

Mr Faizi & Mr Furútan in Australia: the Yerrinbool tapes

Introduction by Graham Hassall

At the commencement of the Ten Year Crusade, in 1953, Shoghi Effendi requested Hand of the Cause ‘Ali-Akbar Furútan to visit the Australian Bahá’í community. As Mr Furútan was not proficient in English at this time, Mr Abdul Qasim Faizi (who was also, three years later, appointed one of the Hands of the Cause) travelled with him to serve as his translator. Mr Faizi and Mr Furútan were given a welcome reception at Hazíratu’l-Quds in Sydney on 9 December. They had arrived from Auckland, New Zealand, the previous day, and were to travel to Queensland before turning south again to Yerrinbool, where the summer school was scheduled to start late in the month. Earlier, they had visited South Australia. Shoghi Effendi wrote to Leila V. Clark, secretary of the Local Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá’ís of Payneham:

He was most happy to hear of the visit made to the Groups of St. Peters and Stirling and to your own Community by the honoured Hand of the Cause of God, Dr. Furútan, and Mr. Faizi. These believers have rendered a great service to the Faith in visiting the various Centers in that land. The Guardian feels assured that your meeting with them has been the cause of great inspiration to all the friends, and is confident that they will arise and assist in accomplishing all the tasks set before them for the period of this historic Ten-Year Crusade, both in their own homeland, and beyond its confines. (17 December 1953)¹

Some seventy Bahá’ís attended the 1953-54 summer school. They came from most states of Australia, and from New Zealand to hear the two distinguished Bahá’ís from Persia. For most, Mr Faizi and Mr Furútan were the first Persian Bahá’ís they had met. On the first evening Mr Furútan spoke on

1. *Messages to the Antipodes – Communications from Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá’í Communities in Australasia*, Mona Vale: Bahá’í Publications Australia, 1997, pp. 350-351.

the importance of summer schools. He said Australia was in a fortunate position, having the Yerrinbool school to develop into the future. The participants cabled to Shoghi Effendi:

*YERRINBOOL SCHOOL SEND DEVOTED GREETINGS BELOVED
GUARDIAN JOYFUL THANKS HAND CAUSE FURUTAN RECORD
YOUTH ATTENDANCE*

To which the Guardian replied:

*LOVING APPRECIATION SUPPLICATING ATTENDANCE SCHOOL
ABUNDANCE BLESSINGS GREAT VICTORY²*

Because of Mr Faizi's Persian background, the school committee reported that his talks on the *Dawnbreakers* "were absorbed with rapt attention - a new horizon opened, flooding hearts with devotion and awe, as the series progressed through the history of Christianity, Islam, and the early Bahá'í Faith. The students were eager to further their studies of Nabil's Narrative, the Dawnbreakers". On four successive nights, Mr Furútan spoke on the *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, and the youth requested special sessions with him. Mr Furútan was asked to encourage its members in the work they were beginning, and to deepen them in the fundamentals of their Faith.

Stanley W. Bolton knew well the importance of this opportunity to have such distinguished Bahá'ís on the program, and arranged for the talks to be recorded. Following the school the Yerrinbool school committee reported on its success to Shoghi Effendi, who replied through his secretary:

He was very happy that the honoured Hand of the Cause, Mr. Furútan, and Mr. Faizi, could be with you at this session of your Summer School, and he is sure they were the cause of great happiness and deep enkindlement of the friends present.

The Guardian has high hopes for the dear Australian and New Zealand believers, and he urges you, one and all, to persist in your labours, no matter at what cost, until all the goals set before you for the Ten Year Crusade, have been attained.

With warm Bahá'í greetings, R. Rabbani.

May the Almighty bless you and your dear co-workers in your highly meritorious endeavours, and enable you to win great victories in the service of His glorious Faith. Your true brother, Shoghi. (24 January 1954)³

2. Report of the 18th Bahá'í Summer School, 31 December 1953 - 10 January 1954. Correspondence. 0241/0060.

3. *Messages to the Antipodes*, op.cit., p. 352.

There were, of course, other significant aspects to the 1953-54 Summer School. In addition to the presence of two special visitors, five Bahá'ís described their recent pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and their meetings with the Guardian. Alvin and Gertrude Blum were present, prior to their departure for the Solomon Islands. Excitement at the tasks facing the Australian and New Zealand Bahá'ís was considerable, and there was an atmosphere of expectation.

When the National Spiritual Assembly reported to Shoghi Effendi on the completion of Mr Faizi and Mr Furútan's visit to Australia, the Guardian replied through his secretary on 16 June 1954:

He feels sure that the visit of the dear Hand of the Cause, Mr. Furútan, accompanied by Mr. Faizi, did a tremendous amount of good. Mr. Furútan has since made the pilgrimage to Haifa, and spoke very highly to the Guardian of the believers in that part of the world, whom he grew to love and admire very much during his visit.⁴

In the course of time the tape recordings made of the talks of Mr Faizi and Mr Furútan were forgotten, and only years later rediscovered in the National Bahá'í Archives at Mona Vale. The process of retrieving the talks then took a number of years. Robert Mannell transferred the recordings from the original "reel to reel" format to cassettes. Alan Waters made the first transcripts. Mr Ghodrattollah Ahmadian then compared the transcripts with the audio tapes, checking the text with the Persian and Arabic of Mr Furútan, and the English of Mr Faizi. Mr Ahmadian also annotated the text to make it more accessible to the reader. The collaborative nature of this project is clear, and the labours of each participant are acknowledged with gratitude.

OPENING REMARKS

Mr Stanley W. Bolton

A few years ago, the friends wished to build a dormitory here, and plans were drawn up as you will see, and the friends donated funds and we had quite a lot of money. Well you know, the building of the Shrine of the Báb was so important, and each donor was asked if they would care to send the money which they donated for the dormitory to the Shrine of the Báb and they said - yes. And all the money went to the shrine.

This is the first time that one person has been missing from the Summer school. And that is our dear Mother Dunn as we all know her. Clara Dunn, Hand of the Cause of God. She has always been at our schools, but this time she is attending the Summer School in New Zealand. But we shall all think of her, the Hand of the Cause of God for Australia.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 364.

Now we are very privileged indeed. We should be very thankful to our Beloved Guardian Shoghi Effendi in extending the time of Mr Furútan here in Australia and New Zealand to come and attend this school. In fact I want to tell you what the Guardian said about this school when I was in Haifa. The Guardian was asked if he would be coming to Australia. He said "If I come to Australia, Bolton Place will be the first place I shall visit, because it is the first national institution established in that part of the world." So we are very privileged indeed to have with us Mr Furútan, Hand of the Cause of God from Iran to teach us here at this school.

In speaking to one of the Persians who was serving the Guardian so well in Haifa, the name of Mr Furútan arose. He said "If there were six Bahá'ís in the world who know Bahá'í administration, Mr Furútan ranks as the first."

...Mr Schopflocher, Hand of the Cause from Canada visited this school when the residence was being built. He said many things, he predicted many things and he named this school. Fred passed to the Abhá Kingdom a month ago.

Mrs Mariette Bolton.

This hall is dedicated to Hyde Dunn, Hand of the Cause for Australia. He used to come here many, many times to get away from the noise of the city, the trams, the bustle which he said used to eat into his heart, his very core. He loved the drive from Sydney. He was such an advanced soul, so highly developed spiritually. How he loved to get out in the woods, to get out into nature. And Father and Mother Dunn would just lie on the ground on red cushions with us, and while we were resting, we would walk this place and we would plan and think what we would do for the Cause, and all we thought, and all we did, and all we lived for was to some-day raise the school here, and one day Father Dunn laid the foundation stone of the residence. It has been such a joy. You youth will be happy here in the future. You have so much to do to carry this Faith forward. So this hall was raised in memory of Father Dunn when he passed on, and the Hilda Gilbert cabin was named after another early pioneer whom we loved very much. And so it went on. Freddie Schopflocher stood on the rafters of the residence as it was being built and he said "Mariette and Stanley, here some day this place will be crowded with cars, it will be all developed, it will all be for the school, for the Bahá'í Faith. Bahá'u'lláh's revelation will be taught here." Now we begin to see those souls that had a vision, how right and how true they were. And in the future it will be tremendous. Tonight we will say a prayer for the departed, because as Stanley mentioned, this place was named by Freddie Schopflocher.

Stanley P. Bolton

It is significant that we should have a visit from Mr Furútan, Hand of the

Cause from the Cradle of the birth of our Faith, in this opening year of the 10 year World Crusade. In the world of being, physical signs represent spiritual realities. The Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette is a physical sign of a spiritual reality. The Shrine of the Báb is a physical sign of a spiritual reality. All throughout the world, Bahá'í schools, this school Bolton Place, is a physical sign of a spiritual reality. And even here at the school itself, in the grounds of the school, we have an oak tree which itself is a physical sign of a spiritual reality. I'm referring to the oak tree planted by Father Dunn, Hand of the Cause, and pioneer, with his wife Clara Dunn to Australasia. I remember many, many years ago, Father Dunn planting that tree out in front, a very tiny oak tree at that day and veritably a tree amongst scrub. The gardens were not landscaped and the grounds were not laid out. I remember what a struggle that little oak had. I remember at one time we thought it was going to die. But somehow it seemed to pull through. And that tree today is flourishing and will continue to flourish. And that tree to me is a physical sign of a spiritual reality of the growth of the Faith in Australia. It was planted by Father Dunn as the Faith was planted. It had a slow beginning. It took several years for mother and father Dunn to make the first Bahá'í in Australia. The Faith went through hard times just as that tree did, strenuous and difficult times, but now today we can see evidences that the Faith is flourishing and will continue to flourish.

Mr Furútan has consented during his visit here to plant a tree. And that tree, too, will be a physical sign of a spiritual reality. It will grow tall, straight and high. It will shade many people. Many people will rest under its boughs and it will represent the visit of Mr Furútan to this school. And its height will stand for the height of his intellect and its grandness, the grandness of his spirit. There, in that tree will be a physical sign of a spiritual reality. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Mr Furútan, Hand of the Cause of God.

Mr Faizi

Session One

I have been invited to address the friends on the subject of Nabil's Narrative. I thought it over and came to the conclusion that we must first understand what we as Bahá'ís mean by history. It is one of those very attractive subjects that mankind has always studied. But those people who have written the histories of the world have never come to a conclusion of what they meant by history. In our Faith, many difficult questions have been answered; and what is meant by history has fortunately been solved most beautifully in the Bahá'í Writings and now we as Bahá'ís know what the study of history is. To know perfectly well what the Bahá'ís mean by history, let us survey the ideas of historians in different ages, because by having that in mind we will understand the comprehensiveness and the beauty of the definition given in the Bahá'í Writings.

In the olden days, mankind started to write events, either on reeds or on

stones or at a later time, on paper. Most of these events were written down by the command of powerful and strong men. Hence all these records are only the forced praises of those men of power, and the writers had to obey the wishes of those authorities. Therefore, if we read these events and descriptions we are not studying history. Later on when printing presses came into existence and they started to think independently and to write the history of the world, then different definitions began to appear. Some of the philosophers believed that if someone could write the history of wars, he had definitely written the history of mankind. Their reason is this: that during wars all the feelings, sentiments and intellectual powers of mankind are at tension. They pour out more than ever from the store of their knowledge; they invent more for the sake of victory. Therefore, if we write the history of wars, we have really written the history of man's achievements.

And this was the case with many histories written along that line. But later on, this idea was attacked by many critics. They said "If we really want to write the history of man, it is like writing the history of humankind, and if we write the history of humankind, and limit it only to the history and events of wars, it is like writing a biography of a man and concentrating the whole thing on how many times the man was diseased, how many times he had typhoid, when he contracted malaria, how many times he was operated on and things like that. This is not the true history of a man. Wars are like diseases, and if we concentrate our history on wars, then we are writing about the diseases of mankind. And we don't want that." Therefore they changed and searched for a better way of writing history. At the beginning of the 19th century, there appeared the great English historian Carlyle⁵ who said that if we write the biographies of great men, then we have written the history of mankind. Because it is the great men who create and bring into existence the country, the time, the century. If we want to know the history of France between 1789 and 1821, we must know the history of Napoleon. And if we know all about Napoleon, we know all about France during those years [text unclear]....

Now, for a point of interest to the Bahá'í scholar, we must know that it was Carlyle who, in the whole of Europe, first mentioned anything real about Prophet Muhammad. Before him, the Christian writers in their books, tried to change the history of Muhammad and to represent him only as a simple Arab camel-driver and nothing else. As a matter of fact, many of the people in the middle ages thought that Muhammad was not a human being, he was only an idol worshipped by the Arabs. [text unclear] Even Trotsky, a great literary man, thought that Muhammad was an idol. Carlyle was attacked by the people of the time because he mentioned Muhammad as a man and a great

5. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881), Scottish essayist and historian. He attended the University of Edinburgh, but left in 1814 without taking a degree in divinity. According to Carlyle, history is merely the essence of innumerable biographies. Among his works are: *The French Revolution*, *On Heroes*, *Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History*, and *Chartism*. The references here are to his work *On Heroes*.

source of truth.

This idea of biography as a record of history spread all over the world, and you know that Emerson the great writer and poet of America was a friend of Carlyle, and he imitated Carlyle and wrote of representative men. The critics also attacked this idea, and said that although it is true that great men make the time, the country and the century, but if we write only of them, then the connection of history will be lost. There will be no continuity to history. Therefore they were lost again as to what they should do. Now one of the writers started with the idea that the best fruit of humanity is its thoughts, let's write about the history of the thoughts of men. And it was very well received by many people, and really in this way you could have continuity. But the serious insatiable thirst of human beings was not quenched by this idea until our recent times when they came to think that real history is the slow evolution of the civilisations of the world: let's find the different civilisations and study them, then we will find the real achievements of mankind. And if you study the history written by H.G. Wells, especially the introduction, it shows the different stages of human civilisation. But please remember that H.G. Wells in his reference book about Muhammad has always referred to books of the missionaries and not to real sources. He is very rude and cruel on the topic of Muhammad. [text unclear] There is a more reliable source and that is the study of history by Toynbee.

And yet Bahá'í students are not satisfied with that. It is true that civilisations are the best output of humankind and yet we don't find continuity, and what is neglected is how these civilisations came into existence. And here is the place where the Bahá'ís will have a definite reply. Here we come to our definition of history. For that, we have many Tablets written by Bahá'u'lláh at different times. His intention was not to define history, but we understand from the Writings of our Faith what history is. One of these Tablets has been translated into English and it appears in the addresses of the Báb translated by Edward G. Browne. You know in the addresses of the Báb there are two Tablets translated, one Tablet to the King of Iran which is in the middle of the book and another is at the end of the book. Now in the beginning of the Tablet Bahá'u'lláh says God has created human beings as mines full of jewels and precious stones and gems. At different intervals he sends His manifestations to bring out these gems, out of the human minds. Now if we thoroughly study this sentence we come to understand what is the history of man. We see that at different times, different Prophets come and immediately after the appearance of these prophets a new civilisation comes into existence. That prophet like the plant sown on the earth of existence of human beings and flowers of civilisation, precious stones of thoughts, useful achievements came into existence. Therefore we Bahá'ís believe that the history of mankind is the unfoldment of the Divine Plan for the purpose of human beings on this earth. God has a

certain plan by creating mankind on this earth and little by little, gradually, He unfolds His plan by giving us great manifestations, great teachers who bring into existence what God means by our existence on this earth - by educating and making manifest the gems in our mind.

Now let us study this divine history in more detail. Let's study Moses, who appeared in Egypt amongst the people of Israel. We know that the people of Israel had been for three or four hundred years living in Egypt. Because these people were in contact with the Egyptians, they accepted their customs and habits and forgot to worship their God, the one and only God Jehovah. They started to worship animals as the Egyptians used to do. And God sent Moses, and ordered him to take out these people from Egypt as it was impossible for them to worship the one God while they were surrounded by people who were immersed in worshipping animals. He brought them out of that place and took them back to their original country.

Now the most interesting part of this trip was that they remained in the desert for forty years. Have we ever thought why God made these people linger in the desert for forty years. It would take them no longer than one month to reach Palestine, even if they were on foot. But it took them forty years to pass that short distance to Palestine because God wanted the old generation, those people who had been infected with the worship of animals, to die away so that Palestine would be inhabited by a new generation who had a new thought of worshipping one God - new emphasis, new energy and absolutely worshipping God and nothing else. It took them forty years to change the generation - when they were captives in the hands of the Pharaohs and the Egyptians, they were worshipping animal gods, but when they came to Palestine, they started a new way of life. A new civilisation was started by them.

Have you also ever thought why in the Old Testament, particularly in the early chapters, we see "I am Jehovah your God"? It is always repeated to pound this idea into the minds of a new generation coming into existence. For every ceremony, for every feast, he ordered them to sacrifice some sort of animal, so that these animals which had been worshipped by them will be degraded by them. Their attention will be turned only to God and not to animals or anything else. Just think, for 40 days Moses left them and went into the mountain, and when he came back they had made an animal to worship. The worship of animals was so deeply impressed into their hearts and minds that Moses did not want them to go to Palestine, till they were ready.

Now as the morning sun rises in the east and casts its first light in the west, so the sun of the religion of Moses shone in the east and its first reflection appeared in Greece. That's why we see that the civilisation of Greece was so great. In one little town in Greece there had been forty different philosophers living at the one time - this was all due to the reflection of the Sun of Truth. Now here is another point; at that time, many people in Greece migrated to the Holy Land and came into contact with the Israelites, and most of them

saw many of the prophets of Israel. And they studied with those people and learnt many things from them. Amongst them was Socrates, who came there and learned of the one God and the eternity of the soul. He returned to Greece, to his own people and started to preach to his own people - for them to turn their mind from worshipping gods and goddesses in the mountains and told them there is one God and that our soul will, after death, be everlastingly living. That was the cause of his condemnation and his being poisoned, and that was the reason he took the poison very bravely, for he firmly believed that his soul would live after him. One of the greatest bounties of God which has ever been explained, or given to anybody by God, is given to Socrates in the Tablet of the Philosophers⁶ from the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh. He said it was as if he had drunk from the cup of prophethood. He brings him very near to the prophets and he really was at that time a demi-prophet for the people of Greece. This is one of the points which may be disputed by scholars. "Oh we haven't read in any book that Socrates made a trip out of Greece and went to Israel!" Well it is not written in any history book, but we believe that it is true because 'Abdu'l-Bahá said it and we believe that whatever He said was true and some day the documents will appear and the school students will be satisfied. We need a human document to prove that God is right. That is the shortcoming of our minds really.

