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Helen S. Goodall

and

Ella Goodall Cooper



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Foreword

Before there were Bahá’í books, pamphlets, period-  
icals—before there were, properly speaking, Bahá’í  
administrative institutions; before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had  
made His historic voyage to America; before Shoghi  
Effendi transmitted to the English speakers of the  
world his own sensitive and authoritative translations  
of the Writings central to the Bahá’í Faith—there  
were Bahá’ís in America. On what spiritual food did  
they subsist? Ever since the announcement had been  
made at the World Parliament of Religions in 1893  
concerning the spiritual sanctity of Bahá’u’lláh, Amer-  
icans began to explore the new Revelation. Some  
Persian Bahá’ís came from the Holy Land about that  
time to give lessons in the Bahá’í Faith in New York  
and Chicago. The first pilgrimage to ‘Akká and Haifa,  
in 1898, was followed by a steady and ever-increasing  
stream of Americans intent on hearing the Faith  
expounded by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Whom Bahá’u’lláh had  
designated the Center of the Covenant. The pilgrims, on  
their return to the United States and Canada,  
conveyed their ardor, enkindled at the feet of the  
Master, to their questing compatriots. They did it by  
word of mouth, by private letter, by widely circulated  
and continually copied and recopied letters, descrip-  
tions, journals, and accounts that went from hand to  
hand. Sometimes they published their little books and  
pamphlets, and, when the Bahá’í Publishing Society  
(predecessor of the present Bahá’í Publishing Trust)

was established in 1902, these travelers’ accounts  
constituted an important part of its output.

But infinitely more important than such publica-  
tions were the Tablets or letters that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
sent to the North American pilgrims. He maintained  
a continuous correspondence with these early believ-  
ers, who welcomed the Tablets and eagerly, reverently  
shared them with their friends—by the same means,  
informal and formal, by which their personal experi-  
ences as pilgrims had been shared. The Tablets were  
written in Persian and were translated into English  
either in the Holy Land or in America by Persian  
believers and teachers.

One of the translators of these Tablets was the  
Master’s grandson, Shoghi Effendi, destined by  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament to become the  
Guardian of the Cause of God. There came to be,  
even before Shoghi Effendi’s accession to the Guard-  
ianship, a strong sense of the difference between  
official, authoritative expressions of the thoughts of  
Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, on the one hand, and  
the informal reminiscences of travelers, on the  
other—of travelers eager to capture the precious  
words uttered by the Master as He taught the  
pilgrims—for He always taught; at tea, at lunch, on  
walks, on expeditions of mercy to the poor, He taught  
by deeds as well as words. Every minute of the pilgrims’  
day was a lesson, sometimes concealed to all but the  
truly sensitive, sometimes apparent to the least gifted.  
Clearly, in the “pilgrims’ notes” (as they came to be  
called) there was necessarily involved the fallibility of  
each pilgrim’s memory and interpretive capacity.  
There was a danger that a sentence in a letter, dictated

in response to a very particular question, might be  
generalized far beyond the case to which it was  
addressed, or that an oral lesson adapted and filtered by  
the needs of the hearer, become the basis of a doctrine  
that, emanating from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, would be seen as  
binding on all believers. Precisely this had happened in  
Islám; the Traditions, or Ḥadíths—that is, the  
sayings of Muḥammad as reported by His disciples—  
had come to represent, for the majority of Muslims, an  
authority second only to that of the Qur’án itself.

Bahá’u’lláh Himself had made it clear that, as  
Shoghi Effendi put it in a letter written on his behalf,  
“only those things that have been revealed in the form  
of Tablets have a binding power over the friends.  
Hearsays may be matters of interest but can in no way  
claim authority.” (*Bahá’í News*, no. 125 [May 1939],  
6). Shoghi Effendi was particularly vigilant in this  
matter and repeatedly warned the friends against  
accepting hearsay as binding on anyone except him  
who had heard the Master with his own ears. However  
that may be, what can be more thrilling, short of the  
immediate experience, than hearing or reading the  
account in a pilgrim’s own words of his reception in the  
loving arms of the Master? Who can tire of the  
description of those penetrating eyes, that warm and  
merry laughter, the wise brow, the wisps of hair  
escaping from the confining turban? Surely pilgrims’  
notes are not binding on us; they cannot be adduced as  
proof of anything; they cannot provide the basis of a  
serious, critical analysis of Bahá’í teachings—though  
the temptation to use them so is sometimes nearly  
irresistible!; but the sense of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s pres-  
ence, His quintessential courtesy, His tenderness,

His occasional severity, His powers of intellect and  
concentration—all these are infinitely precious to  
Bahá’ís, every one of whom is in love with the  
Master.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The account of the pilgrimage of Mrs. Helen S.  
Goodall and her daughter, Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper,  
is among the earliest of the published descriptions of  
life with the Master, in His household.

Mrs. Goodall and her daughter Ella (not yet  
married), were attracted to the Faith at the same time.  
They lived, at the turn of the century, in Oakland and  
San Francisco, when Lua Getsinger was teaching at  
Mrs. Phoebe Hearst’s home. It was after Mrs.  
Getsinger had left the region that a niece of Mrs.  
Hearst’s and friend of Ella’s told Ella and her mother  
about the Prophet Who lived in the Holy Land. Both  
mother and daughter were so fired with the desire to  
know more that they went to New York City, where  
they received more informed instruction in the Faith  
than was available in San Francisco. At this time  
(1898) Mrs. Hearst, on the first American pilgrimage,  
cabled a young friend in New York City to join her in  
the Holy Land and to invite Ella Goodall to accom-  
pany her. Young Miss Goodall was delighted to accept  
and, after securing the permission of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,  
left for Haifa. Mrs. Goodall was not well enough at  
that time to undertake so arduous a journey, and so  
returned to California.

In the meantime, a strong nucleus of believers had  
formed in the Bay Area, of which Helen Goodall  
became one of the principal animating forces. She

had her chance to go on pilgrimage in 1908 with Ella  
(now Mrs. George Cooper, married since 1905), for a  
two-week sojourn in the prison home of ‘Abdu’l-  
Bahá. The Master was still under government surveil-  
lance; the Young Turks’ revolution had not yet ended  
His imprisonment. But that Prison was a haven of  
beauty and freedom, compared with the world out-  
side. The present book is, of course, the outcome of  
that pilgrimage.

Simple, unstudied, direct, almost without form, it  
consists of descriptions, anecdotes, questions put to  
the Master, with the answers He gave, the record of  
lessons given not only by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but also by  
that gifted teacher, Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí. There  
are also appendices with Tablets from the Master to  
Mrs. Goodall and to Mrs. Cooper. There is an almost  
severe economy of expression: no concern for the  
graceful transition, but rather an abrupt turning of  
attention to the next matter of concern. This lack of  
“style” turns out to be the best possible style: it  
breathes the awareness of the preciousness of the  
lessons learned, the value of the experiences and  
observations of the two pilgrims; no time is lost  
getting to the central thought. A sort of sober ecstasy  
pervades these pages—no purple prose, no effusions.  
The flame burns pure.

But, lest you forget—these are just pilgrims’ notes.  
It would not be appropriate to recount in full the  
lives of these remarkable women after the pilgrimage  
of 1908. But the chapter in O. Z. Whitehead’s *Some  
Early Bahá’ís of the West* (“Helen Goodall and Ella  
Cooper”, pp. 21–34) is well worth reading for the  
sequel. It will suffice here to say that after services of

fundamental importance to the establishment of the  
infant Faith in the United States (not the least of  
which were contributed to the erection of the House  
of Worship in Wilmette), Mrs. Goodall died in 1922,  
her physical vigor having entered into a rapid decline  
after the passing of the Master. Mrs. Cooper was a  
loyal and energetic helper of the Guardian until the  
death of her husband, Dr. George Cooper, in July  
1951; she died four days after.

Howard Garey



Introduction

During our visit of two weeks in the “White City”  
we shared with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá the prison life, but we  
were in the Home of God. There one is indeed made  
to feel that he represents and is a part of the whole  
Bahá’í Kingdom, that the Divine Love poured out  
upon him from that Spiritual Fountain is for all the  
believers in the world; but also he must realize that his  
responsibility increases in proportion to the favors and  
blessings showered upon him, not only toward God  
the Bestower of the blessings and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
through Whom they flow, but toward all humanity;  
for in accepting this sweet Water of Life so freely  
given, it becomes incumbent upon him to give in his  
turn—all that his capacity will hold; and the more he  
is favored the greater will be the service expected of  
him. It is to be thus fitted for higher endeavor that the  
souls are permitted to make the Pilgrimage, and not  
because of their deserts.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá is no respecter of persons—(His own  
Personality is entirely in abeyance) and to Him one  
believer is the same as another. His Love embraces  
each and all as God’s children and needy members of  
the human race.

In His presence, one gains some realization of the  
Divine Wisdom required to establish the Kingdom.

Considering that the hearts of the people must first  
be turned to God (and this depends upon their own

desire and choice), and that constant training is  
necessary to keep the souls in the Straight Path, one  
understands that only the Power of God could  
accomplish this Great Work, and also that His chosen  
Instrument for the purpose must be perfect—not only  
in qualities, but in wisdom and judgment.

In this connection, what an inspiring thought it is  
to feel that the early believers have also been chosen  
by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to serve side by side with Him—  
during His Lifetime—have been granted the ines-  
timable privilege of becoming real pioneers in the  
arduous and glorious task of establishing the Kingdom  
of God in the hearts of men!

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s instructions were given to us each  
day at luncheon. Greeting us with a few words in  
English, He always summoned us Himself to His  
bountifully spread table. Besides this material and  
spiritual food, which we received daily from His  
Hand, we were privileged to learn many beautiful  
lessons by watching His daily life. He is indeed the  
living Exemplar of the truth of Bahá’u’lláh’s teaching  
that “Guidance hath ever been by words, but at *this*  
*time* it is by *deeds*—that is, all pure deeds must appear  
from the temple of man, because all are partners in  
words, but pure and holy deeds belong especially to  
Our friends!”[[1]](#endnote-1)

His most simple act is full of significance, contain-  
ing the seed of great teaching. If He never spoke one  
word to the pilgrims, the only lesson necessary would  
be His daily life.

And so we have called this little book *Daily Lessons*,  
meaning the name to embrace both the direct oral

instruction and that conveyed by the “pure and holy  
deeds” of every hour and moment of His Glorious  
Existence.

Arrival at ‘Akká

Having first called to see Rúḥá Khánum and  
Madam Asadu’lláh in Haifa, we arrived at ‘Akká  
at noon January 4th.

As we drove through the streets of the prison city,  
Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn and another believer joined us  
and walked by the side of the carriage, but without  
speaking.

We were met at the gate by Mírzá Asadu’lláh and  
other men believers who conducted us through the  
inner court to the long flight of stone steps leading to  
the third story. At the top we were met by Madame  
Yazdí (Riḍváníyyih, a niece of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá who was  
then visiting there), who showed us to our room.  
Then dear Munavvar Khánum came with her cordial  
greeting and announced that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be  
with us in a few moments.

He came at once, the joyous ring of His voice  
reaching us even before we saw Him, calling, “Wel-  
come! Welcome! I am glad you are here!” and adding  
to His warm, strong handclasp the greater welcome of  
His wonderful eyes and heavenly smile. He made us sit  
down with Him and immediately asked about the  
American believers, of those in London and Paris,  
and also about our California believers. When we  
mentioned those who had sent Him special greeting,  
His beautiful face beamed with happiness.

He asked about our long journey and said “Those  
who go in search of the North Pole count as nothing

the hardships endured, and although you have come  
here in the winter when it is cold and the way a little  
difficult, yet you count the journey as nothing. Those  
having this Visit as their goal will bear any hardship  
for the sake of attaining.”

The household

One can only feel but never hope to describe the  
spiritual atmosphere which surrounds ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
and the members of His Holy Household. The favored  
visitor is so quickly enveloped in this subtle Harmony  
that he is conscious of living in a new element, of  
breathing a different air from that of the outside  
world, of being immersed in a perfect Ocean of Divine  
Love which submerges all his human selfishness for  
the time being, calling forth and sustaining every  
spiritual quality of which he is possessed. This effect is  
produced by the Presence of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and  
preserved by those holy souls who revolve around  
Him.

The members of the Holy Household are:

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

Bahíyyih Khánum, His sister, “The Greatest Holy  
Leaf”.

Munírih Khánum, His wife, “The Brilliant Leaf”.

Díyá’íyyih Khánum, His eldest daughter, married to  
Mírzá Hádí. Their three children—Shoghi (boy),  
Rúḥangíz (girl), Mihrangíz (girl).

Rúḥá Khánum, His daughter, married to Mírzá Jalál.  
One child—Maryam (girl).

Ṭúbá Khánum, His daughter, married to Mírzá

Muḥsin. Their three children—Rúḥí (boy),  
Thurayyá (girl), Suhayl (boy).

