything that transpired afterwards will be regarded as the result of that gathering.

Once the Apostles went their separate ways after [the crucifixion of] Christ in their state of agitation, it was Mary Magdalene who gathered them again; she made them firm and steadfast in the Cause of Christ, and said to them, “Why are you distressed? Nothing has really happened, inasmuch as Christ stated time and again that such an occurrence would come to pass—but concealed from the eyes of men though His body has become, His Reality continues to shine resplendent. No affliction actually touched that Reality; rather this was an affront to His body, not His real Spirit. Why, then, are you perturbed? And setting this aside, Christ suffered hardships that none could endure for a single day. Three long years He spent in the wilderness; at times He subsisted on plants, at others He used the dust of the earth as His bed, and at night He had no light but the stars in the sky. Yet in spite of this immeasurable toil and these countless adversities, He trained you all for this day. If there is an ounce of loyalty in you, do not forget Him, and desire neither comfort nor repose for yourselves. If you are faithful, occupy yourselves with the memory and mention of Him. Would it be seemly of us to forget that radiant face? Would it be seemly of us to efface those bounties [of His] from our memory? Would it be seemly of us to shut our eyes to the sacrifice Christ made—to be like others and think only of eating and sleeping, our ease and tranquility? How can this be called ‘fidelity’: that this revered Person should disappear and we busy ourselves with our indulgent pursuits?”

In short, she gathered the Apostles and eventually a feast was held on top of the mountain. After a few people recounted the limitless bounties of Christ, they said, “We must see what faithfulness demands and act accordingly. There is no doubt that, following [the death of] Christ, [the terms of] faithfulness will not allow us to live in comfort—to occupy ourselves with earthly delights and pursue our own fancies—rather we must give up all that we have. We must first detach ourselves from everything; he who has any tie must excuse himself from it, and he that does not must not form one. None of us must have any thought but the thought of Him. We must limit all our thoughts to the thought of servitude. We must set ourselves to spreading His sweet savors and strive to disseminate His Word.”

And so it was that they made a pact and reached a substantive agreement. They came down from the mountain, and each of them, raising the call aloud, went in a different direction and served the Kingdom.

Everything that transpired in the dispensation of Christ was the result of that gathering, and its signs persist to this day. As for us, seated as we are here in this time and place—we in this atmosphere of consummate spirituality and affinity—I hope that this fellowship may yield great results.

[#199]

28 June: Farewell Address to the Pilgrims in Port Sa‘id

Saturday, 28 June 1913

The Residence of Consul Aḥmad Effendí Yazdí

Port Sa‘id, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 28 June 1913.

* * *

Praise be to God that you have crossed the mountains and deserts, the lands and the seas, and attained to the visit of the Holy Tomb with joy and fragrance. You traversed this long distance till you reached the Blessed Spot and became assisted and confirmed. Often souls start from their home, accept the hardships of travelling, but do not reach their destination, but praise be to God, you have attained. Likewise in my behalf you visited the holy Tomb. The great spiritual value attached to the visit of the Blessed Tomb of Baha-ullah is not known today but ere long it will become evident. The plain of Acca that you observe today will become an emblem of Paradise. In prosperity and progressiveness it will become unique and unparalleled in the entire world. The Kings and emperors of the world shall come to visit the holy Tomb. Having reached the shore of Acca they shall kneel down and prostrate on the ground and with pots of flowers in their hands and on their heads they shall proceed on foot toward the Blessed Spot and visit the Tomb of the Bab on Mount Carmel. Then it will become known what a world is this! What spirituality and fragrance is this! Those souls whose nostrils are opened shall inhale the fragrance of the Holy Tomb but those who are afflicted with catarrh* do not sense it. A person afflicted with cold† says “Where is the perfume? Where is the fragrance?” In short, praise be to God that you have attained, reached your destination, and on my behalf visited the holy Tomb.

* From *The American Heritage Dictionary*: “Copious discharge of mucus associated with inflammation of mucous membranes, especially of the nose and throat.”

† As in, the common cold.

You came also to Port Said and for several days we associated together with the utmost of love. I hope now that you return, every one of you may be like unto a person who has entered a rose-garden. When he comes out of the garden he carries in his hand a bouquet of flowers. I hope each one of you will carry away in his hand a bouquet from the blessed Garden of Abha and perfume the nostrils of whomsoever you come in contact [with]. I pray at the Threshold of [the] Almighty to make you more illumined day unto day, more attracted day unto day, more detached day unto day, more holy and pure day unto day. Know ye of a certainty that this Cause is like unto a sea. The sea does not accept the dead body. It will throw it out. Therefore you must be severed, attracted, enkindled, godlike, righteous, upright, evanescent, humble, and at all times turning your faces toward the Kingdom of Abha. I hope that each one of you may reach to this lofty and divine station. In whichever city you enter, be ye like bright lamps, and shed your rays to all around; so that whosoever sees your deeds, your words, your behaviors and conducts, he may exclaim: "This person is not of this world; this soul is not human but divine; this person is the sincere servant of the Blessed Perfection; he is radiant, spiritual, heavenly, and the means of the prosperity of the world of humanity."

[#200]

30 June: On Bahá'ís as Spiritual Physicians

Monday, 30 June 1913

The Residence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá (exact location unknown)

Port Sa'íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 30 June 1913.

* * *

We must let loose the divine forces so that those souls who are standing still at the turnpike may move along the path of progress. The centers around which the thought of the majority mankind revolve are egoism, selfishness, blind passion, hypocrisy, insincerity, and cupidity. We must do something to change these centers entirely and generate new thoughts, new ideals which are the essential requirements of this divine age. Then these people shall become freed from every tie and soar toward the atmosphere of spiritual freedom. We must ever observe the capacity of the people. Every human being has a special capacity and once the illness is diagnosed, the treatment is made easy. Therefore, the believers as the spiritual physicians must diagnose the spiritual sicknesses of the people and then treat them accordingly. Now just as there various degrees of capacities, likewise there must needs be different modes of expression, various ways of teaching. Often it has happened that the same

talk will be the cause of awakening to one and of complete indifference to another. We must ever strive to find out the subject which is of interest to the other party and speak with him from that standpoint.

[#201]

30 June: Comparing the Bahá'í Cause to a Great Ocean

Monday, 30 June 1913
The Casino Palace Hotel
Port Sa'íd, Egypt

The following text is taken from an unpublished diary letter by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab addressed to Harriet Magee and dated 30 June 1913.

* * *

The Bahai Cause is like unto the Great Ocean or rather the Great Ocean is a symbol of the Cause of God. Its mountainous waves are within itself and by itself. While it is in the utmost calmness, the northern and southern winds lash it into furious tempests. How thoughtless are those people whose aim is to down the Great Ocean. They construct around it with their puny efforts dams and fortifications, ramparts and embankments, but the perennial waves of the Great Ocean beat against them and slowly, slowly, surely, unmistakably wash them all away into its own bosom, and absorb them and leave behind not a single trace. Such is the power of the Cause of God. The Great Ocean of the Cause is tempestuous at all seasons. It is always in agitation, it has hurricanes, whirlwinds, storms, gigantic cyclones, and uncontrollable movements. How many nations, how many religions, how many individuals whose aim is to stop the progress of the Cause, to bring it down from its station of sublimity, to retard its influence, and to cast it headlong into the abyss of degradation! Alas! They are not aware that the Cause of God shall overcome all these hindrances and control all these forces. The great ocean is the great symbol of the Cause of God. [Sulṭán] Abdul Hamid and Nasereddin [Náṣiri'd-Dín] Shah—the two despotic kings—strove with all their available imperial resources to down this great spiritual ocean. Where are they now? The cohorts of the Mohamadan ecclesiastical orders did their best to dam the channels of this Sea. And now do you not see its cyclonic movements all over the earth; its majestic waves ever rising, ever rising, ever rising to the very apex of heaven, its celestial waves gathering velocity and power, roaring, clamoring, battling? Do you hear its thunderous voice? Do you see its almighty power? Do you? Do you?

Part II:
Selections from Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
Regarding His Western Journey

This part of the supplement consists mostly of my provisional translations of selected Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, all of which were reviewed by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and approved for digital publication following the incorporation of some recommended edits. As part of their review, the Bahá’í World Center supplied me with certain authorized translations that have been colored red and provided me with the names of the people for whom each Tablet was written. With very few exceptions, exact dates of composition are not available for these Writings, and unless it can be inferred from the Tablets themselves, information about where each one was written is also unavailable.

* * *

[#1]

(To Áqá Asadu’lláh Báqiroff, written no later than 1 August 1914)

O servant of the Sacred Threshold! . . . At churches and gatherings in Europe and America, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá raised His voice in most of the large cities to proclaim the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh and sound a call to the Abhá Kingdom, adducing brilliant proofs and presenting resplendently evident arguments and consummate testimonies. No excuse whatsoever has been left for anyone; indeed, many of my talks were announced to the world in newspapers. Yet in spite of this, the people are still captive to the slumber of heedlessness; they cling to illusion and are contemptuous of reality. Still do they indulge their carnal desires to such a degree that that the trumpet-blast of Isráfíl would not awaken them. Surely this heedlessness, this ingratitude, and this lack of vigilance are the cause of regret and adversity; they conduce to war and strife, and bring about loss and detriment. Should the people of the world fail to turn to the Greatest Name, a grievous danger will be in store, but my hope for the friends is such that the signs of divine loving-kindness may be manifested, and their affairs set apart from those of the masses . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [71](#) (selection #90)

[#2]

(Written to Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Furúghí on 19 August 1920)

. . . For four long years, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled through the states and realms of Africa, America, and Europe, but in those cities and hamlets where the fame of God’s Cause had not reached the ears of its inhabitants, who had yet to hear of its worldwide renown, he unloosed his

tongue in assemblies and churches to teach the Faith in a new way that was suited to their capacity and potential. Consequently, the aid and bounty of the Desired One were received in quick succession and results were produced. Now must you, too, in those cities and hamlets that are unaware [of the Cause], begin your speech with counsels, stir the hearts to ecstasy with the sweetness of your utterance, and then impart the Word. This sequence draws mighty confirmations, as was the case when Peter the Apostle, the servant of Christ—may my life be a sacrifice for Him—observed it in Antioch. At the outset, he spoke with the people according to their temperaments and capacities, and once their hearts were attracted, he imparted the Word. Even Ḥabīb the Carpenter would impart the Word with the utmost self-effacement, saying, “Why should I not worship Him Who created me, and to Whom you will return?”,* by which he meant, “Why should you not worship Him Who created you?” At any rate, my hope is such that you will bring about the joy and happiness of the friends, and teach the Cause to others.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [69](#) (selection #87)

[#3]

(Written to Áqá Mírzá ‘Alí Mílání)

. . . For some time, even as birds without a nest or shelter, I wandered vast lands. At one time I was on the peaks of mountains and hills, and at another I was in the depths of valleys and deserts, running with a body drained of power. In spite of this, I traveled from one end of the states of America and Europe to the other, and notwithstanding my powerlessness and infirmity, I attended most of the assemblages and gatherings, proclaiming, with an impotent tongue, the Revelation of that Source of light which shone on Mount Sinai, and expounding the teachings of the Friend in great detail.

In Budapest, my constitution was most unsound. My body was weak, my respiratory illnesses intense; the exhaustion of my nerves was constant, the weather cold as could be. Notwithstanding all this, every day and night I gave talks at three large gatherings, and this is excluding the questions of others that I would answer at my home. Especially taxing was one night in particular when I went to a place where there were a hundred and twenty stairs made of marble that was cold as ice; I ascended them with exceeding powerlessness and

* Qur’án 36:22.

fatigue, and then spoke for two hours without interruption. I promoted the Word of God, and my talk was accompanied by a comprehensive translation.

Despite this toil and hardship, I was happy to the utmost that I was not spending my days occupied with other matters, and that the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty were being received in quick succession. Unless it was to teach the Cause, no word proceeded from my lips. My body, however, could not at all endure this strain, and it has deteriorated greatly. When I arrived in Egypt, I was completely overcome by my weakness and powerlessness, by the decline of my health and my nervous exhaustion; hence, I spent a number of days in silence. The instant my illness waned, and as soon as I regained the smallest measure of strength, I began to write—and now I am composing this letter to you, the personified spirit that you are, so all may know that, in this day, teaching the Cause confers aid and assistance, while all else brings about eternal estrangement, torpor, and lethargy. Therefore, the loved ones of God must adopt the conduct of this servant and forget every other affair. Like those holy souls who hastened to the wilderness of sacrifice, offering up their lives at the altar as they danced with joy, in this very way must they grow weary of all other thoughts and words; engage themselves in servitude to the Sacred Threshold; and, detached from all else but God, captivated by His sweet savors, and elated by His glad-tidings, sound the call to the Abhá Kingdom . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, pp. [67–68](#) (selection #85)

[#4]

(Written to Jináb-i-Vahíd, or Mírzá Yúsuf Khán Shírází, known as Lisánu’l-Ḥuḍúr)

. . . For successive years, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled throughout the West, raising his voice in every assemblage and gathering to teach the Cause of God. Now must the loved ones of the Lord lift up a new and wondrous melody, uttering praise and glorification in both the East and West, so that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá can hear it. This is the greatest hope and most ardent desire of this servant from the divine Court . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. 69 (selection #86)

[#5]

(From a Tablet to Mírzá ‘Alí-Akbar Rafsanjání, 4 July 1913)

The extensive letter you had written about Stuttgart was perused. **In brief, Germany will shine resplendent, inasmuch as its citizens are religiously minded. They are not subservient to the world of nature. . . .**

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Asráru’l-Áthár*, vol. 1, p. [25](#)

[#6]

(Written to Abu’l-Ḥasan Ardakání, better known as Ḥájí Amín)

. . . O Amín! Praised be God, you were present in Europe and witnessed how, with a constitution weakened to the utmost, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent night and day in service, aspiring to self-sacrifice. His ecstasy and joy consisted in spreading the fragrances of God, and the solace of his heart and soul stemmed from promoting the Word of God. No other thought did he entertain nor mention make; no hope but this did he cherish, no other goal did he prize. My hope is such that I might partner with the friends of God in this service—no, that they surpass and excel me! Though they may be on the ground, yet do they walk among the Concourse on High. The intention of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is that he soon hasten from this land toward the Most Great Prison, that indeed his greatest desire may be fulfilled. The Blessed Beauty, may my soul be offered up for His loved ones, ascended to the horizon of sanctity as a prisoner. How unfaithful of me it would be to breathe my last and make haste to the realm beyond in a state of freedom! . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [64](#)
(selection #78)

[#7]

(Written to Hájí Mírzá Muḥammad Yazdí ‘Aláqihband)

. . . Though ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was suffering from three chronic illnesses, and the physicians of Haifa said that it was necessary for him to enjoy peace of mind and tranquility for a while, and that he should not associate with anyone, write anything, or occupy himself with any thought—indeed, that he ought to retire to a quiet place and spend his days most comfortably in an elevated spot that has pleasant air, delightful scenery, and wholesome water, otherwise these three illnesses would pose a fearsome threat—at such a time as this, he observed that, prior to his passing, he must make a final attempt, for up to that time the Cause had not been taught publicly in Western countries. In spite of that infirmity and weakness, he suddenly set out from Haifa toward the sea, heading for wildernesses, mountains, and deserts. He went to many Western lands, where, impaired by intense ailment of the nerves and respiratory illnesses, and in the midst of cold weather, he would cry out from morning till midnight at assemblages and gatherings, delivering the call of the Kingdom to every ear. Now in the utmost feebleness and sickness, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has returned to the East and is waiting to hear good news, that it may heal his breast and comfort his heart . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [65](#)
(selection #80)