The civilisation that was brought about by Moses, when we study it thoroughly, continued till the time of Jesus Christ. Now we see how the links are connected together. If we study history in this light, the links will be connected to the Law of the Messiah. All teachings of Moses were centred around one central principle - the unity of God. Jesus came at a time when the Jews knew about the oneness of God, but they did not know about the Kingdom of God and were very materialistic in their life. You read in Matthew that the Synagogue was the place where they used to trade. They would bring their tables for money changes, even the *doves* would be brought to the Synagogue to be sold. They could not think that this was a sacred place, a place for the worship of God. They used to believe in God, but not consider this place sacred. We know that Jesus came to the Synagogue and cleaned that House of these people. It was the time when the attention of the people should be turned to the Kingdom of God. There was no need for Jesus to establish the unity of God, it was already established by Moses, but He had to teach about the Kingdom of God. And there is nothing more attention paid in the Bible than the Kingdom of God. In more than 90 places Jesus says the Kingdom of God is like this, like that and so on, so that if they did not understand one example, they could understand another one. He has given every sort of example, from trees, gems, pearls, the girls who have taken the lamps to be invited to the wedding of somebody, from the banquet of the King, all sort of things have been given so that their

6. Bahá'u'lláh, *Lawh-i-Hikmat (Tablet of Wisdom)* in *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh Revealed after the Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1978, pp. 135-153.

thought would focus on the Kingdom of God. Christ was the first Prophet who told about the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, therefore He was the first one who gave the glad tidings of the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh who was to establish the Kingdom of God on this earth.

Then Christ came and it took a long time for the establishment of His Faith in Europe and elsewhere, and after a time there came the Renaissance and a renewal of civilisation in Europe. Now after Him comes the Prophet Muhammad, another link to this great world civilisation. Muhammad came to the Arabs, and the central teaching was the establishment of the unity of God because the Arabs were worshipping idols, gods and goddesses. Another point He added was surrender to the Will of God. Islam in Arabic means surrender to the Will of God. He established His religion and civilisation and hence three great links were joined until modern civilisation was brought about. As we are going to have two more lessons on Islam, I will not dwell on this subject, but Islamic civilisation was the foundation of our present civilisation; how three great religions, hand in hand brought about the civilisation of our present time.

This line of the prophets just mentioned, was the Semitic line, meaning that they are of the line of Abraham. But we have other lines of prophets, it is very difficult to trace them now, but some traces remain. We have Zoroaster in Persia who came between Moses and Jesus, as 'Abdu'l-Bahá testifies, he appeared in Iran. The pivot of His teachings is the fight that always exists between good and evil. He says in everything you find this fight. One of the most interesting things that He says is that in the day of the King of Kings, good will prevail and bad will be conquered. His glad tidings about the coming of Bahá'u'lláh are the most clear. He says to the Persians that the Arabs will bring a religion, but that religion will be divided into so many sects that if the prophet comes back He would not recognise it. He mentions the Báb as the door of knowledge, He mentions Bahá'u'lláh as the King of Kings and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the great branch. This is why we initially had so many people of Zoroastrian background coming into the Cause because of these clear references. The man who found these references was Abul Fadl, the great Bahá'í historian and learned man, whom the Guardian describes as the greatest literary man in the Bahá'í Cause. After the Pen of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he says the pen of Abul Fadl is the greatest. And He said if he had been living now he would find many things from the Writings of the Báb about the current period.

Session Two

We will all remember that different scholars have defined history as the history of wars, histories of individuals, great people of the world, history of thoughts and history of civilisation up to our present time. We said that according to what we understand from the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, we believe that history means the unfoldment of God's Plan for humanity on this earth. We are told that idea because we see that at intervals, different prophets

come, and each one brings some teachings and after them material civilisation is created in the world. Each one is a link connected to the previous one and each one tries to lift mankind from one level of progress to a higher one.

Now before entering into a discussion of Nabil's narrative and some historical aspects from that, I feel that there is a great need for us to know some details about the history of Islam, because it is so cruelly treated in the history written in the European languages (mostly done by missionaries). It is one of the most fascinating subjects, perhaps very new to the scholars of the West. Some are trying to eliminate those obstacles from the books written by those who had really cruelly treated Islam. Before we start we must know a little about the geography of this Arabian peninsula, enclosed by the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf. Only from one side is it connected to land. Most of us know that Arabia is a barren country. There is plenty of rain in Arabia, but as the land is covered by sand, all the rain soaks into the sand and there are some subterranean rivers underneath which take the water to other places but Arabia itself remains barren, and that is why Arabs are scattered all over the place at the oases. They roam from oasis to oasis, and that is why they live a nomadic life. Before Islam, they had been obliged to raid other places of the neighbouring places for provisions and food. Therefore, the Arab onslaught on other countries had always been a natural part of life for the Arabs. Please remember this point when we come to the history of Islam.

Arab onslaught on other countries had always been a natural thing done by them before the coming of Islam. Some of them had been living on the borders of Persia and some on the borders of the Roman Empire. You know from the history of the olden days that Persia and Rome had always been fighting against each other. Both Rome and Persia conquered parts of the Arabian peninsula, and these two great Arab kingdoms were used as buffer states. When the two kingdoms would come to clash these two Arab states would firstly clash, and if they needed help, Persia and Rome would interfere. We all remember from our Bible stories that Abraham was living somewhere in Mesopotamia and He pioneered to Palestine, and we know that he took his first son Ishmael and brought him to what is now known as Mecca and he built for him a house. That house still remains, and it is that house which is the point of adoration and worship by the Muslims. The whole history of Islam circles around this house. In the beginning, of course, they were worshipping the One God, but little by little their religion deteriorated and they began worshipping gods and goddesses. All these tribes scattered around Arabia represented themselves in this big house in Mecca by one god, and they used to come to the house to worship their god, and were always fighting with each other on the superiority of their gods. This fighting used to take place often until at last some of the leaders came to a settlement, a truce. They said let us have wars for nine months of the year and stop it for three months.

During those three months of truce they used to gather in one place, start another sort of war, not with their swords, but with their tongues. Members from each tribe used to come and the poets used to recite poems in the honour their own tribe, their ancestors and so on. The poet from another tribe would recite some more elaborate poem on the same themes. That literary war started in Arabia. It is also interesting to note that amongst them were Christians and Jews. One of the greatest orators of pre-Islamic days was a Christian, and the Jews were there to teach the children how to read and write, for the Jews were the learned. In the house of Mecca, there were two important jobs which belonged to two very great families. One of the families had the key of the house, the other had the honour to give water to the pilgrims. These two great houses (tribes, families) were the House of Hashim and the House of Umayyah. It is also very important for us to know that these two houses had always been rivals because each one wanted to have both jobs.

Let us remember this, they had always been rivals. Let us remember it from an historical point of view and an administrative point of view. If we see that some of the things are strictly forbidden in the Bahá'í Cause and our beloved Guardian is extremely, emphatically hard on some little problems, we must search for the reasons of these things in history. Now we see that the rivalry of these two families continued all through history before Islam and even after Islam, because there was nobody to stop them fighting on these very insignificant problems of the key and the water. If there was someone to put them into accord, the whole history of Islam might have been written otherwise.

But from the House of Hashim came the prophet Muhammad. Muhammad as a word means the most praised. When he rose to educate the Arabs, the first to oppose him were from the House of Umayyah. It was due to a latent animosity within the family and due to the fact that Muhammad was winning the popularity with the people of his time. Muhammad had very few followers in the beginning; there were his cousin Ali, his wife Khadijah, and an old Arab, a wealthy man. A Negro who was an illiterate man and a slave to one of the Umayyids believed in Muhammad, and his master used to beat him every day for believing in Muhammad. After beating him with a hundred lashes of a whip, he said now, what do you say. He would say Alláh'u'Akbar. God is great and Muhammad is the Messenger of God. So he would start to beat him again until this poor slave would become unconscious. Then again when he became conscious, he would say, God is great and Muhammad is the Prophet of God. At last he drove him out of the house and the slave went to the Prophet, who loved him very much. He could not speak well, he had a lisp, but he was the first man who Muhammad appointed to go up to the minaret and call the believers to prayer, and some of the believers said to prophet Muhammad, why don't you send another who can pronounce the words correctly. Muhammad replied that he did not find anyone who said it as sincerely as this man - Bilál.

We mention these things because they pertain to the Cause. Some of these things remained obscure for the Muslims, but either 'Abdu'l-Bahá or Bahá'u'lláh explained them. I'm sure that in the films you have seen a Muslim go up to the minaret and call to prayer. In Nabil's Narrative, Mulla Husayn orders somebody to go to the minaret and give the call to prayer. He goes up and with a loud voice they call that God is great and the prophet Muhammad is messenger of God. But most usually they go around the minaret to several places and shout, with their hands covering their ears. Most people say that they do not want to hear their own bad voice, but this is not the explanation. 'Abdu'l-Bahá has given the explanation which has remained obscure throughout the ages. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that when the Prophet ordered the Negro slave, Bilál, to go up to the minaret the people of Arabia started to throw stones at him, and to protect his face from the stones first of all he would not stand in one place, then secondly he would cover his face until he had finished the prayer. That is the reason for it.

Now we come back again to our history. We come to Husayn, who is the most important character. Muhammad died after twenty-three years of ministry, and when he died, he did not have many believers from the family of Umayyah. Very few came to him. Before His death he had appointed Ali as his successor. He said he reared Ali by His own hand. Before going to Mecca for His last pilgrimage He said of whomsoever I am the master, Ali will be his master. Anyone who obeys him obeys God and anyone who denies him denies God. It was a very clear statement, and all the people came and congratulated Ali for the great rank given to him by the prophet Muhammad. But when Muhammad died, Ali and some others of his relatives went to the Prophet's house to bury him, but others went to another place. First of all, some of them said Muhammad has disappeared, but Abu-Bakr, one of the early followers said no, the only one who doesn't die is God. Muhammad was a man, and he died, although he was a Prophet of God. They chose Abu-Bakr as the first Caliph. Right at the time of the death of Muhammad a schism started, some few people followed Ali and the rest followed Abu-Bakr. After him Omar was appointed and after him Uthman, who belonged to the family of Umayyah. In order to have their earthly supremacy most of the family of Umayyah eventually came to Islam but not with pure intentions. It was Uthman who appointed as governors to the various regions, members of his own tribe who were mostly belonging to the Umayyah family. He especially appointed in Damascus, Mu'awiyah. All these people who were appointed as rulers came from a powerful family and now they had supremacy in Islam also. Now, it was time for them to do something against their old rival family of Hashim, and of course, Ali was from the house of Hashim. After Uthman, the Muslim community elected Ali as their successor, although he had already been appointed initially by the Prophet. They did not accept him as the infallible successor of Muhammad, as designated by the

Prophet, but as the elected leader. After him, Ali appointed his first son Hasan and then Husayn, the second son of 'Ali. This is a most important feature in the history of Islam. If you want to know the meanings of these names, because all the Arabic names have meaning, Ali means a high person (exalted), Hasan means good and Husayn is the diminutive of Hasan.

These four great Caliphs of Islam stand on their own. After them no one was elected. Already there is division. At the time of Hasan, Mu'áwiyah was the governor of Damascus, and Hasan was in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Mu'áwiyah was a very shrewd politician. He said that in a situation where you can do your work with a whip, never use a sword, and the place where you can do it with your tongue, never use a whip. He was always executing his ideas of policies and politics and won the hearts of many by money, giving them honours, titles etc. All around he had his own agents and spies and he always made everything impossible for Imám Hasan. Therefore, Hasan said I will be in the corner, you do whatever you like, just let me leave. He permitted Hasan to leave, but he sent one of his Negresses to serve in the House of Hasan and she poisoned Hasan with the dust of diamonds. After Hasan, Husayn was the successor, and he said to both families, I want my right. I am the true successor of the Prophet and I am not going to leave it to anyone. Now many people in Mesopotamia were followers of Ali, and they wrote him letters saying come to Mesopotamia, to Iraq, and we will support you. Husayn started with seventy of his followers, by the time he reached there, the whole situation had changed, and they proved to be infidels and turned against him. Mu'áwiyah had sent thousands of soldiers to fight against him. No one will ever dare to fight against thousands of soldiers with seventy followers, but Husayn decided to give his life, to sacrifice himself for the unity of Islam, for the glory of Islam; and it took ten days until all the followers were killed. Husayn was killed on the last day and that is why Husayn is considered the martyr of Islam. All the family were captured and all the male members of the family were killed except a little boy who was so sick they thought he would die anyway.

It is really through the blood of Husayn that Islam got its power again, and it created a certain zeal and enthusiasm in the hearts of its followers throughout the other parts of the world, and after some years they united together to destroy the Umayyah family and established a kingdom - a Muslim Caliphate in Iraq. So finally the Umayyah family was destroyed. Now you see how the rivalry which existed between these two families before the coming of Islam continued in Islam right through the Caliphates, and when they had power in Syria they had Hasan in a corner, killed him, then Husayn and all the family of Husayn. This little bit of history proves to us two great things. Firstly, that even though the people had a centre of the covenant, they did not want to go to him. They had Ali, appointed as the centre of the covenant, but they never cared for him, they went on following their own imaginings. The result of that

was the great division in Islam, and after that lots of sects everywhere in Islam. The second point is that if we do not prevent some little things in history they will grow bigger and bigger, and the results will be detrimental. A small rivalry between two families was not prevented before Islam, was allowed to grow in Islam and resulted in the bloodshed of the holy members of the family of the prophet Muhammad.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said that in the future, the martyrdom of the Báb will similarly be looked upon - the fact that in the time of the Báb the people said that we have the book of God, we don't need anybody.

Now Husayn is mentioned many times in our Writings and in the history of Nabil, so I wanted to mention how Husayn came into existence and how his martyrdom took place. Caliph means in place of, the one who comes after. Imam means the man who is in front.

Question: what is the significance of the twelve Imams?

Answer: I do not know the significance of twelve, but all through history we have had twelve. Twelve families of Israel, twelve disciples of Christ and twelve Imams of the Shi'ah, and you know in this Cause we will have twenty-four. The twelve princes in the Old Testament refers to the twelve Imams. The two witnesses who rule over the holy of holies for 1260 days refers to Muhammad and 'Ali.

The Christians say that because Hagar was cast out into the desert, her family were outcast from God and hence Muhammad and Islam should be shunned. This was not so. In fact Abraham took Hagar and Ishmael to what is now Mecca, which was a desert, and left them there. Hagar ran from place to place trying to find water for her son who was thirsty. The boy was playing with his finger in the sand and a stream gushed forth. That stream, known as Zam Zam is still in existence. God blessed Hagar and promised that from her family, twelve princes would appear.

Session Three

To illustrate the purpose of the summer school, let me tell you a story. Once there was a king in India who had four sons, and he brought a tutor to come and educate his sons so that they would be enabled to rule that country. The tutor started to teach them, and the very first lesson he taught was that under any affliction, one should never give way to self, but be brave and courageous. Then he said tomorrow, I want you to write down this passage and memorise it. The next day three of the sons showed the tutor their penmanship and repeated the passage. The other said I haven't yet learned this lesson. He was slightly rebuked, but the lesson was continued. For three months, the particular prince could not memorise the passage. He was called the black sheep of the family,

the stupid one.

One day the king and his ministers wanted to see what this tutor had done for the princes. So the tutor asked the fourth prince could he kindly memorise the first lesson for the next day, when the king and the court will examine and see what you have done. Well, the next day, the class room had been beautifully decorated, there was a special chair for the king and other appropriate places for the ministers, and the teacher showed very boastfully the achievements of the three, but that the fourth, only yesterday remembered the first lesson. The king was very angry, and rebuked the prince in front of all the people. But the little boy stood there smiling. The ministers said that it was not worthy of a prince to be so lazy and stupid, but still he stood there smiling. The king ordered that the fourth prince be beaten, and he was beaten in front of all the people, but still he was smiling, he never said anything, never lamented.

Then one of the wisest of the ministers came to the king and said this prince is the only one who has really learnt the first lesson. It is not only writing and memorising; he has learned it thoroughly, he has practised this lesson, he has let this lesson penetrate his soul. You see whatever you do, you rebuke him, ridicule him, he never gives way in his courage, he is always smiling. Then they understood that the fourth prince really wanted to learn.

This is the way we must learn our lessons in the Bahá'í schools. Not only reading and listening. Do we ever think when we say "Oh God, I am standing in front of you in absolute self abnegation, selflessness" - how very hard that lesson is? It takes us many years of practise to reach that stage with which we can audaciously declare to God "I am standing in front of you, selfless". Let us learn our lesson this way. Let it penetrate our soul, let it give exercise to our soul and heart and then our lives will really be worthwhile living.

I remember one of our very old teachers who had been the grandson of the arch enemy of Bahá'u'lláh, the one who stood against Bahá'u'lláh in the city of Baghdad, the one who challenged Bahá'u'lláh with all the clergymen of the holy cities of Iraq. Bahá'u'lláh sent a message saying "that if you all agree upon a miracle that you want Me to perform, I will do it, so long as all the clergymen sign that after that they will not oppose Us". Of course they did not dare to do it. Bahá'u'lláh said "even if you want the Tigris river to flow backwards, agree and sign and I will do it". The grandson of this man became a Bahá'í and was a great teacher. He was a very alert man, always making jokes, even with his inquirers. He would get up in the morning and say "you pour some tea, I will just tell some lies to God and come back. Then he would ??? say the long Obligatory Prayer. Well we don't want to tell lies to God!

We remember that we defined history as the unfoldment of God's plan through the prophets sent at intervals. Yesterday we saw how two great Arab families had been rivals and how this affected the course of the history of Islam. There is a prophecy that the witness will be killed, but they will not

bury him, they will let him die in the desert. This refers to the Umayyid family living in Damascus. They killed the spirit of Islam but they did not bury it. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says they did not let the name be forgotten altogether. They were Muslim in name, but not in spirit.