Munavvar Khánum, His youngest daughter, unmar-  
ried. All her time is devoted to serving ‘Abdu’l-  
Bahá personally, sharing the superintendence of  
domestic affairs with the Greatest Holy Leaf and  
interpreting for the American and English pilgrims.

The Holy Family is served in turn by a score of  
women, boys, and girls who are dependent upon  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s bounty. Some of them are orphans of  
Persian Martyrs, to whom He offers a home; others are  
there by their own will, having begged for the  
privilege of serving. One serves at the house in Haifa,  
while her daughter is being educated by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,  
and so on. All seem to realize and appreciate fully the  
blessing of living under the same roof with Him, and  
all service is cheerfully and lovingly rendered.

One might easily imagine the daily life of a family of  
prisoners—even a Holy Family—as sad and depress-  
ing to the visitor but, strange to say, in the “Most  
Great Prison” quite the reverse is the case. Although  
absolute regularity of living is not possible—nearly  
every domestic event being subject to the rise of  
unexpected circumstances—the calm serenity of  
those beautiful people is never broken. They pursue  
their daily tasks, render their sweet service, make  
their little sacrifices, teach their children—and play  
with them, too—in short, carry on, under the most  
extraordinary circumstances, a perfect ideal of human  
family life. One never hears complaint of God’s Will and

Wisdom in every little happening, and a sure under-  
standing of the future blessings which will be the fruit  
of their present patience, blessings for all the people of  
the world.

Although each individual, from the youngest  
servant to the Greatest Holy Leaf, is constantly on  
guard, no parade is made of their watchfulness. Not  
even the creak of a distant door or a strange footfall  
escapes their attentive ears, yet the visitor is never  
reminded that he is the cause of anxiety. When it  
becomes necessary to move the whole supper table  
suddenly into another room to escape the observation  
of the Turkish callers, it is done with a quiet smile and  
no hint of inconvenience. How obvious and easy it  
would be to impress the sensitive pilgrim with their  
daily martyrdom and the constant strain of their  
precarious position. That they do just the contrary is  
another lesson to us!

Were it not for the close proximity of the barracks  
and its guards, one would never realize that he was  
visiting a Turkish prison.

Another delight to the visitor is the discovery of  
their spontaneous and charming humor. They make  
merry over every little jest, extracting all the laughter  
possible from it, and encourage one another to see the  
bright side of all things, thus distracting their minds  
from the tragic side of their existence. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
Himself seemed to come so close to us in His playful  
moods. With a merry twinkle in His eye, He would  
ask Miss Jack how she liked being on the roll of the  
prisoners (she is to remain there a year to teach  
English).[[2]](#endnote-2) When she answered that she would like to  
be written down as “the woman who had just found

her freedom,” He laughed with the rest, and was  
highly pleased that she responded to Him in the same  
tone. Never have we heard more joyous laughter than  
in that Household.

Every day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to our door and called  
us to His table, which was bountifully spread with  
material and spiritual food, saying in English, “Come  
here, come here, sit down, sit down. How are  
you—very well?” and when we answered, “We are  
very well,” He said in Persian, “Very good, very good;  
it makes me happy to sit at table with you, because you  
are the servants of Bahá’u’lláh.” We replied that *He*  
made us happy. He said, “Very good, I am glad you are  
here. It makes Me rejoice when I see you, for I love  
you very much.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s perfectly natural manner indi-  
cates the entire absence of self-consciousness, and  
throughout the Household there is absolute sim-  
plicity, a constant service, and all the members take a  
common-sense view of all things.

When emotion is shown, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says, “No,  
no, not that, not that; be happy, be happy,” and when  
one shows enthusiasm and happiness, it seems to  
lighten His burdens.

The pressure of life there is very great, and  
sometimes, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is very weary, but a quick  
response to His greeting, or incidents related that  
show the activity and steadfastness of the believers,  
will cause His eyes to shine instantly, and His step to  
become more buoyant. He listens intently to every  
word, no matter how trifling.

Morning service

Every morning the Holy Family assembled in the  
Ladies’ room for divine service. This was conducted  
very informally.

Before the chanting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá looked over  
some correspondence, and as the different visitors  
appeared, tea was offered. The children came and,  
leaving their sandals outside, knelt near the door,  
listening quietly. Even the sparrows were welcome,  
and they flew in and out at their own will (picking up  
bits of sugar thrown to them by the young girl at the  
samovar).

Ṭúbá Khánum, Munavvar Khánum, and some-  
times the visiting ladies chanted.

One morning ‘Abdu’l-Bahá shook hands with us  
and, turning to the Persian ladies, said, “This looks  
strange to you, for this is the first time you have seen a  
man and a woman shake hands. After awhile all will  
adopt this custom.”

Then He asked if the chanting sounded strange to  
our unaccustomed ears, especially as we could not  
understand the words. We answered, “Yes.” He  
assented and added that the Persians did not like the  
“part” singing of the Americans when they first heard  
it. We told Him that, though we could not under-  
stand the words, nevertheless, we felt their tremen-  
dous power.

He seemed pleased and remarked that if we could

understand them, they would be even more powerful  
and wonderful to us.

We were reminded of a little incident which  
happened nine years before.[[3]](#endnote-3) At that time there was a  
young Syrian girl in the Household who was teaching  
the Daughters English. She was a Christian and knew  
nothing of the Bahá’í belief, but one day as we all  
listened to the chanting, she suddenly burst into tears  
and ran from the room. They all smiled and quietly  
awaited her return. In a few minutes she came back,  
and when asked what made her cry, she shook her  
head and could only reply, “It was so beautiful—it was  
so beautiful.”

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The first day at luncheon, after ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had  
partaken of the honey, He passed it to us and said,  
“Eat this, it will have a spiritual effect—it is the same  
honey that was offered in the olden time.

“Some material things have a spiritual effect. The  
spoken words cause a vibration which produces an  
effect upon the ear. This is material, but the effect is  
spiritual—that is, the spirit of man feels the effect—  
either of gladness or sadness.”

The Mashriqu’l-Adhkár

“To have it built is most important. Some mate-  
rial things have spiritual effect, and the Mashriqu’l-  
Adhkár is a material thing that will have great effect  
upon the spirits of the people. Not only does the  
building of the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár have an effect  
upon those who build it, but upon the whole world.

“In the time of Christ the believers used a room  
under a house where they held their meetings. Moses  
built the Tabernacle. Solomon built the first real  
Temple.

“In the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár services will be held  
every morning, and the words of Bahá’u’lláh only are  
to be read.”

Mashriqu’l-Adhkár means “Dawning Point of  
Mention” (where God is mentioned).[[4]](#endnote-4)

Feast

One day a Feast was given for the Persian Jewish  
pilgrims. Miss M. Elizabeth Jack and we were invited  
by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to partake of this Feast.

We were conducted to the large hall that was used  
for these occasions. It was filled with a great variety of  
growing plants. The table was laden with fruits and  
cakes, and nine large platters of *pilau*, and beautifully  
decorated with flowers.

We were placed at the head of the table, then  
afterward the men-pilgrims appeared. As they came  
in, one by one, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá graciously greeted them  
and poured water over their hands at a basin. Bashír,  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s attendant, held the towel upon which  
they dried their hands. Afterward they seated them-  
selves at the table.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke to Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn, who  
arose and chanted a Tablet. After he finished,  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá served each one generously to the *pilau*.  
He walked up and down while the pilgrims ate. When  
all had finished, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá explained that this  
Feast was for the visiting Jews and said, “In this Great  
Day, God has manifested One Light, and to this Light  
are attracted these pilgrims from three great reli-  
gions—Muhammadan, Christian, and Jewish. We  
must all thank God for the privilege of sitting down at  
this table, for this gathering is a symbol of unity of the  
Kingdom when all nations, all creeds, all races, and

all religions will gather in unity under one Tent,  
under the shade of one Tree, at one Table to partake  
of spiritual food.”

Then ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood close behind us (three  
women) and said, “In the olden time, it was not  
possible for women to sit at table in equality with the  
men, but in this Day it is different, and the change has  
been largely brought about by the position given to  
women in free America.

“It is the power of Bahá’u’lláh that made it possible  
for these American women to sit at this Table with  
these pilgrims. This is to show that in the Kingdom of  
Abhá there will be equality established between  
women and men. They are equal.

“I am very happy to see you all gathered here, and I  
hope that the fragrances of this meeting will reach the  
nostrils of the believers all over the world and make  
them glad. Such meetings have an effect upon all the  
people.”

After ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had finished speaking, the  
cakes and fruit were partaken of; then the pilgrims  
arose, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and those who had assisted  
Him in serving were seated. Then, in turn, Miss Jack  
and we were permitted to serve Him and the others,  
which to us was a great privilege—a wonderful  
experience.

Sacrifice

‘Abdu’l-Bahá began by saying that He endured all  
the pain and hardship of this prison life for the sake of  
the people, that if it were not for the people He would  
not stay in a prison. He said, “You should thank God  
that you are visiting Me in this prison instead of a  
palace. Most people would like to visit in a beautiful  
palace, but it is not often that people can visit in a  
prison.” We told Him we knew of many who would  
love to visit Him in that prison, and that we  
understood that His was the Great Sacrifice.

He said, “The great Sacrifice is to forget one’s self  
entirely—to sacrifice everything, as did Christ. Peo-  
ple might say, ‘Why should not God forgive the  
people without sacrificing His Son?’

“If a king wished to forgive his subjects, would he  
send his son to be killed by them? Certainly not. If this  
would be unjust in a king, how much more unjust  
would it be on the part of God to send His Son to be  
killed. Christ came of His own will to be a sacrifice  
that the people might become educated and progress.

“How was He to accomplish this? Must He not give  
them good counsel; must He not establish new laws  
and give them new teachings? And if He did all these  
things, did He not know that the people would rise  
against Him, give Him great pain and trouble, and  
finally kill Him? But knowing all this, He was willing  
to be a sacrifice for the sake of the world, and through

this voluntary act He saved all those who believed in  
Him.

“Christ became a sacrifice that His qualities might  
appear in the people.

“If God forgave sins without the sacrifice, there  
would still be only the human qualities in the people.  
The divine qualities would not appear.

“Christ said to His disciples, ‘I am in you, the  
Father is in Me and I am in you,’ meaning that the  
qualities of the Father were in Him and His qualities  
were in them.

“There are many explanations of sacrifice. A seed  
in the ground sacrifices itself—that is, it becomes  
nothing that the beautiful plant may appear (the  
qualities of the plant are latent in the seed). The tree  
and its beautiful branches, leaves and fruit are  
manifestations of the perfection of the seed.

“Christ sacrificed Himself, as the seed, becoming as  
nothing. He produced millions of beautiful trees with  
their leaves, blossoms, and fruit. The leaves, blos-  
soms, and fruit are manifestations of the perfections  
that were in the seed, so the disciples became the  
manifestations of the perfections that were in Christ.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá turned to us and said, “As the  
perfections of Christ appeared in His disciples, I hope,  
through the Sacrifice of Bahá’u’lláh, His perfections  
may appear in you.” We replied that it would require  
much of God’s mercy to make that possible. He  
answered, “If you follow His instructions, it is certain  
to be accomplished.”

We told Him what Mr. Chase had said, that while  
he was at ‘Akká he felt that the outside world was the

real prison, while ‘Akká was the place of freedom.[[5]](#endnote-5) He  
smiled and said that it was the *freedom* of the world  
outside that caused Him to be in prison. He said,  
“This prison is free because of the presence of the  
Spirit.”

Accidental happenings

Question: Are there accidental happenings, or do  
all events occur according to Divine plan?

Answer: God’s creation is perfect. Every part of the  
universe has its connection with every other part,  
according to a Divine system.

We compare the body of the universe with the body  
of man. The members of the body of man are closely  
connected; so, also, are the parts of the great universe.  
The great events which happen are due to this  
connection. There is day, there is night; sometimes  
there are eclipses, etc.—all according to the require-  
ments of this Divine system. All the created beings are  
connected with each other, and all occurrences and  
events are indicative of the requirements of this  
connection and interrelation.

In the body of man, all the members and parts are  
interdependent; for example, the heart feels the  
things seen by the eye; the ear hears, and the soul is  
thereby moved; the nostrils inhale a sweet odor, and  
the whole body is delighted. This is a proof that all the  
parts of the body of man are interrelated. This is  
according to a Divine plan, and it is also evident that  
there is a great wisdom therein.

Even unpleasant things, such as a chill in the feet  
which is felt in the head, a disagreeable odor which  
affects the whole system, or trifles (which are endless,

and seem to be accidental) such as a small hair  
appearing in an unusual place on a man’s face, should  
also be considered as having a place or part in this  
general system. Therefore, what we call an accident is  
the effect of the connection of all the parts, and no  
events transpire in vain.

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Referring to the Tablet sent to Mr. Dealy previous  
to the flood and hurricane at Fair Oaks, Alabama: “Be  
not grieved if the clouds of the Violation of the  
Covenant are condensed in those regions.”

Question: Are great calamities like this flood, the  
San Francisco earthquake, etc., caused by the wick-  
edness of the people?