[#8]

(Written to a certain Mrs. Weiland, perhaps Thekla Weiland in Karlsruhe)

O you whose gaze is fixed on the Kingdom of God! Your letter has arrived. You had asked about the health of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. On account of this three-year journey, and due to endless toils and hardships, the physical powers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá have been entirely dissolved. It is as if my limbs have disintegrated. But the aid and bounty of Bahá’u’lláh give strength to my heart and joyful tidings to my spirit, and it is these divine glad-tidings that revive ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with fresh life. Praise be to God that, viewed from this perspective, I am in perfect health. However my body may be, it is well; no mind is paid to its condition. God be praised, my body too is better these days . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [67](#)
(selection #83)

[#9]

(Written to Abu’l-Ḥasan Ardakání, better known as Ḥájí Amín)

O trusted one [Amín] of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! . . . As a result of the length of my travels over land and sea, the severe hardships I have suffered night and day, my lack of comfort and sleep, and the extensive talks I have given at public gatherings, my body has weakened and deteriorated. From sunrise to midnight while in America, I was either responding to questions or giving talks and addresses. This earthly frame has been unable to endure daily the disagreeable weather and nervous exhaustion; it has declined into the utmost frailty. Hence, from my arrival in Port Sa’íd to the present time, my health has been totally impaired and my powers diminished. Here in Ramleh, however, I have regained some strength over the past few days, and for this reason it has become possible to write again . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [62](#)
(selection #74)

[#10]

(Written to Hippolyte Dreyfus)

O kind friend! As of this moment, in which I have begun to write this letter, I have been at the home of Mr. Whyte in Edinburgh for two days. I am well and in good health, and I am thinking of you. In two days from now, meaning the 10th of January, I will arrive in London. At a gathering yesterday, there were college students in attendance and a meeting with them took place. Last night, in the grand hall of the Esperantists, nearly a thousand people were present and a talk was given. This afternoon, I will appear at a large gathering; in the evening, I shall meet with the *ḥákim*, the *válí*, and a few other dignitaries;* and tomorrow, I will speak to

* It is unclear whom ‘Abdu’l-Bahá meant by “the *ḥákim*” and “the *válí*.” Both of these words refer to someone who exercises a certain kind of authority, typically a governor or chief magistrate—and given their synonymity, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá may have been using both titles for the same person. The closest equivalent to these positions in Edinburgh at that time would have been the Lord Provost, also known as the Lord-lieutenant. However, such contemporaneous records as the chronicle of Mirzá Maḥmúd Zarqání and the diary letters of Mirza Ahmad

women who are advocating for their rights. Convey my respectful greetings to your wife, upon her be the Glory of God.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [59](#) (selection #69)

[#11]

(From a Tablet to Mírzá Muḥammad-Báqír Khán Dihqán Shírází, apparently written on 17 August 1913)

O close companion of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! O dear fellow traveler of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Praised be God, this second journey, too, has come to an end, and I have returned to the East. This second journey, however, cannot be compared with the first, inasmuch as America is incomparable with Europe. It is another world, one with a different sort of people and level of receptivity. Thus did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá find a vast field and behold an expansive arena. In every gathering and assemblage, he lifted up the cry of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” and shouted aloud “Yá ‘Alíyyu’l-A’lá!” with such force as to reach loftiest heights. From the endless bestowals of the Blessed Beauty do I await the emergence of results from this journey. My hope is that this conduct of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá might serve as an example to the friends, that they may all teach the Cause in this way, becoming wanderers throughout plains, mountains, and wildernesses. May not one of them seek repose or rest a single moment, offering up instead to the Blessed Beauty their hearts and souls in the palms of their hands . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [72](#) (selection #91)

Sohrab make no mention of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá meeting with anyone bearing that title, nor do they specifically name anyone who might have held that office.

[#12]

(Written to Hippolyte Dreyfus)

O dear and kind friend! Tomorrow we shall set off for Scotland, but I am not in good health whatsoever. Last night I developed a high fever and did not sleep at all. Prepare a modest apartment; on the 20th or 21st of the month, we will arrive in Paris . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [59](#)
(selection #68)

[#13]

(From a Tablet to the Bahá’ís of Khayru’l-Qurá’, Fárán, and Bushrúyih, apparently written on 8 August 1913)

O dear friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! It is now three years that, like a bird without a nest or shelter, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has been wandering the mountains and deserts, and roaming the plains and wildernesses. Not for a moment have I rested or stopped in any one place; I have been constantly traveling, always on the move. A call to the Abhá Kingdom was raised, and the greatest of glad-tidings reached those vast lands. The banner of the mention of God’s Cause was hoisted on every summit, and it rippled across the foot of every mountain.

Owing to my incessant preoccupations and my cries which have set the earth ablaze, I was compelled to fall short and was unable to write a letter and communicate with you companions of my heart and soul. Now that I have returned to the East, no sooner did I arrive than, in spite of my weakness and infirmity, I immediately set myself to correspondence, for the most ardent desire of my heart and soul is to remember my companions and mention the friends . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [66](#)
(selection #82)

[#14]

(Written to Maryam Cropper-Thornburgh)

He is God

O heavenly daughter! My health has been impaired in Paris. The exhaustion of my nerves is intense; hence, I am determined to travel to the East. As soon as it becomes possible to depart, I will set out for Port Sa’íd. I think of you always, dear daughter, and I implore God to aid and assist you. **In London I scattered seeds, knowing that ye would water them and soon send thence good news—but Paris is dark, all its peoples drowned in a sea of materialism.**

Upon you be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [61](#)
(selection #73)

[#15]

(Written for the readers of *The Pittsburgh Spectator*)

O readers of the [*Pittsburgh*] *Spectator* newspaper! ‘Abdu’l-Bahá traveled thousands of leagues and crossed a vast ocean to reach the land of the free, the country of America. In every city, he sounded a call to the Kingdom of God, proclaiming the oneness of humanity, raising a cry for universal peace, and announcing the joyful tidings that the Sun of Truth has risen. Truly, he found a prosperous nation, a highly intelligent people bursting with excitement, and a just and kind government. Its people have the capacity to obtain every distinction, for they thirst after the truth, and an expansive arena for progress is open to them. My hope, therefore, is that the banner of universal peace may first wave in that country and then spread to the rest of the world. In this luminous age, the morning of favor to mankind has broken, and the Sun of Truth cast its rays on the world. The peoples of the earth must become like mirrors, so that brilliant lights may appear with the utmost force.

The ages of darkness have passed. I hope that, through the intense heat of the Most Great Luminary, religious, racial, national, and political prejudices may melt away even as snow, and the meadow of truth acquire consummate verdure and luxuriance, freshness and beauty, that this earthly plane may become the envy of Paradise, and this terrestrial realm the scene of celestial bestowals.

May the East and the West take one another in their embrace, and the North and the South become as the lover and the beloved! May the human race become the waves of one sea, the flowers of one garden, the trees of one orchard! May the darkness of estrangement be dispelled, and the radiance of oneness made resplendently manifest! May politicians become godly, and philosophers the lights of the Kingdom! May leaders establish everlasting sovereignty, and the peoples of this world shine brightly like the stars in the sky!

This is the greatest hope of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. May you be well, happy, and successful!

—'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original text published in *Najm-i-Bákh^utar*,* vol. 5, no. 8 (1 August 1914), p. [3](#)

[#16]

(Written to the Bahá'ís of Rangoon)

He is the All-Glorious

O righteous friends! The darkness of ignorance and error had enveloped the contingent realm and straitened the wide expanse of existence when one morning broke with the utmost radiance. Then did the Sun rise with the greatest brilliance and splendor, its rays so dazzling as to burn away the darkness. Through the outpouring of light streaming from that world-illuminating Orb, this terrestrial realm became the envy of celestial palaces, and through the beams emanating from that Sun of Truth, the earth roused the garden of Paradise to jealousy. This ancient effusion, this mighty splendor, this outpouring of rain from the cloud of bestowal—consummately powerful as all these were, yet the people must be receptive and worthy, and the realities of existence seek suitable capacities. Though the light may appear with great intensity, the blind eye will remain deprived of it. Though the vernal cloud may have sent down its rain, soil which is salty and impure shall not yield flowers and sweet herbs.

Strive, then, O friends of God, to make people's eyes sighted, that they may become capable of seeing, and to make the soil of their hearts pure, that it might yield roses, hyacinths, and sweet herbs. These are loving counsels; listen to them with the ear of your souls. I swear by the Educator of the visible and of the invisible that if even an insignificant being were to turn

* The name given to the Persian section of *Star of the West*.

toward and stand before that bright Luminary, it would become like a shining star and take on the quality of a towering mountain.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [70](#) (selection #89)

[#17]

(Written for Abú Turáb al-Ḥusaynī al-Shírází in Ṭíhrán, delivered via Ḥájí Amín)

He is God

O servant at the divine threshold! You had complained about the lack of a response to your letter. This is attributable to the fatigues of my journey, the intensity of my weariness, and the illnesses that have afflicted my body and are still lingering because I was traveling for four years without cease. I have not rested at all. Had it been anyone else but me, their skin and bones would have melted completely by now. Hence, you must consider what great suffering and endless hardship have prevented me from writing . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, pp. [64–65](#)

[#18]

(Written for Ghulám-Riḍá Iṣfahání, better known as Amín Amín)

He is God

O servant at the threshold of Bahá! There is no end whatsoever to our detainment in Paris. There is a wisdom in this that will become clear later. A journey was made to Hungary, Vienna, and Germany, and it yielded heavenly results . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [61](#)
(selection #72)

[#19]

(Written for William Jay Moore)*

O servant of Bahá’u’lláh, you who are dear to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! Your letter arrived, and its contents brought great happiness. Praised be God, my travels in Budapest yielded a result, in that multiple souls became attracted to the Abhá Kingdom and were set ablaze with the fire of the love of God. In the days of Jesus Christ, with the power of the Holy Spirit, eleven people were attracted, but in a matter of nine days, blessed souls in Budapest entered into the Kingdom of God. Observe how great is the power of the Abhá Kingdom, that the instant the call is raised, people’s hearts are enraptured and their souls ignited with the fire of the love of God. This being the case at the present time, consider what will happen in the future. Eleven people in the time of Christ became devoted believers; behold what has come to pass today! Millions of bells peal out the cry, “O Christ, O Christ!”, yet after a short while, you will hear the cry of “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” lifted up from every land . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, pp. [60–61](#)
(selection #71)

[#20]

(Written in Paris on 6 May 1913 to the Bahá’ís of Esslingen, the Bahá’ís of Stuttgart, the Maidservants of Esslingen, and the Maidservants of Stuttgart)

He is God

O ye sons and daughters of the Kingdom!

Oh, how happy were the days of My stay in Stuttgart, and how radiant were the meetings of the friends. Heavenly confirmations were manifest, the breath of the Holy Spirit surged forth

* Not to be confused with Dr. William J. Moore (d. 1906), an early Bahá’í of Chicago and the brother of Lua Getsinger.

and the Voice from the Abhá Kingdom rang out to the sky. Whenever I recall those glorious moments my heart and soul leap with gladness. Blessed is the Lord of Hosts Who hath raised the Call to the Kingdom in that country, Who caused the hearts to vibrate with joy, Who gladdened the souls and cheered the spirits through the revelation of the divine glad-tidings. I earnestly hope that the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh may shine forth one after another, that in every moment a fresh manifestation of the divine Spirit may appear, so that the Message of the Kingdom of God may be spread abroad without delay and that the glad-tidings of the advent of Bahá’u’lláh may regenerate the peoples of all regions.

Those days I spent in your company were spiritual and glorious indeed. The food that cometh down from heaven was at hand, the outpourings of His eternal grace were manifest, the emanations of the Spirit were endless. The eyes were solaced and the ears deeply stirred by the resounding melodies of the realms above. I beseech the Almighty that this heavenly grace may be vouchsafed uninterruptedly and that the reality of the Teachings of Bahá’u’lláh may materialize, so that through their pervading influence the hearts may be attracted, and the souls may be revived by the breath of the Holy Spirit.

Upon you men and women be the Glory of the All-Glorious.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [60](#)
(selection #70)

[#21]

(The addressee of this Tablet is unknown, according to the Bahá’í World Center)

O spiritual friend! So intensely cold is it that I cannot move my fingers. In spite of this, I have found a moment of free time at midnight; I remembered you with fondness, and my pen is now moving with difficulty . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [62](#)
(selection #75)

[#22]

(To Mohanlal K. Shah, president of the Jain Lodge of Bombay, possibly written on 25 April 1914)

O thou who art enamored of the truth! The receptivity present in any object attracts divine confirmations. You will observe that, when the earth acquires receptivity, a copious outpouring of vernal showers is let loose; so too with other things. For four years, I lifted up cries and shouts at every assembly and church in the countries of the West, sounding the call to the Abhá Kingdom. It was the power of the receptivity of the Westerners that attracted my heart; otherwise, it would have been impossible. Now I have returned fatigued and powerless, and there is no strength left for me to move in order to travel to India. If, however, the country of India should acquire a conspicuous receptivity—if the fragrances of the All-Merciful are spread, and pure hearts and radiant souls raised up—perhaps that receptivity will exercise an attractive power and deliver ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to that country illumined with the light of truth . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [70](#) (selection #88)

[#23]

(Written to Abu’l-Ḥasan Ardakání, better known as Ḥájí Amín)

He is God

O trusted one [Amín] of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! I have returned, I have returned! By way of Europe have I come back, a servant at the threshold, returning from flowering rose-gardens! But alas that it is to the country of the Egyptians I have returned! For they are chilled and apathetic, cold and illaudable. “The fire well-fueled” * would not warm these people, contrary to the Westerners of Europe, who are highly receptive.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [63](#) (selection #76)

* Qur’án 85:5.

[#24]

(Written to Joseph H. Hannen)

He is God

O you who are firm in the Covenant! Your document has arrived, and the happenings indicating the splendid manifestation of God’s Kingdom delighted the ears of His friends. Praised be God that such a ray as this one, emanating from the Sun of Truth, has been cast from the East upon the West, inasmuch as these sorts of radiant gatherings are convened and this kind of sweet melody is upraised to the Abhá Kingdom. Without interruption, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent a year on those hills and plains shouting “Yá Bahá’u’l-Abhá!” from the depths of his heart and soul, announcing at gatherings and churches the glad-tidings of the advent of the Kingdom of God, crying out the news that the Sun of Truth has risen, giving divine proofs and evidences, and lifting up a new and wondrous song as the very core of his being brimmed with the love of God. This is sure to have a prodigious effect. Consider how it took the revitalizing melody of Jesus Christ, may my soul be a sacrifice for His sake, three hundred years to be heard around the world and produce an effect, but how the anthem of the Abhá Kingdom has stirred the East and the West alike in so short a span. Know, then, what a song and melody this is, and how great a Cause it is . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, pp. [64](#)–[65](#) (selection #79)

[#25]

(Written to Siyyid ‘Abdu’lláh Ṭabáṭabá’í Míyánijí in Iran, apparently on 27 June 1913)

O you who are growing firm! In this day, the hosts of the Concourse on High aid and assist blessed souls who arise to teach the Cause and embody this wish: “Keep all my words of prayer and praise confined to one refrain; make all my life but servitude to Thee.” While ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was overpowered by three illnesses, he left Haifa all of a sudden, and for three years now he has been traveling continuously. Service to the Sacred Threshold is a magnet that draws confirmations. That which I have desired for myself is the same as what I desire for you.