The blood of the Imam Husayn guaranteed the renewal of Islam, even though there would be two major sects. We know from the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, written by our beloved Shoghi Effendi, that as Bahá'ís, we recognise the claim of Shi'ism in the same way that we recognise in Christianity, the theory of Catholicism. That means we accept that after the passing of the messenger, there must be one who is the centre of the covenant, one who can explain the difficult passages of the writings.

Session Four

Today I want to give you something of the Qur'án, the great book of the Prophet Muhammad. Qur'án means that which is readable. An Arab will not say I am reading this book, he will say I am reading in this book. Please remember that in the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, there is another name for Qur'án - Furqán it means that which divides between truth and falsehood. The book of God shows the people what is right and what is wrong.

When you read the Qur'án you will not find it a relevant book, that means it is not like a story. You read one verse here with one theme, then another verse about a different topic. It's due to the fact that the Prophet Muhammad did not write it and did not relate it like a story. He revealed it to his followers at different times and repeated it several times until his followers memorised it. That is why it is said that the Qur'án was written first in the hearts of men - they had first to memorise it. Sometimes he would be asked different questions, he would answer them and again the followers would memorise it. Then at different times he would want to bring the Arabs close to the past religions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that the very first thing that Prophet Muhammad said was why didn't you believe in Christ? Why didn't you believe in Moses? They were the great prophets of God, the great educators sent by God and he told the Arabs their stories from the beginning of Adam to the time of Christ.

Now some of the Christians may object when we speak about Islam, because there are some points about the history of the prophets of the past which are not the same as in the Bible. First of all, Prophet Muhammad did not want to teach history, he wanted just to bring an example to expose the Arabs to history and then to advise them, give them glad tidings. This was his purpose mainly, not as historian, but as a Prophet who wanted to take an example and then consider the results out of that. And if your Christian friends object any farther than that, you will please refer them to their own Bible and in many places there are accounts which are absolutely different from the Old Testament. And if they still object further, please refer them to their own four Gospels,

all of which are written about their own prophet; but the four Gospels have differences and are written quite differently. For instance there is the story of feeding the five thousand. John has written it one way, Matthew has written it absolutely another way. Then you ask them why there is difference here? Well, the same thing is true about the Qur'án. Now as I said, the Qur'án was memorised by the people, but there were seven people who knew it absolutely by heart; they were called the readers or the reciters of the Qur'án. First of all they knew it by heart, secondly they could chant it in a beautiful Arabic melody. They are famous for their reading and still when you listen to the radio and you hear them reading or chanting the Qur'án from Egypt or Baghdad or Palestine, they will say that they are chanting it after so and so, it means one of the first readers, after that fashion.

When the prophet Muhammad died, the Muslims were scattered all around the east, and there were several problems posed to the Caliphs about various matters. But the Caliphs elected by the people did not know the answers. They were not appointed by the Prophet as the interpreters of His Word. The Word of God was not revealed to them. They had no authority to explain. Therefore they could not expound or explain. In that case they came to Ali, who was really appointed by the Prophet and asked what should we do now. He said at least gather together the Qur'án in one book, and give to the believers. They must have a book in their hand. If they do not have the centre of the covenant, let them at least have the Qur'án. And so they started to gather the Qur'án. And this point is very important for us to know. If anybody questions the authenticity of the Qur'án, please remember that the first people who had memorised the Qur'án did not give their consent to sit down and write those words, they said it will be much below the sanctity of these words if we put them down. They were not ready to do this. But after much persuasion by the Caliph and much advice given to them, then they gave their consent. Now these people who would not have willingly given their consent to writing down the word of God would never write it wrongly, and therefore they were very sure and certain that the words were the Words of God and they wrote them down. There is no question about the authenticity of the book of the Qur'án.

They wrote down from those who had memorised and there had been some written down in the time of the Prophet on the leaves of palm trees, or on the bark of the tree or on the skin of animals, just a few fragments, not the whole complete book. They wrote it down and arranged it into chapters. They put the long chapters first and they went on and on to the small ones. And they named the chapters according to the most important point mentioned in the chapter. Please remember this, because some of the chapters appear to have funny names and the Christians laugh at them. They saw the first chapter of the Qur'án is called "cow". What is this, could it be the book of God? Please remember that it was given the name by the people who wrote it down and they

searched through for the most important problems discussed in that chapter and named the chapter after that. The titles were not given by God.

Then, we have a chapter called "Mary" which is all about Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ and so on and so forth. Now in relation to the Bahá'í Faith, we have one chapter called the chapter of Joseph, which is considered to be the most beautiful story amongst the Arabs. Many of the commentators on the Qur'án, wrote explanations on the meanings of the verses, but this special chapter veiled its explanation until the time of the Promised One, that means the Báb should come and explain it. Now, you all know from Nabil's Narrative that the first thing He wrote for Mulla Husayn was the first chapter of His commentary on the Surah of Joseph, the "best story". And why did He do so. Why had they been waiting for one thousand years for the commentary on the Surih of Joseph? First of all, when you read it from the very beginning, the very moment when the Báb declared His mission, he started with the praise of Bahá'u'lláh. He started to foretell the coming of Him. He started to imbue in every one the expectation of Bahá'u'lláh. And then He lamented the sorrows of Bahá'u'lláh. He says as Joseph was wronged at the hands of his brothers, so will Bahá'u'lláh be, so will the Master be, and so will the Guardian. That's why the Báb mentioned it, and explained it so that there would not be any controversy, because the controversy had been great in the past ages - others went against the covenant. In this dispensation, the most near relations had been against Him, and the Báb wanted to create this concept in his followers so that they would be ready for such a great catastrophe. That's why he mentioned it and explained it.

Now, here is a little story. There was a Bahá'í in Isfahan. You know the people of Isfahan are extremely funny, they always make jokes. Well, this Bahá'í had many letters from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And then once he received a very short letter from the Master, at the time when the Cause had spread in Europe and in America. He wrote to the Master and said when Prophet Muhammad had not many followers he used to reveal for them the Surih of Baqarah (Cow), the longest surah in the Qur'án. And when the Prophet had many followers, he revealed the shorter chapters which are at the end of the Qur'án. Well now that the Cause has spread to America, it seems that you are forgetting me, and writing me short letters. And the Master sent him a very long letter in response to that.

In the Qur'án, besides the stories, exhortations and wisdom of God there is a great deal about learning. He encourages the Arabs to learn, to go around the world seeking knowledge and learn from different people. In the Qur'án it is written (*in Arabic*) "hit the ground", meaning go to all the places. And He orally also told them "Seek knowledge, even if it is in China". The Arabs did so, and went to China and learnt from them. Seek knowledge even if it is in heaven. He encouraged them. Seeking knowledge is compulsory for men and

women in Islam. Well after that the Arabs dispersed around the world and learnt many things from many different people, and it was as if Islam was composed of all the different civilisations of the past, brought by all the past prophets, poured them into a melting pot from which a new civilisation emerged.

They went to China and brought back paper, the compass and gun powder. I wish they had never brought back gun powder, but they brought it anyhow. But you know paper was the great revolution that was brought to the knowledge of mankind. When the people had more paper, they were encouraged to write more and to give more of their knowledge. And the compass encouraged people to go to the middle of the sea and discover other countries. The Americans must be grateful for the compass the Muslims brought from China. As a matter of fact compass in Persian and Arabic means that which shows the mausoleum, you know they want to pray towards the Ka'bah, and by that they found the direction. They only had it for that, but the Europeans got hold of it and sailed. The Arabs went to India, and from India they brought the most useful thing ever brought to the hands of mankind., i.e. numbers, amongst other things.

Before that time they only had Latin numbers, and you know what a clumsy way of writing that is. Having these Latin numbers only, the whole of mathematics would not have developed. If you want to multiply two numbers in Latin, a whole board would not suffice. But the Arabs went to India and got numbers from them. It is very interesting to know how the Indians got their numbers. They got it from a circle with two diameters perpendicular to each other. Now we consider nine the highest number, the climax of all numbers, because whatever you write after that is composed of other numbers. There is no number higher than nine. The Arabs wanted more than this and they invented zero. In fact the Arabs called it *Sefer*, and zero is a mispronunciation of the Arabic word "sefer".

Now, when they made progress in numbers, mathematics came to them and they invented algebra. In Arabic they call it *Algabr*, and the word algebra has come to the English and other European languages. Now, "gabr" means "force", meaning a subject which is not studied by the students by their own free will, but they are forced to do it. Then we have many mathematicians in the Muslim world and the word *log* (logarithm) also comes from the Arabic world. There was a Persian who made a schedule, by which he could find the result of the multiplication of two numbers, two big numbers. First of all schedule is an Arabic word, in Arabic it is called *Jadwal* and secondly the name of the man who invented it was *Kharazmi*. Now I can't blame the Europeans for not being able to pronounce this, but little by little it was shortened logically. But please remember that it was from the Muslim mathematicians.

Anyway, they got many other things from India. Then they went to Persia and from Persia they got the books, literary books, Fables and the administration of countries, written at the time when the Persians were at the height of

their civilisation due to the influence of Zoroaster. They went to Asia Minor - Turkey and Greece. There they came to the source of knowledge, the books written by the great philosophers of Greece (referred to previously) in the times of Moses, the books written about philosophy, science, mathematics etc. were all stored in monasteries, churches and similar places, some of them untouched, some of them indexed as to what to read and what not to read. The Arabs bought them, and brought them back. They contained knowledge of medicine, geometry and chemistry, and many sciences. They took them back and started to encourage their own people to work on these things and it resulted in a great civilisation.

(Referring to a map and mentioning Spain, North Africa, Palestine, and Italy). Now Baghdad gathered all these books and translated them into Arabic. They added their own inventions and their own discoveries to all these sciences brought to the universities of Baghdad in books from China, India, Persia, Asia Minor, Greece and North Africa. You know that from about the eleventh century, the crusades took place. For about three hundred years the Christians used to come in flocks to Palestine. When they came they did not only fight, but they came into contact with the Muslims and the scientists and with men of learning. They began to realise how much knowledge the Muslims had, and they got some parts of the Arabic civilisation and Arabic learning. When they got into North Africa they did the same. Really the most interesting point about the history of Islam is the basis of our civilisation of today. Muslims gathered all the ancient civilisation together in one melting pot of Baghdad - the great centre of learning. Now the Europeans, due to the crusades and their contact with the Muslims in North Africa and in Spain, wanted to have these things, therefore they wanted the Arabic books translated into their own languages and there were many Jews who had been living in all these places. The Jews started to translate all these books into the European languages - it was a great service that the Jews did to European civilisation. So the Jews translated, and the Christians got these books, read them and added to them. Now we see the followers of three great messengers working together in the time of Islam to bring about the basic foundations of a world civilisation, and that is the civilisation upon which the whole world is living now. This is a very interesting point that we can find written only in the books and Tablets of the Master. He makes slight references to these things which allows us to realise aspects of this subject. There is another interesting point which I want to mention. I said the Europeans were using these Latin numbers and the Arabs used to have their alphabet for their numbers. And the alphabet were not letters, they would not say a,b,c,d and like that. They would say *Abjad*, *Hawaz* etc.. Now these were used for numbers and for writing also. And of course with this method, progress in mathematics would never be possible. It is interesting for us to know this because it will allow us to understand many things in our religion.

Now can you calculate the word Bahá from this. That is why we have Bahá as nine. Can you calculate the word Báb = Five. It is very useful for us to know these things and very interesting.

Question: I thought all the Qur'án was written on leaves and bark.

Answer: No, only fragments, otherwise there would have been no trouble in collecting them afterwards.

Question: Were there just seven who knew the Qur'án by heart?

Answer: No there were more than seven, but these seven were outstanding and reliable and their memory was beyond doubt.

Question: Are there any recommended translations of the Qur'án for Bahá'ís?

Answer: The Guardian recommended two, the translation by Sale and that by Rodwell. But please note that the translation only was recommended, not the footnotes etc. We must not trust the whole translation either, there are many errors. You know, the Arabic language has many expressions which can't be translated into any other language. For example, you say the wife of the Guardian. We never say that. In Arabic and Persian we have a special word which is used only for that purpose which is Haram. I can't translate that. It doesn't mean holy, it doesn't mean this or that, it is specially for the wife of the Guardian. Or the wife of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is not a new word, it existed in Arabic. And suppose this is translated into the Qu'rán, the translator will say the wife, but it does not mean the wife really. And in the Qur'án you will read statements about men and women. He says to men you are their clothings, and they are your clothings. By that He means you two are one body with one sort of covering clothing the body, you must be united in your family. With my apologies to all, one of the translators translated it as you are their trousers and they are your trousers. That was the closest he could do, but if he had put the spirit of the word, it would have been much better of course. And in many other places there are their funny mistakes as well.

Question: What do the words Islam, Muslim Mohammadan and Hindu mean?

Answer: Islam means to surrender. Muslim is the nominative form derived from Islam which means the one who has surrendered his will to the will of God. Therefore Islam is the name of the religion, Muslim is the name of the

follower. Islam the religion says surrender your will to the Will of God, and the Muslim says I have surrendered my will to the Will of God. Sometimes the historian does not want to write Islam or Muslim, he wants to nominate them after the founder of the religion so he designated them Muhammadan or Muhammadanism like Christianity. It's an English term, not Arabic - so exists in the English translation and not in the Arabic language.

Hind (Hend) is the name of India. When you say Hindi, it means a man from India, whether Muslim or Hindu or Christian. But when you say Hindu, it means the follower of the Hindu religion in India.

Question: Did the Muslims originate medicine or did they get it from somewhere else?

Answer: No it originated at the time of wars. And this is a very important point. Muhammad the prophet did not order his followers to fight, but He said you must only defend yourselves and your Cause. Because if those bands of followers were to be all killed at once in a battle against the powerful tribes of the times, the whole Cause of Islam would be forgotten. He said defend your Cause and yourselves. In these wars of defence He said women should also participate. Now, women had three great jobs. Firstly to give water to the men. They had these large skin bags, filled with water, and the women would go around and with cups in their hands, give water to the thirsty ones. Second to dress their wounds, which is where nursing started, and thirdly to encourage them by singing poems and thrilling words.

Question: The accusation made against Muslims that Islam was spread by the sword, was that in the time of Muhammad or did it ever take place?

Answer: It took place after the Prophet Muhammad. We have said that they elected their leaders after the Prophet's death. These Caliphs were first politicians and then leaders of their religion. They sent armies to other lands, but what they did first was to mix it with religion. They sent missionaries, for example to Persia, and told them that if they became Muslims, they would be under the protection of Islam. And they said if you do not become Muslims then you have to pay a sum of money, a tribute. If you pay a tribute, well and good. If you are not willing to pay a tribute, they would send armies there to oblige them to pay tributes. It is amusing to read in the original writings and commandments of those first four Caliphs, that they preferred that the people pay tributes and not become Muslims; they wanted the money more than people becoming Muslims. But under the successorship of Ali, the tribute was not demanded and Muslims did not wage war, they only defended themselves when attacked by others.

Question: In the Muslim Faith I have heard that when they are killed for their Faith they go to paradise? Is that true.

Answer: Yes, that is true. He says defend your Faith and yourself. When you are aggressively attacked by others, and if you are killed in that defence, you will go to paradise. They needed that in those days.

I will tell you some of the books on this subject. First there is "The stories of the Saracans" by Amir `Ali. It is one of the most authentic histories written about Islam. He had been an Indian, and the book is written in superb English. It is used as a textbook on Islam in many of the countries of the world. Second is the "History of Science" by Dr. Sauter. He is an American who has studied the history of Science and after 30 years investigation recently wrote a book. He is very much in favour with the idea that the basic foundations of our civilisation are Islamic. And he gives four waves of civilisation coming from the east to the west going back to the east and coming back to the west again. Very interesting treatment of the subject.

Session Five : Islam and the Dawnbreakers of the Bahá'í Faith

First successor of the Prophet Muhammad who was appointed by Him, was called `Ali. The second one, his son, Hasan, and the third Husayn - the two being the sons of Ali. These successors were called Imams. Now at the same time that the line of the Imams was going down to the descendants of Ali, there was another line of the Caliphates, also descending - those who did not believe in or accept the authority of the Imams, but stood against them until every one of them were killed by them. But the most important Imam was Husayn, who voluntarily went to martyrdom, who said if my blood is shed, the religion of Islam will be fed with it and will stay forever. That is why we have so many references to Imam Husayn in the Bahá'í Faith, and also in the history of the Cause. In the Book of Certitude, the Book of Iqan, pages 231 and 232 we read Bahá'u'lláh's words regarding the Báb:

"Likewise, in His interpretation of the letter "Há," He craved martyrdom, saying: "Methinks I heard a Voice calling in my inmost being: 'Do thou sacrifice the thing which Thou lovest most in the path of God, even as Husayn, peace be upon him, hath offered up his life for My sake' And were I not regardful of this inevitable mystery, by Him, Who hath my being between His hands even if all the kings of the earth were to be leagued together they would be powerless to take from me a single letter, how much less can these servants who are worthy of no attention, and who verily are of the outcast...."

You see how very important Husayn stands in our religion. The Báb Himself said "I heard in my innermost self a voice which told Me sacrifice like Husayn".

This is one reference from the Báb. And in another place, in Nabil's Narrative:

*"In one of His Writings revealed in the Year A.H. 1260, the Báb declares the following: "The spirit of prayer which animates My soul is the direct consequence of a dream which I had in the year before the declaration of My Mission. In my vision I saw the head of the Imam Husayn, the Siyyidu'-sh-shuhadá, which was hanging from a tree. Drops of blood dripped profusely from His lacerated throat. With feelings of unsurpassed delight, I approached that tree and, stretching forth my hands, gathered a few drops of blood of that sacred blood, and drank them devotedly. When I awoke, I felt that the Spirit of God had permeated and taken possession of My Soul. My heart was thrilled with the joy of His divine presence, and the mysteries of His Revelation were unfolded before my eyes in all their glory."*⁷

So two great references to Imam Husayn; and the craving for martyrdom on the part of the Báb. He wanted to be martyred for the sake of Bahá'u'lláh. On page 231 of Iqan we read:

Gracious God! In His book, which he hath entitled "Qayyumu'l-Asma'," - the first, the greatest and mightiest of all books - He prophesied His own martyrdom. In it is this passage: "O thou Remnant of God! I have accepted curses for Thy sake; and have yearned for nought but martyrdom in the path of Thy love. Sufficient witness unto me is God, the Exalted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days!"