Answer: It belongs to the lesson of yesterday.  
Events like these happen because of the connection  
between the parts of the universe, for every small part  
has connection with every great part, and what affects  
one affects the other or all the others.

On account of this connection, the actions of man  
have effect. Whenever a promise is broken, it causes a  
commotion. For instance, suppose two nations have a  
disagreement. It is a difference in ideas only, and not a  
physical thing, not anything we can touch or see; yet  
this disagreement has a physical effect. It causes war,  
and thousands of men are cut in pieces. So, when man  
breaks his promise to God, in other words when he  
“violates the Covenant”, the effect is physical, and  
calamities appear.

A man may be condemned to death because he is a

murderer, another because he is a thief, or they may  
be punished for many different kinds of crimes, but  
Jesus Christ was put to death because He wished to  
become a sacrifice, so there are other causes of  
calamity.

The incident of the departure  
of Mírzá Asadu’lláh  
from Haifa at the time  
of the disturbance in 1905

Extract from Mírzá Asadu’lláh’s letter written to the  
Bahá’ís at that time:

“Our Beloved Master commanded the believers to  
leave ‘Akká for different countries so that they might  
remain free, but their sorrow at parting from the  
Master was far greater than would have been the  
imprisonment. They refused to part with Him, saying  
they would remain and share with Him His trials. But  
He admonished them, saying, ‘O ye beloved of God.  
These people (officials) have come especially for Me,  
and their purpose is not yet known. It is My Will that  
you should depart from here and serve God wherever  
you go. This is the appointed time for work; it is the  
season of victory. If I am crucified or exiled or thrown  
into the ocean, ye should remain, nevertheless, firm  
as mountains; nay, your service should become greater  
and your endurance more. Lay your trust upon God;  
rest assured in the confirmation of Bahá’u’lláh; spread  
the Fragrances of God; help the people and lead them  
to the Light of God. This is the blessed promise of  
Bahá’u’lláh: “We will help him who rises to serve My  
Cause through a host of the Supreme Concourse and  
an army of near angels.”’[[6]](#endnote-6)

“Following the command of the Master, they  
commenced preparations for their journey. The

Master remained a mountain of firmness, a heaven of  
patience, and an ocean of steadfastness.

“At this time I was commanded by the Master to go  
to ‘Akká, and reaching there in the afternoon I met  
the Master and was with Him two hours alone. He  
gave me directions for teaching, commanding me to  
go within a few days to Egypt and deliver His Message  
to the people, telling me He would let me know the  
time. A few days later my son returned from a visit to  
the Master and said the time had arrived. On  
receiving this message, he informed the Master that I  
had no passport—a necessity in Turkey—to which  
He replied that I would be protected. The Governor,  
with his officials, were on the pier to see that no Bahá’í  
Persons left. As we walked down the pier, the  
Governor’s attention was distracted by the mails  
which had arrived, and we were enabled to pass to the  
steamer unnoticed—thus we were protected.”

Question: Was this an accidental happening?

Answer: No, this was on account of all the parts of  
the universe having a connection and being depen-  
dent upon one another.

To study the universe, take the body of man; all the  
elements are in it, and its members are dependent  
upon one another; so, also, are the parts of the great  
universe. The great events which happen are due to  
this connection—all according to the *requirements* of  
the *system*.

As the great events belong to the general system, so  
the small things which occur belong to the same  
Divine system.

In the case of Mírzá Asadu’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said,  
“God told the Governor to turn his head.”

Referring to the disturbances at this time, ‘Abdu’l-  
Bahá said, “These things must happen. The clouds  
will not gather moisture from the sea until the wind  
blows. Clouds must gather and rain fall and storms  
appear, or there will be no spring; then we should  
have no flowers, no fruit, no blessings of Spring. All  
the happenings in the Cause are for the future fruit.”

Bahá’í argument against the belief  
of the naturalists regarding  
the essence of God  
or the reality of creation

We believe in a Universal Essence or Reality,  
which is purified or exalted above all mention, and  
which cannot possibly be conceived of by the mind of  
man. But we can prove Its existence by Its signs which  
we see in the surrounding creation.

Naturalists believe in this Universal Cause, which  
they call universal “Nature”, and they claim that it, of  
necessity, brings things into existence, that this ne-  
cessity is one of the requirements.

We say the Essence is the Creator of all things, and  
we differ from the Naturalists in attributing the *kind* of  
qualities to this Essence.

We say that the Essence is purified from all  
imperfections. They say it has some imperfections.

We say the Essence is conscious.

They say it is unconscious.

We say the Essence is the Knower.

They say it knows not.

We say the Essence has Will.

They say it has no will.

We say the Essence has the power of choice.

They say it creates without choice—because it  
must.

We prove the existence of the Universal Essence by

qualities that are perfect. They prove the universal  
“Nature” by qualities that are imperfect.

They say, and try to prove that there is neither  
organization nor system in the world of existence, that  
although the works of nature are in themselves perfect  
(like a flower, for instance) they are not created  
according to plan or arrangement. For example, in a  
bouquet of a variety of flowers one sees that each  
flower, in itself, is perfect, but the arrangement of the  
bouquet is not according to system.

They say that because the works of nature are not  
systematic, the Universal Cause can have no con-  
sciousness of it.

We ask: Is it possible that perfection can exist in the  
branch of a tree and not exist in the root of the tree?

Is it possible that perfection shall exist in a drop of  
the sea and not exist in the sea itself?

Is it possible that perfection will not exist in man  
himself but will exist in a hair of his head, which is  
only a part of him?

Is it possible that man, who is a part of the whole,  
may have qualities of perfection which cannot be  
attributed to the Essence, or Reality? Or is it possible  
for man to be a point of perfection and that real  
Essence be deprived of perfection? A child could not  
imagine such a foolish thing.

It would also be foolish to say that the hair of a  
man’s head had feeling but that his heart and mind  
were deprived. (We take the Naturalist’s own words  
for this proof.)

We say that the Essence, or Reality, is purified from  
all words, all description, and all praise; that the

Essence would have first to be understood and then  
judged. But man cannot understand the Essence.

The Naturalists say, for example, that the universal  
“Nature” is like the ocean, and the existent beings are  
like the waves of that ocean. Now, can we imagine  
some perfections in the waves without believing that  
perfection also exists in the ocean itself?

Man is in the position of a little worm in a seed; the  
seed is in an apple; the apple is on a tree; the tree is in a  
garden; and the garden is under the care of a gardener.

Now, suppose that little worm should say, “I have  
understanding and feeling, but the gardener has not.”  
How can this little worm, which is so far from the  
gardener, possibly have an idea or conception of him?  
How much could it know of the perfections or  
qualities of the gardener, so that it might be able to  
judge whether or not he has such and such perfec-  
tions, such as consciousness, will, etc.?

The beings in this existent world are created in  
different conditions. There is the mineral condition,  
or degree, the vegetable condition, or degree, the  
animal condition, or degree, and the human degree.

Every higher degree comprehends or includes the  
lower, but the lower degree does not comprehend the  
higher. For example, man comprehends the kingdoms  
below him, but the mineral does not comprehend the  
three higher kingdoms.

Whatever progress the mineral kingdom may  
make, it can never reach a condition of knowing the  
power of growth; and in the same way whatever  
progress the vegetable kingdom may make, it can  
never imagine the condition of the animal kingdom;  
and the animal cannot imagine the human reality.

Though all of them are creations, the difference in  
degree prevents the lower from comprehending the  
higher.

As this is so, how can man, the phenomenal being,  
understand God? How can the creation understand  
the Creator? How can the art imagine the artist?

Man cannot understand the Reality of Divinity or  
know whether He has consciousness or not.

The consciousness of God is not the consciousness  
which we know of. As unconsciousness is an imper-  
fection, we say that Reality has a consciousness. We  
say so because we want to deny the imperfections  
ascribed to God. But the consciousness of God is  
different from the consciousness of man. Man’s  
consciousness is a quality of phenomenal beings, but  
the consciousness of God is the quality of an Eternal  
Reality. Therefore, we cannot compare one with the  
other.

The consciousness of God is sanctified and purified  
from the consciousness of man.

As it is with the spirit of the vegetable kingdom,  
which cannot understand the spirit of the animal  
kingdom or comprehend the sense-perception of the  
animal kingdom (as an instance, it is impossible for an  
orange to comprehend the power of sight or to  
understand the power of hearing or the power of  
taste), so it is with man, the created being, in his  
relation to God, the uncreated Reality. It is impos-  
sible for him to understand the power of God.

That Reality which is the Essence of God cannot be  
conceived of by any understanding; therefore, God  
has created a Manifestor, and in Him is reflected that  
Sanctified Reality.

The Manifestations are points, or sources, of  
assistance for all people, and they are the Educators of  
men. They are like mirrors, and the Reality, the  
Essence, is like the sun. For instance, the Sun has  
been reflected by the Mirror of Christ and appears in it  
with Its Rays and Heat.

Though the Mirror is a phenomenal reality, it is the  
place of the Sun, or the recipient of the Sun; so,  
therefore, Christ said, “The Father is in Me”,  
meaning, The Sun has reflected upon this mirror. If  
the Mirror will say the Sun is in Me—this is right, is  
truth. But He does not mean that the Sun has come  
down from Its sanctified height and is dwelling in  
Him.

In short, we say that man is incapable of under-  
standing the Essence of God and His qualities. Why?  
Because that Essence is the Highest Sanctity, and  
man is phenomenal.

Essence of the material creation

Question: Is the essence of the material creation  
the Spirit of God?

Answer: No, it is not the *Spirit* of God, but it is the  
*Bounty* of God. It is not a part of God, for it is His  
creation.

To illustrate: Take a lamp; its light is created by the  
sun but is no part of the light of the sun. The action of  
the sun upon the earth produced the petroleum that  
gives the light. Neither the petroleum nor the light is  
any part of the sun.

And so it is with the life, or essence, of all creation.

God has created all beings, but their life, or  
essence, is not the Life of the Spirit.

The Bounty of God is bestowed upon the mineral,  
the vegetable, animal, and man, but their life, or  
essence, is not the Spirit of God.

But when the spirit of man awakens to the  
consciousness of the Spirit of God and becomes  
imbued with the Light of the Sun of Truth, that Light  
in him is of the Spirit of God and is immortal with  
God. But the man who is not endowed with this Light  
remains as a lamp whose light may be extinguished.

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Question: Suppose a man is ill and dies, not  
having summoned a physician. Had his time come  
to die, or would he with proper care have recovered?

Answer: There are two kinds of death. One is  
preordained, and the other is dependent upon many  
things. For example, a lamp is filled with oil, and it  
will burn as long as the oil will last. This is  
preordained. (If the lamp is filled with oil to burn five  
hours, it will not burn six hours.) Another lamp may  
be filled, but a strong wind arising may put out the  
light. This is the other kind of death—dependent  
upon circumstances.

It is certain that if a babe be thrown into the sea, it  
will die. This is not preordained death, for the child  
had just begun its life.

Question: Then these circumstances are somewhat  
dependent upon the will of man?

Yes, but God has given him that will.

Question: Can any of these circumstances be  
changed by prayer?

Yes, prayer might prevent the strong wind from  
blowing out the light of the lamp—but it could never  
change the amount of oil in the lamp—that is  
preordained.

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Question: Do animals have an existence after this  
life?

Answer: The love shown by animals is instinctive  
and not dependent upon their own will—that is, they  
are endowed with their qualities and use them in a  
natural way, but not by their own will. As these

qualities are instinctive and not voluntary, animals  
will not be rewarded. Their benefits are confined to  
this world only.

Take a flower; it gives forth a fragrance not of its  
own will but because it has been naturally endowed. It  
has no power to withhold the fragrance, so it is  
compelled to give it out.

This piece of bread gives strength to the body, not  
by its own will, but because it must. This is of the  
Bounty of God; therefore, the bread has no reward.

A dog shows affection by instinct and not by will.

A rich man gives a bounty to a poor man. Should  
the rich man also give him a reward because he has  
received a bounty? It is the same with the animals.  
Their qualities are bestowed by God. Shall He give  
them reward for this Bounty?

Man is the only creature who can receive reward,  
because he has the power of choice—whether he will  
show forth love or withhold it. He has the power to  
choose immortal life or to reject it, while the animals  
have no qualities that are immortal.

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For fresh air and exercise we were sometimes  
permitted to walk on the housetop.

The view from there was superb. Toward the west  
lay the blue Mediterranean, south of us was the Bay of  
‘Akká, Haifa, and beautiful Mt. Carmel. To the north  
and east was the rolling country where the shepherds  
were tending their sheep as in the olden time, in the  
same flowing garments, and carrying their shepherds’  
crooks in the same old way.

From the minarets was heard the call to prayer.  
How we longed to shout to the muezzin that a “New

Call” had been “vociferously raised” and to the  
shepherds—the “True Shepherd” hath appeared!

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At table one day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked, “If the people  
here should not let you leave ‘Akká, what would you  
do—how would you feel?”