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [66](#)
(selection #81)

[**#26**]

(Written on 4 July 1913 to Áqá Mírzá Mihdí, son of the identically named Áqá Mírzá Mihdí, residing in ‘Akká)

O remnant of that respected person! . . . Truly, the desire of my heart and soul is to be present at the divine Threshold, that I may perfume my face and hair with the dust of its hallowed ground. For three years now, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá has been deprived of this supreme favor and far removed from the brilliant rays of that Luminous Spot; night and day pass with regret upon regret. My hope in the bestowals of the Desired One is such that this powerless body, which on this extensive journey has neared the point of complete disintegration, may yet, before it ceases to draw breath, fall upon the dust of the Sacred Threshold and obtain new life, that this may illumine his eyes and make his heart and soul the envy of every rosy meadow. Then would he set out for the abode of the Friend, hastening from this realm to another . . .

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Haḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, vol. 5, p. [63](#)
(selection #77)

[**#27**]

(Excerpts from a letter to the editor of *The Christian Commonwealth* in London, 3 September 1913)

He is God

O kind friend! After making a complete journey throughout all the United States and the large cities of Europe, I have returned to the East. I am very pleased with this journey, for I met with respected persons who are truly pivots around which the honor of the world of humanity revolves—learned and accomplished people who are informed of the realities of events and are well-wishers of mankind. This is especially true of those who desire universal peace . . .

. . . I am most pleased with the blessed gatherings that I saw in the West which were devoted to the promotion of universal peace, and I hope that those societies may grow with every passing day, that the lights of lofty thoughts might shine on all the earth—that the oneness of humanity may be announced in the East and the West, and the world of creation find peace. Each of these revered souls, who are the servants of the world of humanity and the promulgators of universal peace, shall ere long shine like unto a brilliant star from the horizon of humankind and illuminate the whole earth. . . .

For three years, despite my weakness, I traveled throughout the world. I traversed East and West, lifting up a cry in every place of worship and raising up a shout in every gathering. I explained the detriments of war and the benefits of universal peace. I made evident the honor and distinction of the world of humanity and laid bare the ferocity and bloodthirstiness of the animal kingdom. I expounded the viciousness of the world of nature and elucidated the radiance of the world of humanity. I spoke plainly of the foundation of divine religions and proclaimed the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. I proved the station of divinity with convincing and rational arguments, and vindicated the truth of all the Prophets. As to the veracity of religion itself—which gives life to the world of humanity, brings about divine civilization, and conduces to pure brilliance—this, too, I established through clear proofs and arguments. In enunciating all these principles, my objective was to promote universal peace. Praised be God, I found hearing ears, seeing eyes, and conscious hearts. I am, therefore, pleased indeed with this journey . . .

—'Abdu'l-Bahá

Original text published in *Muntakhabátí az Makátíb-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-'Abdu'l-Bahá*, vol. 5, pp. [73–75](#) (selection #93)

Part III:

**A Biography of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání
Written by 'Azízu'lláh Sulaymání**

The following biography of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání has been excerpted and translated from Masábih-i-Hidáyat, vol. 8, pp. 147–86. Per the emphatic and unequivocally clear instructions of the author (as stipulated in Masábih-i-Hidáyat, vol. 9, pp. 616–21), the late ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání (1901–1985), to those translating or otherwise reproducing his work in any way, his words have been preserved in full, with no abridgements or other omissions being made to the text. All parenthetical insertions are Sulaymání’s, while all bracketed commentary is mine.

In preparing this translation, I benefited from other accounts of the life of Zarqání—written by ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávárí, Fádíl Mázandarání, Ni ‘matu’lláh Dhuká’í Baydá’í, Siyyid Ghulam Murtaadá ‘Alí, and Şábir Áfáqí—and as I came across new details that I thought would complement Sulaymání’s biography, I incorporated them into the translation as endnotes. I also had a chance to consult an unpublished (but possibly forthcoming) English translation of Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i, a book originally written in Urdu by the late Şábir Áfáqí on Muḥammad Iqbal’s relationship to the Bahá’í Faith, and similarly incorporated details not only on that particular subject, but also on the life of Zarqání himself, as endnotes to this translation.

* * *

In the biography of Nayyir and Síná¹ included in the first volume of this series,² it is mentioned that a youth by the name of Mírzá Maḥmúd—a maker of cotton summer shoes³—traveled awhile with those two poets,⁴ and that he would go on to author the work known as *Badáyi ‘u’l-Áthár*.⁵ In that same account, I promised that I would write a biography of Mírzá Maḥmúd at the earliest opportunity. Twenty-four years have passed from that time until now, which is the year 1970, and in that time I had not procured any materials that might have allowed me to keep my promise—and this remained the case until just two months ago, when I traveled to Pakistan at the instruction of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Iran.

I first resided in the city of Karachi, where I met well-informed people and came across various writings which made me hopeful that I would achieve my goal. One of those knowledgeable individuals was Isfandiyár Bakhtiyári,⁶ a Bahá’í of Pársí background who helped me to find a variety of documents. The name of this great man [Mírzá Maḥmúd] is also mentioned in my biography of Jamál Effendí,⁷ that spiritual conqueror of India, and I obtained additional information on him through the writings of Maḥfúzu’l-Ḥaqq ‘Ilmí, a Bahá’í scholar living here in Pakistan about whom I have written a separate biography.⁸ Furthermore, a few of the kind friends of Pakistan—among them Anísu’r-Raḥmán [Dihlaví],⁹ Ṭáhir Akbar,¹⁰ and some others—assisted with research along these lines, to the extent that some of them told me whatever they knew for certain about Mírzá Maḥmúd, while others provided me with his writings and other documents on him, both in manuscript and in print. Yet all this notwithstanding, his lineage,¹¹ the date of his birth,¹² and details from his childhood remain unknown.¹³ We know only that he was born in Zarqán, a mountainous village in the province

of Fárs located near the ruins of Persepolis, and that his brother [Mírzá Aḥmad] believed in the Bahá'í Faith—this according to what Zarqání himself wrote about him in the following account, published in the fifth issue of the monthly periodical *al-Bishárat* (7 July 1921):

In 1321 AH [1903], at a time when the movers of sedition were laying the groundwork for the wholesale slaughter of all the Bahá'ís of Iran, the people of oppression in Zarqán had likewise headed in droves—at the incitement of a most foolish *mullá*—for the home of my brother, intending to murder him and plunder his possessions. Since he, however, had been apprised of this imminent onslaught, he ran out of his house and planted himself at a conspicuous place in the midst of that menacing tumult. When those riotous rebels reached the city, my brother began preparing himself to endure whatever suffering they might inflict on him. It was not long before he was weltering in a pool of his own blood, brought to the brink of death by all the blows he had been dealt. When word of this calamity reached *Shíráz*, the governor sent someone to treat him for a time, yet owing to certain considerations, that governor took no punitive action against those agents of corruption. The people of Bahá did not retaliate, either, preferring instead to pardon the perpetrators and overlook their crime in obedience to the firm commandment of Bahá'u'lláh. Now that that pure soul has ascended to the Kingdom of sanctity, in truth I say that the greatest source of solace to me, forlorn as I am by his passing, is none other than that spirituality and steadfastness which my brother showed in times of tests—qualities which enabled him to emerge from the crucible even as pure gold, his face afire with fervor and his heart rejoicing with delight.¹⁴

We do not know much about Zarqání's own faith beyond what is written in the 5 January 1958 issue of the *Bishárat-i-Karáchí* magazine (not to be confused with *al-Bishárat*), indicating that he embraced the Cause at the age of sixteen.¹⁵

I recall one day from my time as a youth in *Ṭíhrán* when the late Ḥájí Abu'l-Ḥasan Ardikání (Ḥájí Amín) had occasion to mention Zarqání in this way:

This man first accompanied Mírzá Maḥram¹⁶ on his travels as a teacher of the Cause to obtain information about the religion. Sometime thereafter, he entered into the service of Nayyir and Síná, and from there he accompanied Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí *Iṣfahání* on his travels. Once he had learned about the Cause from these individuals, and was well-versed in the ways of travel, conversation, and association with people from all walks of life—having become a thoroughly seasoned teacher of the Faith—he then arose to serve it on his own.

No documents in Zarqání’s own hand have yet been found that speak to the period in which he accompanied Mírzá Maḥram on his travels. There is, however, a writing of his that discusses his accompanying Nayyir and Síná—a letter composed in versified prose as a condolence to Síná on the occasion of Nayyir’s passing. In this letter, Zarqání praises Nayyir as his spiritual teacher and expresses his sorrow at his death. I saw this letter when I was at the home of the late Mírzá Ḥabíbu’lláh Síná-Zádih.¹⁷

There is also material that covers Zarqání’s accompaniment of Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí Işfahání; this is included on page 407 of *Bihjatu’s-Şudúr*,¹⁸ written by the Ḥájí himself, and it offers a glimpse into the life of Zarqání:

I was in Ṭihrán for five months [of the winter].* On the day after Naw-Rúz, since my late wife was afflicted with paralysis—and as the severity of her symptoms suggested that she was not long for this world—it was observed that it would be unwise for her to remain by my side in the event that she died. She saw fit to agree, and after obtaining her consent, I changed residences so that I might tend to some unfinished business pertaining to the Cause. With that, it seemed I had bidden her farewell.† With my luggage in hand, Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání (may my life be a sacrifice for him) and I relocated to a distant caravanserai and lodged there.¹⁹

As can be inferred from the passage above, the Ḥájí and Zarqání lodged at a caravanserai, where they were engaged in services to the Cause. Yet in rendering these services in those days, Zarqání would act in whatever way the Ḥájí would direct him. In other words, Zarqání would assist the Ḥájí with spiritual undertakings and serve at his command. The degree to which Zarqání became apprised of truths, scientific and spiritual alike, while at the Ḥájí’s side is abundantly clear, as is the extent to which he learned to comport himself with heavenly qualities and observe prudence in his dealings with others.

The very work mentioned above, *Bihjatu’s-Şudúr*, attests to the fact that the Ḥájí had reached the pinnacle of faith and certitude; it shows that he occupied the highest rank of insight and intelligence, and had attained to the greatest possible degree of sincerity and humility. Few could rival the Ḥájí’s knowledge, especially when it came to the contents of the holy Texts—including the Torah, the Bayán, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas, and other such Books and Scriptures—and he was intimately familiar with even the subtlest details of the histories of various religions.

* This detail is included in Ḥaydar-‘Alí’s original account, but appears to have been omitted from Sulaymání’s reproduction of this passage.

† Immediately after this passage, Ḥaydar-‘Alí makes it clear that, once he had changed residences, he would visit his wife some nights and console, in his own words, “that woman contented with the decree of God and well-pleased with whatever He had ordained for her.”

Owing to the purity of his heart, which naturally drew divine confirmations to himself, the Ḥájí was remarkably quick-witted and always ready with an answer to any topic.

At that time, which is to say forty-three days after Naw-Rúz or the Twelfth Day of Riḍván in 1313 AH [1896],²⁰ the Ḥájí and Zarqání were at the home of the Hand of the Cause of God, Adíb Ṭáliqání,²¹ where they were all the guests of Mashhadí Muḥammad-‘Alí Ṭabbákh. The pillars of the Iranian government were preparing to hold a celebration commemorating the fiftieth year of Náṣiri’-d-Dín Sháh’s reign—a celebration that would begin the following day, the forty-fourth day after Naw-Rúz, and would last for a total of seven days. They had illuminated all of Ṭihrán, in particular the government buildings; both the Mashq and Túpkhániḥ Squares; the residences of foreign diplomats; the homes of ministers, princes, and dignitaries; the bazaars; and the caravanserais. All the nation’s governors had been summoned to attend that grand gathering, where they would be invested with ceremonial robes of honor, and representatives from outside the country had come to extend their congratulations. On that same day, meaning the day before the start of the celebration, Náṣiri’-d-Dín Sháh himself, clothed in a garment ornamented with jewels, could be seen riding in a conspicuously majestic carriage that was headed for the shrine of Sháh ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím, where he was to render thanks for the longevity of his reign and implore divine blessings. Even prior to this occasion, the sháh was known to do this very thing, and it is widely reported that whenever he went to that shrine, he would recite this verse of poetry (and it has yet to be determined whether he himself was the author of these words, or whether they belong to someone else):

How good ‘twould be, ‘twould me beseem
 If with one move I meet two ends:
 Make pilgrimage to ‘Abdu’l-‘Azím
 And visit him, my best of friends

But on that same day, as the sháh was making his pilgrimage to the sanctuary of the shrine, he was shot with a bullet fired by Mírzá Riḍá Kirmání, the obsequious disciple of Siyyid Jamálu’-d-Dín Afghání. The contents of *Bihjatu’š-Ṣudúr* indicate that Adíb conveyed this news to those at his residence when he returned there in the afternoon:

The sháh is dead, but no one is aware of it yet because the Amínu’s-Sulṭán took the sháh’s body at once and placed it in the carriage. He then had a member of the royal retinue sit behind the sháh, put his hand up the sleeve of the sháh’s cloak, and begin twirling the sháh’s mustache. The Amínu’s-Sulṭán, also seated in the carriage, repeated over and over again the words, “Yes, yes, Your Majesty,” and the town crier shouted, “Praised be God that no harm has come to the Pivot of the Universe!” From behind the glass window of the carriage, the onlookers saw the sháh upright and bespectacled,

and it seemed to them that he himself was twirling his mustache and conversing with the Amínu’s-Sulṭán.

In short, Adíb said:

We must disperse now and pray God to protect His loved ones in this time, for the Bahá’ís will certainly be accused of having committed this act.

He then said to the Ḥájí and Zarqání:

Remain in that same caravanserai where you have taken up residence and do not leave it. I will inform you of any developments that take place.

These two returned to the caravanserai immediately, and once night had fallen, Zarqání purchased enough rice, cooking oil, lentils, and dry bread to sustain themselves—and also the Ḥájí’s ailing wife—for a few days. They allocated some of these provisions for the Ḥájí’s wife and sent her share to her residence.

Very early the next morning, Adíb came with this good news:

The sháh’s assassin was Mírzá Riḍá Kirmání. They apprehended him within the hour; all are aware that he was a follower of the republican Siyyid Jamálu’d-Dín Afghání, and that he had nothing to do with the Bahá’ís.

The Amínu’s-Sulṭán communicated the fact of the matter everywhere by telegraph, and the Bahá’ís were kept safe from the malice of their enemies.