He desired and craved for martyrdom in the path of Bahá'u'lláh. In another passage of the Qayyumu'l-Asma, He addresses Bahá'u'lláh when He says I want to be martyred for Thy path. Now here is the most interesting point about the relationship between Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb. Whatever Bahá'u'lláh did for the sake of the Báb, the Báb did the same for the sake of Bahá'u'lláh. Whatever we read in the Writings of the Báb referring to Bahá'u'lláh, He did the same thing, for Him. Whatever physical thing happened to the Báb, the same thing happened to Bahá'u'lláh, Now there we read that He craved to be martyred in the path of Bahá'u'lláh and here Bahá'u'lláh says (at the time before His declaration), at the time when He was a Bábí, a follower of the Báb:

*"We stand, life in hand, ready; that perchance through God's loving kindness and grace, this revealed and manifest Letter may lay down his life as a sacrifice in the path of the Primal Point, the Most Exalted Word."*⁸

7. Nabil-i-A'zam, *The Dawn-Breakers*, (trans. Shoghi Effendi), Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974, p. 177.

8. Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974, p. 252.

The Primal Point and the most Exalted Word both refer to the Báb. The Báb said He wished to be martyred for the sake of Bahá'u'lláh and Bahá'u'lláh repeats the same sentiment. In Nabil's Narrative we read again,

*"...The Báb, whose trials and sufferings had preceded, in almost every case, those of Bahá'u'lláh, had offered Himself to ransom His Beloved from the perils that beset that Precious Life; while Bahá'u'lláh, on His part, unwilling that He who so greatly loved Him should be the sole Sufferer, shared at every turn the cup that had touched His lips. Such love no eye has ever beheld, nor has mortal heart conceived such mutual devotion. If the branches of every tree were turned into pens, and all the seas into ink, and earth and heaven rolled into one parchment, the immensity of that love would still remain unexplored, and the depths of that devotion unfathomed."*⁹

So we begin to understand the real importance of Husayn, as a sacrifice in Islam.

Now this is the map of the place where our Cause first started. This is Persia, here is Shiraz, and here is Teheran. One in the south, one in the north. This is the country of Iraq, which is also called Mesopotamia, a Greek word which means between two rivers - Euphrates and the Tigris. Sometimes you read in the Tablets, "the Euphrates stream of Thy love" - it means this river, figuratively speaking. Now we know that all the fights of Husayn's martyrdom took place in an area here. Now the city where the body of Husayn is buried is in this place called Karbila. It is composed of these two words "Karb", which means calamity and "bila" which means disaster. Calamity and disaster because such a great calamity, Husayn's martyrdom took place on this plain.

Is there any other place called Karbila in the Bahá'í World today? Well it is interesting to know that a Central American lady offered her own place for an institution (for the use of the Faith) and she called that place Karbila after reading Nabil's narrative. The Guardian has been extremely pleased and he told the Persian believers to tell the priests of Islam how much we magnify the name of the martyrs of Islam, even a believer in Central America has given her possessions and called it Karbila.

So this is Karbila. There are two other places, Najaf and Kazimayn. These three places are very famous. Karbila is the place where Husayn is buried, Najaf is the place where Ali is buried and Kazimayn is another holy place. Why do we mention these names? - well they are the great centres of learning. All those who want to study theology go from Persia, Iraq, India etc. to these three centres of learning and study theology.

In the book "The Promised Day is Come", there is one page about the clergymen of Islam and the Guardian there mentions everyone of these places,

9. Nabil-i-A'zam, Nabil's Narrative, op.cit., pp. 268-269.

what they have been studying. It is at the top of the page. For instance he mentions history, traditions, Qur'án, the science of words, the science of rhetoric, character, philosophy, ancient philosophy, things like that. All the Islamic terms are written down by the pen of the Guardian. Now, what is the situation in these places. I want you to visualise how they are living there. Suppose this is a shrine. Around it are houses of the people and very small lanes going here and there - narrow, small, dirty lanes. All the cities are alike, except that Karbila is more green and prosperous than these two, namely, Najaf and Karbila. Here and there you will find mosques, and it was a custom amongst the Muslims that wherever they had a Mosque, they would also have a school near it. This school had rooms around it where the students would have one room per student. The rooms were quite tiny, but sufficient for a student to be comfortable.

There is one man who is the head clergyman of the city. If the students are from wealthy families, they finance themselves. If they do not have enough finance, he will finance them to study. Sometimes the school is quite large, and on every corner of the school (not a regular class like this), a teacher will sit down. Now, the students coming out of their rooms, know which teacher teaches philosophy, traditions, the Qur'án, and rhetoric. In another school there is one who teaches history. So if they wish to study history, they go to this man and sit around him on the floor and he will discuss the lesson. There is no regular classes, no teaching program, no regular examination, but when they study all these different courses here and there, they will go to the head clergyman and say they have studied all these courses then he will examine them. When he is satisfied that they know all the rules and science of religion, he will give them a certain paper and the student will go to his own country and become the head of the city for religious affairs.

This is the situation. Having this in mind, please remember that a very great learned man rose up from this place called Ahsá which is between Iraq, Arabia and Persia. It is an Arabic region. This great man's name was Shaykh Ahmad. You know that Shaykh in Arabic means old man, and as the old men had been the head of the tribes and families therefore it has come into the Arabic language to mean the Headman. But they also use Shaykh to refer to a learned man. Shaykh Ahmad means the learned man whose name is Ahmad. Now he rose from this place and taught the coming of the Promised One to the people of his time. He made a trip to the little island of Bahrain and he wrote some of his very great books in that island. When the great priest of that island was approached by the Shaykh for his examination, the priest wrote on Shaykh Ahmad's paper that verily he is the examiner and not the examined one. This is what he has written. He found him so superbly conversed in all the teachings of Islam. It is interesting to note that our first believer in Bahrain was named Shaykh Ahmad also.

Question: Was he a Bahá'í before you went there?

Answer: No, no. There were no Bahá'ís there, but after a few years he accepted the Cause. When I asked his name he said Shaykh Ahmad.

Back to the original Shaykh Ahmad. He found this place very small for his work. Where could he find a better place than these three places of learning we mentioned above? That is why in Nabil's narrative you read that he departed from his place (Ahsá) and went to the places where there are representatives of Persia, Iraq, India, and all the Muslim countries gathered there for the science of religion. They wanted to learn something, to get something.

They gathered there and Shaykh Ahmad started his teachings. As he started, firstly there were 10, in the afternoon there were a hundred students. His fame went far and wide very rapidly. All those little clergymen became jealous of him and started to work against him, and you will read in Nabil's narrative all the things that happened to him by the clergymen of his time. Now you know the reason why, because they found their classes empty. All the students rushed to him.

After him, he named one of his students to be his successor and that one was from the north part of Iran, Siyyid Kazim. You see, the Báb from the south, Bahá'u'lláh from the north; Shaykh Ahmad from the south, Siyyid Kazim from the north. South and north, just overwhelming the whole country.

So Siyyid Kazim took over and became the leader after the Shaykh's death. Now I have made all this introduction because of this little point. One day, Siyyid Kazim sat in his class, and a number of students came in. His students, who were of the very famous people of the time, the greatest poets, the greatest literary men of his time, the princes, the learned men of the time, those who were taking certificates were sitting in his class. One day he came to the class and said there had been some of the great learned people at the time of Shaykh Ahmad who used to help our cause and make the people ready for the coming of the Promised One, and those great and learned men are now in the cities of Iran but are silent now. They do not help us. I want one from amongst you to get up and go to Iran and talk to these people and bring them back to the Shaykhi School and make them help our cause. We need them now. We need some people to make the populace of these countries ready for the Promised One so that they will not be inflicted by the flame of the wrath of God. They will be ready to accept the Promised One. Now there arose from the midst of the students a very fat man, the greatest poet. Siyyid Kazim said sit down, it's not your work. Another man said I will go. He said to him, it is a lions cage, don't play with it, you are not worthy of that, sit down. The third one arose, he said I will go. No, you are not worthy of that.

Now in the corner of the room, behind the students, there was a young man from this part of Iran, Kurasan. About 21 or 22 years of age. He was just

silently sitting there without any movement, without any pretence. Siyyid Kazim pointed to him. He said Mulla Husayn you get up. That was the first time we hear the name Mulla Husayn in our history, uttered by the mouth of Siyyid Kazim. He said you get up and go and he went, firstly to Isfahan. Without any delay, he went directly to the classroom of the great learned man of that city, and when he entered the class, without any attention to the learned men, he went forward and sat down in front of him and said why are you silent. Why don't you work for the Cause of God. Why don't you make people ready for the Cause of God, for the Promised One? The leading priest was so afraid of this brave approach by this young man. Also note that daily he went to the priest, and the students laughed at him because he was so young.

The leading teacher said I have seen some differences between the sayings of Shaykh Ahmad and Siyyid Kazim. Mulla Husayn said no they are not different, they were both brought forward for the same purpose. Bring books and I will prove it. They brought books, he proved it to him so the teacher promised that he would write pamphlets and work for the Cause of God. Mulla Husayn left the room and went to the mosque. The man sent a servant after him. The servant came back and said that Mulla Husayn went to a certain mosque, went to a pond of water, took ablutions (it means he washed his hands and face), said his prayers, laid down on a mat and pulled his aba, his big long cloak, on him and slept.

The great man gave him 100 tumans, which is almost equivalent to 300 or 400 pounds of today, and told the servant to give it to him. He went back and presented the money to Mulla Husayn but he did not accept it. He said that he did not need money, and urged him to tell his master to fulfil his promise and that will be sufficient.

From there, we read in Nabil's Narrative, he went to Khurasan and did the same thing to another higher clergyman. Made him also an ally and brought him back to life so that he would work for the Cause of God. My purpose in telling you this story is not just to tell a story, rather to make us think. When Siyyid Kazim told Mulla Husayn, get up and go, have you ever thought how he went? Did he say I have family to support now, what about my brothers and sisters there. He had his own family, brothers and sisters. How can I go, what about them?. Where can I get some money to go on this long trip. He did not even ask his master what shall I tell this man, which way should I go. Immediately when he got the command, he got up and went and everything was done well. We do not know how he was financed, it is not mentioned in our history. Perhaps he sold all his possessions to do the work of God.

And when he returned from that trip he did not find his master alive. You have all read the history. And then again another point to all this that Mulla Husayn was a youth. It is especially the privilege of the youth to do these things when they are quite light and unburdened, they are not yet entangled with the difficulties of life.

They say once a king of India wanted to choose a great treasurer for himself. He invited his ministers to his court and after giving them something to drink he said that door leads to my treasures. You go inside that and see all the things exposed to you. The rubies, the pearls diamonds, everything. Then from the end door go out to your houses. When they went in and there was no one to control them or able to see them (and they thought from the next door they would go to their homes), there was no one to bother them, well they made free of all those things and gathered in their pockets as much as they could. Some got pearls, diamonds, silver, gold in their pockets everywhere. And they went out and entered a certain court and there was the king standing in front of them. He gathered them all together in the court, and ordered his appointed musicians to play. "Now, all of you must dance to this music and I want to see which one of you dances the lightest," commanded the King. Those who had been heavy with all the things they had carried on themselves of course could not dance nimbly, could not go on their tip toes. There was only one young man amongst them who was dancing and jumping and bouncing. Well, the king chose him as his treasurer.

Now the Guardian wants us to be like that. The music of the world is going on, the Guardian says come on and show your art, show that we are not entangled by the world, that we are light, not heavy. Please remember this passage of Bahá'u'lláh which should always stand in front of us. He says between God and his created, between God and man there is only one ladder of three steps. He said that the first step is names and all that belongs to it. In one of His prayers Bahá'u'lláh says "O God, save us from the oceans of names". The second step is the world and all its pleasures. Any kind of pleasure in the world. And the third, the next world with all the promises. Even that should not stand between us. He says any one who passes these three steps will immediately see himself with his beloved. If he does something, he must not think of the material aspects or the next world's bounties of God. He must do it for the love of God and that only.

How can we do that? We will do it if we have certitude. You know that there is a difference between faith and certitude. Suppose we are all thirsty in this room and there is a spring of water over there. We look at this spring of water. We have faith that there is a spring of water. But perhaps that spring of water is salty, we can't drink the water, it does not satisfy our thirst. If we go there and drink of that water then we will come to the stage of certitude. Now when we know the Cause of God, we know history, we know teachings. When we practice that, put it into our everyday life, then we will reach the stage of certitude. And in that state, we can do everything and surmount everything in our path.

Let me tell you a story about one of the first believers who had reached the state of certitude. Once there came a man from some part of the world to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh. He pretended to be a Bahá'í and all the people were

very kind to him, especially one of the old believers who had been posted by Bahá'u'lláh to take care of him and to accept him in his own house. After about 10 days the man came to the presence of Bahá'u'lláh and said I had about 40 gold pounds with me when I came and last night the owner of the house stole it from me. Bahá'u'lláh called the old believer and said go and give him his 40 pounds. He immediately went and sold his things and borrowed some money and after some hours gave him 40 pounds. And he started to repent and say prayers for sinners. Later the visitor went to Bahá'u'lláh, with a scornful laugh in his mouth and said I wanted to test you. The man has not stolen the money from me, and when I told you I wanted to see if you could tell me that he has not stolen the money. But you believed my word. How do you say you are a prophet of God? Bahá'u'lláh said I wanted to show you what kind of faithful believers I have. And the Bahá'ís said to the old man, how come you immediately paid the 40 pounds. He said, Bahá'u'lláh said I had stolen, I was sure that I had stolen. There was no doubt, I must have done something with it, I didn't know what, but I was sure that I had done something with it. This is the stage of certitude that we wish to reach some day, through prayers. That was I think our lesson for this morning.

I was thinking about explaining about the power of the Word of God, but I was not sure where to find the translation of that work. But most happily the devotions arranged by Miss Dobbins had that subject I had in mind. Bahá'u'lláh says any word issued by the pen of the manifestation of God has certain power and potentialities emanating from that word and at different times certain souls receive those emanations and bring about sciences, arts, knowledge of mankind. It's one of the most interesting parts in the Bahá'í literature to show the origin of arts and sciences of human kind on this earth.

I wanted to explain this as I had it in mind to tell you. Yesterday we started saying about the manifestation of God, the Báb, the forerunner to this stupendous revelation of Bahá'u'lláh - that the Báb declared in 1844 or 1260 AH. We must know both these dates as in the books of the past, both dates are given, when the manifestation of God declares His mission. Now let us bear in mind that this year (1844) is the turning point in human history, arts, sciences, literature. Before that humanity was the same as at the time of Christ. Please read "One Earth" by Hemmerick Seller. In that book you see the changes which took place at the time of the manifestations. He brings a very beautiful example. Before Caesar when Christ was born, when someone wanted to go from Rome to London it took him twelve days on a horse. In 1839, the British ambassador to Rome wanted to go to England, which is the same distance, it took him twelve days also. It is the best example to give of how the world was the same until about 1844.

Now, when this year dawned, the Sun of Truth appeared and shone on the hearts of men. With the release of it by the Words of God, little by little everything sprouted out and new art, new literature, new thoughts, new inventions

came. If you study English literature, you will know that this year is given as the year of the coming of romanticism in English literature. The romantic poets in English, French and German literature all over Europe wanted to break off those strict rules of classicism, and they wanted to be free to express their own ideas; ideas about nature, about mother child, parents. You know the words of Wordsworth, you have read Coleridge, Byron, Keats, Shelly. Great figures in romantic literature appeared after 1844. All those great figures of the French literature such as Victor Hugo¹⁰ and the rest, appeared at this hour of the century. The greatest novel that has ever been written, *Les Misérables*, was started by Victor Hugo in 1844, and finished in 1863. He started it when the Báb declared his mission and finished it when Bahá'u'lláh declared His mission at Ridván Garden.

It was in the year 1843 when the great French poet wrote a poem called *Respoir*, the meaning of which is "hope". At the end of that poem it said "Oh God, humanity is in darkness, isn't it time that you come to take away the veil from your face and show yourself to us. This is our last hope in life". I will now read to you the dates of the poem, please note these dates and you will find many interesting things written about the Cause by those great literary figures who received the rays of the sun of truth. You will be surprised to know that Alfred de Vigny¹¹ one of the French poets, on the day of the martyrdom of the Báb wrote a poem on the crucifixion of Christ. And he said "what right have you to do that"? He said that you must worship God. As if he was talking about the martyrdom of the Báb. He felt the great sorrow, the great tragedy in human history and wrote of the name of Christ - with which he was familiar. One of the prophecies of the Báb is this, that the gospels should be taught all around the world, and our Hand of the Cause, Mr Townshend has said that it occurred in 1843, because the Bible had been taken to all the countries of the world except Tibet. It was taken to Tibet in 1843, and a year after that the Báb declared.

Then, if you look into inventions, you see the steamers, cars, planes, radios, everything else came into existence after that year. It was in this year when medicine too made sick people unconscious for operations. And the most outstanding of these inventions was the Telegraph. You know Morse was the man who invented Telegraph and this man tried his best in order to get telegraph at least between two cities in America to show the practical ways of transmitting news, but no one ever helped. When he had been friends with a little girl, a girl of about twelve or fourteen years old, and he did not have anybody else to open his heart to except this little girl. He told her of his troubles, of his tragedy in life and showed her how this wonderful machine works, but no one will help

10. Victor Hugo (1802-85), French poet, novelist, and playwright. His most well-known works are *Les Misérables*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The King Amuses Himself* - which was adapted by Verdi for the opera *Rigoletto*.

11. Alfred Victor de Vigny (1797-1863), French poet, novelist and dramatist.

me he said. This little girl happened to be one of the daughters of a senator, and she went and insisted that her father do something, for this man. So then a telegraph was established between two near cities in America. When this had been done, Mr Morse went to this little girl and said you did all for me, now I leave it in your hands. I want the first message to be given by you. You give me the message and I will send it. She went to her grandmother who was always reading the Bible and the grandmother said it is written in the old testament that on that day these words will be spoken "What hath God wrought",¹² and she gave it to Mr Morse, and what time do you think this was transmitted, on the morning of the night when the Báb declared His mission. At night He declared His mission in the East, next morning when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born, the first telegraphic message was given in the West, "What hath God wrought".