We answered, “We would stay here always and be  
perfectly happy.” He smiled at this and said, “Suppose  
they should ask you why you came here? They might  
say, ‘These prisoners are Persians. What have Ameri-  
cans and Persians to say to one another?’”

We answered that we should like nothing better  
than to mount the housetop and shout to all the  
people the reason of our coming. He smiled again and  
said, “You are shouting although you are silent, but  
your words will be heard in the future. The words of  
Christ were not heard until three hundred years after  
His death.

“There is a Persian story of a thief who, in order  
to rob a certain house, went to work to undermine  
the foundation. The owner of the house happened  
to be on the roof and looking down discovered the  
thief and asked what he was doing. The man  
replied, ‘I am trumpeting.’ ‘Trumpeting!’ exclaimed  
the owner, ‘Why, you are not making any noise.’  
‘Oh no,’ answered the thief, ‘you will hear the noise  
tomorrow!’”

Evil thoughts

Question: What is the source of evil thoughts that  
disturb those who do not wish to entertain them?

Answer: They come from other minds; they are  
reflected. One should not become a mirror for  
them—to reflect them; neither should one try to  
control them, for this is impossible; it only aggravates  
the difficulty, causing more to appear.

One should constantly turn the mirror of his heart  
*squarely* toward God so that the Light of the Sun of  
Truth may be reflected there.

This is the only cure for attacks of evil thoughts.  
The *face* of the mirror should be turned toward God,  
and the *back* of the mirror toward the evil thoughts.

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Question: Are there “earthbound” souls who try to  
have, and do have, an influence over people, some-  
times taking entire possession of their wills?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered, “There are no earthbound  
souls. When the souls that are not good die, they go  
entirely away from this earth and so cannot influence  
anyone. They are spiritually dead. Their thoughts can  
have influence only while they are alive on the earth.  
Caiaphas had great influence during his life, but as  
soon as he died, his influence ceased. It was of this  
kind that Christ said, ‘Let the dead bury their dead.’

But the good souls are given eternal life, and  
sometimes God permits their thoughts to reach the  
earth to help the people.”

Automatic writing

Question: What is the power used in automatic  
writing?

Answer: This power is neither heavenly nor spiri-  
tual; neither is it an influence from disembodied  
spirits. It is of the human spirit—*magnetism* within the  
self of the one doing the writing.

When the thoughts have taken possession of the  
mind and are not consciously directed, one becomes  
subject to their promptings and, unconsciously, or  
automatically, takes a pencil and writes them down.  
The oftener this is done, the stronger becomes the  
magnetic prompting.

For instance, one may learn a lesson or poem by  
heart, and he repeats and repeats it so often that the  
thoughts take possession of him, and he will repeat it  
unconsciously even in his sleep. This is magnetism  
belonging to the human spirit.

Or he may walk many times upon a certain road,  
and he takes his walk so often he is able to take it  
unconsciously or automatically.

This power is his own magnetism.

A mother rocks and rocks her babe to sleep in a  
cradle, but the thought of the child’s sleep may so take  
possession of her mind that sometimes she is able to  
put him to sleep without the aid of the cradle. This  
effect is produced by the mother’s magnetism.

In regard to the automatic writing, if one will pray  
very earnestly, and pray *sufficiently*, the mind will turn  
against the automatic writing, and one will be freed  
from the effects of that power.

Pray, and pray, and not be misled by the seeming  
beauty of the writings.

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One of us had a birthday, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
congratulated her upon being in that Sacred Spot for  
such an anniversary. He was asked to guess the age,  
and He smilingly guessed several years under the right  
number. She said, although He was very kind, she was  
bound to acknowledge a few years more, at which He  
quickly rejoined, “I wish to make you as young as  
possible so that you will have so many more years in  
which to live and spread this Truth.” She said that  
since becoming a Bahá’í, nine years ago, she had been  
growing younger every day. He smiled and assented,  
“That is so, and, in reality, you are only nine years  
old.”

Then He told the following story: A great king,  
walking in his garden one day, noticed a man, about  
ninety years old, planting some trees. The king asked  
what he was doing and the old man answered that he  
was planting date trees. “How long before they will  
bear fruit?” asked the king. “Twenty years.” “But you  
will not live to enjoy the fruit; why then should you  
plant these trees?” The old man answered, “The last  
generation planted trees that bore fruit for my benefit;  
so it is now my duty to plant for the benefit of the next  
generation.”

The king was pleased at this answer so gave the man

a piece of money. The gardener fell on his knees and  
thanked him. The king asked, “Why do you kneel  
before me?” “Because, your majesty, not only have I  
had the pleasure, or gift, of planting these trees, but  
they have already borne fruit, since you give me this  
money.” This so pleased the king he gave the man  
another piece of money.

Again the old gardener knelt, saying, “Again I  
kneel to thank your majesty. Most trees will bear fruit  
only once, while these trees of mine have already  
borne two crops—since you give me two pieces of  
money.”

The king smiled and asked, “How old are you?”  
The man answered, “I am twelve years old.” “How  
can that be? You are surely a very old man.” The  
gardener answered, “In the days of the king your  
predecessor, the people were in a most unhappy state  
of constant warfare and trouble, so I cannot include  
that as a part of my life. But since your majesty came to  
rule, the people are happy, contented, and at peace.  
Therefore, as it is but twelve years since your gracious  
reign began, I am only twelve years old.” This pleased  
the king so very much that, perforce, he gave the old  
man another piece of money, saying, “I shall have to  
leave you now, for your words please me so greatly that  
if I listen to you longer I shall become a pauper!”

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One day we spoke of an active worker in this Cause,  
and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said, “In this Cause, he who is  
active and who makes an effort will always meet with  
success. In worldly matters how often we see a man  
work hard for a lifetime and never achieve success.

But the worker in the cause of God is like a gardener.  
The more attention he gives his garden, the more fruit  
will reward his efforts, or, like the traveler who has a  
great goal before him, no matter how hard the road, if  
he only keep on walking and is not turned aside by  
discouragements, he is sure, eventually, to reach his  
goal.”

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Question: Will the stations of the believers con-  
tinue to be different hereafter?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered, “Yes, it will be necessarily  
so, for the Kingdom requires it.

“The King appoints one to be his prime minister,  
another to be his greatest general, another a soldier,  
and so on from the highest to the lowest. If all were  
generals or all were soldiers, there would be no  
kingdom.

“God created the mineral, the vegetable, the  
animal, and man. Had He created only man there  
would be no world.”

Memorial service

One of the visiting ladies from ‘Ishqábád seemed  
very sad, and as a sad Bahá’í face is a rarity, we asked  
about her. It seemed she had lately lost both her  
daughters within a month’s time and was incon-  
solable.

When she first came, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent much  
time comforting her. He told her she must take the  
believers for her children, and during the days in His  
Presence, she began to learn real content with God’s  
Will, which is better than resignation. Finally, He  
revealed some beautiful Tablets for the departed  
daughters and held a memorial service at which these  
were read. This was a service of joy and not of sorrow  
or regret. Only men believers took part in it, but she  
was able to hear it, although she was not seen. The  
spiritual effect this blessing had upon her was won-  
derful to see, and before we left, the empty place in  
her heart had become filled with His Love, and her  
face became illumined and beautiful like those of her  
Persian brothers and sisters.

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá brought us flowers or oranges or  
grapefruit from the wonderful Riḍván nearly every  
day and also gave us delicious grapes from a vine that  
was planted by His own hand. (This vine yields seven  
crops of grapes every year, and these particular grapes  
were the seventh yield.)

His constant shower of material and spiritual favors  
caused us to exclaim that we did not deserve so many  
blessings, and while we received and received every-  
thing from Him, we were unable to give Him  
anything in return.

He replied, simply, “That is what I am here for—to  
give, and not to receive.”

When we deprecated the trouble it must be to  
answer so many questions and to give us so much time,  
He replied, “Whatever is done in love is never any  
trouble, and—there is always time.”

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá entertained the Turkish officials and  
non-believers who came to call nearly every evening.  
When asked if this was not a great tax on His time and  
strength, He replied, “Bahá’u’lláh commanded us to  
show courtesy, kindness, and hospitality to all who  
come to us—whether they are believers or not.” This  
command ‘Abdu’l-Bahá obeyed most conscientiously.  
Besides showering upon them material favors, He also  
engaged a man to come and chant the Qur’án, which  
greatly pleased His Muhammadan guests.

During the troublous time of 1905 in ‘Akká, a  
Syrian officer in the Turkish army who had always  
been friendly with the Holy Family, suddenly turned  
against them. He discovered a book written in English  
which was detrimental to this Cause. Thinking to  
ingratiate himself with the powers at Constantinople,  
he determined to send it there, first having it  
translated at Beirut. Of course it fell into the hands of  
the authorities there, who immediately concluded  
that, since he had the book in his possession, he must

himself be a Bahá’í. So they promptly arrested him  
and sent him to Damascus. Thus he fell into his own  
trap. But ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had no word of censure for this  
false friend. On the contrary, He with the Greatest  
Holy Leaf, went at once to call upon the sorrowful  
wife, offering her money and every assistance. Here  
was one of our daily lessons in the practical appli-  
cation of these Great Teachings.

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In the Words of Paradise page 54, these words  
appear: “A strange and wonderful instrument exists in  
the earth, but it is concealed from minds and souls. It  
is an instrument which has the power to change the  
atmosphere of the whole earth, and its infection  
causes destruction.”[[7]](#endnote-7)

Question: Does this refer to an evil power such as  
psychic control? Is there some other power in the  
world beside God?

Answer: This is a deep and lengthy subject, but,  
briefly, there is, as we know, a power that composes  
and a power that decomposes.

The world of existence is constantly revolving  
through the changes of building up and tearing down.

When elements are attracted, something is com-  
posed, and when these same elements are repelled,  
that form is decomposed.

As by the will of God the power of composition  
exists, so, also by will of God the power of decom-  
position exists.

These two are expressed in scripture by ‘Isráfíl’ the

angel who gives life to men, and the Angel of Death  
who takes it away.[[8]](#endnote-8) The first is the power of  
composition or attraction, the other the power of  
decomposition. They are not angels.

There is no power exercised over the people by  
those evil souls that have passed away. Good is  
stronger than evil, and even when alive they had very  
little power. How much less have they after they are  
dead, and besides they are nowhere near this planet.

Journey of the Israelites

Question: Was this a physical or spiritual journey?

Answer: It was both a physical and spiritual. They  
journeyed to the Promised Land, and geography and  
history both prove that this was a physical journey.

Moses viewed the Promised Land, but died before it  
was reached, having given over his charge to Joshua.

The crossing of the Red Sea has a spiritual  
meaning. It was a spiritual journey, through and  
above the sea of corruption and iniquity of Pharaoh  
and his people, or army. By the help of God, through  
Moses, the Israelites were able to cross this sea safely  
and reach the Promised Land (spiritual state), while  
Pharaoh and his people were drowned in their own  
corruption.

The Egyptian history recorded even trifling events.  
Had such a wonderful thing happened as the parting  
of the physical sea, it would also have been recorded.

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Question: Christ said, “This generation (meaning  
dispensation) shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.”  
(St. Luke 21:32.) And in Ex. 20:5 it states that the  
sins of the fathers will be visited upon the children  
unto the third and fourth generation. Does this word  
generation also mean a cycle, or dispensation?

Answer: No, for the word generation has a different  
meaning in different places. Christ referred to the

Christ Dispensation, or Cycle, and the other refers to  
the physical generation.

For example, if a man does a great injustice to  
another in his life, then, after his death, his son will  
be despised for having had such a father, and in some  
cases the injury might be so serious that the effect  
would reach to the grandson, etc., or a man may, by  
wrong living, fall into consumption and give that  
disease to his children unto the third or fourth  
generation.

Both physically and mentally, the sins of the fathers  
may be visited upon the children.

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Question: What was the cause of the Greek  
Civilization? Did the Greeks ever have a prophet?

Answer: They had philosophers and great men, but  
while their civilization was full of beauty and was  
superior to that of the Romans, it was material—  
neither moral nor spiritual.

The foundation of the Roman civilization was  
force; consequently, a downfall was inevitable. Think  
of a monarch like Nero setting fire to a city and  
playing upon his lyre while it burned! What kind of a  
civilization was that?

A prophet brings a spiritual civilization, and after  
that is established, material progress follows.

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Among the Persian pilgrims who called to see us  
were several Jews from Hamadán. They were new  
believers and full of enthusiasm. They told us it made  
them so happy to behold the American sisters, and

they thanked God that they had lived to see the day  
with their own eyes wherein the prophecies of the  
Holy Books were fulfilled.

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Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí—that renowned and ven-  
erable teacher—said that now he was happy to state  
there was not a village in Persia, no matter how small,  
but what contained believers—there might be only  
one—or ten—or a thousand, but not even the  
smallest hamlet was without them.[[9]](#endnote-9) We remarked the  
apparent affinity existing between the Persians and  
Americans, and the visitors said ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had  
told them that in the future many thousands of  
Americans would be visiting Persia and many Persians  
visiting America. This thought seemed to give them  
all great happiness.