A few days later, however, a piece of news was brought to Adíb, as described in and quoted verbatim from page[s] 423 [and 424] of *Bihjatu’s-Şudúr*:

The prime minister [the Amínu’s-Sulṭán] privately expressed the following:

Three or four months before the sháh’s assassination, a number of high-ranking Bahá’ís received several “Tablets” (as they call them) from the representative of Bahá’u’lláh [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] to this effect:

Siyyid Jamálu’d-Dín and his associates intend to commit an act of grievous sedition against Iran and her royal throne. Inform the governmental authorities so they shall be apprised; perhaps they will take measures to prevent it from happening. It is certain, however, that

this sudden death will come to pass, so let them be aware from this very moment that, “when the thing that must come hath come suddenly” [Qur’án 56:1], they will not accuse this beleaguered band, who love the people and government of Iran, obey her authorities, and work for the betterment of the world. Let them recognize the real spreaders of corruption—the true enemies of the people and government of Iran.

Some ten or twelve Tablets along these lines, written with the utmost eloquence, were brought to us. We perused them and saw the truth of their words, though we profess no belief in the Cause of the Bahá’ís and do not consider it a revelation from God. Perhaps they learned the intentions of the real movers of sedition by some means or other, or perhaps the two parties are colluding in secret. At any rate, it behooves us to discover the truth of the matter.

Jináb-i-Adíb, that mountain of steadfastness and sacrifice, had written a letter in which he set forth lucid, tangible, and conclusive proofs, clearly demonstrating that the Bahá’ís are not, nor have they ever been, associated with the spreaders of corruption, and stated that the gulf between the two groups was as wide as the distance between the East and the West. To this letter he appended his name, governmental title, and signature, and declared:

I consider it my religious duty to report these matters and decisively disabuse the authorities of this grave misunderstanding and erroneous suspicion, which imperil the lives of thousands of innocent souls who strive for the betterment of the world.

I reflected on the fact that for fifty years I had enjoyed great happiness and fulfillment under the shadow of the Cause of God, and that I had been accorded much respect through the bounty of this Cause, while Jináb-i-Adíb—who had only recently embraced the Faith—had already foregone his rank and his wealth for the sake of God. My pondering led me to conclude that it would not be right for him to convey such a letter when I myself might do this in his stead. Thus, Áqá Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání transcribed an identical copy of this letter, to which I then appended my own name, address, and signature. As we knew firstly that the Hands of the Cause (may my life be a sacrifice for them) would not consent to this arrangement if we apprised them of it, given the manifest danger it entailed, and secondly that the time was ripe for this letter to be sent—and also that the death of the sháh was imminent—we secretly sent the letter through the mail and later received a note from the prime minister acknowledging that he had received it.

Praised be God, for the timing of this act was most opportune. When the prime minister asked his personal amanuensis to summarize the letter for him, he replied:

It would be impossible to summarize this letter any further. Were I to omit a single word of it, this would compromise the meaning of any one of the important issues it raises. Indeed, the significance of the letter would be lost, inasmuch as the contents thereof all bear some relationship to each other.

The royal retinue of the supernal Muḏaffari’d-Dín Sháh was in Zanján at the time, and that very letter was cabled to him word for word. This was a great service which the prime minister rendered—through the sacrifice of Jináb-i-Adíb—to the Cause of God, the Word of God, and the people of God.²²

Though only a passing reference is made to Zarqání in the foregoing account from *Bihjatu’ş-Şudúr*, at the same time it shows the greatness and devotion of Áqá Mírzá Ḥasan Adíb—as well as the strength of his faith and the power of his pen—and likewise attests to the faithfulness and sacrifice of Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí. It is clear that this courageous act ranks as one of the most important measures taken in the history of the Bahá’í community.

Once the people of Bahá had safely escaped the specter of their own massacre, the Ḥájí and Zarqání set off for Qazvín. They secured a two-wheeled carriage to make their journey easier and more comfortable, but when they were six leagues away from Qazvín, the carriage suddenly overturned. The Ḥájí was the first passenger to be thrown to the ground; immediately thereafter, the other travelers and their luggage all fell on top of him, resulting in severe injury to the left side of his body. Zarqání ran barefoot for a full league before reaching a town, where he procured a remedy and then returned. With great difficulty, he helped the Ḥájí, who was practically half-dead, to reach Qazvín. While there, [Mírzá Músá Khán Ḥakím-Báshí, entitled] Ḥakím-i-Iláhí—whose biography is published in the fourth volume of this series²³—began treating the Ḥájí and taking care of him until his pain subsided.

When he was fully healed two months later, the Ḥájí and Zarqání went to Zanján, from there to Azerbaijan, and then traveled to Tabríz, Mílán, Uskú, Mamaqán, Khuy, and certain villages in the vicinity. In the thick of the seditious stir which the covenant-breakers were causing in those days, the majority of the teachers of the Cause everywhere were striving diligently to make the Bahá’ís firm and steadfast in the Covenant, and bending every effort to persevere in the face of the doubts being spread by those who had broken it.

From there, the Ḥájí and Zarqání set out, in the bitter cold of winter, towards ‘Ishqábád with the intention of going to the Holy Land. So ebullient were they in their excitement to meet

with their Beloved [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] that they accounted neither the snow, nor the cold, nor the icy conditions as potential obstacles to their journey. The Bahá’ís yielded when they saw that their attempts to dissuade the Ḥájí and Zarqání from pursuing this journey were to no avail. They rented two horses for them to use, and also retained for them the services of two others who would ride with them and act as their guides. They embarked at daybreak, but lost their way after having traveled for just one hour. They crossed mountains and plains until, four hours after nightfall, they finally reached a village, where they spent the night at an exceedingly small and squalid house with the head of that household, along with his wife, his children, his dog, his donkey, his hen, and his rooster. They left that place after paying an exorbitant fee the next morning, but their compatriots made still more trouble for them when they reached the border. The Ḥájí and Zarqání were eventually released by the border agents after a fine of five túmáns had unjustly been exacted from them.

Following this, once they had made it to Russian soil, they traveled, by carriage and without the slightest disturbance, first to Nakhjaván and then to Tiflís [Tbilisi] after a few days. Wherever they went, they would spend several days meeting with the Bahá’ís and promoting the Word of God.

The Ḥájí and Zarqání had barely reached ‘Ishqábád when the news arrived that Jamál-i-Burújirdí had openly defected from the Cause in Ṭíhrán. In those days, Mírzá MaḤmúd Furúghí²⁴ was also in ‘Ishqábád and had plans to travel to the Holy Land. On the night before Naw-Rúz, the Ḥájí met with Furúghí and said to him:

It would be good if you went to Ṭíhrán so that you might possibly persuade Jamál to repent. If not this, then you can at least rouse the vigilance of those Bahá’ís whose faith has been weakened.

Furúghí replied:

I am preparing to depart for the Holy Land, and I do not see fit to delay that journey for any reason, whatever it may be.

In short, since the Ḥájí’s importuning had no effect on Furúghí, he resolved to return to Ṭíhrán himself to prevent the corruptive influence of Jamál from spreading any further. The following account is taken verbatim from page[s] 439 [and 440] of the Ḥájí’s book:

On the afternoon of Naw-Rúz, and in spite of the heavy snowfall, Áqá Mírzá MaḤmúd and I embarked the train. We returned to the city, boarded a ship, and arrived at Bandar-i-Jaz [Bandar-i-Gaz]. Once there, we went to the home of that man who has since ascended to God, Áqá Mírzá Ibráhím Khán [the Ibtiháju’l-Mulk]. As we were in a

hurry, and fifteen days [still remained] until the steamboat would depart for Maṣḥadsar [Bábulsar] and the docks at Bárfurúsh [Bábul], the late Khán remarked:

I have a fine boat, and the weather is clement. In just two or three hours, the boat can get you to your initial stop, which is six leagues’ distance from Sári. If you wish to go to Bárfurúsh first, you must travel to Sári and then return to Bárfurúsh, and from there set out for Ṭihrán.

I observed that, in several respects, this course of action would be simpler, more efficient, and overall better [than our original plan]. We entered the boat, which had six laborers on board. One hour into our voyage, the waters became turbulent and we found ourselves caught in the midst of crashing waves. Three hours turned into twenty-eight as the wind took the boat every which way. We were sorely tested that night, and the laborers on the ship fell into despair. Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd said:

I am assured in my heart that no harm will come to us, for this would cause the covenant-breakers to rejoice and regard the incident as a miracle on their part.

I replied:

I, too, have the utmost confidence. So supreme are the power and majesty of the Cause of God and His Covenant that if a hundred thousand others like you and me, who amount to less than a gnat—and also a myriad holy, radiant, and steadfast souls—were all to drown, this would not weaken the Covenant of God. On the contrary, it would straightway be changed into a means for the aid and exaltation of His Cause. He, exalted is He, is the Absolutely Independent, while all others are dependent on Him.²⁵

In brief, we were delivered from our plight the following afternoon.

The Ḥájí and Zarqání went to Ṭihrán, and from there to ‘Ishqábád once again by way of Qazvín and Raṣht. From ‘Ishqábád, and accompanied by a group of the Bahá’ís of that city who were going to make pilgrimage, the Ḥájí and Zarqání departed for the Holy Land, traveling through Bádkúbih [Baku], Tiflís, Báṭúm [Batumi], and Beirut along the way. Although the Ḥájí does not explicitly mention the name of Zarqání in *Bihjatu’š-Ṣudúr* as he describes his second journey from Ṭihrán, he does state on page 478 that, on [the anniversary of] the night of Bahá’u’lláh’s ascension, Mírzá Maḥmúd was en route from ‘Akká to the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, and that he recited prayers in the precincts of that hallowed Spot the following morning. At this point, the Ḥájí and Zarqání likely went their separate ways; it can be said that the Ḥájí took up residence in the Holy Land, leaving only temporarily to carry out some duty or other, while

Zarqání was engaged in teaching the Faith by himself. The following is taken from page 482 of the aforementioned book:

I went from ‘Ishqábád to the holy city of Mashhad, and Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání (may my life be a sacrifice for him) traveled throughout the cities of Khurásán. At a time when he and his brother, Áqá Mírzá Aḥmad, were in Mashhad, the two of them and I secured a residence there. We spent our days associating with people from all walks of life. This included various noblemen, princes, dignitaries, and scholars, with whom we enjoyed friendly relations; they would visit our residence, and they, in turn, would invite us to their homes.²⁶

The contents that follow the passage above indicate that the Ḥájí and Zarqání secured such great victories in Mashhad that the Bahá’ís began to imagine that, in the span of a single year, all the intellectuals and ministers of state would embrace the Cause of God. But in no time at all, news of the calamitous upheaval in Yazd reached Mashhad in 1321 AH [1903], and the terrifying tales of the slaughtering and plundering of the friends that had been carried out with so much cruelty and malice were enough to distress the new converts and deter them from remaining in the Faith.

In any case, this time the Ḥájí went from Mashhad to ‘Ishqábád with the late ‘Abdu’l-Karím Banná Yazdí,²⁷ and from that point forward we have no information on Zarqání or his whereabouts up until he appears in India.* While it is not known when Zarqání first went to India,²⁸ there are documents which show that he was traveling in that country in 1904, and that he resided for a time in the city of Gujrat [in present-day Pakistan].²⁹ Wherever he went, he consorted with the scholars and grandees of that place.³⁰

One of the especially interesting episodes from this period is Zarqání’s clash with the late Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad Qadíyání, who had claimed to be the Promised One of Islám. On the basis of numerous verses from the Qur’án and successively-narrated Islámic traditions, in particular the following *ḥadīth* attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad (may the blessings of God be upon Him) and accepted by both Sunnís and Shí’ihs, the Muslims were awaiting the advent of two consecutive Revelations:

* The suggestion that Zarqání’s whereabouts before arriving in India are unknown appears not to be entirely correct. Fádíl Mázandarání lists several of the teaching trips which Zarqání undertook independently following his arrival in the Holy Land with Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí: to Hamadán, Yazd, and Kirmán; to Azerbaijan; to Yazd again; to Khurásán, where he helped form the first Spiritual Assembly of Bushrúyih; to Khurásán again, this time with his brother, by way of Kirmán; and to Yazd a third time (Mázandarání, *Zuhúru’l-Haqq*, vol. 8, part 1, pp. 564–65). Ni‘matu’lláh Dhuká’í Baydá’í writes that, before embarking on these teaching trips, Zarqání sojourned in the Holy Land for “approximately six months” (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 184), and adds Tíhrán, Iṣfahán, Shíráz, and Ábádih to the list of places Zarqání visited in the course of his independent teaching trips throughout Iran afterwards (*ibid.*, p. 185).

I swear in truth that God hath raised me up as a Prophet. If naught but a single day of this earth should remain, verily God shall prolong that day until the emergence of my son, the Mihdí. Thereupon will the Spirit of God, which is to say Jesus Christ, descend from the heavens; He shall then pray behind the Mihdí, Whose sovereignty will encompass both East and West alike.³¹

Among the strange things the late Ghulám Aḥmad Qádíyání used to say was this: “I am both of these people.” Although this statement had previously been made in the midst of other Islámic sects, and the late Ghulám Aḥmad merely used it to his advantage, it can be reckoned a strange remark [of his] at any rate. There is a saying that has been popular for some time—that a given person and their friend are like one soul in two bodies. Yet now Ghulám Aḥmad, may the mercy [of God] be upon him, has made it known to all humanity that two souls can exist in one body! Additionally, to protect himself within the fortress of Islám from the attacks of others, this man had the foresight to say the following in one of his Persian poems: “No Messenger am I, nor any Book have I brought.”³² Here is one matter of great importance which this claimant believed he had broached: “Why should the Prophet of the Christians, which is to say Jesus Christ, have gone to heaven when our Prophet sleeps beneath heaps of dust?” He strove to convince others, according to his own belief, that Jesus Christ is buried in Kashmir. Bravo to him for this knowledge he brought forward! Well done for having solved this problem!

As to his followers, they are a quarrelsome and obstinate people who can be likened to the members of Iran’s “Society for the Propagation of Islám.”³³ Whenever the opportunity presents itself, they approach the Bahá’ís claiming to have questions. Then, in keeping with the indoctrination they have received from the founders of their society (whose reason for being formed in the first place is unclear), they parrot a few cherry-picked sentences from our Writings—entirely unaware of the words that precede and succeed them—and ask why this thing or that has been said. Of course, they are unwilling to hear our answers to their questions, which reflect the same baseless doubts raised a hundred years before by so many antagonists and objectors in their polemical works, [collectively] referred to in the Qur’án as “the book of the wicked.” To quote the Words of God, exalted is He, in the Súrih of Muṭaffifín:

Nay! Truly, the book of the wicked is in the depths of hell. And what will apprise thee of the depths of hell? It is a written book. Woe betide the deniers on that Day!³⁴

Such are the books they have written, and Bahá’í scholars have composed responses to each and every one of them that draw on both rational and traditional proofs.

Let us now turn our attention to the matter of Zarqání and Qádíyání. In those days, when the Bahá'ís of Lahore were holding lively gatherings, a nationally-sponsored magazine by the name of *Makhzan* was concurrently being published through the efforts of Shaykh Sir 'Abdu'l-Qádir Amritsar, and a newspaper known as *Paisa Akhbár* was also being printed under the editorship of Munshí Maḥbúb 'Álam. From time to time, articles on the Bahá'í Faith—or some mention of the religion more generally—would appear in both of these publications. In 1904, when Zarqání was residing in Lahore, the late Ghulám Aḥmad Qádíyání arrived in that city. The editors of *Paisa Akhbár*, who were acquainted with Zarqání, informed him thus:

Qádíyání is in Lahore now, and it occurred to us to ask the two of you to meet with one another and discuss your beliefs. Will you permit us to move forward with this idea?