There are very many interesting facets when you study the history of the Cause along with the history of the times. You will find the history of the Cause supplementary to all these histories. The history books tell us that this year is the year of the industrial revolution. History does not explain what overtook the minds of the people of Europe, or what the source was. But now the Bahá'ís know, it was because of the coming of the Sun of Truth which brought to life all these latent powers within humanity.

Likewise with previous religions, whenever a religion came from the East, in the West material civilisation was brought into existence to help with the propagation of the spiritual powers.

Yesterday we studied about Mulla Husayn. After Mulla Husayn had become a believer in the Báb, went a second time from the region of Khurasan to visit the Báb who was incarcerated in Mah-Ku. It is a mountain, semicircle in form, like a ball broken in half. When you are in the mountain it is like you are under a ceiling. The Báb was incarcerated in that place. In His Writings He says that the king has imprisoned Him in this place which has no light, except a small candle and there is no one with Him except some dogs. That was all He had. It is also very interesting to note a reference in the Old Testament that when the Ark of Noah was settled down it was on the mountain of Ararat, and that mountain stands in front of the mountain of Mahku.

Mulla Husayn took a trip from Khurasan along all the northern borders of Persia, to this place which is the neighbouring part of Russia. We always say he went, but in every step he had difficulties. He took this trip on foot, that means he had been walking in the desert, and at night he would reach a certain place called caravanserai. Of course not as comfortable as your caravan here. By caravanserai, they mean a small house in the middle of the desert with rooms inside. Those passing by night come inside, take a room for the night then go the next morning. But Mulla Husayn who was such a well known person throughout Iran that he could never go into one of these caravans because he

12. *Old Testament*, Numbers 23:23.

would never come out of it. Those people would kill him so he had to go from one place to another until he reached the presence of the Báb. You read all the details of this in Nabil's Narrative.

The Báb told Mulla Husayn to go back and visit the friends everywhere and send them His regards. The very same thing that the Guardian is doing now. Whoever visits him he says send the friends my love, my regards and assure them of my prayers. The very same thing the Báb told Mulla Husayn. He gave the friends power and energy as he went to Khurasan. On another occasion he knew that there was some help to be given to Quddus in Mazindaran and he said to the Bábís of those days we want to go to Quddus. Many people followed him. But when he came out of the city, he passed some miles and stopped the followers and said, those of you who have any attachment in their hearts such as wealth, riches, family, dear ones in life without any hesitation go back, we want only those who have not the least doubt in their heart.

We only want those who are ready for the worst thing coming in life. Some of them were very frank and returned. Another time he stopped and again he did the same thing, and some others went back. By this he sieved his followers. He had the cream of youth under his hand and the third time he stood up on his horse and said I know that all of you have changed whatever you had in your possessions into precious things such as diamonds, rubies, emeralds so that wherever we go and we need something you may sell them. You have little things but costly. Now I want you to purify yourselves. I don't want you to have any of these things: possessions. Throw them out, into the desert. And the very first man to obey him, had two bags of precious stones, was the father of Badí the one Mr Furútan spoke about. He was the one who took the letter of Bahá'u'lláh to the King of Iran, his father was one of these followers. He immediately dismounted his horse, went to the desert and threw away the precious stones and the others followed: they obeyed.

[text missing] said to the second one - "you look to know about it." He said something about the inside of the bird and how it was created, but yet he was not satisfied. He said, "if you can break it I will see the inside." The man said "it is a precious gift from one of the kings of the earth to you. If you break it the whole relation is broken up."

He gave it to the third one and he did something. Everyone found excuses. He gave it to Iyaz, who was enamoured with the king. He said "Iyaz, what do you think?" He immediately took the stone and smashed it into pieces and said "this is the inside." But the king said "how did you dare to break this most precious pearl? Didn't you see my ministers, how they described this bird?" He said "Your majesty, your word is more precious than this. Had I not broken this I would have broken your word, your command. I don't want to do this."

Then let's try to be like that with the Guardian. Let's never break his word. Break other things, then we'll have more precious things of course.

There is another story about the same man. Once the same king took a great part of his treasury with him and went hunting. He specially ordered his servant to make a hole in the sack which contained these precious stones and these fell out on the way. Some parts had been strewn with these diamonds and pearls and other things. The King galloped away on his horse and went on. Suddenly he looked back and he found only this young man Iyaz with him. The king asked where are the rest? He answered they are collecting your precious stones. "Why didn't you collect some?" asked the King. Iyaz replied that he had never wanted anything in his life, only to be with the king. This is what the youth can do really. It is within their power as they are not yet entangled in life. They are like birds whose wings are not in the mud of the earth - they can soar with their beloved wherever the beloved says to go - and they will follow. If we get such lessons from history, then it will be a living history. To relate the dates of history - what date did that man come, how many were his followers. These are childish things. Let's learn one incident from the history of mankind, history about any religion, and make the lesson in our own soul, and let the soul exercise with these things till it shows its perfections which are latent, and then we will be so happy that we will be more ready to give whatever comes to us for the pleasure that we get out of those stages of perfection.

Friends, Foes, Followers

In Pharaoh's Egypt, as you remember that the Israelites had become worshippers of animals. That was the greatest difficulty that Moses had. He stood against it, and we also remember that he kept the Israelites in the desert of Trans-Jordan for forty years so that all the old generation would die away, and a new generation, those who were firmly believing in the One God would enter into the Promised Land.

If you study the Old Testament you will come across so many difficulties that Moses encountered with his own people. Please when you study it, study it in a comparative way with other religions. You remember that one of the greatest difficulties was that He went away for forty days and when He returned, they had made a statue of an animal and had started to worship it. When he neglected them even for a little while they returned to their old beliefs.

Now we understand how difficult it is to cleanse one's soul from previous ideas, habits and customs. It is difficult for all of us who have come to the Bahá'í Faith from different backgrounds; we bring in our own customs and habits and we want to sometimes adapt the Bahá'í Faith to our own habits. And it is very hard to adapt ourselves to the Bahá'í teachings.

Now in the time of Jesus, He had one great difficulty, and that was the three classes of the clergymen of the Israelites. The Pharisees, the scribes and the Sadducees. You know that the Israelites themselves were ready to accept the Messiah, but their leaders were always preventing them. You refer to the Gospels and see in many different places, the people come to the pharisees

and say Jesus is doing wonderful things, he is telling us beautiful words of God, there is nothing wrong with Him; but then immediately before they had finished their words, the Pharisees said “never approach Him. He is the leader or the prince of the devils and he is working with the devil and not with the spirit of God.” In some of the Gospels you see that the people are at a loss what to do. They don't know which way to turn. Jesus passes in the streets, goes into houses and Synagogues, cures the people, exhorts them, explains to them difficult passages of the Books of God, and yet here is that power standing against Him. There is the power of God also, but that government was Roman. Palestine was part of the Roman Empire. They did not have anything directly to do with Jesus. Their action against Jesus was only at the instigation of the Pharisees. Therefore Jesus also had one difficulty to face, and that was the people of Israel.

Government was interfering, but not very much. Moses had likewise one difficulty, his own people. Jesus had the people of Israel and a part of the government, but not very seriously, at the time when Pharisees used to instigate. You remember reading in the Gospels, when they go to the Roman governor and they take Jesus to him and he questions Jesus and comes out and says I haven't found any fault with this man, so that I could kill him. But the Pharisees said that from head to foot he is full of faults and he must be crucified. Well then the Roman governor, Pilate, brings water and washes his own hands. He says I wash my hands of the whole affair before anything happens to this innocent man.¹³ See how mild the governor is towards Jesus Christ. It was all the insistence of the pharisees. That is why in the Gospel of Matthew you see so many “beautiful” things said by Jesus to the Pharisees. He calls them vipers and the sons of vipers. He calls them graves, inside full of dirt, but outside full of ornaments. Please study them. It is very useful for us to know how these people stood against Him.

Now at the time of Muhammad the Prophet as we remember, his own kinsmen were against him. That family were always against Him; stood against him with one force. In Arabia, there was no government to interfere with these matters, but it was the collective force of the people that aimed to stop Him preaching His Cause. His greatest enemy was His own uncle who was called Abu Hakim, the father of all philosophers. He was a great man, a very learned man, but he could not believe in the Prophet Muhammad. The prophet called him Abu Jahl, which means the father of all ignorance; and he was really because he could not see the truth of the Prophet Muhammad. For 23 years, Muhammad used to go from town to town, even to villages and He used to preach and recite the verses of the Qur'án, and brought many families into the new Faith, tribes who used to be antagonistic, he united them. But the forces from inside His family were always against Him, but no government.

13. Matthew, 27:24.

This is an interesting story that may help us in our pioneering. Once the Prophet sent His cousin Ali who was appointed as His successor also, to certain parts of Arabia. He said “you go there to the city of Yemen and teach the Cause. Give a speech there in the square of the city and come back.” He went there and you know Yemen had many Jews there, still it is one of the greatest centres of the Jews. He went and called the people to come into the square and he spoke to them. One of the things he spoke was this: some of the people do not see in the daytime, but they see at night. Some do see in the daytime and some see neither in the daytime nor in the night. This was one of the things he mentioned in his speech. Well after his speech was over and the people dispersed to their houses, one of them went to a very learned Jew who was living in a secluded place and asked what was the matter in the city. He said “a certain man by the name of Ali came and spoke to us and he said that there is a prophet in Mecca. And amongst the things he said was about the people who do not see in the daytime, but they see at night and some who see in the daytime and some who see neither in the daytime nor in the night.” And the man immediately prostrated himself towards Mecca and said “I believe in Muhammad the Prophet of God.”

They brought this news to Ali. None of the people who had heard him ever came to him, only the news of this man. He returned to the Prophet Muhammad, and He said “what happened?” “Nothing, thousands of people were there, only one who was not there believed.” Muhammad said “I have sent you for that man only.” You see you may go pioneering and many people come to you, but the one the Guardian has in mind may never come to you. But those people who are between you and him may go and give him the message and bring him to the Cause. Our job is to go there and proclaim the Message of God; we do not know what will happen there.

One of the believers of Iran before I went to Bahrain came to me and said “I am too old to go, you are going for pioneering.” He said never worry. The Guardian has made the house of the Cause in that Island. He has arranged everything, has brought electricity to that house also, but that house is now dark. The only job for the pioneer is to turn the switch, and everything will be light. I went there and wrote him back that he (the Guardian) turned the switch for me, because really everything is done by him for those who go and do his bidding.

Now we come back to our subject again. These were the difficulties of the prophets of old. Now, we come to the Báb and His time. Well, the Báb faced difficulties unsurpassed in history. First, when he claimed His mission the clergymen of Iran who had the possession of everything stood against Him. And then the government also helped them. In other ages we did not have governments interfering, but at the time of the Báb both hand in hand stood against Him. When I say the clergymen of Iran, please remember this point.

We have two sorts of clergymen. There are those who wear green or black turbans and those who wear white turbans. Both are extremely dangerous, but there are some differences between them. Those who wear green and black turbans believe that they are descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, and as such they have the right to possess one fifth of your property. They even go to such extremes that they say one of the five fingers of your hand belongs to them. When they go at a certain time of the year they go to the farm and collect their one fifth and sometimes with chains in their hands they go and collect this from the poor villagers. Anywhere that they went and passed, the people were afraid for they knew something would happen, for they had this power in their hands. Now the white turbaned people believed that the Qa'im, the Promised One is the real king of the world and as he is absent they are his representatives, therefore the kings of Iran are subdued to them. Please refer to the Promised Day Is Come written by our beloved Guardian, in the place where he explains the power of the clergy in Iran, he very fully deals with this subject. As they claim that the kings were under their rules and obedience, therefore whatever they said the kings had to do. Obey.

I remember one day, one of the old believers in a village in Isfahan told me all his property had been taken by a certain cruel man because he was a Bahá'í. He said "I went to Tehrán and I went to the court and lodged a complaint and I got a decree from the King that he must give me back my property. I was so happy that I returned and showed him my decree from the King. He said that it is true that it is signed by the King, but what will our clergyman say?" They took the letter to the clergyman, who said that the decree did not matter at all, because he had not signed it. So the Bahá'í could not retake his own property as the clergyman had not signed the King's decree.

Well, these two great forces, the Kings and the Clergy, hand in hand stood against the Báb from the very moment He returned from Mecca, they put Him in prison; He was never freed, and from town to town they took him as a prisoner - they took him from Shiraz to the borders of Russia, and they kept Him there until they put Him to death.

Now is there any comparison between this and the life of other prophets? Moses was free to go to his own people, educate them, tell them about the Words of God. The people could see Him, could be magnetised by His presence. Jesus was going to the houses, seeing people in the streets, making miracles for the people. Going to the Synagogues - you remember He went one day to push out all those commercial people from the Synagogue. He had this freedom that the Báb did not. Muhammad the prophet for 23 years used to go here and there from village to village, though they tortured him very much. One time an Arab came and gave Him such a blow to the head that it caused a row of teeth to fall out. They used to pour ashes of fire on His head, they used to cover His road with thorns, they did everything to Him, but yet He was free to go

amongst the people, to sit with them, talk to them, but the Báb did not have this freedom. The followers were not free to see Him. After He left Shiraz, the governor of Shiraz proclaimed and said "In whatever house I find a page of the Writings of the Báb, the owners should be sure that the house will be destroyed to dust." And that is why in those days, anyone who had a Writing of the Báb used to bring it to the House of His wife and mother and for many months, they used to wash away the ink on the pages. Many of the Tablets of the Báb we no longer have because they were destroyed.

And yet with all these great difficulties, the government and the priests hand in hand stood against the Báb: Let's see what the friends and followers brought about. The followers of Moses were from his own people, nation, one sort of idea, and yet with all the miracles they saw from Moses, all through the forty years they were objecting to Him. Why did you bring us out of Egypt, we were comfortable there. Why do you command us to do this, why that? Why do you want our gold for the altar of God? Always why, why, why? And the followers of Jesus, who counted less than fifty, of which twelve were the chosen ones. These twelve did not know him. Once He asked them who am I. Only one said "I believe you are the son of the living God." Another interesting point in the gospel is this. When Jesus was proclaiming His message, doing His miracles, and he had gathered some followers here and there, who came to Him - two members of the followers of John the Baptist, who was at that time in prison. And they said "are you the Messiah, or should another one come?"¹⁴ There was a doubt there, He was not even sure about Him. Jesus said, "go to him, and report whatever you have seen here." Even Jesus did not say go to him and say that I am the Messiah.

And then at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, His followers were so meek, so humble, therefore all the people were saying paradise is for the foolish ones - they were making fun of the paradise Muhammad described for His followers, because only a very limited number of humble, illiterate ones were coming to Him. And then they told Him if you are a prophet, why is it that only these low ones with limited thought come to you?¹⁵ And they were calling him a mad poet,¹⁶ and His followers were very very few at the beginning, mostly illiterate, and as I told you one was that Negro from Abyssinia who could not even pronounce the words. There was another one who was a shepherd. That shepherd was tending his sheep in the fields and someone passed by and the shepherd asked what was the matter in these days. "It is nothing," he answered, "There is someone by the name of Muhammad who has come to our city and brought confusion to the city." He immediately bent down and prostrated and said immediately "I bear witness that Muhammad is the prophet of God." He was a shepherd, but his heart was mirror-like, and

14. Matthew, 11:2-4.

15. Qur'án, 11:29; 37:35.

16. Qur'án, 37:35.

the name of Muhammad brought him to faith. None of Prophet Muhammad's followers except Ali, His cousin, was a learned man. None of the followers of Jesus was a learned man, you know Peter the greatest of all was only a simple fisherman; Matthew was a tax collector and so on and so forth. But the Báb with all the restrictions He had, with all those enemies of the clergymen and the government, look at the list of His followers - none of them is illiterate. All were learned and erudite in those days.

Mulla Husayn was a great learned man of his time, Quddus also, Mulla Ali also. Every one of them, and the greatest amongst them - Tahiri, the great woman of that age, a miracle of her time, in a country where still the majority of women are illiterate, where the majority of women are neglected, are not considered to be anything equal to men. To have such a woman is one of the miracles of the Cause of God.

She is known by her poems, but she has something else which is much greater than her poems. There are pieces written by her in pure, beautiful Arabic and Persian, in answer to the questions of the clergymen and leaders of thought. She was so pure and had such insight that in one of her letters addressed to Bahá'u'lláh she says "Why don't you ask 'who is your God?' so that I can reply 'you are'". She knew Bahá'u'lláh from then, even though Bahá'u'lláh never showed anything in those days regarding His station and He was considered one of the followers of the Báb.

Think of the great Vahíd, who was sent by the King of Iran. You know if the King wanted to send a representative he chose the best - his name signifies that, it means 'unique'. Without any doubt of his erudition, they sent him to Shiraz, and the king said "go and investigate into the matter and bring me the news". He went and met the Báb, became a follower, and did not even go back to the court - he sent a message that he had become a follower, and he was martyred. Hujjat, from Zanzan in the northern part of Iran, who had a great school of learning, sent one of his students to the Báb to bring some sign about the truth. He brought back a letter. When Hujjat read the letter, he closed the books and said "we read these books to find our Beloved. Now that we have found Him, close the books, we no longer need them. Now is the time of action." He believed in the Báb and we know that he was martyred in the north of Persia. And thousands of these people gave their lives for the Báb in those early days. Amongst the early believers we can find none who really were from humble origins or who were illiterate completely. They were men of learning, men of erudition, especially in divine theology and they found their beloved and they established the Cause of God and sealed the Faith with their pure blood.

Now, here I remember something, one of the beautiful passages of our beloved Guardian. He said the Bahá'ís when talking about the history, teachings, the administration, the principles, world order, they must never depend

on these things when they teach the Cause, they must never boast about these things. These are not proofs to the people. One and only one thing will attract the people, that is the life of the Bahá'ís. No matter how much he relates history, no matter how much he describes the world order or administrative principles or the laws detailed in the books of Bahá'u'lláh, they are of no effect unless they are followed by a mirror-like life. He says his life must become a mirror into which the sun of these teachings will reflect and his life will show to the people all those principles in his daily life. It is a precious Cause, we must try our best to see if there is a trace of character, we must try to do our best for the sake of the Cause.