Miracles

One evening Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí gave us this  
little lesson in his inimitably sweet and humorous  
way.

“If we ask for miracles as proof of the truth of this  
Revelation, we produce many veils. We should first be  
sure that the One we believe in has said, ‘I am sent by  
God.’ Then if we ask Him for a miracle, for example,  
to turn this glass cup into gold, He will answer, ‘I am  
sent by God; therefore, I am not against God. God has  
created this cup out of glass; if I turn it into gold, I am  
against God.’ And not only this; if He perform one  
miracle to satisfy one person, He will be obliged to  
perform thousands to satisfy all. Or suppose He should  
do this for the people who live in His time, what  
would He have to do to convince those who came  
after Him? How could He do this? He would have to  
live forever. Or He would have to divide Himself up  
and wander all over the earth, knocking at every door  
and saying, ‘I am the Manifestation; what kind of  
miracles would you like to see?’

“No. Let us see if He comes to improve the  
condition of the people, to develop their minds and  
hearts and give them the knowledge of God. If He did  
turn the cup into gold, what benefit is there in  
this—what profit or help to the people? Rather He  
would cloud the intellect and the reason by doing such  
strange things.

“So we see that the Manifestation cannot follow  
the desire of the people. He must bring to the world  
something which all the people can understand, in  
order that they may recognize that His cause is from  
God. Now what shall this something be? It is to make  
the people *understand*. We may say to a man, ‘Close  
your eyes that you may not see’, and he will close  
them; or ‘close your ears that you may not hear’, and  
he will close them; but when we say ‘close your mind  
that you may not understand’, then that is impossible.

“For example, I may say that I am sure I can wrestle  
with and overthrow a certain man; the people may  
declare that I cannot do it; but I am so sure—because I  
know—that the more they say I cannot, the more  
positive I become. When a person has learned  
something like a parrot, as soon as he meets with real  
opposition he will deny what he has learned; but if *in  
his own mind* he *understands* the matter, then the more  
he is opposed, the more sure he becomes. If all the  
people of the world came and told us that two and two  
make less than four, would we be disturbed? No,  
because we understand this matter. When we under-  
stand Bahá’u’lláh’s Revelation as well as this, then we  
can stand firm and say to all the world, ‘You are  
wrong, for we are sure.’ This kind of understanding  
only flourishes by opposition.

“When the people asked Christ for a miracle, He  
declared, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeketh  
after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but  
the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three  
days and three nights in the whale’s belly, so shall the  
Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart

of the earth.’ The spiritual meaning of these words  
must be clear. If Christ had performed physical  
miracles, He would have referred to them instead of  
giving such an answer; so we must conclude that the  
miracles were spiritual.

“By saying that He would be three days in the heart  
of the earth, He meant that He would be resurrected,  
or reappear in the third cycle or third heaven.  
Counting His own Dispensation as one, and the  
Muhammadan cycle as two, He has reappeared in  
this, the third Dispensation, the Day of Bahá’u’lláh.”

Exile of Bahá’u’lláh

By Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí

When Bahá’u’lláh was imprisoned in Ṭihrán, the  
Russian Ambassador went about twenty times to the  
Sháh to plead in His behalf, saying, “This man has  
no fault. He is faultless. Why do you imprison Him?”  
The Sháh answered that Bahá’u’lláh must be pun-  
ished because He had ordered the attack on his life  
(see history).[[10]](#endnote-10) The Ambassador said, “That is not a  
reasonable supposition; for, if He had ordered such an  
attempt, He would have ordered a bullet put in the  
gun instead of merely powder and small shot.” The  
Sháh acknowledged this reasoning but was deter-  
mined to hold Bahá’u’lláh responsible so as to have a  
pretext for keeping Him in prison.

Again and again the Russian Ambassador went to  
talk with the Sháh about the matter, and at last the  
Sháh confessed that he was afraid of the influence of  
Bahá’u’lláh, and that if he should set Him free, it  
would create a great tumult among the people.

The Ambassador answered, “If, then, you fear Him  
so much, why keep Him in Ṭihrán? Would it not be  
better to exile Him to Baghdád?” This was accord-  
ingly done, and an escort furnished of Cossack and  
Russian horsemen to protect Him from the Persian  
horsemen. From Baghdád, Bahá’u’lláh was sent to  
Constantinople, then to Adrianople, then to ‘Akká  
—by force He was sent to the place where He desired

to be, thus fulfilling the prophecies of all the Holy  
Books. He came by His own Will. Had He simply  
appeared and declared Himself there, the opposers  
might have said, “Of course, He has read the  
prophecies and determined to appear in the Holy  
Land in order to mislead the people.” But we see that  
He used the natural instruments who thought they  
were sending Him there by force. This is what we may  
call a real miracle.

After all, did the Sháh accomplish his will, or did  
Bahá’u’lláh accomplish His Will?

Knowing God  
through His Manifestation  
of Himself

Lesson by Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí

Both animal and man have material sight, but the  
animal has no spiritual sight—no power to compre-  
hend spiritual things. And the man who does not  
accept the revealed Light of God has no conception of  
the Power of this Light that changes the sight, mind,  
and heart of those who do accept It.

The Light of God cannot be comprehended by man  
excepting through His Manifestation. A Christian  
might search this universe over and over to find God,  
but he only finds Him when he touches the hem of the  
Garment of Christ.

In Christ (the Spirit of Truth) we find all spiritual  
knowledge, all love, all perfection. His perfection is  
beyond compare. As the ocean is to one drop of water,  
so is His Perfection above that of the creatures. By  
comparison all fail to stand in His Presence.

Christ is a Mirror that shows the Essence in Its  
Perfection. The Essence does not descend to the  
Mirror, but Its Perfection can be seen in the Mirror,  
and whosoever loves the Reflection loves the One on  
High, and whosoever sacrifices himself for this Reflec-  
tion sacrifices himself for God.

Now, it is certain that God is not realized except  
through His Manifestation. Now you have recognized

Him, have loved Him, and you have come here to *see  
Him*. What you have seen, I have seen, and nothing  
more (meaning that an account of his services in the  
Cause, which we asked him to relate to us, were as  
nothing).

The gift God has bestowed upon Bahá’ís can be  
realized by them, but not by unbelievers. The  
intellectual power of the whole world cannot under-  
stand what power brought Bahá’u’lláh from Ṭihrán to  
‘Akká.

(In former lesson H. M. Ḥaydar-‘Alí said, “If  
Bahá’u’lláh had come to ‘Akká by Himself—without  
force—the people might say that anyone could have  
done the same thing and made the same claim.”)

Whatever is done in this world on the material  
plane, is by means; but The Revelation of God is  
spread without material means or aid. The Kingdom  
of God begins here upon earth.

The power of God

Lesson by Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí

Every matter, whether earthly or heavenly, physi-  
cal or spiritual—which has not been manifest among  
men but which has at a certain time become exis-  
tent—must of necessity be related to one of human-  
kind as its originator, founder, or organizer.

First: If that matter be repugnant to the faith and  
reason of the world and nations but in accord with  
their selfish tendencies and desires, it is possible that it  
may be executed and gain a temporary existence  
among men, either through the wealth and affluence  
of its originator or by the means of his power and  
worldly influence. For people obey and recognize such  
an unreasonable matter, not only because the worldly  
power wielded by its originator compels them, but also  
because that matter appeals to their self-interest and  
cupidity, though inconsistent with their belief and  
higher judgment.

Second: If that matter be repugnant to reason but in  
conformity with faith, it is possible that it may be  
recognized.

This is illustrated by the doctrine of the Resur-  
rection of Christ and His Ascent to Heaven which,  
though apparently against reason and science, is still  
believed in by many without any explanation or  
proof—because it is the clear, literal text of the  
Gospels.

Third: And if a matter be contrary to faith but in  
accord with reason and acquired learning, this can  
also be established for a time but continues only  
temporarily, as in the case with the theories of certain  
philosophers.

Fourth: But if a matter be considered repugnant  
both to reason and to faith, and be also against men’s  
desire and self-interest, it is utterly impossible for it to  
be executed and established, even if it is proposed—  
unless there is an unseen Power to guard and protect it  
and to establish and promote it in the world. This has  
been always the case with the Divine Matters—that is  
the laws and missions of the Prophets and Divine  
Manifestations. For these Holy Personages executed  
their commands and promoted their cause among  
men, although they were alone, unaided, without any  
family, clan, soldiers, ammunition, or treasures with  
which to assist and enforce the spread of their Word.

Moreover, they were known as illiterate, un-  
learned, and were devoid of every worldly means or  
power. But they fulfilled their mission, made their  
Cause to triumph, and subjugated nations to their  
command solely through the power of the greatest  
Humility and Meekness.

Consequently, the Oneness of God was proven  
through their Oneness, and the Singleness of God was  
demonstrated through their Singleness, and from  
every one of their names and attributes the Divine  
Names and Attributes became manifest—for they had  
no worldly instruments, but the Invisible Power of  
God was their sole Helper, Protector, and Confirmer.

Story of Badí‘

By Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí

This thrilling story of one of the great martyrs in  
this Cause emphasizes the point that when a man  
accepts this Truth he becomes a new creature with a  
new heart and a new character. Badí‘ was not a  
particularly good boy—he was very young, and his  
father, a splendid believer, was somewhat troubled  
over Badí‘’s thoughtlessness and carelessness. But  
when Bahá’u’lláh, declaring Himself from ‘Akká to  
all the rulers of the earth, chose the boy to bear His  
special Tablet to the Sháh of Persia, Badí‘ was  
transformed. Although Bahá’u’lláh told him that  
when his journey was ended he would be killed, he  
accepted his mission joyfully.

Concealing the precious Tablet for the Sháh upon  
his person, he started on foot for Persia. Four months  
he walked, meeting many believers on the way, but  
never revealing to anyone his great secret. However,  
they all noticed that he often turned his face toward  
‘Akká. He constantly prayed that nothing might  
hinder him from fulfilling his mission that he might be  
worthy of the promise of martyrdom. His instructions  
were that when he reached the capital, Ṭihrán, he  
was to change his dress and put on a white robe to  
show that he had no concealed weapon, and station  
himself outside the gates where the Sháh would ride  
by with his train. Then he was to hold the Tablet high

above his head that all might see what he held. All  
these things he did, and when the Sháh with his  
glittering suite came in sight, Badí‘ raised his hand so  
that all could see the paper. The Sháh, remarking  
that he supposed it was a petition from one of his  
subjects, instructed a soldier to bring it to him. But  
Badí‘ called out, “It is not a petition but a command.”  
Instantly the soldiers seized and surrounded him.  
Again he called to the Sháh, “My Lord, who sent  
me, told me that you would kill me.” The Sháh  
angrily replied, “We shall not kill you then, just to  
prove that your Lord does not speak the truth.” He  
ordered that Badí‘ should be tortured with hot irons  
and forced to tell all he knew about the Bahá’ís. This  
was done, but he puzzled the soldiers so that they came  
to the Sháh saying, “This is a very strange man; the  
more we torture him, the happier he looks, and he will  
tell us nothing.” This story the Sháh could not  
believe, so ordered that Badí‘’s photograph be taken  
during the torture. It was brought to him showing the  
smoke rising from the boy’s burning flesh and his face  
more radiant than ever. The Sháh was furious and,  
forgetting his promise, ordered that Badí‘ should be  
killed at once, thus fulfilling the words of Bahá’u’lláh.

About three months later the Sháh asked to see  
the Tablet which had caused so much trouble, and  
after reading a few lines was so affected by its power  
that he threw it from him, exclaiming, “Take it away,  
for if I read any more, I too shall become a Bahá’í!”

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H. M. Ḥaydar-‘Alí said: Bahá’u’lláh endured  
hardships for the world. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is enduring

hardships for the believers that they in turn may give  
the Light to the world.”

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Mírzá Asadu’lláh was visiting in ‘Akká and came to  
see us several times. We gave him special messages  
from some of the American friends, and told him how  
much the American believers loved him. He smiled,  
and answered that he loved them very much, for they  
were all his spiritual children. We also told him how  
many of his lessons we had copied and spread. He  
answered, “That is good. But now you have come  
yourselves to the Fountain—the Source—of all inspi-  
ration, and you must take back this Water of Life to all  
the believers. Here is the Treasure House, and you  
must fill your hands with jewels to take back to  
America.” We told him that was exactly what we had  
come for, and hoped our capacity would enable us to  
take much. He answered, “God also gives the  
capacity.”

“The believers who visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and go out  
into the world are like the mists that gather on the  
bosom of the ocean; soon they will rise and spread,  
then condense, and shower the precious moisture,  
thus giving verdure and plenty to all the land.”