Zarqání replied:

I am certainly willing to do this. When he has accepted your invitation and made his appearance, I will come, too.

Once the editors of *Paisa Akhbár* were assured of Zarqání's participation, they approached Qádíyání and invited him to participate in this debate. They printed an article in their newspaper with the heading, "Which of These Two is True?", which began with an explanation of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh and concluded with an address to Ghulám Aḥmad that called on him to prepare for the discussion.³⁵ At the end of that article was a poem in Urdu, the gist of which is as follows:³⁶

Come forth to Egypt's market-square
Before Joseph thyself prepare
So he who looks will not mistake
Which gold is real and which is fake

Ghulám Aḥmad, however, was not willing [to participate]. Rather, he stated the following in one of his talks:³⁷

From reading *Paisa Akhbár*, I have learned that a *ḥakím*³⁸ by the name of Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání is in Lahore. He is a promoter and supporter of One who claims to be the Messiah, and he wishes to have a dialogue with me, but I am preparing to depart this place and do not have even a second to spare. Moreover, having this discussion in person may lead to feelings of offense or resentment. It would be better, then, for him to write a response to this very talk, which he will read once it has been published tomorrow.³⁹

It was in this way that Ghulám Aḥmad freed himself from the grasp of his opponent. Consequently, Zarqání composed a treatise entitled *Javáb-i-Nuṭq-i-Qádiyání* [“A Response to the Discourse of Qádiyání”], which was published over several issues of *Paisa Akhbár*.⁴⁰ In 1908, Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí—one of the teachers of the Cause of God on whom I will write a biography,⁴¹ God willing—translated that treatise from Persian into Urdu, and then published and disseminated it with the financial assistance of the Bahá’ís of Rangoon. At one point in the treatise, Zarqání has written:

We invited Qádiyání to debate, but he did not accept this invitation. We hereby state that we are still residing in the area; whenever you are prepared to pursue this matter, we, too, will be ready.

But Qádiyání never consented to this meeting, nor did he ever mention the Bahá’í Faith again, whether in his speech or in his writing. Whenever he was asked about his opinion of Bahá’u’lláh, be it in the course of an oral conversation or written correspondence, he refused to utter a single word in response.

Another episode from the life of Zarqání concerns his meeting with Dr. Muḥammad Iqbál, a poet from Lahore. This man was an eminent individual and a celebrated orator who composed poetry in both Urdu and in Persian. It is for this reason that he was renowned not only in India, but also in Iran. There are certain patrons of education from our homeland, Iran, who have recently published Iqbál’s Persian poetry and have written extensive accounts of his life. They regard him as the equal of such poets as Rúmí or Ḥáfiz, and have reckoned him as one of the world’s greatest thinkers. Yet when it comes to poetry, whether in Persian or in Urdu, there is a contingent of scholars from Pakistan itself who, notwithstanding the pride they take in him and in his various accomplishments, nonetheless prefer Asadu’lláh Bahádur Túrání-Nizhád, who adopted the pen name of “Ghálíb,” to Dr. Iqbál. At the same time, these same scholars acknowledge the higher standing of those famed writers who have sprung up from the soil of Iran, fertile with poets and rich with literary luminaries, and confess to the greater degree of their success over that of both Dr. Iqbál and Ghálíb.

According to Maḥfúzu’l-Ḥaqq ‘Ilmí, the late professor Pritam Singh⁴² used to recount this anecdote:⁴³

When I was a youth, Dr. Iqbál and I studied at the same university⁴⁴ and were good friends. One day, as we were walking down Anarkali Street, we saw before us a sign that had been posted in the building across the street from the office of the *Paisa Akhbár* newspaper which read: “*Ḥakím Mírzá Maḥmúd Írání*.” We decided it would be good to pay a visit to this Iranian fellow. When we approached the door of his residence and requested permission to enter, he received and welcomed us with the utmost love and

cheerfulness. In jest, Dr. Iqbál said, “Check our pulse, Jináb-i-Ḥakím!” Mírzá Maḥmúd replied, “I am a *ḥakím*, not a *ṭabīb*.”* This sentence—which had been spoken pleasantly, affectionately, and deliberately—made a very good impression on Dr. Iqbál.

As a result, whenever Zarqání was in Lahore, Dr. Iqbál would meet with him. To that effect, Dr. Iqbál himself told Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaqq 'Ilmí that, on numerous occasions, he would take up a considerable amount of Zarqání's time—sometimes spanning several days—to engage him in conversation. For example, he would say, “I want to speak with you every day of the next week, from morning till noon or from the afternoon till the evening,” and Zarqání would consent to these requests every time.⁴⁵ With consummate kindness and patience, he had discussions with Dr. Iqbál in which he shed light for him on the truths of this most holy and most exalted Cause.

In some of his poems, Dr. Iqbál had previously repeated the portrayals of Náṣiri'd-Dín Sháh's arraignment of the Báb mentioned by those opposed to the divine Cause, and had himself written about the Báb disparagingly. But after associating with Zarqání and Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaqq 'Ilmí—and later Martha Root, that burning brand afire with the love of God—his opinion of the Cause of God changed. According to Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaqq 'Ilmí, Dr. Iqbál has treated the Báb respectfully and discussed the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh positively in one of his books, *Falsafiy-i- 'Ajam*.⁴⁶ I saw a published copy of this book in Karachi, and because it was written in Urdu, I asked some of the friends to translate the section that dealt with the Cause of God into Persian, so that it might give me both a standard by which to measure the author's knowledge of philosophy and also a sense of how he had written about the Faith. Those friends, however, told me that they were not conversant with philosophical terminology, and thus excused themselves from rendering that service. Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaqq 'Ilmí would have been capable of producing such a translation, but he was not in Karachi at the time. As a result, the matter has remained a mystery to me, and it is for this reason that I have had to rely on 'Ilmí's testimony on the subject.

Regarding the meeting between Dr. Iqbál and Martha Root, the preeminent teacher of the Cause, Isfandíyár Bakhtíyári has said:

During the time when Martha Root had come to India and was spreading the call of God's Cause to the nobles and grandees of the country, three people—Martha Root, professor Pritam Singh, and I—went to the home of Dr. Iqbál on 22 June 1930 per an

* This is an instance of wordplay that does not neatly carry over into English. As mentioned in a previous note, *ḥakím* means “physician” in Urdu; hence, Dr. Iqbál's joking request that Zarqání check his pulse. As was also mentioned previously, this word can alternatively mean “sage” or “philosopher” in Persian. The word *ṭabīb* likewise means “physician,” and thus has potential semantic overlap with *ḥakím*, but only in Persian. Being familiar with Persian, however, Dr. Iqbál would likely have picked up on this nuance and was therefore impressed by Zarqání's cleverness.

arrangement that professor Singh had made with him. Once Martha Root and Dr. Iqbál had introduced themselves, exchanged pleasantries, and expressed their respect for one another, Martha Root told Dr. Iqbál a bit about the history of the Cause and discussed some of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Dr. Iqbál said, "I believe that no prophet will come after Muḥammad, and that no Book will be sent down from heaven after the revelation of the Qur'án." Martha Root replied, "I would be very grateful if you could cite a proof to that effect, or present a book that demonstrates the truth of what you are saying, so that the matter will become clear to me, too." Dr. Iqbál brought a book that he himself had written in English and was entitled *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* and gave it to Martha Root, who in turn gave Dr. Iqbál a copy of *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, along with a booklet called *Tuḥfiy-i-Ṭáhirih*,⁴⁷ and said to him, "I gift this book by Dr. [John] Esslemont whenever I meet a prominent person, just as I have also presented it to Her Royal Majesty, the Queen [Marie] of Romania." After exchanging these books, they decided to meet again in two days at this very residence.

Accordingly, on June 24 of that same year, all three of us went to the home of Dr. Iqbál and saw that he was seated in anticipation of our arrival; he was dressed in formal attire, and welcomed Martha Root and the rest of us with the utmost courtesy and respect. Once everyone had taken their seats and had some tea and sweets, Martha Root handed Dr. Iqbál the copy of *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* he had given her and said, "Over these past two days, I have read this book carefully from cover to cover. It is a very good book, but at no point did I see anything demonstrating that the flow of God's mercy has been dammed up, nor any proof that further Manifestations of God have not come or that additional heavenly books have ceased to be revealed." Dr. Iqbál smiled and politely said, "It would be better for us to forget this matter and speak of other subjects instead. I have been deeply affected by the words of Qurratu'l-'Ayn [Ṭáhirih], and wish to mention her name in a book that I am currently writing." Following this, he discussed the poetry of Ṭáhirih and described her characteristics.

Dr. Iqbál then indicated that he wanted to give Martha Root that same copy of his work, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, as a keepsake. He took up his pen, intending to dedicate the book to her, when that firebrand of a woman said, "Whenever I am offered a book on religion that I like, I send it to the Guardian of the Cause of God, Shoghi Effendi. How excellent would it be if you were to personally dedicate this book to him! I can give it to Mr. Bakhtiyári today to be sent to him by mail." Dr. Iqbál accepted her request with much pleasure; on the back of the front flyleaf, he wrote "To Shoghi Effendi" in English and appended his signature. He then handed the book to Martha Root, who gave it to me (Bakhtiyári), and I sent it to Haifa that same day. I wrote an account of this meeting, and not long thereafter, the National Spiritual

Assembly [of the Bahá'ís of Pakistan] published a translation of it in an Urdu book entitled *Najm-i-Durri* ["The Brilliant Star"].

This was the fruit of Jináb-i-Bakhtiyári's remarks on this subject.

Zarqání's presence in India had a great effect on the progress of the Cause,⁴⁸ and he succeeded in guiding important people to the Faith, among them the aforementioned professor Pritam Singh. This individual, a learned man of high rank, belonged to the Sikh religion, and was the first person of that creed to enter the Cause of God. Up until the end of his life, he rendered valuable services and emerged pure and proud from the crucible of tests. In addition to the fact that he served, throughout his life, as a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of [the Bahá'ís of] India and Burma, and that he was aware of the weighty responsibilities which this membership entailed, he embarked nevertheless on numerous teaching trips and spread the Word of God in many regions. Since he was a renowned and high-ranking professor, he mentioned the Cause of God to various people in most of the country's universities.

Those familiar with the details say that, on most occasions when he wanted to organize a Bahá'í gathering, professor Singh would compose the advertisement himself, pay for the cost of printing with his own money, and post it on street walls with his own two hands. On the day of the gathering, he would rent as many chairs as needed, and help the laborers take them to the site of the event. He would sweep the floor and also dust the chairs and tables himself. When half an hour remained until the gathering was to begin, he would change his clothes and wait for people to arrive. Once the guests had come, he would welcome them all and give a talk on a Bahá'í topic.

Observe what servants God has in every country and in the midst of every people! This great man, who in the course of his services encountered much hindrance and oppression, sustaining unspeakable blows from unexpected people, has also written works in several languages. One of them, a treatise entitled *Madhhab-i-Hunúd va Díyánat-i-Búdáhá* ["The Religion of the Indians and the Creed of the Buddhists"], was written in Persian. Although Singh did not write this work in his native language, he was able to expound his points nonetheless. A few lines from that treatise will now be cited below to give the reader a sample of his writing:

Sikhism is one of the religions of the Indians. Put differently, it is a reformist religion that exists among the Indian people. The founder of this belief system was a reformer by the name of Bábá Nának; he lived as a dervish, and many of his aims accorded with those of the saints of Islám. He wanted to remove all distance and separation between the Hindus and the Muslims; in his own words, he considered humanity the servants of one God and the worshippers of one peerless Creator. The flowing garment of the mendicant which Bábá Nának wore—as well as his long hair, the turban on his head,

his cloak, and his prayer beads—were all the marks of a dervish. He spent his life associating with religious luminaries, and he traveled to a great number of places. Some historians have stated that he also went to Baghdád and Mecca, but we have no historical evidence that corroborates this assertion . . .

My intent in quoting these words from Singh was to introduce him, if only to a degree, as one of the great ones of the Cause. In view of his knowledge and the services he rendered, this man deserved to have a biography of his own, but since I did not have enough information on him to write a separate chapter, I felt it was only right to commend him somewhere in this book to whatever extent possible—and where better than this very chapter, as the account of the one who guided him to the Faith is being given?

Pritam Singh had a wealthy father who was displeased with his son's conversion, and he wrote the following in his will accordingly:

A hundred thousand rupees will be the share of my eldest son, Pritam Singh, on the condition that he openly testify in a court of law that he is not a Bahá'í.

The contents of this will were disseminated while Singh's father was still alive, and when the news eventually reached Singh himself, he confronted him and said:

My dear father, do you not find it shameful to sell your son's faith for a hundred thousand rupees? I will forgo this money and leave it for the other inheritors.

Additionally, there was a renowned lawyer in Lahore named [Lala] Ísardás or Íshwardásh (which means "the servant of God") who was a friend of professor Pritam Singh's, and the professor would arrange for him to meet with all the itinerant teachers of the Cause whenever they came to India. Following the partition of [British] India into two states, India and Pakistan, this gentleman relocated from Lahore to Delhi, and his two sons, who had both graduated from law school, rose so highly in the ranks of the state that the government gave them a stately residence, equipped with every possible provision to support their way of life.⁴⁹ Professor Pritam Singh was also in Delhi in those days, as he was a member of the National Spiritual Assembly and this required him to reside in that city.

During this same time, the government of India seized the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds⁵⁰ from the Bahá'ís and rented it to the ambassador of the Soviet government. The reason this happened is that the ambassador and his family, who had recently arrived in India, were searching for a suitable place to live, and they preferred the gardens and building of the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds to all the other residences they had seen. Thus, the government of India ordered the National Spiritual Assembly to transfer that property to the [Soviet] embassy for a paltry price. In

return, the government gave a different residence to the Assembly so as to not leave them without a place of their own. Things carried on in this way for a few years, and eventually the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds was vacated and returned to the Assembly.

Professor Singh lived with Jináb-i-Bakhtiyári in one of the small rooms of that house, and from time to time the two of them would visit the aforementioned lawyer, who by that time had grown very old. One day, this lawyer, who was sick, summoned the professor to see him alone, so Bakhtiyári did not accompany him on this occasion. When the professor returned, Bakhtiyári asked him, “What was that all about?” The professor said:

This man showed me the large residence accorded him by the government, along with its many rooms, and said:

Choose whichever one of these rooms you like for yourself. Cooks, servants, and the other trappings that come with this life can be provided to you, and my sons will be delighted if you decide to live here. What, then, could be better than for you to accept this offer and spend the rest of your life in comfort with us? What repose do you enjoy with a bunch of Bahá'ís that has caused you to stay in that place?

I replied:

Íshwardás! Do you mean to take from me the treasure of my life, the very fruit of my existence, with this offer of yours? When I am with the Bahá'ís, I am more than happy to live in this very condition that you see, for we, the people of Bahá, attach no importance to the things of this world. You need not be sad, then, nor should you grieve on my account.