Now you see that all these believers came from all parts of Iran - we don't want to go into all the details of these things, but some came from very small villages, villages of one-hundred people for example. Villages that are absolutely destroyed now - destroyed because there were Bahá'ís there, but they came to the call of God, they gathered around the Báb, they gathered wherever there was something to do. They gathered in Nayriz, in Zanzan, in Tabarsi, in Khurasan, all these great centres of activities, they went there. Whatever was to be done they did it. They neglected their properties, wealth, fame, learning, everything and 'life in hand' as we say, they went to the battle-field. There is a story about a bird, I heard it in India, and I find it very useful to illustrate this. I don't know if you have heard it before. There is a bird, the eggs of which are very much hated by other birds. Wherever the bird has its nest and lays its eggs, other birds will attack and destroy the eggs. In order to have little ones, this poor bird goes to different nests of other birds in the forest and lays eggs in different places. And they are hatched under different mothers. But when she is sure that the little ones can fly, she just goes to the top of a tree and sings a certain song and all these little children will come back to her.

So that you will be taken back to the conditions of those days so you can see how they accepted the faith, how they lived for it, under what circumstances they used to teach, and how they died for it. 'This is the story that I have heard from the man himself. Once I was living in a village, I was there for 5 years. The village had a population of 30,000 people, only 2,000 were Bahá'ís, but these Bahá'ís were so stalwart, staunch and steadfast that all the people in those surroundings used to say that all the people in this village are Bahá'ís. Though only 2 out of 30 were Bahá'ís. It was such a beautiful community. Every night we had a public meeting, all the farmers used to come back from their farms, to the Hazirat'ul-Quds. No formal program was made for it. But tea was served by the committee of service and usually they were asked to tell stories of the past, and for 5 years I heard these stories every night and sometimes during the day and the stories were not ended. We had always some visitors from other parts of Persia for the believers in that village were well known for their hospitality. It was in that village that I first started to become fat. I remember

once there was a Tablet that belonged to the city of Kashan. Someone was chanting it, he chanted the first two lines and one man said "here are twenty-five of them". Twenty-five friends from that city of Kashan had just come to see us the moment we had just started to read the tablet. And they came in and the rejoicing was really complete. One day came to us, an old man, very old, hugely built, and from his face you could read great sufferings he had gone through, and from his lips you could see what a beautiful smile he had, passed through all these ordeals. The friends' joy had no end when he came to us. He came from the same city where I was born as I came to the Bahá'í religion at the age of 17 or 18 very easily, I really kissed his feet because I said it was due to your suffering in our city that this gift of God was given so easily. I loved this man intensely. Then, one night the Spiritual Assembly asked would you like that we bring some inquirers for you to speak to them about the Cause. He said "when I was in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá he said go and teach the Cause of God, I told him Master, I am a simple carpenter, how can I tell them about the Faith. He said tell them your life story, that will be a great teaching." That is why I am giving you his life story now.

He was a simple carpenter in the city of Qum. It is the city where in Nabil's narrative we find that Qum was the city that the Báb did not want to go in. Somebody came to him and told him little by little about the Cause. It took him ten complete years to understand what Bahá'u'lláh said. He said "I didn't know anything about my own religion, I didn't know how to read and write, how could I understand this great Cause of God? From the moment I started talking to the man about the cause, I knew there was something in it, but I wanted to grasp it, but I couldn't, I didn't have the capacity - it took me ten years to develop that capacity within myself." But he said "The moment I said I am a Bahá'í, I immediately stood up for teaching. And I started to teach. The whole city rose against me, and the very first week I became a Bahá'í they put me in prison." He said "Now I tell you something about the prison, but you can only have a conception of it, you can't imagine it." He was telling to the people who were also suffering and said "they opened my legs as far as they could and they tied one leg to one end of a log and the other leg to the other end. And then they laid me down and tied my head to the log. The man that was there started to beat me every day." The first three beatings each day I mentioned Ya Ali'u'Ala, Ya Baha'ul-Abhá and Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá - I mentioned the Báb and Ya Bahá'u'l-Abhá - mentioned Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and then I didn't feel anything." These three words. He said "The friends in that city tried to bring me out - there were only three Bahá'ís at the time, and one went to Tihrán and went to the outstanding Bahá'ís and they approached the Prime Minister and then a telegram came that they should release him from prison."

He said "My mother saw me one day in the street and she hit her breasts so hard that blood came out and said that I will never forgive you that you

left Islam and became a Bahá'í." He said "One night, the four of us gathered together, we were so poor, we gathered four pence. One penny was spent for charcoal, and one penny for tea and two pennies for something to sweeten our tea with." He said "We had only this much, and we made a nineteen-day feast. Just as we started to say prayers, a group of people came in to our feast and scattered us." And due to that, one of the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, one of the greatest that He has revealed, was for these four people who had nineteen-day feast in those days. He said "The name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had always been in my mind and I wanted to meet him. Suddenly there arose something in my mind and I wanted to see Him. And at this time I had worst saw in the log, the dust of this saw came to my eyes and I had very terrible eye disease, and at this moment I decided I had to go on foot to 'Abdu'l-Bahá." His eyes were so bad that he had to open them, go three or four steps, "then open them again till I reached the first city where I worked as a mason. When I had some money I went to the next village and so on, village by village, town by town till I reached Baghdad. When I reached Baghdad I dreamed of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and he went like this twice to me, I said I am sure that He is accepting me. I passed through the Arabian desert, an extremely difficult desert to pass through with guides, means of transport still in difficulty."

He passed through the desert on foot until he reached Beirut. In Beirut he saw Muhammad-i-Baghdadi, one of the believers at the time of Bahá'u'lláh, who was there to receive the visitors and guests of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and he went to his house. He said "Have you written to 'Abdu'l-Bahá?" The man replied, "No, something told me I had to come." Muhammad-i-Baghdadi said you don't have permission and 'Abdu'l-Bahá says that everyone must have permission before they come. He said but he gave me permission in my dream, but the man said that that is not a document, we must be orderly and the Master said that no-one can come without the permission. He told him where is the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, he said "You must cross the sea." He said he was so mad he wanted to throw himself into the sea and swim to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And then he understood that he was enamoured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, so he said "You can stay in my house and I will write to the Master." He wrote to the Master and the answer was that the visitor is permitted, let him come. He said "I went on foot to the House of the Beloved. I went in, they said 'the Master is in this room, you must go in.' He said "Suddenly I saw all the things I did in this life. I saw the moment I stroked my sister with a piece of wood. I saw the time I scaled the wall and saw something when I was a Moslem. I saw the time when with a hammer in my hand I hit against the people who were always fighting in those days." And he said "I don't want to go in, I want to go back." At this moment the doors opened and 'Abdu'l-Bahá embraced him. Yes. He said "I didn't know, I don't remember the moment 'Abdu'l-Bahá embraced me, I only know after perhaps hours I appeased of it and I heard the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá - 'you are welcome, be assured, you are welcome.'"

And then 'Abdu'l-Bahá asked his own barber to take some blood out of this man, yes he took a little of his blood and then he said I felt a little bit better. Now there was a man who used to work in the pilgrim's house. This man used to say to the visitors, "Now it is one month you are here, now you must go tomorrow." The other one next day, next month and so on. He said "I went to him and said the friends come here and become alive when they see the master. You are the angel of death when you come and say you must go tomorrow. By His own life if you come and tell me this I will strangle you here or throw you in the sea. If the Master tells you, tell him I am not ready. Let the Master come and tell me I must go." He said one day also, the Master was standing at the door, you know when they used to eat with their hands, they used to wash them first. Well the Master would pour water on the friends' hands to make them clean and then the Master from His own shoulder would give each one a towel. He said "I took the towel, folded it, put it in my pocket and sat down at the table. When the man came to collect the towels, he said 'you did not give it to me, the Master did, let Him come and take it back.' Well, this man promised never to tell me to go out from the presence of the Master. Then some weeks passed and the Master one night said 'the friends in Ishqabad are building a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, they are going to start. We will send them some money, each one, as much as we have.' So all the friends gathered the money and gave it to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. One of the friends didn't have any money, so he borrowed some money from 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then said 'write the name of Muhammad Hasan on the list and note that he borrowed nine shillings from 'Abdu'l Bahá.' And they wrote it down. And then the Master said, "Oh how I wished that I could go to the Temple and work there as a mason, as a labourer. I want to take mud from one place to another, stone from one place to another, I want to work as a labourer. But I am imprisoned in this place, I cannot move from this place, but how I wished to go.' This man stood up and said 'I will go'. Then I thought that I had become the angel of my own death, the man didn't tell me to go, but I stood up and said I would go."

Well the Master said, "alright you can go, but we have something to do yet, and then you can go." That thing that they had to do was this; The body of the Báb had been carried from place to place, village to village until it had reached the city of Haifa. Now it had been Naw Ruz when this man was there and the Master said we have to enshrine the body of the Báb. And this man was appointed to take the marble coffin from the House of the Master to Mt Carmel. And when they did it, you have read the account of how the Master went there and took off his shoes and His turban. Well on that night, the Master returned from Haifa to Akká, but there were eight persons there, and we worked on the shrine, we made the gardens, sowed the seeds so that flowers would grow, we were so happy chanting prayers, singing songs and telling stories, and suddenly at about 3am in the morning, one of the believers said "let us write a

letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and seek confirmation from Him, because we were the first people to work at the shrine." And they wrote their names, and because they were eight and wanted to make it nine, they wrote the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá because they said "You are always with us." And they started to walk to Akka. At about five in the morning they saw the balcony that Bahá'u'lláh used to walk on. The Master had been walking there and He asked them to come up. He asked, "Did you plant the seeds?" They said "yes." "Well," He said, "I wish that you had counted me as one of yourselves". So they brought out the letter and showed Him. He read the letter and immediately wrote the answer for it and He called them the sowers of flowers. And he told Mishkin Qalam to write nine copies of the answer and He gave each one of them a tablet.

This is one of the incidents. Well, he went to Ishqabad and worked at the Temple. If you have seen the picture of the Temple in Ishqabad in the Bahá'í World, the tallest man standing with something on his shoulder, well he is the man of whom I have told you in this story.

All through his life he was full of love, he never stopped showing his enthusiasm, even to the end of his life. Sometimes you would see him dancing in the street. I would say, "Ismail, why are you dancing?" He would say, "Sometimes when I am walking, I think that I am living in an age when Bahá'u'lláh has declared His mission, and I have seen His son, I can't control myself and I sing and dance wherever I am." Once he had lunch with me, I said: "Don't you just want to stretch?" He said, "If I stretch a little more I will reach heaven."

Now, another traveller who had been there at the same time told me this beautiful story, because it was at the same time that the body of the Báb was enshrined. He was from the city of Nayriz, the place where some upheavals took place at the time of the Báb - you will remember this from Nabil's Narrative. He was at the conference - do you remember the old man Mr and Mrs Blum,¹⁷ well this is the one.

His name was Vahíd. He said one day before Naw-Rúz, the Master said "I want to go to the shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, but my carriage has places for only three persons. And I only want from amongst you three persons to come." Then he asked Haji Mirza Haydar 'Ali, who is called the angel of Mt. Carmel, "Draw lots and whoever has lots will come with me."

They drew lots and three persons from the same city of Nayriz had been written on their papers - carriage. They went with the Master from Haifa to Akká and then to the shrine. On the way 'Abdu'l-Bahá suddenly started talking and said "It's tempest, it's storm". We looked at the ocean and there was not even the sign of a small wave. He said the time of Bahá'u'lláh was good; every day we had a new disaster, a new calamity, but these days things are quiet. We don't have ordeals and difficulties these days - how can we be happy. When he said this I was so frightened within myself I knew something must have

17. Alvin and Gertrude Blum were listening to Mr Faizi.

happened somewhere. In order to save the situation, I said to the Master that before I came from Nayriz, someone by the name of Husayn asked me to ask permission for him to come and to be honoured. Suddenly the Master looked at me and said he is already honoured. I grew with enthusiasm and excitement, I did not know what to do in that situation. We went to the Shrine and prayed, and then the next day the Báb's entombment was finished. Sunday after that we wanted to go back to our own city. The Master gave him a letter and said when you get back to Nayriz, open it and read it for the friends. I went to Nayriz, opened the letter and read it. It was about the entombment of the remains of the Báb in Mt Carmel and then he says that later he found out that on the day the Master was saying there is a tempest, that calamity is good, twenty seven of the believers in Nayriz were martyred, and the Master had written that the blessed body of the Báb had been entombed in Mt Carmel, it needed sacrifice, and the honour had been given to the friends in Nayriz. And one of them was Husayn, the one who asked to go on pilgrimage, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá said he was already honoured.

I thought of giving you these two stories to show how it took them years and years of growing within themselves before they could accept the Cause. How they worked for it, how they died for it and how they passed through the thorny road with love to the Master and the Cause. And we just see a shrine these days, with a body in the shrine but we must always think of the mysterious powers, mysterious events that have taken place step by step till the shrine had been realised.

The most delicious times in our life in Bahrain were when the pioneers passed through Bahrain to go to different parts of Arabia. They had to go from different ports so that people did not suspect they came from one country. It was not allowed by the Spiritual Assembly of Bahrain for us to meet in one place. They had to come at least after 10pm, because they were going to the most [text unclear] places in the world. If they were found out to be Bahá'ís they would be dragged back. One day a young man came and said he wanted to go to Qatar, where there were no pioneers. And it was very difficult for any one to go there. There were no boats or aeroplanes going there in those days. And we asked him was alone and he said, "No I am married, and my wife has sent me - we are tired of living in that city and we want to pioneer. I have come to pave the way." Well he remained there for about one week and then we found a sailing ship that used to take petrol to Qatar, and he sat on tanks of petrol all the way. He entered and most fortunately they wanted a carpenter and he volunteered for that. One week after that he sent word that he wanted another one to come, even if he doesn't know carpentry, it doesn't matter, let him come. So we sent another one immediately. When the second one arrived at the factory he said he didn't know any work, he hadn't worked as a carpenter. Well the first pioneer went to the master of the works and said every day I

am paid seventeen shillings. Please give me ten shillings and give him seven shillings, but do not tell him you are giving it to him from my salary. Just give me ten and give him seven and say this is from the factory. The master said alright, if you want it that way, and it was arranged for one year. During that year he learned the work, and we established by then two persons. They worked so well and so faithfully that they said if he wanted to go and get his family, they would give him a passport.

They gave him a permit and he brought his family - his wife and his little son. And they hired a house. Their house became a centre amongst the friends and they were most wonderful. And then after that there were lots of pioneers - now we have about twenty five, due to the faithful service of this first one. When they were many, the Shaykhs, the clergy, the religious leaders were against them and wanted to send them out. They were afraid of their influence. They called the first pioneer and said you must go out. He said by what order. They said by the order of the governor of this city. He said I will go out but I will be responsible in front of our International Bahá'í Council - he frightened them by this word. He said we have this international administrative council they will say why have you been sent out, what have you done, have you killed somebody, have you stolen something? If I say it is because I am a Bahá'í, they will not accept this reason. They were frightened for one whole month, they wrote to us that they were in difficulty and every night we prayed for them the remover of difficulties. And after one month they said you can stay, and they even gave them passports and allowed them to go to the conference and we met them there.

Another outstanding figure, a young man who was a graduate from the agricultural college, he decided to go pioneering. He came in to another part of Arabia where the Arabs from the desert come out of the desert just to eat something, and then go back in.

Mr Furútan

After twenty years serving in the Central Administration of the Bahá'ís in Iran, it is a great pleasure for me to be at this Summer School. I think that it is one of the best Bahá'í Summer Schools in the world, first, because it is established near the first Bahá'í Spiritual centre which was established in this country. Second, it has for 18 years served the followers of Bahá'u'lláh. And third, the order and beauty which I have witnessed everywhere. I have been to some of the Bahá'í summer schools all over the world, but this one has a special place in my heart. The greatest gift that I can offer this institution is my heartfelt prayer and request to the threshold of Bahá'u'lláh so that He by His unlimited bounties will enlarge the school and services rendered by this institution.

Those persons who are singled out by the Hands of Bahá'u'lláh to establish

Bahá'í administrative centres on this earth, and He enabled them to achieve charitable deeds during their life, must always stand out as shining examples in front of all the Bahá'ís, because it is only the sacred deeds which always shine like eternal stars from the horizon of the Abha Kingdom and from the horizon of this earthly life.

I know that you all realise that one of the great principles of the Bahá'í religion which is the most outstanding is that religion and science must always be in accordance with each other and must always go hand in hand in the service of humanity. One of the greatest miseries of mankind throughout the ages is that science and religion have been kept always apart. Science has divorced religion altogether, and religion has always hated science. The world of humanity has remained with one wing entangled in the mud of this world. But during this dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, the two wings are even.

The two sides, those who divorced religion and those who hated science have always been the cause of great misery and both are responsible for the many wars and bloodshed which have taken place during the history of humanity. Of course, you all remember the two great wars, these two great catastrophes which took mankind to the abyss of misery were the result of the conflict which existed and still exists between science and religion, and their followers. Some of these wars were very long - 300 years, and resulted in so much bloodshed. e.g. the crusades. For the first time in history, Bahá'u'lláh wants to bring these two powers together so that they can work for the prosperity of mankind. The place where these two powers will meet is in the schools. I have spent all my life as a teacher. I have studied the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the topic of education, and both advise humanity to have these two subjects taught to the children, so that they will be brought up by these two great powers.

Of course the time will come when the Bahá'ís will have their own educational institutions. Until such time, we must place great emphasis and importance on the summer schools. This is where we receive real Bahá'í education. That is why the beloved Guardian has said these summer schools all over the world are the introductory steps toward the establishment of Bahá'í universities in the future. One of the examples by which we can understand the nature of these schools is this: If we wish to make some soup, first we bring a pot, and then into the pot we place many elements. We are those many elements placed in the pot of the summer school. By the heat of the love of God, we will be boiling and will produce something wholesome for every adult, youth and child. The result of such institutions will be great for all.

You all realise that the Cause has reached a certain stage. Let us suppose that all the Bahá'ís are passengers in a certain boat, the boat of the Cause of God. The boat has left the shore, that stage was the Heroic Age of the religion of Bahá'u'lláh. Now it is on a tempestuous ocean, passing through very stormy days and nights to reach the shore of the Golden Age of the Cause of

Bahá'u'lláh. Now during this time there are different elements coming to the boat. Some are from a Muslim background, some from Jewish and Christian backgrounds, some Persian, some American, Arab, European, all have different backgrounds, all come into this boat and bring some traces of their previous education and spiritual understanding. We must do our best to cleanse ourselves of those traces, and be pure Bahá'ís before we reach the next shore.