Mírzá Asadu’lláh talked most earnestly about the  
Mashriqu’l-Adhkár, and wished us to tell the  
believers in America how very, very important it is to  
have it built now. He said, “Some of the people are  
poor and so think they cannot help. A few have  
enough money but think for various reasons they  
cannot help. But all, each and every one who calls  
himself a Bahá’í and says the Greatest Name, should

have a part in this great work, and if each believer  
gave only one stone, the building would be finished. It  
is not to be the home of the people but the Home of  
God; and while the people are poor, God is rich, and  
He has commanded that it be built and has promised  
to help those who arise to obey this command. This  
prison is now the Home of God; shall we not build in  
America the finest ‘Home of God’ possible?”

Among the pilgrims who were delighted to hear of  
our interest in the Mashriqu’l-Adhkár at ‘Ishqábád  
was Ḥájí Mírzá Muḥammad-Taqí (Afnán), an old,  
old man who was instrumental in having it built. He is  
a cousin of the Báb and uncle to Mírzá Muḥsin . His  
work is finished, and he has come to ‘Akká to end his  
days. (All relatives of the Báb’s family are called  
“Afnán”.)

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Mírzá Jináb-i-Zayn wrote *A Traveler’s Narrative*.[[11]](#endnote-11)  
He was a devoted follower of Bahá’u’lláh and accom-  
panied Him to Baghdád. When Bahá’u’lláh was sent  
from there to Constantinople, Mírzá Jináb-i-Zayn was  
exiled alone to Mosul, where he was obliged to stay for  
twelve years. At last Bahá’u’lláh called him to ‘Akká,  
where he remained until his death—about four years  
ago. His native town was Najafábád, and when he  
returned there after an absence, he found but one  
believer. He taught about five thousand people.  
When one of his sons died, Bahá’u’lláh comforted him  
by saying, “You must not grieve over the death of your  
son; for you have given life to five thousand souls, and  
they are your spiritual sons.” He was also given the  
name of Zayn, which in Arabic means “good”. Two of

his sons are now serving ‘Abdu’l-Bahá as secretaries—  
Mírzá Munír-i-Zayn and Mírzá Núru’d-Dín-i-Zayn.  
They very kindly interpreted for us when the Persian  
pilgrims called and when Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí and  
Mírzá Asadu’lláh gave us instruction. Another son of  
Mírzá Jináb-i-Zayn, Mírzá Bushrá Zayn, also inter-  
preted for us.

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In Cairo, Ḥusayn Rúḥí took us to call upon that  
illumined soul, dear Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl. For some time  
he had been quite ill but had sufficiently recovered to  
be able to sit up and renew his writing. When asked  
about his illness, he said that he did not mind being  
sick, only that it prevented him from working on the  
book which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had commanded him to  
write. He said he was rejoiced to see us and to learn of  
the progress of the Holy Cause in our country and sent  
loving greetings to all the American believers.

Inscription on  
the Greatest Name stone

“The star is a symbol of man’s body (Haykal). The  
Báb designed the star and wrote 360 forms of the  
Name of Bahá’u’lláh in the center. These repre-  
sented the Lights of the Perfection of God which  
could be contained in the body of a perfect man—  
Manifestation.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá designed the engraving on the stone.  
The center symbol means the Greatest Name. One  
star represents the name Báb, and the other star was  
used to balance the design.[[12]](#endnote-12)

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Question: Do the hieroglyphics seen inside the  
great Pyramid refer to Bahá’u’lláh?

Answer: Maybe, but if this is so, it will be known in  
the future. There are prophecies in the old Persian  
books that were taken to India long ago by Zoroas-  
trians when they were driven from Persia. In every old  
gospel, or sacred book, if it be carefully studied,  
reference to this Day may be found. The old Pársí  
books are in India, for the Pársís fled to India.

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Question: Was Confucius a prophet?

Yes, though not so great as Buddha.

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Question: What is the meaning of verse 52 on page  
16 of *The Hidden Words*:

“O Son of Man!”

“My Calamity is My Providence. In appearance it is  
fire and vengeance; in reality it is Light and Mercy,”  
etc.[[13]](#endnote-13)

Answer: These are the Words of Bahá’u’lláh  
referring to His persecutions and those of His Martyrs.

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “The form of the cross is made  
by two lines crossing each other at right angles. It is to  
be found in everything—even in this piece of cloth. It  
is the symbol of spiritual sacrifice.”

He said: “The present disturbances in Persia remind  
us of the French Revolution. In time, peace will  
come. Although the Bahá’ís will make no war in  
Persia or any other country, the flag of Bahá’u’lláh will  
overcome every other flag, and all rulers will do  
homage to it.”

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“You are very fortunate to have come here while  
there are no disturbances.” We answered that we  
appreciated this blessing and that in His Presence we  
felt we were at home. He replied, “This is your home.”

“You should be very happy to meet the Persian  
pilgrims in this Holy Place. California and Persia are  
very far apart, but the pilgrims from the furthermost  
parts of the earth meet at ‘Akká by the power of the  
Word of God.”

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá said He had revealed a Tablet to some  
Persians in which He wrote that the believers were  
drops of one sea, rain from one cloud, flowers of one  
garden, and stars of one heaven.

On His way home from a visit one morning,  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá noticed a large hawk hovering over the  
garden. Another had also seen it, and that was a  
terrified little bird, but when the bird saw Him it flew  
straight to Him for protection, while the hawk sailed  
away.

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One day at luncheon ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked us if we  
were glad to be at ‘Akká and if we were happy. We  
answered that we were very happy to be there with  
Him but that when we thought of our faults we were  
unhappy. He replied *emphatically*, “Think not of  
yourselves, but think of the Bounty of God. This will  
always make you happy.” Then He smilingly referred  
to the Arabic saying regarding the peacock, that “He  
is contented because he never looks at his feet—  
which are very ugly—but always at his plumage which  
is very beautiful.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s approbation and encouragement—  
ignoring one’s faults and dwelling on one’s virtues—  
clear the spiritual vision so that, in His Presence, the  
soul becomes acutely conscious of its own unworthi-  
ness. This is God’s Way of teaching, and ‘Abdu’l-  
Bahá daily practices the Command, “If a man have  
ten bad qualities and one good one, look at the one  
and ignore the ten.[[14]](#endnote-14)

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Question: Is it necessary to arise to say the midnight  
prayer, or the prayer of the Dawn, or to wash the  
hands and face before using these?

Answer: No, the ablution is only for the obligatory  
daily prayer which should be said three times a day.[[15]](#endnote-15)

Question: Does ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wish the believers to  
take part in charitable or political affairs, or should  
they interest themselves in spiritual things only?

Answer: Any movement that is for the benefit of  
mankind should be joined by the Bahá’ís. If they are  
not asked to help, they should offer their services,  
especially in all kinds of charitable work. They must  
not be exclusive but general and serve believers and  
unbelievers alike. They should also take the usual  
voter’s part in all elections.[[16]](#endnote-16)

Pronunciation of Bahá’o’lláh[[17]](#endnote-17)

The first *a* pronounced as *u* in but.

The second *a* pronounced as *a* in *ah*.

The *o* is a connecting letter and is now used, with  
the long sound, instead of the connecting letter *u* that  
all may learn and use the same pronunciation.

Both *ll*s following the *o* are sounded. Slight accent  
on second and last syllables.

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Question: Was Bahá’u’lláh a descendant of Cyrus  
the Great?

Answer: Bahá’u’lláh was a descendant of Abraham.

Meetings

We asked ‘Abdu’l-Bahá about our meetings, how  
they should be conducted, and we told Him we  
opened our services by saying the Greatest Name nine  
times in silence. He replied, “That is very good, that  
is right, for it brings those present into harmony.”

Then He said *The Hidden Words* should be read and  
often the “Tajallíyát”—the Five Holy Tablets—that  
this was important. *The Hidden Words* are words of  
counsel, and the “Tajallíyát” are words of instruction,  
and a preparation for *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*. Besides  
these, other Tablets should be read.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that discussions and personal  
opinions expressed had caused inharmony and should  
be avoided, but that some speaking, such as accounts  
of the *Visit* by returning pilgrims, etc., always done in  
love, would be advisable because it was both devel-  
oping and profitable. In general, it is best that  
speaking be not confined to one, that the appearance  
of leadership may be avoided.

“The object of the meetings is to produce harmony  
and happiness.”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá highly approved of our dividing into  
groups for the purpose of answering questions and  
giving explanations after the service, at teatime. We  
told Him that the believers took charge of the  
meetings in turn and that the reading was done in  
turn, and He also approved of this.

A message sent by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

To the Beloved of God

Tell them I love them with all My Heart, that I  
always think of them and never forget them, that it  
makes Me happy to hear from them; and when I shall  
hear that they are *entirely united*, I shall be *perfectly*happy. To become harmonious is very important, for  
the least inharmony *retards* the bestowal of the great  
blessings that are awaiting them.

When one or two pilgrims come here, it is the same  
as if all the members of their assembly were present,  
and also the same as if all the believers in the world  
were here; for one or two represent the whole, and  
when I send My Love and Greetings to the believers  
through these pilgrims, it is the same as if they were  
here to receive them, and the Love is the same Love.

I wish the believers could know how much I love  
them. I would give My Life for them.

The picture of Bahá’u’lláh

The privilege of viewing the pictures of the Holy  
Báb and Bahá’u’lláh was accorded us just before we left  
‘Akká.

This remarkable photograph of the Blessed Beauty  
is the only one in existence. How perfectly that noble  
Face and Form embody the Words, “The King has  
come! The Kingdom and Power, the Glory and  
Majesty are His! He is the Lord of mankind, the Ruler  
of the Throne and of the dust!” and at the same time  
express with such Power the utmost Gentleness and  
Love.

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On Saturday morning, the eighteenth of January,  
after receiving the parting blessing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
and bidding good-bye to all, from the Highest One to  
the least one in His Service, we drove to that most  
Sacred Spot, the Rawḍatu’l-Mubáraka, the Holy  
Tomb of Bahá’u’lláh.

Outside the walls of ‘Akká Mírzá Munír joined us,  
and at the Holy Tomb we were met by Ḥájí Siyyid  
‘Alí, the brother of Mírzá Muḥsin.

As the resident believers make the pilgrimage on  
Friday, we had only the company of these two friends.  
They remained in the inner Court while we entered  
the Holy of Holies, alone.

That visit is indeed a glorious experience, at once  
both solemn and joyful.

As we left the heavenly Silence of that Center of  
Peace, some beautiful roses gathered from the outer  
garden were given to us, which we gratefully received  
and have carefully preserved.

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From the Holy Tomb we drove to Haifa. Rúḥá   
Khánum went with us to the Shrine on Mt. Carmel.  
We saw there the group of trees under which  
Bahá’u’lláh loved to rest.

Symbolic picture

As we slowly descended Mt. Carmel our eyes  
beheld a *symbolic picture* of wondrous beauty.

Before us spread the Bay of ‘Akká. The sun had just  
disappeared (to our left), and it was still daylight, the  
glowing colors of the sky and landscape remaining.

To our right stretched the cream-colored beach;  
and, beyond, the dark green line of shrubs and trees  
followed its curve.

Still further on was the range of blue mountains,  
snow-capped.

The full moon of orange color had already risen  
above these mountains, and its golden beams reached  
across the bright blue Bay.

Directly opposite lay ‘Akká, the Beautiful, its  
forlorn, ancient buildings transfigured in that wonder-  
ful light to marble palaces, carved and jeweled—a  
“White City” rising from the Bay, its domes and  
minarets pointed with rubies.

The following Words of Bahá’u’lláh interpret the  
symbol:

“O people of the earth! When the Sun of My  
Bounty sets and the Firmament of My Form is hidden,  
be not troubled. Arise for the helping of My Work and  
the advancement of My Word throughout the world.  
Verily, We are with you under all conditions and will  
help you with the Truth.”[[18]](#endnote-18)

“Say O people!

“Let not trouble take possession of you when the  
kingdom of My Epiphany becomes concealed and the  
waves of the Ocean of My Utterance are hushed.

“Verily, there is in My Epiphany a reason and in My  
*Occultation* another reason which none knoweth save  
God, the Incomparable, the All-Knowing.[[19]](#endnote-19) And we  
shall see you from the most Glorious Horizon and will  
help whosoever riseth up for the helping of Our Work  
with hosts from the Supreme Concourse and a cohort  
of the Cherubim.”[[20]](#endnote-20)

At the time of the disappearance of the “Form” of  
the “Sun” (Bahá’u’lláh), the “Moon” of this Dispen-  
sation (‘Abdu’l-Bahá) had already arisen, and the  
Beams of this “Orb of peace and reconciliation” have  
encircled the globe.

As the light of the material sun remains long after it  
has set, so, in this Day, the Light of the Sun of God’s  
Manifestation remains, and the “Moon” of this  
Manifestation, being so high in the spiritual heaven,  
above the earthly states and conditions, will continue  
to reflect in greatest splendor the Light of the  
Heavenly Sun.

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On the nineteenth of January we left the Holy  
Land, our spiritual Home, to enter the world again.  
Our hearts were full to overflowing with the gracious  
gifts which had been bestowed—not only upon us,  
but upon all the friends to whom we were bearing  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s loving messages.