Professor Singh, who was fluent in several languages, published an English magazine called *Bahá'í Weekly*. He later changed this into a monthly periodical known as *This is Bahá'í*, which he published in Lahore for two years at his own expense. On 25 August 1959, the professor passed away in Amritsar and ascended to the Kingdom of glory.

Let us now return to the story of Zarqání. All the well-informed Bahá'ís of India who were his contemporaries agree that he treated seekers with much patience and forbearance, and showed great perseverance and steadfastness in guiding people to the truth. For instance, in his efforts to teach the Cause to this same professor, Pritam Singh—who met him for the first time with Dr. Iqbál simply for his own amusement—he labored for a full year, spending nearly every day at the professor's residence and speaking with him, even though he paid no

attention whatsoever to what Zarqání was saying. Yet one day, the professor suddenly came to his senses and said to himself:

This respected old man, who never tires of paying me these visits and having these conversations, must surely have some noble goal in mind. I must see what he is saying.

The very same day he began to listen intently to Zarqání’s words was the day he was transformed and became enamored. As has been mentioned above, the professor went on to gird up the loins of his endeavor, and never sought a moment’s repose until he drew his final breath.

The Bahá’ís say that Ibrahim Sialkoti, one of the ‘ulamás of the city of Sialkot and an eminent scholar of Islámic traditions, was so captivated by the pleasant temperament and attractive speech of Zarqání that he said the following on more than one occasion:

Only two people in this world have been able to capture my heart and leave a good impression of themselves on my very being, and one of those two people is Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání.

Similarly, Mawláná ‘Abdu’l-Ḥaqq, author of the *Tafsír-i-Ḥaqqání*; Ḥakím Ajmal Khán Dihlaví, the Masíḥu’l-Mulk; Khájih Ḥasan Nizámí; and other luminaries from these regions all looked upon Zarqání with respect, for in addition to the positive impression he made and the great respect he showed to those who were traveling in the area, whenever people came to him intending to harass and insult him with snide remarks, he would say the following with gentleness and kindness, and without the slightest evidence of offense on his face:

Your words are mixed with mockery and sarcasm, but here is the fact of the matter, and the answer to your question is this . . .

He would then continue the conversation in a spirit of love.

It was this approach that chastened a great many of those who sought to dispute with Zarqání; it was an approach that made them wary of overstepping their bounds, impelled them to apologize for their impudence, and drew them closer to the Cause of God.

This man remained engaged in teaching the Faith and promoting the Word of God until he went to the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,* at which time he joined the retinue that would accompany the Center of the Covenant on His journeys to America and Europe.

* This was in 1908, according to Šábir Áfáqí (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, no. 379 (July 2011), p. 31).

Following his return from that lengthy trip, Zarqání was dispatched to India in the early months of 1914. He went there with the woman⁵¹ he had recently married in the Holy Land,^{*} ⁵² but she died as she was giving birth to her child,⁵³ who did not survive, either. This time, Zarqání based himself in Bombay; he took up residence at a place owned by the Bahá'ís then known as a *Mashriq'u'l-Adhkár*, and would occasionally travel to other regions. Jináb-i-Bakhtiyári has related the following:

On a certain day in the year 1919, as I was sitting in one of the shops of Bombay, I saw that Jináb-i-Zarqání had come and was bidding farewell to the Bahá'ís. "Where are you going?," I asked. "To the Holy Land," he said. I was aware of the situation in India; I knew that the Bahá'ís in this country were few while the seekers were many, and I felt that this land was in need of people to teach the Cause, so I said to him, "Now that you are leaving, what will become of this place? We do not have anyone to teach the Cause here, after all." He replied, "As I have been permitted to go [to the Holy Land], I will be leaving here. We will see what the Will of God has in store." I asked, "If I write a letter, will you give it to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?'" Zarqání replied, "Why wouldn't I? Go ahead and write it." I then took up my pen, and because I had not received a proper education,[†] I wrote the following on a piece of paper:

O 'Abdu'l-Bahá![‡] I hope You are well. In case you were wondering how the Bahá'ís in this land are doing, praised be God, everyone here is in good health and they are eager to meet You. It would be good of Your blessed self to come here, or to send an accomplished teacher of the Cause like Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání, or even to dispatch him to India once again.

I signed this letter "Isfandiyár *Khudádád Bahrám Bakhtiyár*," and one month later, I received the following response from 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

Via Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání
Bombay

* While Zarqání may have returned to India in early 1914, he could not have done so as a married man because his first marriage did not take place until January 1920, according to the sources cited in the endnotes to this sentence. This return to India in early 1914 must also be reconciled with the fact that, in the signature Zarqání himself appended to the second volume of his chronicle, he notes that he was in Haifa in July 1914.

† By which *Bakhtiyári* means to say that he had not learned how to write eloquently.

‡ A point inevitably lost in translation: here, *Bakhtiyári* does not use the prefix "Ḥaḍrat" (a title of honor preceding the names of very great persons) for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which is the cultural norm among Iranian Bahá'ís. In His response, 'Abdu'l-Bahá quotes *Bakhtiyári*'s opening words back to him exactly as he wrote them: "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá," sans "Ḥaḍrat."

Jináb-i-Isfandíyár Khudádád, known as Bakhtíyárí, upon him be the Glory of God, the All-Glorious

He is God

O servant of God! I was most pleased with the opening words of the letter you sent through Maḥmúd, that praiseworthy soul, and those words are “O ‘Abdu’l-Bahá!” You conveyed the glad tidings of the good health and the zeal of the friends of Him Who is the Daystar of the world, and this brought me joy.

An accomplished teacher like Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd is not available in these days. Therefore, God willing, we will send Jináb-i-Maḥmúd to that region after a time. Rest assured of this.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

1 November 1919
‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás*

Sometime thereafter,⁵⁴ Zarqání returned to India at the behest of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; he engaged himself in rendering spiritual services and promoting the Word of God.⁵⁵ Among the efforts he undertook was the organization of the first convention of the Bahá’ís of India and Burma. This work was initiated at the suggestion of a certain Yúsuf Shayth, formerly an Ismá‘ílí Shí‘ih Muslim who later became a Bahá’í through Khusraw Bimán, a Pársí residing in Pune. The person who collaborated with Zarqání to launch this initiative was Áqá Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí, a singularly capable teacher of the Cause of God in Burma and a compassionate nurturer of the Bahá’ís in that land. Eventually, the convention was held in Bombay towards the end of December 1920 and was met with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s approval. An account of this convention has been published in the *al-Bishárat* magazine.⁵⁶

In 1921, shortly after the ascension of the Center of the Covenant, the Greatest Holy Leaf recalled Zarqání to the Holy Land, where he served as a secretary to the Chosen Branch⁵⁷ for a considerable period. During this time, and at the suggestion of certain friends, Zarqání married an Arab girl who was employed as a servant in the household of the Greatest Holy Leaf, who permitted this marriage to take place and gave it her blessing. Yet because of the vast difference between the ages of the husband and wife, that girl—with the help of her brother, and in the absence of her husband—made off with whatever furnishings, articles of clothing, and other items were in the house. They ran off by way of the roof, neither of them

* This provisional translation was reviewed by the Research Department of the Universal House of Justice and approved for publication following the incorporation of some recommended edits.

ever to be seen again. All that had been left for Zarqání was a small, shabby rug. For his part, after consulting with the Guardian, Zarqání divorced that girl [in absentia], who was a Muslim, according to Muslim law—just as he had married her in a Muslim ceremony—and did not make any attempt to retrieve the stolen possessions.

Zarqání did travel to India one more time;* he succeeded in guiding a number of people to the Cause, among them Maḥfúzu'l-Ḥaqq 'ilmí. Following this, he returned to Haifa, and he continued to reside in the Holy Land until the early months of 1927, after which he went to Iran⁵⁸ and married the rather old daughter of Áqá Mírzá 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn Samandarí.⁵⁹ Yet shortly after this, while he was living in Rasht, the pure soul of Zarqání winged its flight to the realm of light, and it was not long before his wife, too, hastened to the immortal realm.

From a footnote on page 223 of the second printing of *Ganjíniy-i-Ḥudúd va Aḥkám*, written by ['Abdu'l-Ḥamíd] *Ishráq-Khávarí*, it is understood that, in 1315 AH [1897–98], Zarqání delivered the *Lawḥ-i-Hizár Baytí* of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Azerbaijan at His behest.⁶⁰ We also see from the contents of that same page that the date of Zarqání's passing was 11 October 1927, and that he is buried at the Mudíríyyih cemetery in Rasht.⁶¹

After the death of Zarqání,⁶² the Guardian addressed the following words to Ṭarázu'lláh Samandarí:⁶³

My spiritual companion! The shocking news of the passing of that precious friend, companion, and helper, Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání—may God make him to dwell in the spacious gardens of His paradise—was the cause of sorrow, regret, and sadness. He was truly an active servant, a secretary without like or peer, an intelligent and skillful counselor who arose to render significant services in the Holy Land. Convey my condolences to his relatives, and deliver them from the ocean of grief and pain to the shore of assurance, tranquility, resignation, and submission—his respected wife in particular. Glorious indeed is her reward from God, and exceedingly high her station in the Kingdom of Heaven. From the bottom of his sorrow-stricken heart, this servant supplicates the threshold of the loving Lord for the happiness, the composure, the well-being, and the success of that well-favored, long-suffering, and sorely-tested believer in the Cause; may she be happy and rest assured, therefore.

* This was in 1924, according to Siyyid Ghulám Murtaḍá 'Alí (Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámiy-i-Ishráq-Khávarí*, p. 424), and also Šábir Áfáqí, who writes that Shoghi Effendi had dispatched Zarqání there (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, no. 379 (July 2011), p. 32). According to Mír Muḥammad Khán Shaháb, whom Áfáqí quotes in his article, *Shaykh* Muḥíyyu'd-Dín Šabrí, a Kurdish Bahá'í who operated an early publisher of Bahá'í books, accompanied Zarqání on his final journey to India, but was unable to adjust to the climate in Agra; he fell sick and returned to Bombay, but Zarqání remained and taught the Faith as he traveled to Delhi, Malerkotla, Amritsar, Phillaur, Lahore, and Batala (ibid., 33).

The servant at His threshold,
Shoghi*

What follows is a list of Zarqání’s writings that are known to us at this time:⁶⁴

- 1) *Javáb-i-Nuṭq-i-Qádiyání* [“A Response to the Discourse of Qádiyání”], which has been discussed above. I was not able to find the original Persian text of this treatise, but its translation into Urdu by Áqá Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí is extant. This work was published in the *Paisa Akhbár* newspaper in 1904, and in 1908 it was translated at the expense of the Bahá’ís of Rangoon.⁶⁵
- 2) *Iḥqáqu’l-Ḥaqq* [“The Establishment of the Truth”]. Mawlaví Muḥammad ‘Alí, the head of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement, wrote an article entitled *The Bahá’í Religion in Review of Religions*, an Ahmadiyya magazine.⁶⁶ In response, Zarqání wrote a treatise called *Iḥqáqu’l-Ḥaqq*; it was eventually published, and the Mawlaví never responded to it or raised any objections.⁶⁷
- 3) *Asráru’n-Nuṣhúr* [“The Mysteries of the Resurrection”]. This treatise deals with the Resurrection, and portions of it were published in the *Kawkab-i-Hind* [“The Star of India”] magazine, which was published in Delhi.^{68, 69} I have not seen either *Iḥqáqu’l-Ḥaqq* or *Asráru’n-Nuṣhúr* for myself.⁷⁰
- 4) A number of leading articles featured in *al-Bishárat*, a monthly periodical that was published in Bombay under Zarqání’s own editorship from the beginning of March 1921 to the following year.

Badáyi‘u’l-Áthár in two volumes. The first volume of this valuable and educational book consists of a daily account of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s travels in America, ranging from the day of His departure from Ramleh (in Alexandria) on 25 March 1912 to the moment He embarked the *Celtic*, which was heading for Europe, on 5 December of that same year. The second volume features a daily record of His travels in Europe, starting with the date of His departure from New York on 5 December 1912 and extending up to the time of His arrival in Port Sa‘íd on 17 June 1913. In all, this adds up to one year, two months, and twenty-two days. Furthermore, in his introduction to the first volume of this book, Zarqání has given a very concise account of the eleven-month sojourn which the Center of the Covenant previously made, after leaving Haifa, in Port Sa‘íd, Ramleh, and Zaytún (all in Egypt), as well as His four-month stay in Europe the first time He traveled there.⁷¹ Additionally, in his conclusion to the second volume,

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Zarqání briefly alludes to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s six-month sojourn in Port Sa’íd and Alexandria following His return from His lengthy journey to the West. The first volume was published in Bombay in 1914, and the second volume was published in India in 1921. Although the daily accounts in both volumes are brief, in many places resembling a mere index of events, yet in spite of the concision of this work and in addition to its historicity, it also relates a number of episodes that are so sweet, and discusses themes of such great significance, that to familiarize oneself with them would surely bring joy to one’s heart.

¹ References to a certain Maḥmúd and his younger brother Ḥáj Siyyid Ismá‘íl, celebrated poets from Işfahán who adopted the pen names of Nayyir and Síná, respectively, after converting to the Bahá‘í Faith.

² A reference to the volumes of *Maşábih-i-Hidáyat*. For the biography of Nayyir and Síná, see Sulaymání, *Maşábih*, vol. 1, pp. 93–172.

Available online at: <https://afnanlibrary.org/masabih-i-hidayat-vol-1/>

³ Ni‘matu’lláh *Dhuká‘í* Baydá‘í makes it clear that Zarqání was following in the footsteps of his father, Muḥammad Ismá‘íl, who also practiced this profession (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4 (Ṭihrán: Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú‘át-i-Amrí, 1972), p. 183).

⁴ Ni‘matu’lláh *Dhuká‘í* Baydá‘í goes into more detail on how Zarqání came to accompany Nayyír and Síná, writing that these two brothers came to the village of Zarqán in the course of their travel teaching. Zarqání, then a youth with a voraciously curious mind, had a great love for poetry and was thus naturally drawn to the poetic prowess of Nayyir and Síná. After listening to them give logical discourses and rational proofs to establish the legitimacy of the Bahá‘í Faith, Zarqání straightway submitted himself to their service, abandoning his profession and departing Zarqán to accompany them on the remainder of their travels (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, pp. 183–84). Fádíl Mázandarání sheds still more light on this period by writing that Zarqání accompanied Nayyir and Síná in 1310 AH (1892–93) on their teaching trips to *Khurásán*, Yazd, and Kirmán (Mázandarání, *Tárikh-i-Zuhúru’l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1 (n.p., n.d.), p. 564).

Available online at: <https://www.h-net.org/~bahai/areprint/vol5/tzh8a/TZHV08a.pdf>). Şábir Áfáqí adds that, while Nayyir and Síná were in Işfahán, they started a literary society in collaboration with Na‘ím, the eminent Bahá‘í poet from Sidih, and that Zarqání would participate in the meetings of this society and benefit from the discussions that were had on poetry and other literature (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá‘í*, no. 379 (July 2011), p. 29).

⁵ The original title of what is known to English speakers as “Maḥmúd’s Diary,” Zarqání’s two-volume chronicle of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s journey throughout the United States and Europe. The work is also known to Persian speakers as *safar-námih* (“travelogue”).