Schools are melting pots where all these traces and unnecessary elements will be melted and washed away. They are like a polish on the mirror. If we follow the instructions and steps then of course we will get the best result out of them. Therefore we know that we come to the summer school to mould our thoughts and spiritual understandings according to the stupendous Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

Session One : The real cause of divisions in religion

The lessons that will be given here are quite different from those at a conference. I will arrange it in such a way so that if there is anyone in the audience who wishes to take notes or refer to a book, he can easily do so. The subject I wish to discuss is what has been the cause of sects in other religions. All the previous religions of the past have been divided into many divisions and sects - what has been the cause of it.

If we thoroughly study the religions of the past, we see that some years after the ascension of every one of the prophets, all the toils and troubles resulted in nothing, in vain. The messengers of God came to unite the different members of humankind, and they did succeed in uniting them. But, after a short while, they were again dispersed. They came to collect them under the banner of love. After a little while they were divided into divisions. They came to create love in the hearts of the people, but after their ascension, that love was changed into utter hatred amongst the same members and followers.

Again, if we study the reasons for sects forming after the passing of the prophets and come close to the roots of those events we will understand that the followers did not want to recognise the centres of the covenant. They did not want to come to the centre of the Covenant in times of difficulties and everyone of them followed his own whimsical ideas and imaginations. They neglected the words of God and they were dispersed.

To illustrate this basic fact I will go through the history of the dispensations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and will explain for you some of the reasons and some of the subjects which resulted in the formation of differences amongst themselves. This is something that I am sure you have studied, but I will briefly remind you of the same.

After Moses, for 450 years the Israelites were governed by elected people called judges. And the government had been very just and good - so good that the neighbouring countries respected the Israelites and the form of their government. And no division took place amongst them. After that, they changed the

elected judges into the kings on the throne. And the first king Saul was put on the throne of the Israelites to govern them. After Saul was killed there came David on the throne of Israel. And after him, Solomon. These two, David and Solomon were both prophets and kings. And it was during their reigns that the followers of Moses reached the climax of their progressive spiritual and material civilisation. The Mosaic civilisation was really established in their time.

But unfortunately, after Solomon, the followers were divided as to who should be the successor of Solomon. You know the Israelites were comprised of twelve branches. Ten branches accepted Jeroboam as their king and followed him. Only two accepted Rehoboam, son of Solomon, as their king. And it was the first time that division started in the family of Israel.

Now, those who followed Rehoboam the son of Solomon had their central root in Jerusalem and the holy of holies was there. And that was the centre of all of the Jews in those days, but his competitor Jeroboam chose as his centre the city of Shamron, and in order to persuade his followers not to go to Jerusalem to pay a visit to the holy of holies, he made a temple for gods and goddesses. When they were divided, they became weak and they had to find support from wherever they could. So each one of the rival kings tried to flatter the kings of Phoenicia and the kings of Egypt. In order to attract their attention to themselves, they brought into the temples the gods and goddesses and idols worshipped by the Phoenecians and the Egyptians and thus a great competition started between these two kings of Israel in bringing the idols into their temples.

Well, God was patient with them for some years, but this patience came to an end and he became angry. He brought upon them destruction. First the Assyrian kings destroyed Shamron, and secondly the Babylonian kings destroyed Jerusalem and brought the Jews into captivity and to the city of Babel keeping them there for seventy years, after which the king of Persia - Cyrus the Great - delivered them from their captivity and caused them to return to their native land.¹⁸

Now, during this time of course, they were again divided into different sects and divisions and their whole power was scattered and they became weak and feeble so that they could not withstand any force from outside. At that time the great Roman Empire came and scattered the Jews all over the world and this time was contemporary to the time of Jesus Christ.

Now, consider this fact about the history of the Jews. Moses with very many difficulties brought them out from the land of Egypt and delivered them from their troubles in that country. They were slaves, he made them the masters of their own land. He made them learned men. He gave them the kingship of Solomon and David. He made them the centre of material civilisation. But due to the whimsical fancies and imaginings, they were divided into sects and

18. See the Old Testament, the Book of Ezra I.

their whole power was taken away from them so that they became so weak and feeble that they were the lowest people of the world, and were scattered.

The same history you will find amongst the Christians. It is unfortunate that this happened in all these religions. You all know that when Jesus was crucified, he had about 120 to 150 very poor followers, and it took them about three centuries to become well known or officially recognised in the Roman Empire. And it was only in the time of Constantine the Great, a believer in Christ, through whom Christianity was known in the Roman Empire. After three centuries they came to life and were known throughout the Roman Empire.

Then they became free and they started to teach the Cause of Christ in Europe, Africa and Asia. And wherever they went, of course they had priests and clergymen. But the one who was living in Rome became the head of all of these priests and clergymen of different continents and countries of the world and he was supposed to be the most learned of them all and was elected Pope.

After the seat of the Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople, the great clergymen of that country who were under the mercy and bounties of the Empire did not want to obey the rules and regulations issued by the Pope in Rome and tried to make themselves independent of him. It was the struggle between them and the Pope that broke Christianity into two great churches of the east and the west. And that was the starting point for all the divisions thereafter.

The dispute was first about the authority of which one should be the greatest clergyman of the Empire and then the scientific and theological disputes started. And the first thing they disagreed on was the trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. These became subjects of great discussion amongst them. In the beginning they used to explain it very concisely and briefly saying that the son existed in the father like mind exists in the human being. As human being has a soul and one of its effulgences is the mind, so does the Son live in the Father. And the holy spirit is just a mediator between the two. They were discussing this and explaining it to the followers and there was no dispute about it. But afterwards they began to say now, between these three, which one was the greatest, Father, the Son or the Holy Spirit. Are we going to have all three on the same level, on different levels, which one is lower and which one is higher? And this became the starting point for divisions.

Arius,¹⁹ one of the theologians of the first part of the fourth century declared that there was no resemblance between father and son. Father is everlastingly living in his high position and sent his son as a manifestation amongst mankind for the education of mankind. And we must absolutely have them separated from each other.

19. Arius (256-336) was originally a native of Libya. His beliefs concerning the trinity and the divinity of Christ caused him his exile to Illyria (the ancient region of the eastern and northern coasts of the Adriatic Sea, known afterwards as Yugoslavia). His doctrine caused agitation for the whole church for more than half a century.

Now, when he expressed this idea amongst the followers, it was utterly against what the great book believed and propagated in those days. Pope and his followers, Arius and his followers began to dispute this fact, and quarrelled to such an extent that the emperor was obliged to gather most of these clergymen, in Nicaea,²⁰ in Asia Minor to settle the disputes amongst themselves.

It was in this congress where the basic principles of Christianity were formulated. And up to now they still believe the doctrines which were formulated at that congress in the first part of the fourth century. They said Father and Son are equal in degree, in origin and in qualities. Of course, we must never think that when one congress outlined the basic principles of Christianity they all followed it immediately and that there was no dispute or argument. They had great disputes and great wars and strifes amongst themselves by pen, by tongue and by sword. The history of these different congresses have been written by the blood of the followers of these great theologians.

In the fifth century, another calamity started, and that was the calamity of the Nestorians. The Nestorians said that Jesus sometimes called himself the Son of Man and sometimes the Son of God. Therefore we can call Mary the mother of man or the mother of God. And another church in Alexandria, stood against this idea, saying that Mary is the mother of God and that is all. Now when Christianity reached the borders of England, at about the sixth century, the division and differences between the two churches of Rome and Constantinople reached its climax. There was no end of quarrels. Sects were created every day as a result of different views and different ideas between these two different churches.

In the eighth century of Christianity another thing started, and that was this: should the Christians worship the pictures, icons and statues representing the Christ, God or the Holy Spirit? Now at Alrius in Sophia, which was a great temple near the country of Turkey, the king decided that he must have some, but the Pope was against it and ordered that he must resign his job. And that started wars between those different sects. Now the two sects became known as the worshippers and non-worshippers of the pictures, icons and statues of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit.

In the ninth century another problem started, this time between the Greeks and the Romans. They said from which one of the two does the Holy Spirit emanate, from the father or from the Son. Now the Latin people said both of them, the Greeks said from God only. And another series of strifes and wars started between the two countries.

In the tenth century, Christianity reached Russia, after one thousand years

20. Situated on the eastern shore of Lake Ascania, Turkey. It is especially famous for two religious councils held there, the first of which was convened by Constantine in 325. 318 bishops out of 1800 met to settle the Arian dispute concerning the question of nature of Jesus Christ. The Nicene Creed, which defined the Son as consubstantial with the Father, was adopted as the official position of the church regarding the divinity of Christ. The second council was convened in 787 by Irene, Empress of the East, and 350 bishops. The council ordered the veneration of images and their restoration in churches throughout the Roman Empire.

since the time of Christ. And it was in that century that the crusades started, and began three hundred years of fighting between the Christians and the Muslims over their Holy Places.

After that the Reformation started, Luther appeared and Protestants came into existence. And after that Protestants and Catholics became divided into still smaller sects and today you will find in every country more than 400 sects of Christianity. From then until now there have been more sects but there is no time to look at those new ones.

Now you see very clearly that the history of Christianity has been written down by the blood of its followers from the very beginning until now. For a very long time, there have been theological subjects to dispute about and to fight for. Now those things have been forgotten, there are political, national and racial prejudices bringing war between the Christian nations. One Christian nation is destroying the houses, cities and civilisation of another Christian nation.

Most unfortunately, one of the subjects they utterly neglected was the subject of women amongst the Christians. They did not rank them equal to men, and they neglected this great part of humanity. They did not realise that at least half of the population were women and they did not want to confess that they were equal to men, and they brought the reasons from their holy books. They went even farther than that, and discussed whether women had a human soul or not. Should they be considered as human beings or not. With apologies to the ladies at this meeting, they all decided that only men had human souls, and not women.

To support their own ideas, they opened their holy books. Of course, I don't say that the holy books said such things, but it was due to their ignorance of the meaning of the Word of God, and the wrong explanations of the Words of God. They opened the book where it said that God took some clay and moulded it into the figure of man and breathed into him the soul or the breath of life. And then He made him sleep and took out one rib and made it into women. But they contended that in the book of God, it is not written that He breathed into women the breath of life. Therefore, she has no human soul.

Some dared to question the clergy of those days "how come they move like men". They said, "well, there is a devil by the name of Beelzebub²¹ living in them and making them move like human beings, and that is why in paradise, Eve became first friendly with Satan and that was the cause of their expulsion from paradise." Open the third chapter of Genesis,²² where it says "now that you have become with Satan, you must have children with great many difficulties, and your husband will be your master and you must obey him." The same story has been repeated in the Qur'án, and that is why amongst the Arabs and the Muslim world, when they want to mention their wives they say "my

21. Beelzebub, Beelzebub and Baal-Ze-Bub: see 2 Kings 1:2,3,6,16 and Matthew 10:25.

22. The Book of Genesis, 3:16.

rib". Mr Furútan has a letter from his friend and he says my rib sends you her love. He says some of the Muslims are more fortunate and they say my ribs.

And Paul the great disciple also repeats and says these things in another form. He says God is the head of Christ and Christ is the head of man, and the ornament on man. and man is the head of woman. And then he goes on and says that man is not created for woman, but woman is created for man. As he is the glory of God, when he is going to the Church, he must take off his hat and have his head open in the presence of God, but women must cover their heads because they are not the glory of God, they are the glory of man.²³ Thus you see in every day in the history of Christianity, we have had some sort of schism brought about in that religion, even today. You will be surprised to know that sects are made for very insignificant reasons. One says: "what do you call God? You must call him Jehovah", and so they form a sect by themselves who don't use any other name for God but Jehovah. Another says: "which day shall we have holiday, Saturday or Sunday? So, they make another sect where they have Saturday as their holiday and things like that.

It is most surprising that they all say God is love. And we ask them if there is God then there must be love and not division. If there is division there is hatred, no love and hence no God. And that is why we say wherever there is division, hatred and schism, there is no God there and we do not want it.

The same thing is true in the religion of Islam. The moment Muhammad died, the religion was divided into two sects. Ali, his cousin and his son-in-law had to be recognised as his successor, but Omar, one of His followers did not let this be realised, and they elected an old man, Abu Bakr, as His successor, and this caused the two great sects, Shiah and Sunni, and now there are more than seventy different sects in Islam. With the exception of some years at the beginning of the Islamic dispensation, all the Muslims spent their time in wars against each other. If we really want to explain these things, we must explain 1000 years of warfare, civil wars amongst themselves.

The same subjects, and even things worse than that have been discussed by the followers of Muhammad, the prophet. Firstly, one of them said "is Gabriel, the one who was the mediator between Muhammad and God, a higher personage in the presence of God or is the servant of the House of Ali higher?". They said angels are made of the essence of things, since they are essence, let us see and count how many could gather together at the tip of a needle. They wanted the exact number and they fought over these numbers. Some said ten thousand, some said fifteen thousand, and thus they discussed all the days and hours of their lives for these insignificant problems.

You know they had Imams as sacred personalities and they called them sacred and pure. Well, they said: "our Imams are sacred and pure; when they sweat, is their sweat clean or not. If they are gathered in a certain place, can

23. 1 Corinthians, 11:3-9.

we make ablution for prayers with it or not". Their minds, especially the minds of the theologians of Islam, were, as we say in Persian, frozen. They could not think independently by themselves and they could not think about the serious problems of life. They were the same as the theologians of Christianity.

Now, for one example, I mention the name 'Abul Fadl, the greatest literary man and historian in the Cause. I want to give you an example of his life when he was a Muslim, how he was thinking and then when he became a Bahá'í, what a great change was brought upon him. When he was a Muslim priest - he was a great clergyman in Islam, and very learned too, he used to go and visit a holy place outside of Tihran on Thursday evenings, and he used to go on a donkey. One day he took his donkey to a blacksmith who used to live at the gates of Tihran who happened to be a Bahá'í. This blacksmith was illiterate. When Abul Fadl took the donkey to the blacksmith, the blacksmith started a certain discussion with him. The Bahá'í blacksmith said to him, "from the size of your turban, I understand that you are a big, learned man. I have a question for you. Is it true that the drops of rain are brought down by angels? We have heard that each drop of rain is brought by angels, they fly down to bring one drop of rain, then they fly up to get another one. Thousands of them fly up and down to bring this rain. Is it true or not? And Abul Fadl said, yes I have read it in one of our books. Then he asked from him, I have also heard that wherever there is a dog (for a dog is unclean to the Muslims) in a certain house, then the rain will not fall on that house or seven houses around it. Is it also true or not? He said yes, it is true, I have read this in our books. Then he asked him, please give this answer, if every drop of rain is brought down by an angel, and if angels don't come to houses with dogs, then there must be some houses without rain. How is it that we have rain everywhere, if this is the case. Well, Abul Fadl was really startled by this. He was a teacher of logic and philosophy, and he had read all these books without any serious attention to them, and now this question by this illiterate blacksmith had made him think and he was surprised and did not know what to answer. This was the introduction of him for becoming a Bahá'í. A blacksmith was the reason for him becoming a Bahá'í.

Just to bring our lesson to a conclusion, I want to give a final picture of the whole situation. There is the book of God given by a certain prophet to mankind for their instruction, education and guidance. He also appoints a certain man to interpret for him, but they did not want to pay any attention to him. Now this huge ocean of divine knowledge was divided by the ideas of different individuals into many little streams, weakening the ocean and weakening themselves and starting to fight against one another. This is a picture of all the religions of the past when they did not turn their attention to their centres of the Covenant. Well, this age is called the pride of all ages, and in the next lesson we will study how the covenant of God was established by Bahá'u'lláh in this age.

Session two : The Bahá'í Dispensation

Whatever I want to refer to tonight, you will have already studied in the books and Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I only want to repeat them to emphasise some important points. I am sure that you have come across the words "Cycle" and "Age" in the Tablets. Bahá'u'lláh is the founder of this Cycle, which will last at least 500 thousand years. And He is at the same time the founder of an Age which will last at least 1,000 years.

In this new Cycle which will last for 500,000 years, there will be many "ages" or "dispensations". The first one is that of Bahá'u'lláh himself and at regular intervals, every 1,000 years or so, a prophet will arise to renew the spirit of the Cause, all these prophets will be the propagators of the general principles of humanity laid down by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh.

When I say that this new Cycle will last for 500,000 years, and the general principles of the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh will not change, please remember that those general principles such as world peace, the Most Great Peace, will not change. Do you imagine that by the coming of any prophet will this great principle be changed? Or that prejudices of all kinds should not be abolished? Do we think that this principle could ever be altered? Or education should not be compulsory? These principles will be carried on for evermore. As long as mankind is on this planet, he will be in need of these principles, and at intervals the prophets will come and give these principles new impetus, to penetrate these teachings further into the hearts and souls of the people.

The world will be united by the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and never will the time come when the people say let's go back to the time when we were divided into sects. We have been divided into little countries' fighting. These teachings will progress mankind from one stage to a higher stage and this will continue for evermore.

When a man reaches the age of maturity he never goes back to the age of childhood. He will go on. The same thing will occur with mankind as a whole. Under the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, humanity will pass into the age of maturity, the wheel of history will ever be marching on and never goes back.

Now this "Age" which belongs to Bahá'u'lláh himself is divided into three great parts. First part is the Heroic Age. Second part is the Formative Age, and the third is the Golden Age. Now the Heroic Age is divided into three parts. Firstly, the time of the Báb, nine years. Secondly the time of Bahá'u'lláh, 39 years, and thirdly, the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 29 years. Altogether, 77 years. Now the first period, the time of the Báb, which lasted nine years, starts with the declaration of the Báb, and ends with secret declaration of Bahá'u'lláh in the dungeon of Siyah-Chal (Black Pit) in Tihran. And that of Bahá'u'lláh starts with the declaration of Bahá'u'lláh and ends with his ascension in Bahji, thirty nine years later. And the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from the time when they read the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh till the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Now, it is interesting to know that the Heroic Age which begins with the declaration of the Báb and ends with the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá is exactly equivalent to the lifetime of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, because as you will remember 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born on the morning preceding the declaration of the Báb's mission. He was born with the birth of the Heroic Age, and with His passing, it came to an end. This is a very interesting point.