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As we sailed away, gazing at ‘Akká, it presented a  
different appearance from its material reality. Instead

of a crumbling, gray stone building, the prison, as it  
projected into the blue Sea, looked like an exquisite  
white marble “casket”.

From the worldly standpoint, it is truly a prison.  
From the heavenly standpoint, it is truly a “Casket”  
containing

THE GEM OF MYSTERY, ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ.

Appendices

Appendix 1  
Tablet to Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper

*Through his honor  
Mírzá Aḥmad* and *Mírzá Munír*.  
*Translated by M. A. Iṣfahání, Sept 29, 1908.*

To the maidservant of God,  
Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper.  
Upon her be Bahá’u’lláh-al-Abhá!

He is God!

Oh, thou who art attracted to the Kingdom of God!

Thy detailed letter was received. Its perusal pro-  
duced the utmost happiness, for it evidenced the fact  
that thou hast attained to the knowledge of the reality  
of tests, that tests endured in the Path of God are  
conducive to confirmation, nay, rather, they are  
heavenly powers and the bounties of the realm of  
Might. But to the weak believers tests are trials and  
examination, for, on account of the weakness of their  
faith and assurance, they fall into difficulties and  
vicissitudes.

However, to those souls who are firm and steadfast,  
tests are the greatest favors.

Consider thou that at the time of an examination in  
sciences and arts, the dull and lazy pupil finds himself  
in calamity. But to the intelligent and sagacious  
student, examination in learning produces honor and  
infinite happiness. Alloyed gold subjected to the fire

portrays its baseness, while the intensity of the flame  
enhances the beauty of pure gold. Therefore, tests to  
the weak souls are calamity, and to the veiled ones the  
cause of their disgrace and humiliation.

The point is this, that in the Path of Truth every  
difficulty is made plain and every trial is the matchless  
bounty.

Therefore, the believers of God and the maid-  
servants of the Merciful must not relax during trial,  
and no disaster must deter their service in the Cause of  
God.

You have written that upon your return you have  
compiled whatever you saw and heard (at ‘Akká) and  
you have received the invisible assistance, that the  
teachings, which were like invisible seeds, have  
sprung to life and verdancy, spreading branches and  
leaves, and producing blossoms and fruits. Indeed,  
what you have written is true.

You have asked regarding the influence of evil  
spirits. Evil spirits are deprived of eternal life. How  
then can they exercise any influence? But as *eternal life*  
is ordained for holy spirits, therefore their influence  
exists in all the divine worlds.

At the time you were here, this question was  
accordingly answered, that after the ascension of the  
godly souls, great influence and wide spreading boun-  
ties are destined for them, and all-encircling signs in  
the seen and unseen are decreed for them.

When the souls leave the bodies, they do not  
assume elemental bodies. Whatever man thinks  
regarding this is but his own imagination.

When man desires help and communication from  
holy souls, he puts himself in a condition of self-

unconsciousness and becomes submerged in the sea of  
meditation, then a spiritual state, which is sanctified  
from matter and all material things, becomes visible  
and apparent to him. Then he thinks he beholds a  
form. Its appearance is like unto a vision.

Man beholds in the world of vision various images,  
communicates with them, and receives benefits, and  
in that world of vision he *thinks* they are physical  
temples and material bodies, while they are purely  
*immaterial*.

Briefly, the reality of the soul is sanctified and  
purified above matter and material things, but like  
unto the world of vision, it manifests itself in these  
material forms and visages. Likewise, in the psychic  
condition, one beholds the spirits like unto physical  
forms and visages.

To be brief, the holy souls have great influence and  
intense effect, and their influence and continuity does  
not depend upon physical existence and elemental  
composition.

Ponder ye, that during sleep the human body and  
the five physical senses, viz., sight, smell, taste,  
hearing, and touch are passive—i.e., all physical  
forces are inactive. Notwithstanding this, human  
reality has spiritual life, and the spiritual powers are  
penetrative; and wonderful disclosures are made in  
both the East and the West, and perchance one may  
discover some matters, which, after a long time, may  
become apparent in the physical world. Therefore, it  
has become evident that the continuity and influence  
of the human reality does not depend upon the  
physical instrumentality; nay, rather, the physical  
body is an instrument over which the human spirit

spreads a luminosity. It is like unto the sun which,  
shining upon the mirror, causes its brilliancy, and  
when the reflection is withdrawn from the mirror, it  
becomes dark. Likewise, when the luminosity of the  
human spirit is withdrawn from the body, that  
instrument becomes useless.

To be brief, Humanity consists of the spiritual  
reality, and that reality is penetrative in all things,  
and it is that reality which discovers the invisible  
mysteries, and through that reality all sciences, arts,  
and inventions become known and manifest. What-  
ever thou beholdest of the works of man is but a faint  
ray of *that* reality. It encircles all things and compre-  
hends all things.

Reflect thou that all these existent sciences, crafts,  
industries and arts were at one time in the world of  
invisibility, unknown and concealed mysteries. As  
the spirit of man environs all things, therefore he has  
discovered them and brought them from the un-  
known world into the arena of manifestation.

Therefore, it is evident and established that the  
human spirit is the discoverer of things, the seer of  
things, and the comprehender of things.

But regarding the progress of the spirit in the world  
of the Kingdom after its ascension, it is wholly beyond  
space and time, and developments after leaving this  
body are spiritual and not terrestrial. It is like unto the  
progress of the child from the world of the fetus to the  
world of maturity and intelligence, from the world of  
ignorance to the world of knowledge, from the station  
of imperfection to the pinnacle of perfection.

As Divine Perfections are infinite, therefore the  
progress of the spirit *is limitless*.

Whatever the European and American historians  
have written regarding His Highness Muḥammad the  
Messenger of God, most of it is falsehood.

Consider ye, is it possible for a person afflicted with  
epilepsy to establish such a great nation?

Therefore, this statement of the European histo-  
rians regarding that Holy Personage is unqualified  
falsehood.

Reflect ye that that Illustrious Personage was born  
in the Sahara of Arabia among the ignorant tent  
dwellers, affiliating and associating with them till he  
grew to manhood and maturity, never studying the  
sciences and arts; nay, even He was apparently  
illiterate and uninstructed. Notwithstanding all this,  
He brought forth such a nation, established such a  
religion, and uttered such explanations regarding  
scientific questions, with great perspicuity, and raised  
such a community from the nadir of ignorance and  
barbarism to the zenith of civilization and prosperity!  
Through His influence, science, literature, philoso-  
phy, crafts, and trades made wonderful progress  
during the medieval ages in Andalusia and Baghdád.

Now is it possible that such and illustrious Personage  
be afflicted with epilepsy?

Relative to the Paradise explained by Muḥammad  
in the Qur’án, such utterances are spiritual and are  
cast into the mold of words and figures of speech; for at  
that time people did not possess the capacity of  
comprehending spiritual significances. It is similar to  
that reference to His Highness Christ who, addressing  
His disciples said, “I shall not partake of the fruit of  
the vine anymore until I reach the Kingdom of My  
Father.” Now it is evident His Highness Christ did

not mean material grapes, but it was a spiritual  
condition and a heavenly state which He interpreted  
as this fruit.

Now, whatever is revealed in the Qur’án has the  
same import.

Regarding the Most Great Name, Its influence,  
both in physical and spiritual affairs, is indisputable  
and certain.

In the last Tablet (to the Board of Council of New  
York) in which I have stated, “I am not Christ and am  
not eternal,” the meaning is this, that I am not  
Christ—and not the Eternal Lord! But I am ‘Abdu’l-  
Bahá. This is its real purport. Undoubtedly, those  
souls who are under the shadow of the Blessed Cause,  
believing and assured, firm and steadfast, and living in  
accord with the Divine exhortations and advices, all  
of them are confirmed in the Everlasting Life.

Regarding the materialization of spirits through  
mediums: A person finding himself in a state of  
trance or unconsciousness, is like one who sleeps;  
whatever he feels and sees he imagines to be matter  
and of material things, but in reality they are *wholly  
immaterial*.

O thou maidservant of God! Arouse ye the people  
and make them cheerful through the Glad Tidings of  
God, and quicken them through the Spirit of Glad-  
ness and Heavenly Rejoicing. The essence and  
foundation of all is to advance toward the Kingdom of  
Abhá and to be attracted by the Beauty of God.  
Whatever produces any influence in the world of  
existence is on account of the Love of God, which is  
the Spirit of Life and the cause of Salvation.

Convey on behalf of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wonderful Abhá  
Greetings to the believers and the maidservants of the  
merciful.

Upon thee be Bahá’u’l-Abhá!

(signed) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

Appendix 2  
Tablet to Mrs. Ella Goodall Cooper[[21]](#endnote-21)

*Through Dr. Amínu’lláh Faríd*

To the revered Maidservant of God,  
Mrs. Ella G. Cooper.  
Upon her be Bahá’u’lláh!

He is God!

O thou who art attracted to the Kingdom of God:

Thy writing of August 19, 1905, was considered,  
and the contents were a source of joy.

If thou question regarding the trials and difficulties  
of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, that is a sea, boundless, surging, and  
full of storms; but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá is in perfect peace and  
composure, and in complete joy, happiness, and  
tranquility; nay, it is for Him a ready banquet and an   
adorned feast. I hope that at the end of this feast and  
banquet the overflowing chalice of Martyrdom will  
come round to Him, and then will He be intoxicated  
by that wine.

But you must not look to the catastrophes of  
‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Consider power and strength, and  
withstand the world. For the sake of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá  
bear the persecution of the enemies, and the blame of  
those who oppose. Under all conditions, My Soul and  
My Life shall abide with you in this world as well as the  
world above.

O maidservant of God! Hasten and sow the seed as

best you can, for time passes away, and through it shall  
the blessing of the Kingdom appear.

Question: Is astrology a real science, and is it  
possible for persons to receive messages or trumpet  
communications from departed souls, etc.?

O, thou maidservant of God! There is a wonderful  
power and strength which belongs to the human  
spirit, but it must receive confirmation from the Holy  
Spirit. The rest of which you hear is superstition. But  
if it is aided by the Bounty of the Holy Spirit, it will  
show great power; it will discover realities; it will be  
informed of the mysteries. Direct all the attention to  
the Holy Spirit, and call the attention of every soul to  
It. Then will you see wonderful signs.

O maidservant of God! The planets and stars have  
no spiritual effect in the earthly world, but the parts of  
the universe which are in endless space are closely  
connected with each other. This connection pro-  
duces material effects. Outside of the Bounty of the  
Holy Spirit all that thou hearest concerning mes-  
merism or trumpet communications from the dead are  
sheer imagination.

But thou canst say whatever thou desirest con-  
cerning the Bounty of the Holy Spirit, and what thou  
hearest from the Holy Spirit and obey. But the people  
who are mentioned, those in connection with the  
trumpets, are entirely bereft of this Bounty, and they  
have no portion therein. Theirs is imagination.

Question: Are prayers answered by the Essence of  
God or by His Manifestation?

O, thou maidservant of God! The answer to prayer  
is through the Great Manifestation of God. But for  
obtaining material things, if the ignorant (of the  
Manifestation) supplicate and implore and pray God,  
it will also be effective.

O, thou maidservant of God! Although the Reality  
of Divinity is boundless, yet the purposes and needs of  
the servants are limited. The Bounty of God is like  
unto the rain from Heaven. The water has no limit  
and no form, but in every place it will take to itself a  
form and effect peculiar to the capacity and prepara-  
tion thereof. That shapeless water when poured into a  
square reservoir will appear as a square. Likewise when  
in the hexagonal vessel or in the octagonal. Water has  
no geometry, no limit, and no form. But it will appear  
in one of the forms according to the exigencies of time and place.

Likewise the Holy Essence of God is boundless, but  
Its Manifestation and Bounty in the creatures is  
limited. Thus the prayers of certain persons con-  
cerning special matters are answered accordingly.

Question: Were the Healing Tablets intended for  
physical healing or only spiritual illness?

O maidservant of God! The prayers which were  
written for the purpose of healing are both for the  
spiritual and material healing. Therefore, chant them  
for the spiritual and material healing. If healing is best  
for the patient, surely it will be granted. For some who  
are sick, healing for them shall be the cause of other  
ills. Thus it is that Wisdom does not decree the answer  
to some prayers.

O maidservant of God! The power of the Holy  
Spirit heals both material and spiritual ills.

Question: It is claimed by some Bible students that  
the Valley of Achor, referred to in Hosea 2:15, does  
not mean the City of ‘Akká, and is not a prophecy  
relating to this Manifestation. Is this another place?

O maidservant of God! It is recorded in the Bible:  
“Achor shall be a door of hope unto them.” This  
Achor is the City of ‘Akká. Whosoever interprets this  
otherwise is ignorant.[[22]](#endnote-22)

O thou maidservant of God! I hope that thou  
mayest again make the pilgrimage to this Blessed Spot  
and attain great development.

Question: Was Buddha a real prophet sent by God?

O thou maidservant of God! Buddha was also one  
of the prophets, but His teachings were interpolated  
and altered. What the Buddhists now have in hand is  
contrary to the original laws of Buddha.