⁶ Isfandíyár Bakhtíyári (1895–1975) was a Bahá‘í of devout Zoroastrian background who served on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá‘ís of India and Burma, subsequently on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá‘ís of Pakistan, and as an Auxiliary Board Member for that region. An obituary for Bakhtíyári has been published in *Bahá‘í World*, vol. 16, pp. 554–55.

⁷ Sulaymání, *Maşábih*, vol. 8, pp. 125–146. Available online at: <https://afnanlibrary.org/masabih-i-hidayat-vol-8/>

⁸ Sulaymání, *Maşábih*, vol. 9, pp. 195–242. Available online at: <https://afnanlibrary.org/masabih-i-hidayat-vol-9/>. An obituary for Maḥfúzu’l-Ḥaqq ‘ilmí (1894–1978) has been published in *Bahá‘í World*, vol. 17, pp. 446–47. An account of one of ‘ilmí’s teaching trips, recorded by Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí in his memoirs, has been published in Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí: Hand of the Cause of God, Apostle of Bahá’u’lláh* (Wilmette, Illinois: U.S. Bahá‘í Publishing Trust, 2020), pp. 226–31.

⁹ Anísu’r-Raḥmán Dihlaví (c. 1920–1988) was a Bahá‘í of Muslim background who was originally born in Delhi and migrated to Pakistan after the Partition of India. A government servant by profession, he became a Bahá‘í on 20 February 1961 and served for a time as the editor of *The Bahá‘í Magazine*, a periodical published in Karachi, and as the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá‘ís of Pakistan.

¹⁰ Ṭáhir Akbar served for a time as an assistant to Faridoon Yazamaidi, who at one point was the secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá‘ís of Pakistan.

¹¹ Ni‘matu’lláh *Dhuká‘í* Baydá‘í writes that Zarqání’s father, Muḥammad Ismá‘íl, was “one of the common folk of Zarqán” (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 183). Şábir Áfáqí adds that Muḥammad Ismá‘íl was unschooled and that he also made a living through farming, in addition to his occupation as a maker of cotton summer shoes (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá‘í*, p. 29).

¹² The records of Zarqání’s birth year are approximate and discrepant; Fádíl Mázandarání has circa 1292 AH, or 1875–76 (*Tárikh-i-Zuhúru’l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1, p. 564), while Ni‘matu’lláh *Dhuká‘í* Baydá‘í has circa 1290 AH, or 1873–74 (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 183). Şábir Áfáqí likewise identifies 1290 AH as the year of Zarqání’s birth, which he equates to 1873 (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá‘í*, p. 29). This inconsistency is compounded by Siyyid

Ghulám Murtaḏá ‘Alí’s statement that Zarqání passed away at the age of 55 (Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámíy-i-Ishráq-Khávarí* (Madrid: Fundación Nehal, 2014), p. 422); given that he died in 1927, this would mean Zarqání would have had to have been born in 1871 or 1872, which cannot be reconciled with either 1290 AH or 1292 AH. The present biography of Zarqání by ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání, and also ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí’s biographical notes on him (published in Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámíy-i-Ishráq-Khávarí*, pp. 425–26), are silent on the matter of the year in which Zarqání was born and the question of how old he was when he died.

¹³ Regarding Zarqání’s early years, we do have the following anecdote related just one month after his passing by Siyyid Ghulám Murtaḏá ‘Alí, who was serving as the secretary of the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Rangoon at the time: “. . . in his childhood, nothing brought Mírzá MaḤmúd more joy than reading odes and other poetry pertaining to the Cause. Day and night, he would chant the verses of Him Who was the Lord of the Worlds with a sweet and soul-stirring tone. One day, Áqá AḤmad [his brother] sent Mírzá MaḤmúd from the [family] shop to fetch something from the house and bring it back. He went, but did not return. A few hours later, Áqá AḤmad, worried and sunk in thought, went home to see what had happened to his brother. There he found that enamored lover of the Cause seated in a corner, where he was reciting prayers and other passages from the divine verses with an astounding degree of spiritual joy and ecstasy” (Translated from the original Persian, first published in *al-Ishráq*, vol. 5 (October & November 1927), nos. 2 & 3, pp. 6–9, and reprinted in Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámíy-i-Ishráq-Khávarí*, pp. 422–23). Additionally, Ni‘matu’lláh Dhuká’í Bayḏá’í writes that, as a child, Zarqání did study at a *maktab* for a few years, where he learned to read and write (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 183). According to Şábir Áfáqí, Zarqání received this education from Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh, a Bábí local of Zarqán who wrote poetry under the pen name “Buká.” Áfáqí writes that Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh had become a Bábí at the age of 37 through Mírzá Ḥasan Vá’iz Khurásání, and that Zarqání became “an active Bábí believer” through Mullá ‘Abdu’lláh before embracing the Bahá’í Faith when Nayyir and Síná came to Zarqán (Şábir Áfáqí, “Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 29).

¹⁴ *al-Bishárat* is the name of the Persian counterpart to the Indian Bahá’í periodical *Bahá’í News* (not to be confused with the American monthly periodical by the same name, which ran from 1924 to 1990); the two were published together as a single magazine. This account was originally published in *al-Bishárat*, vol. 1, no. 5 (July 1921), p. 52. A scanned copy of this issue is available online here: <https://afnanlibrary.org/d/bahai-news-india-vol-1>

¹⁵ Fáḏíl Mázandarání writes that Zarqání was born into a Bahá’í family, but that he truly embraced the religion with great zeal in the prime of his youth (Mázandarání, *Ḥuhuru’l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1, p. 564).

¹⁶ Mírzá MaḤram (c. 1864–1913) was an Iranian Bahá’í who traveled to India and Burma. An account of his time in South Asia, written by Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí, has been published in Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muşţafá Rúmí*, pp. 71–84.

¹⁷ The son of Síná.

¹⁸ Certain extracts from this book have been translated into English by Abu’l-Qásim Fayḏí and published as *Stories from the Delight of Hearts: the Memoirs of Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí* (Los Angeles: Kalimát Press, 1980).

¹⁹ Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí, *Bihjatu’s-Şudúr* (Pune, 1913), p. 407. In the more readily available third edition of this work, printed in Germany (Bahá’í-Verlag, 2002), this passage appears on p. 333.

²⁰ This would have been 1 May 1896.

²¹ Also known by his title of Adíbu’l-‘Ulamá (“Literary Man of the ‘Ulamá”), Mírzá Ḥasan Adíb (1848–1919) was a distinguished scholar and littérateur who converted to the Bahá’í Faith in 1889, when he was in his early forties. For more on Adíb in English, refer to Adíb Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 4, pp. 312–14. For a brief biography in Persian that also includes a selection of Adíb’s poetry and other writings, refer to Ni‘matu’lláh Dhuká’í Bayḏá’í, *Bakhshí az Jild-i-Duvvum-i-Tadhkariy-i-Shu‘aráy-i-Qarn-i-Avval-i-Bahá’í dar Sharḥ-i-Aḥvál va Áthár-i-Jináb-i-Áqá Mírzá Ḥasan-i-Adíbu’l-‘Ulamáy-i-Ṭáliqání Ayádiy-i-Amru’lláh, ‘alayhi Riḏvānu’lláh* (Ṭihrán: Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú‘át-i-Amrí, 1972).

²² Ḥaydar-‘Alí, *Bihjatu’s-Şudúr*, pp. 423–24. In the more readily available third edition of this work, this passage appears on pp. 345–46. A summary translation of this account has also been published in Fayḏí, *Stories*, pp. 139–40.

²³ ‘Azízu’lláh Sulaymání, *Maşábih-i-Hidáyat*, vol. 4 (Ṭihrán: Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú‘át-i-Amrí, 1959), pp. 468–98. Available online at: <https://afnanlibrary.org/masabih-i-hidayat-vol-4/>

²⁴ Mírzá MaḤmúd Furúghí (d. 1927/8) was the only Iranian Bahá’í teacher to ever meet with a Qájár sháh (Mużaffarí’-d-Dín Sháh). A brief biography of Furúghí has been published in Balyuzi, *Eminent Bahá’ís*, pp. 156–69.

²⁵ Ḥaydar-‘Alí, *Bihjatu’š-Šudúr*, pp. 439–40. In the more readily available third edition of this work, this passage appears on pp. 358–59.

²⁶ Ḥaydar-‘Alí, *Bihjatu’š-Šudúr*, p. 482. In the more readily available third edition of this work, this passage appears on pp. 392–93.

²⁷ The son-in-law of Ustád ‘Alí-Akbar Banná Yazdí (d. 1903), an eminent Bahá’í building contractor who is especially known for the leading role he played in building the now-destroyed Mashriqu’l-Adhkár in ‘Ishqábád and his being the recipient of Bahá’u’lláh’s well-known Tablet of *Tajalliyát*. For more on him, refer to Taherzadeh, *Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 4, pp. 118–25.

²⁸ Siyyid Ghulám Murtaqá ‘Alí identifies 1904 as the year in which Zarqání first arrived in India (Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámíy-i-Ishráq-Khávarí*, p. 424). Fádíl Mázandarání writes that, following Zarqání’s numerous teaching trips throughout Iran, he was dispatched to India in 1321 AH (1903–04) (Mázandarání, *Zuhuru’l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1, p. 565). Šábir Áfáqí also identifies 1321 AH as the year in which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent Zarqání to India, but incorrectly equates this to the year 1902, when it would have actually been 1903 or 1904, depending on the month (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 29). It is possible, however, that Zarqání was actually living in Lahore as early as 1902, considering that, in a note to his *Lecture Lahore*, Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad states that Zarqání had written him a letter dated 2 September 1902 in which he asks him to explain the meaning of Qur’án 18:86 (Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad, *Lecture Lahore* (Tilford, Surrey, United Kingdom: Islam International Publications), 2008, p. 65). Áfáqí does, in fact, assert that Zarqání lived in Lahore from 1902 to 1908 (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 30), after which time he went to the Holy Land, where he remained until he departed for the West with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as a member of His retinue (ibid., 31). A brief account related by Mír Muḥammad Khán Shaháb (or Meher Mahomed Khan Shihab, an early Ahmadi convert to the Bahá’í Faith) and quoted by Áfáqí also indicates that Zarqání first arrived in India in 1902 (ibid., 33).

²⁹ For four months, according to Šábir Áfáqí, quoting Maḥfúzu’l-Ḥaqq ‘Ilmí (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 30)

³⁰ Šábir Áfáqí lists Hyderabad, Bombay, Pune, Delhi, Gujrat (in today’s Pakistan), Peshawar, Sialkot, Lahore, and Karachi among the cities that Zarqání visited during his time in South Asia (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 30).

³¹ The late Bahá’í scholar, ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávarí, discusses this very *ḥadīth* in his *Qámús-i-Íqán*, vol. 2 (Tīhrán: Mu’assisiy-i-Millíy-i-Maṭbú’át-i-Amrī, 1973), p. 964, where he states that it is included in collections considered credible by Shí‘ihs, such as chapter 13 of *Biháru’l-Anvár*, and also those regarded as authentic by Sunnis, such as the chapter entitled “the Descent of Jesus Christ” (*Nuzúl-i-Ísá*) in *Saḥīḥ-i-Bukhárí*. The present translator is exceedingly grateful to Khazeh Fananapazir for providing him with this valuable reference.

³² This statement (من نیستم رسول و نیاوردهام کتاب) can be found in a brief treatise in Urdu by Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad entitled *Ayk Ghalaṭí Ká Izála* [“A Misconception Removed”].

³³ The members of this organization, which sought to propagate Islám within Iran, were known to attend Bahá’í gatherings and ask provocative questions, sometimes under the guise of sincere inquiry from a genuine seeker.

³⁴ Qur’án 83:7–10.

³⁵ It seems, by Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad’s own account (given in his *Lecture Lahore*), that this article was published in the 27 August 1904 issue of *Paisa Akhbár*. The original Urdu text of the article has been reproduced in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*.

³⁶ This verse comes from the poetry of Khwaja Haidar Ali Aatish and has been quoted, in the original Urdu, in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*. Sulaymání quotes a Persian rendering of this verse, which served as the basis for the following translation into English.

³⁷ This was Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad’s *Lecture Lahore*, delivered to a large gathering in Lahore on 3 September 1904.

³⁸ In Persian, the word *hakím* can have many meanings, including “sage,” “physician,” or “philosopher.” In Urdu, however, the word strictly refers to a physician. Šábir Áfáqí writes that Zarqání “had special expertise in Greek medicine, and came to be known by the name of ‘Ḥakím-i-Írání’ while residing in Lahore” (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 30).

³⁹ Mírzá Ghulám Aḥmad’s exact words on this subject are published, in English translation, in his *Lecture Lahore*, p. 1.

⁴⁰ In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*, Šábir Áfáqí writes that this rebuttal by Zarqání was published in the 15 November 1904 issue of *Paisa Akhbár*. An Urdu translation of the rebuttal has been reproduced in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*. The present translator was unable to locate the original Persian text.

⁴¹ Sulaymání did eventually write a biography of Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí; see *Maṣábiḥ*, vol. 8, pp. 231–322. Refer also to the memoirs of Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí, compiled and edited by Iran Furútan Muhájir.

⁴² Dr. Pritam Singh (1881–1959) is widely regarded as the first member of the Sikh community in India who converted to the Bahá'í Faith. A brief account of his life, written by Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí, has been published in Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí*, pp. 247–50. In several of his letters, Shoghi Effendi makes references to Singh's various activities and services, and speaks of him with high praise; these have been published in Shoghi Effendi, *Dawn of a New Day* (Bahá'í Publishing Trust of India, n.d.), pp. 5, 14, 21, 25, 31, 33, 35, 36, 44, 50, 55, 62, and 189.

⁴³ A substantially different version of this anecdote is as follows: “Pritam Singh was passing by the Anarkali Bazaar one day when he suddenly saw a sign that read: ‘*Ḥakím Mírzá MaḤmúd Írání*.’ Singh went up, met with Mírzá MaḤmúd, and said to him jokingly, ‘Check my pulse; I am sick.’ With a perfectly calm and deliberative demeanor, Mírzá MaḤmúd replied, ‘I treat sicknesses of the spirit,’ and acquainted Pritam Singh with the Bahá'í Faith. The professor became very happy; a few days later, he met with his friend, ‘Allámih Iqbál, and told him that he had paid a visit to Mírzá MaḤmúd. Iqbál thought to himself: ‘Since this man has come from Iran, I must meet him.’ Consequently, Pritam Singh and Iqbál went to the residence of Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání together to see him. Jináb-i-Mírzá was a dignified and courteous man, a littérateur and a poet. For the most part, he recited the poems of Ṭáhirih and Na‘ím-i-Iṣfahání. The charming traits of Mírzá MaḤmúd made a positive and lasting impression on Iqbál, and these visits continued until 1905” (Šábir Áfáqí, “Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, pp. 30–31). Yet another contradictory detail is recorded in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*, where Šábir Áfáqí writes that, by Pritam Singh's own account, his first meeting with Zarqání took place in a house near the Anarkali Bazaar in December 1905.

⁴⁴ The University of the Punjab, also called Punjab University.

⁴⁵ MaḤfúzu'l-Ḥaqq ‘Ilmí has written: “Iqbál's meetings with Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání lasted for a full week with virtually no interruption; they met and held discussions from morning till night, and they would have lunch and dinner together” (*Bishárat[-i-Karáchi?]*, January 1958; quoted in Šábir Áfáqí, “Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, p. 31).

⁴⁶ This is the Urdu title of Iqbál's *Development of Metaphysics in Persia* (Lahore, Pakistan: Bazm-i-Iqbal, 1908), the book form of his doctoral thesis at the University of Munich. References to the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and the Bahá'í Faith more generally can be found on pp. x, 143–46, and 149 of that work. A digitized collection of these references is available here: https://bahai-library.com/iqbal_development_metaphysics_persia.

⁴⁷ A small collection of seven *ghazals* by Ṭáhirih that also included a brief account of her life. The booklet was published in Karachi and prepared through the efforts of Isfandiyár Bakhtiyári himself.

⁴⁸ Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí's accounts of Zarqání's time in India (and also Burma) have been published in Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí*, pp. 95, 104, 138, 141, 143, 151, 159, 162–63, 167–73, 219, 223, and 247.

⁴⁹ In a similar but slightly different anecdote also related by Isfandiyár Bakhtiyári, he states: “Lala Ishwardas, an ex-judge of the Lahore High Court . . . had left a lot of property behind in Pakistan and had been given suitable compensation from the Government of India. He lived in a palatial residence in Delhi with his two sons, one of whom was an Ambassador and the other a highly-placed government official” (Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí*, p. 249).

⁵⁰ Often called “Bahá'í centers,” the Ḥazíratu'l-Quds (literally, “the Sacred Fold”) is the original Arabic term used to refer to a center of Bahá'í administrative activity that is owned by a Spiritual Assembly.

⁵¹ Fáḍil Mázandarání notes that this was a young servant in the household of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá in Haifa (Mázandarání, *Tárikh-i-Zuhúru'l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1, p. 565). In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*, Šábir Áfáqí writes that her name was Ḍíyá' *Khánum* and that she was a relative of Mírzá Hádí *Shírází*.

⁵² Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání and Ḍíyá' *Khánum* married in Haifa on 2 January 1920, according to a Bahá'í named Mírzá ‘Ísá *Khán* Iṣfahání Darágáhi, who happened to be on pilgrimage at the time and was an eyewitness to the marriage. In his brief diary of that time, translated by Ahang Rabbani, Darágáhi writes the following in his entry for that date: “Since it was the nuptials of the honored Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání, in the company of the honored Mírzá Jalál, who is the son-in-law of the Blessed Person [‘Abdu'l-Bahá], we went to the House in the afternoon and took a photograph of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá. Since the marriage festivities were to take place in the home of the

honored Áqá Mírzá Jalál, therefore gradually the pilgrims, resident believers, and other guests arrived at a long hall arranged for this purpose, and with His blessed permission took their seat. His Sanctified Person [‘Abdu’l-Bahá] sat on one side and the Americans and Europeans also sat on the same side in a row. After tea was served, the two witnesses—the honored Dr. Zia Baghdadi on behalf of the bride and the esteemed Mírzá Asadu’lláh Fáḍil Mázandarání on behalf of the groom—were introduced into the presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Afterwards, in accordance with His blessed instructions, sweets were presented to attendees and [a] concluding prayer was recited. Since two visitors had arrived for the Blessed Temple, He left. After a few minutes, the guests [at the wedding] dispersed as well” (“With Abdu'l-Bahá: The Diary of Mirza 'Isa Khan Isfahani,” *Witnesses to Bábí and Bahá'í History*, vol. 11 (March 2008); available online at: https://bahai-library.com/isfahani_rabbani_with_abdul-baha#29).

⁵³ In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*, Šábir Áfáqí writes that Dīyá' Khánum died at Mastiyaa Hospital in Bombay. Áfáqí then notes that he had seen a photograph of “a grieving Mírzá Maḥmúd [Zarqání] standing next to the deceased woman with her innocent child,” which the present translator was unable to locate in the course of his research. This short obituary for Dīyá' Khánum was published in *Najm-i-Bákhhtar*, the Persian counterpart to *Star of the West*: “She was brought up in the house of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and married in Haifa one year ago. She then went with Áqá Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání to India, but the Will of God ordained that that bride leave this world behind and hasten to the realm of holy maidens. May she enjoy mercy and good-pleasure, and upon her husband be patience and solace” (*Star of the West*, vol. 11, no. 19 (2 March 1921), p. 342).

⁵⁴ This was “the following year,” according to Šábir Áfáqí, who incorrectly identifies it as 1921 when it would in fact have been 1920 (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, pp. 31–32).

⁵⁵ It seems appropriate here to mention this testimonial, by Šábir Áfáqí, to Zarqání’s prodigious efforts in India: “The vast and deep impression Mírzá Maḥmúd’s services has left behind in India has no peer. The degree and status of what he did for the Faith in India is what Saint Paul did for Christianity” (*Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*).

⁵⁶ Refer to *Bahá'í News (India)*, vol. 1, no. 1, March 1921, pp. 2ff. A scan of this issue is available online here: <https://afnanlibrary.org/d/bahai-news-india-vol-1/>

⁵⁷ A title conferred on Shoghi Effendi by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in His *Will and Testament* (p. 11).

⁵⁸ Ni‘matu’lláh Dhuká'í Bayḍá'í writes that Zarqání had been dispatched at this time to teach the Cause in Iran, and that he was able to travel to various parts of that country for this purpose before passing away in Rašht (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 186).

⁵⁹ In his brief account of Zarqání’s life, ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd Ishráq-Khávárí states that this was a woman by the name of Munavvar Khánum, “the daughter of the sister of Mírzá Munír Nabílzádiḥ Qazvíní” (Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámiy-i-Ishráq-Khávárí*, p. 426). Šábir Áfáqí writes that she was fluent in Persian, Arabic, and English (“Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, p. 33). Ishráq-Khávárí’s account suggests that Zarqání married her while in Ṭihrán (though Áfáqí has this as Qazvín; see “Mírzá Maḥmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá'í*, p. 33, and also *Iqbal aur Amr Baha'i*); that the two of them then went to Rašht; and that Zarqání had actually intended to return to the Holy Land, but fell sick and died in Rašht from an unspecified illness. In his own brief biography of Zarqání, Fáḍil Mázandarání also writes that he died from an illness, but similarly does not specify what it was (Mázandarání, *Zuhúru’l-Ḥaqq*, vol. 8, part 1, p. 566).

⁶⁰ “In AH 1315 (AD 1897–8) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá addressed a lengthy Tablet known as the *Lawḥ-i-Hizár Baytí* (Tablet of One Thousand Verses) to Jalíl [Khu’í]. In this celebrated Tablet He showers upon him much loving-kindness, exhorts him to faithfulness in the Cause, explains in detail the authenticity of the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh, sets forth convincing proofs in support of His argument and provides one of the most illuminating insights into the subject of the Covenant as a whole. . . . Writing at a time of great agitation and danger in the Holy Land and wishing not to add fuel to the fire already lit by the Covenant-breakers, which threatened to engulf the community of the believers, the Master sent a trusted servant of the Cause, Mírzá Maḥmud i-Zarghání [sic], to Tabríz, the capital of Ádhirbáyján, with instructions to read aloud the full contents of the Tablet to Jalíl, but not to hand him a copy. Jalíl heard this highly enlightening Tablet in full but, alas, the lust of leadership had blinded his eyes and stopped his ears. He later witnessed the futility of his efforts and died in ignominy” (Adib Taherzadeh, *Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh*, vol. 4, p. 146). There are, in fact, two Tablets from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that are both known as the *Lawḥ-i-Hizár Baytí*: one was written for Jalíl Khu’í, the other for Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl. The former, under discussion here, has yet to be translated into English. A complete provisional rendering of the latter has been published in Ahang Rabbani and Khazeh Fananapazir, “Abdul-Baha’s First Thousand-Verse Tablet: History and Provisional Translation,” *Bahá'í Studies Review*, vol. 16, no. 1 (April 2010), pp. 114–30.

⁶¹ According to Šábir Áfáqí, Zarqání was buried in the Gulistán-i-Jávid (“Eternal Garden”) of this place, a term that refers to a cemetery or section of a cemetery where Bahá’ís are buried (“Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 32). Áfáqí writes that, in an unfortunate turn of events, Zarqání’s resting-place was reported to have been destroyed in the Iranian Revolution of 1979 (*ibid.*, 34), and in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*, he adds that a public market was established in its place which was still in use at the time of writing (1999).

⁶² An obituary for Zarqání written in Persian by Siyyid Ghulám Murtaḏá ‘Alí has been published in *al-Ishráq*, vol. 5 (October & November 1927), nos. 2 & 3, pp. 6–9, available online here: <https://www.datocms-assets.com/74307/1659037337-the-dawn-vol-5-burma-1927.pdf#page=25>. An English translation of this obituary appears in the same issue of that periodical; refer to *The Dawn*, vol. 5 (October & November 1927), nos. 2 & 3, pp. 10–12. A much shorter note on Zarqání’s passing has also been published in *The Bahá’í World*, vol. 3 (1928–1930), p. 213: <https://dl.bahai.org/bahai-world/the-bahai-world-vol03-1928-1930.pdf#page=234>

⁶³ Siyyid Ghulám Murtaḏá ‘Alí writes that Shoghi Effendi also sent this telegram to the Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Bombay on the occasion of Zarqání’s death: “Profoundly deplore Zarqhani passing His outstanding services adorn enrich annals of cause. Instruct friends hold befitting memorials. Shoghi” (*The Dawn*, vol. 5 (October & November 1927), nos. 2 & 3, p. 10). He goes on to say that, to act in accordance with Shoghi Effendi’s instructions—and also a telegram received by the chairperson of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of India and Burma—a memorial service for Zarqání was held in Rangoon at the home of Áqá Siyyid ‘Abdu’l-Ḥusayn Shírází on 11 November 1927 (*ibid.*, pp. 11–12).

⁶⁴ The present translator feels that Zarqání’s considerable poetic output—some six-hundred verses, according to Ni‘matu’lláh Dhuká’í Bayḏá’í (*Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, p. 186)—also deserves to be mentioned here. Several of his poems have been published in the back matter of *Badáyi ‘u’l-Áthár*, vols. 1 and 2, and also in Dhuká’í Bayḏá’í, *Tadhkarih*, vol. 4, pp. 187–96. Especially noteworthy are the poems he composed in honor of Bahá’í martyrs, such as those who were killed in the village of Abarqú; these have been published in Vahid Rafati, *Yádnámíy-i-Ishráq-Khávárí*, pp. 427–49. However, Šábir Áfáqí writes in *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i* that a standalone collection of Zarqání’s poetry had yet to be published at the time of writing (1999).

⁶⁵ Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí himself writes: “While touring in India, Mírzá MaḤmúd challenged Ghulám Aḥmad Qádíání, the founder of the Aḥmadíyyih movement, through a widely circulated daily paper *Paisa-Akhbar*. The only response from Qádíání was that he was unable to accept his challenge at the time as he was very busy with certain litigation in law courts. Mírzá MaḤmúd insisted through the same paper that if he had no time at that moment he would be glad to meet him at any later suitable date. At the request of the Bahá’í Assembly of Rangoon, I translated Mírzá MaḤmúd’s article into Urdu with the title ‘A Refutation of the Lecture of Jináb-i-Qádíání,’ and it was published twice in India as a booklet with some additions by me. The last publication of one thousand copies was in 1908, which formed an important landmark in the history of the Bahá’í Cause in India” (Iran Furútan Muhájir, *Siyyid Muṣṭafá Rúmí*, p. 170). Šábir Áfáqí states that *Javáb-i-Nuṭq-i-Qádíání* (apparently Rúmí’s Urdu translation) was printed a fourth time in Delhi in 1946 (“Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 32).

⁶⁶ Šábir Áfáqí clarifies that Maulana Muḥammad ‘Alí’s article was of a polemical nature (“Mírzá MaḤmúd Zarqání,” *Payám-i-Bahá’í*, p. 32). The present translator regrets that he was unable to locate it in the course of his research.

⁶⁷ Writing in 1928, Mír Muḥammad Khán Shaháb states that Maulana Muḥammad ‘Alí “observed perfect silence” after *Iḥqáqu’l-Ḥaqq* was published (*The Dawn*, vol. 5 (March & April 1928), nos. 7 & 8, p. 3). In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*, Šábir Áfáqí writes that *Iḥqáqu’l-Ḥaqq* was written in Urdu. The present translator regrets that he was unable to locate it in the course of his research.

⁶⁸ *Kawkab-i-Hind* was an Urdu Bahá’í magazine launched by Maḥfúzu’l-Ḥaqq ‘Ilmí in May 1924, not long after he was converted to the Bahá’í Faith by Zarqání. This magazine is not to be confused with another by the same name, which operated at roughly the same time and was edited by Christian missionaries in India. In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*, Šábir Áfáqí has outlined the history of this magazine as follows: “The weekly *Kawkab-i-Hind* was published in 1924 from Agra. In 1925, *Kawkab-i-Hind* was transferred to Delhi with its office initially in Lal Kaonvan and later shifted to Karol Bagh. Later, *Kawkab-i-Hind* was published monthly and was regularly printed until 1937 with a Persian section added to it later. In 1928, *Kawkab-i-Hind* was changed to ‘Bahá’í’ and was published in Bombay; its Persian editors were the late Esfandiyaar Bakhtiyaari and Khodadad Rashid Alyani. The ‘Bahá’í’ was published for two years in Bombay; however, in July 1940 it was changed to ‘Payaambar’ and published in Delhi with the late Noor’u’llah Akhtar Khavari, martyred in Yazd . . . as its Persian editor. Payaambar was published until 1950. During its last years, the Bahá’í poet Munshi Ahmad Ali Yazdani assisted the publication

as its sub-editor. On Ilmi’s arrival in Pakistan in 1951, the magazine was published with the title of ‘Bishaarat’ in Karachi every month. The late Muhammad Husain Sabiri assisted Ilmi. The Persian section was under the supervision of Muhammad Husain Afnan and its publisher was the late Faraidoon Yazamaidi. Bishaarat was published in Karachi until 1961. From October 1962 to 1968, the ‘Bahá’í Magazine’ was published in Lahore under the editorship of Ilmi. The Bahá’í Magazine was then transferred to Karachi, from where it was published in August 1968. From 1924 until 1968, Ilmi remained the editor of these Bahá’í periodicals and carried out his duties with great ability, dedication, and true commitment.”

⁶⁹ In *Iqbal aur Amr Baha’i*, Şábir Áfáqí writes that the full text of *Asráru’n-Nushúr* had yet to be published at the time of writing (1999). The present translator regrets that he was unable to locate any of the text in the course of his research.

⁷⁰ Sulaymání has appended a footnote here stating the following: “According to a communication from the National Committee for the Approval of Bahá’í Literary Works dated 30 May 1972, Zarqání has also written a brief history [of the Cause] entitled *Badv-i-Tulú ‘i-Amr* [“The Inception of the Dawning of the Cause”], which is currently among the holdings of the National Spiritual Assembly of [the Bahá’ís of] Iran.” Denis MacEoin has also mentioned this work by Zarqání, noting that it was once cataloged in the Iranian national Bahá’í archival holdings thus: “Tehran, INBA 1015D” (Denis MacEoin, *The Sources for Early Bábí Doctrine and History: A Survey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 217).

⁷¹ Zarqání, *Maḥmúd’s Diary*, p. 9.