Upon thee be greetings and praise.

(signed) ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ ‘ABBÁS

*Translated by Amínu’lláh Faríd*, December 30, 1905.

Appendix 3  
Tablet predicting the “tests” of  
San Francisco.

To the Maidservant of God,  
Mrs. Helen S. Goodall—California.  
Upon her be Bahá’u’lláh!

He is God!

O thou who art attracted to the Fragrances of God!

Verily, I read thy latest letter, and My great love  
welled forth unto thee on account of its wonderful  
contents. Verily, it showed thy firmness in the Cause  
of God, and that thou wilt resist great tests in the  
future. *Still greater tests will appear in your great city*.

As to thee, make firm the footsteps of the believers  
of God on this right Path, and say, verily, the test has  
a great power, and when its storms wax fierce, they  
uproot everything, even large and well-rooted trees,  
and they wreck great ships on the ocean.

But whoso among the maidservants of God firmly  
resists a great test, her face shall gleam, and her brow  
shall glitter in the Supreme Concourse. This is what  
We inform thee, so that when the test appears, thou  
mayst be heedful thereof and mayst remind the  
maidservants of God that the tests have also occurred  
in former dispensations, even at the time of Christ.

Christ said, “Fast, so that you may not fall into  
temptation.” Verily, tests withheld a great apostle

(Judas) from the Mercy of God and made him take  
part in the shedding of the Christ’s blood. The tests  
made Peter the apostle deny Christ. The tests made  
the brothers of Christ deny Him. Many a just,  
faithful, and assured soul did not endure the power of  
the tests, turned backward, until they reached the  
lowest of the low.

O maidservant of God! Rely upon the Bounty of  
thy Master, for, verily, thou art firm and steadfast, and  
His Favor is great and great toward thee. But make  
firm the hearts of the maidservants and believers in  
this Cause, which the greatest powers of the world  
cannot withstand, and which spreads in spite of all  
through the Power of the Kingdom of God.

Upon thee greeting and praise.

(signed) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá ‘Abbás

*Translated by* Ali-Kuli Khan, April 16, 1902.

Appendix 4  
Portions of tablets sent  
by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

To Mrs. Helen S. Goodall.

*Translated by* Anṭún F. Ḥaddád.

In *The Hidden Words* “Leave the ego” means that  
man must leave his passions and lusts, his human  
sentiments, his personal interests and aims, and seek  
the Spiritual Fragrances and Heavenly Attractions,  
and become drowned in the sea of redemption, and  
drawn to the Beauty of al-Abhá.[[23]](#endnote-23)

In *The Hidden Words* “Remember the covenant you  
entered into with Me upon the Mount of Paran”  
means that in relation to the Truth (God) the past,  
the present, and the future are regarded as one time,  
but in relation to the created beings, the past has  
passed and expired, the present is about vanishing,  
and the future is the place of hopes.[[24]](#endnote-24)

Of the fundamental principles of the Law of God,  
there is one which means that in every Prophetical  
Mission God taketh a covenant from all the souls  
which come up to the end of that mission, which is  
the Promised Day of the Appearance of a Promised  
Person.

Look back to Moses, the Interlocutor. Verily, He  
took the Covenant of Christ upon the Mount of Sinai

from all the souls who came in the time of Christ.  
Those souls, though they came after Moses by ages  
and generations, yet, with reference to the Covenant  
which is sanctified from times, they were present. But  
the Jews were heedless and did not remember; so they  
fell into a manifest loss.

In the Arabic *Hidden Words* “No peace was  
ordained for thee save by cutting the ego from  
thyself”: It means that man, also, must not seek for  
himself in this perishable world anything, but must be  
separated from it—i.e., he must redeem his whole  
soul under all conditions, in the place of martyrdom,  
on the appearing of its Lord.[[25]](#endnote-25)

*Through Dr. Amín Faríd*, January, 1903.

As to thy question concerning the “Minor Resur-  
rection” and the first creation, this is the appearance  
of the Báb, the Great, His Holiness the Supreme. But  
the “Major Resurrection” signifies the Manifesta-  
tion of the Pre-existent Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh), the  
GREATEST NAME. (May My Spirit be a sacrifice for  
His beloved!)

By the majesty of My Lord, your gathering in the  
meeting of Oneness, your commemoration of God  
with a pure heart, and your association with a spirit  
rejoiced by the Spirit of God in the Great Day  
profiteth you more than all favors and this Bounty  
surpasseth all wishes.

O maidservant of God, assemble the maidservants  
of the merciful with all spirituality and fragrance, love  
and attraction, and raise your voice in the praise and

glory of your Majestic Lord for His abundant mercy  
and great favor of guidance.

Upon thee be greeting and praise.

(signed) ‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ ‘ABBÁS

Alláh-u-Abhá!

Notes

1. For a more accurate translation see Bahá’u’lláh, *The  
   Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh*, trans. Shoghi Effendi (Wilmette,  
   Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1939), p. 48.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Marion Elizabeth Jack (1866–1954) taught English to  
   ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s grandchildren in ‘Akká in 1908. In response to  
   the Tablets of the Divine Plan she taught the Faith of  
   Bahá’u’lláh in many places in North America and pioneered to  
   Alaska and later to Bulgaria for the last twenty-four years of her  
   life. On her death Shoghi Effendi called her an “immortal  
   heroine”, and a “shining example (to) pioneers (of) present and  
   future generations ….” See “In Memoriam: Marion Jack,”  
   *The Bahá’í World: A Biennial International Record*, Volume XII,  
   1950–1954, comp. National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís  
   of the United States (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust,  
   1956), pp. 674–77.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Ella Goodall Cooper here recalls an experience from her  
   first pilgrimage to Haifa in 1898–99.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Mashriqu’l-Adhkár is more accurately translated “The  
   Dawning Place of the Praise of God”. See [The Universal  
   House of Justice], “Notes and References”, in Bahá’u’lláh, *A  
   Synopsis and Codification of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy  
   Book of Bahá’u’lláh*, [comp. The Universal House of Justice]  
   (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1973), p. 61.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Thornton Chase (1846–1912), who became a Bahá’í in  
   Chicago in 1894, was the first believer in America and the  
   Western world. For more information see Mirza Aḥmad  
   Sohrab, “‘Abdu’l-Bahá at the Grave of Thornton Chase: Los  
   Angeles, California, October 19, 1912,” *Star of the West*, 3, no.  
   13 (Nov. 4, 1912), 14–15, and O. Z. Whitehead, *Some Early  
   Bahá’ís of the West* (Oxford: George Ronald; 1976), pp.  
   1–12.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. For a more accurate translation see Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*  
   *from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, trans. Shoghi Effendi, 2d rev.  
   ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 139.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. For a more accurate translation see Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of  
   Bahá’u’lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, comp. Research  
   Department of the Universal House of Justice, trans. Habib  
   Taherzadeh et al. (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1978), p.  
   69.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. According to Islám, on the Day of Judgment Isráfíl calls  
   the dead to rise to a new life.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí of Iṣfahán was a devoted servant  
   of the Báb, Bahá’u’lláh, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from the 1850’s to his  
   death in 1920. At Bahá’u’lláh’s bidding he went to Egypt to  
   teach about the Bahá’í Faith; his efforts resulted in his being  
   imprisoned for nearly ten years. For more than twenty-five years  
   he was one of the foremost teachers in Persia; he staunchly  
   defended the Covenant of Bahá’u’lláh at His passing and during  
   ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry. He spent the last years of his life as  
   companion to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and counselor to pilgrims; the  
   Western pilgrims knew him as the Angel of Mount Carmel. For  
   details on his life see Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of  
   Bahá’u’lláh: Adrianople 1863-68* (Oxford: George Ronald,  
   1977) pp. 438–50.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. It is not clear to what “see history” refers; perhaps it  
    means to see historical accounts of the August 12, 1852,  
    attempt on the life of the Sháh.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. According to H. M. Balyuzi (*Edward Granville Browne  
    and the Bahá’í Faith* [London: George Ronald, 1970], p.10n),  
    “A manuscript copy [of *A Traveler’s Narrative*] in the hand-  
    writing of an eminent Bahá’í, Zaynu’l Muqarribín [Jináb-i  
    -Zayn], was given to Browne in Bahjí, ‘Akká, in 1890. This book  
    was written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but at that time its authorship was  
    anonymous. Browne had that manuscript published in fac-  
    simile. …” Probably Mrs. Goodall and Mrs. Cooper were told  
    that Jináb-i-Zayn wrote *A Traveler’s Narrative* in the sense that  
    he copied it; they may have misunderstood and thought that he  
    had authored it. For accounts of Jináb-i-Zayn’s life and work see  
    ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Memorials of the Faithful*, trans. Marzieh Gail  
    (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1971), pp. 150–53,  
    and Adib Taherzadeh, *The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh: Baghdád  
    1853–63* (Oxford: George Ronald, 1974), pp. 25–26.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. For a detailed explanation of the Greatest Name see  
    Abu’l-Qásim Faizi, “Explanation of the Emblem of the Greatest  
    Name” (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1977), re-  
    printed from *Bahá’í News*, no. 451 (Oct. 1968), pp. 8–12.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. When Shoghi Effendi translated *The Hidden Words*, he re-  
    numbered the Arabic section. For his translation see Bahá’u’lláh,  
    *Hidden Words*, p. 15, no. 51.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. For a more accurate translation see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá quoted in  
    J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá’u’lláh and the New Era: An Introduction to  
    the Bahá’í Faith*, 3d rev. ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing  
    Trust, 1970), p. 83.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. The Medium Obligatory Prayer is to be recited three times  
    daily, in the morning, between noon and sunset, and in the  
    evening. The Short Obligatory Prayer is to be recited once in  
    twenty-four hours, between noon and sunset. The Long Obliga-  
    tory Prayer is to be recited once in twenty-four hours. According  
    to Shoghi Effendi, “The daily obligatory prayers are three in  
    number … The believer is entirely free to choose any one of  
    those three prayers, but is under the obligation of reciting either  
    one of them, and in accordance with any specific directions with  
    which they may be accompanied.” Shoghi Effendi, quoted in  
    *Bahá’u’lláh, The Báb, and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Bahá’í Prayers: A  
    Selection of the Prayers Revealed by Bahá’u’lláh, The Bab, and  
    ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, rev. ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust,  
    1970), pp. 117–28. For further details on obligatory prayers and a  
    description of ablutions see Bahá’u’lláh, *Synopsis and Codification*,  
    pp. 35–37.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. According to The Universal House of Justice, “If a Bahá’í  
    works for one political party to overcome another it is a negation  
    of the very spirit of the Faith. Membership in any political party,  
    therefore, necessarily entails repudiation of some or all of the  
    principles of peace and unity proclaimed by Bahá’u’lláh. As  
    ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stated: ‘Our party is God’s party; we do not belong  
    to any party.’” The Universal House of Justice, *Messages from the  
    Universal House of Justice: 1968-1973* (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá’í  
    Publishing Trust, 1976), p. 46. See also Shoghi Effendi, *The  
    World Order of Bahá’u’lláh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wil-  
    mette, Ill.: Bahá’í Publishing Trust, 1974), pp. 64–67, and  
    “Membership Criteria in Non-Bahá’í Groups” in *National Bahá’í  
    Review*, no. 106, (Feb. 1978), p. 5.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. The correct transcription is Bahá’u’lláh.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. For a more accurate translation see Bahá’u’lláh, *Synopsis  
    and Codification*, p. 14.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Occultation means absence from the physical world.  
    Shoghi Effendi translates this line as follows: “In My presence  
    amongst you there is a wisdom, and in My absence there is yet  
    another, inscrutable to all but God, the Incomparable, the  
    All-Knowing.” Bahá’u’lláh, *Gleanings*, p. 139.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. For a more accurate translation of the entire passage see  
    ibid.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. For a more accurate translation of excerpts from this Tablet  
    see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*,  
    comp. Research Department of the Universal House of Justice,  
    trans. Committee at the Bahá’í World Centre and Marzieh Gail  
    (Haifa: Bahá’í World Centre, 1978), pp. 160–62.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. The Universal House of Justice in a letter dated February  
    20, 1978, to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of the  
    United States, noted that, “There is a Tablet written by  
    ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to an individual believer in California on 19  
    August 1905 in which He states, ‘In the Torah it says that the  
    Valley of Achor was made for you a door of hope; this valley is the  
    city of ‘Akká, and this is certainly so …..’. This is similar to the  
    statement of the Guardian on page 184 of *God Passes By*,  
    “‘Akká, itself, … designated by Hosea as a door of hope’ … it  
    is thus made indisputably clear that the Valley of Achor (which  
    means Valley of Trouble) in this prophecy refers to the City of  
    ‘Akká. …”—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Shoghi Effendi translates this phrase as “Renounce thy-  
    self”. See Bahá’u’lláh, *Hidden Words*, p. 35, no. 38.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. For a more accurate translation see ibid., p. 46.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. For a more accurate translation see ibid., p. 5.—ED. [↑](#endnote-ref-25)