Now, in the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, you find the history of the Heroic Age, the exemplary life of a hero in the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, and the greatest example of servitude to the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh.

In the first part of the Heroic Age, the Kingdom of God descended from the heaven to the earth. The religion of God was established. By the three great personages of the Cause, the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the victory of the Faith was guaranteed by the blood of 20,000 martyrs.

Due to the cause of the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and the receptive power of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, something new was brought into existence, and that was the Tablets of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This was a child born by the power of Bahá'u'lláh, and the receptive nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The Guardian says that this document is an outline of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The Guardian also said that the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá are supplementary notes of the Kitab-i-Aqdas.²⁴

When this first Age, the Apostolic Age, came to an end by the ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, it meant that the law giving power of God came to an end, and the second stage, the Formative Age began. In this second Age two powers are needed: protective power of God and executive power.

Whatever was necessary for 500,000 years of humanity was laid down by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh in His books and Tablets, and whatever should not be changed in 1,000 years was also written down by His pen. But those things which would be affected by time, were left unwritten, but it was left to those elected legislative bodies to develop rules for the parts not written by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh.

Those things that would be affected by years and days were left for the boards that would be elected by the people, and they have legislative powers. Now, these will be of three kinds - international for the whole world, national for one country and local for one place. This shows the elasticity of the religion of God. It is steadfastly having roots in the principles of Bahá'u'lláh, but growing according to the needs and to protect, rules and regulations that will be laid down by legislative bodies.

There are two points worthy of attention. First, those legislative powers are boards, the members of which are not there by inheritance. They are elected by the people -international, National and local. And elections in the Bahá'í religion are absolutely free from all the destructive elements. That means there

24. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944, p. 328.

are no candidates, no propaganda, no speeches and none of these other childish things done in the world today. It is the sacred religious duty of every believer to freely elect whomever from among his own community who is sincere, active and wise. The second element which is worthy of attention, is that there are parts that are not written by the pen of Bahá'u'lláh, but have been left to a board which are elected by the people. That board will put down rules and regulations for the whole world.

Now, within that legislative power, the international one will come into existence by three processes. First, all the local communities of every country will elect representatives to go to the capital city of each country to form the convention. The convention from all the believers in that country will elect the nine members of the National Spiritual Assembly. The members of the National Assemblies will elect from all the Bahá'ís of the whole world the members of the International House of Justice. These members must be the most active, the most wise and the most sincere. Three times the communities will be sieved to have the most pure in the International House of Justice working for the whole of the world.

The International House of Justice will be established on Mount Carmel. It is from there that the streams of the knowledge of God, and the laws of God will flow down to all the countries. The National Spiritual Assemblies of the countries will receive laws and regulations from the International House of Justice, and the rules and regulations that have not been decided by the International House of Justice but are needed in their own countries will be decided by them. And they will convey all messages to the local assemblies, and the local assemblies will adopt regulations not mentioned there according to the demands and necessities of their situation. Now you see how the legislative power comes down from the highest International House of Justice to the local assembly which may be just 9 people, but yet they receive that regulation from the great House of Justice of the world. And how the friends are connected by their Local Assembly to their National and International Houses of Justice.

That a world order will be established, we can say that the world is under the commandment of God. Above all is the Book of God, under that the International House of Justice, then the National Assemblies and then the local Houses of Justice, all working together, and the individuals will put them into action.

Now, above all is the Word of God. Whatever legislation is laid down by the International House of Justice must not be against what is written in the book of God. At the head of the House of Justice is the Guardian who leads the legislative power to the Guardianship, that is whoever, to the one who has the power of expounding the book of God on this earth.

The legislative power is one of the pillars of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and we say that this legislative power is under the word of God. But who is the one to expound the Book of God, to see that nothing will be laid down against

the book of God. This is important for us to study.

Do you remember in our previous lessons that we discussed how in previous religions, they were always divided into sects and divisions and we explained why this was so - many people tried to explain the verses of God according to their own imaginations and limited understandings of the complete meaning of the Book of God. And everyone tried to bring followers to himself and thus the religion was divided. But we must be glad and rejoice in our hearts that this door is forever closed in the Bahá'í religion.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has clearly said in His Tablets of Will and Testament, that no one of these Houses of Justice whether International, National or Local, no one of the family of Bahá'u'lláh or the Báb, no one of the most learned people in the Bahá'í community and no one of the Hands of the Cause has any right to expound or explain the meanings of the Book of God according to their own understandings. This refers to only one person, and that is the centre of the Covenant of God.

I have often said that if you put all the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on one part of the balance, and only this Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the other side, this will be equal to all of those writings. The reason is this, the religion of God came to establish the unity of humanity. Bahá'u'lláh says I came primarily for this purpose. Twenty thousand people gave their lives for this purpose. And the only thing that guarantees that unity is the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Had it not been for this, the Bahá'í Faith would by now be divided into thousands of sects around the world.

'Abdu'l-Bahá has said that no sin will ever be equal to making divisions and differences amongst the friends. The powers of understanding of the people are different. Should we refer to the power of understanding of the people, a beautiful, constructive, prosperous house will immediately be changed into a desolated, destroyed house. Light will vanish immediately, and a night full of darkness will come in its place.

Many have asked me what is the guarantee for the unity of the Bahá'í world. I have often told them it is the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Has he said it clearly, they ask? Yes, everything is written extremely clearly and declared by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. I read you some parts:

Firstly, this is what the Master says about the person of the Guardian. He says:

“O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghsán (Branches), the Afnan (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi - the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and Sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, - and he is the sign of

God, the chosen branch, the guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the expounder of the words of God and after him will succeed the first-born of his lineal descendents."²⁵

Here He describes the Guardian, and gives him five different ranks. Some people may say, well 'Abdu'l-Bahá is describing him as a very good person, yet they do not have to obey him. This is also addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in another part, when he describes the Guardian as:

"The sacred and youthful branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice to be universally elected and established, are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One, (may my life be offered up for them both... Whoso rebelleth against him and against them hath rebelled against God; Whoso opposeth him hath opposed God;... Whoso denieth him hath denied God; whoso disbelieveth in him hath disbelieved in God; whoso deviateth, separateth himself and turned aside from God. May the wrath, the fierce indignation, the vengeance of God rest upon him!...It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice, upon all the Aghsán, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God... to turn unto him and be lowly before him."²⁶

Now, some people may say if we disobey the Guardian, let the wrath of God rest upon us. But they are not left on that point only, the Master has written about them. He says:

*"...the Hands of the Cause of God must be ever watchful and so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the People of Bahá and in no wise accept any excuse from him. How often hath grievous error been disguised in the garb of truth, that it might sow the seeds of doubt in the hearts of men!"*²⁷

Now having this document in our hands, we must remain assured and certain that never will the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh have the same destiny of other religions. No east church and west church. No Omar or Abu Bakr or other covenant breakers as in the age of Islam will ever come into existence. In the House of Justice the two great powers will unite, the power of legislating and the power of expounding. The Guardian will be the head of that legislative power,

25. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Sydney: Bahá'í Publications Australia, 1992, p. 18.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

and always will protect the unity of humanity under his unerring guidance.

We don't say that there are no differences existing in the Bahá'í Cause. The differences which exist have been much greater than those of the religions of the past, but the only thing that safeguarded the unity of the people of Bahá'u'lláh was this document and nothing else.

These are the last lines of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

"It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by the two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree."

"For he is, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnan, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Bahá'u'lláh) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular conviction. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Centre of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.

*The Glory of Glories rest upon you!*²⁸

These Tablets of the Master were written when the Beloved Guardian was 9 years old. I congratulate the Bahá'í community for having been given a document by which their unity is forever safeguarded. Whenever I read the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, my soul soars in the oceans of beauty and happiness.

Questions and Answers

Question: Was the Guardian ready at the age of 9?

Answer: There is a short time for us to think of the future and less to think of the past. If the guardian at the age of 9, he would be the guardian of the Cause of God, he could control the Cause. At that age of 9 he was fully ready to accept that responsibility, and that is why the Master wrote it down. Of

28. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

course for those persons who are confirmed from the high ranks of God, we never count years. Even from amongst the students of the schools, we find a child of nine who has the capacity of a child of the age 15, 16 and more. Also children of age 15 or 16 who did not have the capacity of those aged 5 or 6 after the intelligence test was given to them.

We have heard of many children, precocious ones, who have been showing great intellectual capacity at the age of 9, who have conducted great orchestras for example. And then a person who is divinely appointed, divinely supported is like a machine through which God works, no matter at what age he is.

Question: Some Christians believe, probably from the Book of Revelation, which mentions a millennium at the end of which the devil will be loose for a while, that there will be a period, a short period of difficulty, before the next manifestation is accepted.²⁹

Answer: You see, it exactly happened at the time of Bahá'u'lláh. Millennium refers to the coming of Muhammad. His revelation was for 1000 years, and when Bahá'u'lláh declared his mission there were devilish spirits who stood against Him as covenant breakers and against the Master, and they had a free time in those days and they were free. But in the time of the Guardian, as it is written in the fables of the East, a great power will put the devils in a bottle and seal it. Now he has done so, and they will never come out.

Question: Our communities are not very large, and since our voting is through prayer and not through nomination, how are we to know those who are best qualified?

Answer: As the community will grow in number, the means will increase also such that the friends will know each other better than now. If now we meet only 19 days a time, in the future we will have better time to meet and oftener than now, more occasions more places and know each other much better than now. The means will be newspapers, radio, television, and many other things which will help us altogether.

Session Three : The powers of Expounding and Legislating

We remember from our last lesson that the prophetic cycle established by Bahá'u'lláh for 500,000 years and this cycle is divided into several ages and we are now in the first age, the age of Bahá'u'lláh himself which will last for at least 1000 years. We also said that this age is divided into 3 periods. Apostolic or heroic, formative and golden period. We all remember that the first period lasted for 77 years, the life age of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, now we are in the formative

period, and we don't know when we will reach the golden age of Bahá'u'lláh. The first period was divided into three parts, first the Báb's nine years, second Bahá'u'lláh's 39 years and third 'Abdu'l-Bahá's 29 years. The world order of Bahá'u'lláh is based on two great pillars. First the pillar of expounding, and second the pillar of legislation. We also mentioned that expounding the Book of God is only in the hand of one central figure and that is the centre of the covenant of God. No-one in the Bahá'í world community, no Local or National Assembly, no Hand of the Cause of God and no international House of Justice will ever have the right to do that. Legislation divides into three kinds: the international, national and local. What we said now is the revision of last night's lesson.

Tonight's lesson will centre around these two problems. First, the relation between the power of expounding and the power of legislation. Then the problems, miscellaneous problems, which come out of these two.

This point is extremely important for the Bahá'ís to know, that the duties of the guardians of the Cause and the duties of legislative powers are explicitly written down by the pens of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We want to know the duties of these two great powers, of the Guardian and of the House of Justice, because they are not left alone by themselves to do whatever they like, but their duties are appointed, and according to those duties they must work, decide and act.

Now, the first and foremost duty of the Guardian of the Cause is expounding. Please have in mind that this word never means explanation. By expounding the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh or the Book of God it is meant that when there is diversity of understanding about something in the book, there are several people who have a different understanding, then they refer to the Guardian and he says this verse means this and only this. The people should not follow different ideas, but that which is expounded by the Guardian. But sometimes there is a different word in the book, and I may go and ask somebody for the explanation. He says what it does mean; he does not expound. He says it means this word, it is a synonym to that word. Some parts may refer to an historical thing. He says this refers to that. And then the meaning will be clear. But in other places where expounding of the problem is concerned, it is only in the hand of the Guardian.

One day the Guardian read for me a verse from the book of Aqdas in which Bahá'u'lláh addresses Tihiran. He says, soon, all the affairs will be revolutionised in the land of Tehran. 'Now here is a word in the second part, a word which may mean that public will rule on you or there will be a confusion on you and your country. And two or three different meanings can be made on this word. That word in Arabic is *Jomhoor*, the public will rule. Then he asked me "what do our teachers say about this verse of the book of the Aqdas? How do they give the meaning?". "Well," I said, "so far the teachers have told me

29. Revelation 20:1-3.

that there will be a great confusion in Tehran and then the people will rule and there will be anarchy.”

He said “no, it does not mean that. Bahá'u'lláh says revolutions will take place in Iran and then the public will rule over the land. It means when the public of Iran will elect their representatives and then the NSA or the House of Justice of Iran will have the full representation and will rule over Iran.”³⁰

Well, I gave you this example so that you will know the difficulties that will arise and had it not been for the sake of one who would give his decisive meaning about the word, then there would be confusion amongst the friends. But he gives the real meaning of the word and everyone will be satisfied.

I give you an example from the Master. There is a verse in the Qur'án that says “God had a trust and he wanted to entrust it to the world of creation. He gave his trust to the mountains, they did not accept it, he brought it upon all the very heavy strong things, and suggested to them to accept this trust of God, they did not accept. But he suggested to man, you accept it and man accepted it. Because He was the Wronged-one and the commentators of the Qur'án wrote because man was oppressor and ignorant. Well, there arose a great difficulty amongst them for that trust is the trust of prophethood. And the most perfect man of every age accepted that trust of God. Well, they said if the prophets who are the most perfect of all creation accepted the trust of God, how could they be called ignorant and oppressors? They were at a loss and are still at a loss, and they don't know how to solve this problem.”³¹

Well, the Master solved it in one simple sentence. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá says refer to the grammatical rules of the Arabic language and you will very obviously find the meaning. In this case, it does not mean oppressor, it means oppressed one, wronged one; it does not mean ignorant one, it means ignored one. They accepted as they were the most wronged ones on earth, the prophets, and those whose values were always ignored by mankind. It means that. It solved the whole problem. Well, wherever such problems arise we must refer to the centre of the covenant and he will expound it for us and we will clearly understand the meaning.

Now, the same centre of the Covenant in whose hand lies the authority to expound, is the chairman of the legislative power. Hence by the one person, the two powers will be connected to each other. The power of expounding is the chairman of the power of legislating. The chairman of the House of Justice must be the Guardian of the Cause, thus the two pillars will be connected to each other. The Guardian has no interference in the work or opinions of the members of the House of Justice. He is there so that if it ever happens that a decision is passed by the House of Justice that may be against the explicit Writings of the Book of God, the Guardian will put his finger there and says it is against that rule of God and it should not pass.

30. See Bahá'u'lláh, *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1992, p. 54.

31. *Qur'án*, 33:72.

(text missing) ...and regulations for the whole world is the International House of Justice and the only place where we believe that their decisions are divine and divinely protected and we know why the Guardian should be the chairman of the House of Justice - so they should always be under his guard, so that the weakness of humanity may never enter the decisions and may never have anything to do with their study of cases. Always they will be under the unerring guidance of the Blessed Perfection and the Báb. That is why ‘Abdu'l-Bahá said in His Will and Testament, that their decisions will be divine, everybody has to obey them and whosoever disobeys them has disobeyed God.

Now, you see very clearly how the two powers have their own duties to perform and none will have the power to interfere with the other one, and joining them will be the person of the Guardian of the Cause. Well, their duties of legislative power are also very clearly written down. Those things that are not mentioned in the Book of God and in the Tablets of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, they may make rules about them according to the circumstances of the time and whenever it necessitates to change it, they themselves may change the rules.³²

Another duty of the Guardian is to nominate and appoint Hands of the Cause. It is not a title given by any other person, it is the duty given to them by the Guardian. “The Hands of the Cause of God must elect from their own number nine persons that shall at all times be occupied in the important services in the work of the guardian of the Cause of God. The election of these nine must be carried either unanimously or by majority from the company of the Hands of the Cause of God...”³³ Now, whoever may be appointed Hand of the Cause, as many as the Guardian appoints, then in a certain time they will elect nine from amongst themselves who must be in the service of the Guardian. The duties of these Hands of the Cause are also explicitly written down in the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá:

*“The obligations of the Hands of the Cause of God are to diffuse the Divine Fragrances, to edify the souls of men, to promote learning, to improve the character of all men and to be, at all times and under all conditions, sanctified and detached from earthly things. They must manifest the fear of God by their conduct, their manners, their deeds and their words.”*³⁴

The Guardian will encourage each and all of them to different services which he has in mind, such as teaching, education and other things. Therefore, we understand the duties of everyone, the Guardian, the House of Justice, the members of the Hands of the Cause and others are fully and explicitly written down in this *Will and Testament* of the Master, so that no-one will ever deviate from his duties.

32. See Shoghi Effendi, *The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh*, London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1947, pp. 55-65.

33. ‘Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of ‘Abdu'l-Bahá*, op.cit., pp. 20-21.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Now that the Guardian is expounding the Book of God, the House of Justice makes rules and regulations, but who is to execute these things. The governments of the world will be the power of execution of all these laws passed by the House of Justice. The governments will also be international, national and local and each will be the executive power of this great legislative power. We have a judicial court also to solve the disputes occurring between different nations of the world. The great powers of the world expounding, legislating and executing are found explicitly in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Now, you remember we explained how religions have been divided into different sects because they have been quarrelling over what they should believe and what should be the basic beliefs of the religion. What should we call Jesus? What should we believe in the Holy Ghost? What is the rank and station of the mother of Jesus? What should we believe in God? The same thing happened in the history of Islam. Now, to prevent all these hows, whys and wherefores in the Bahá'í religion, 'Abdu'l-Bahá has fully and completely written down the basic beliefs of all the Bahá'ís and no one has the right to change these beliefs in the course of the years to come.

This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them): "His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb), is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty. His Holiness the Abhá Beauty (may my life be a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the Supreme Manifestation of God and the Day-spring of His Most Divine Essence. All others are servants unto Him and do His bidding." Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself.³⁵

Now, please ponder on these facts so far explained and see how everything is lawfully written down and we have everything according to the law of religion and if there is any way that they may create a certain schism or division in the Cause of God, please mention if there is any, all are closed up for centuries. If you think there is any chance for any man to make a new scheme to create a schism in the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh you may mention it now and that will be shown in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that this door is also closed.

The International government will be the representative of all the governments of the world working with the House of Justice so that none will deviate from the rules issued by that board. National governments may have kings at the head for instance but that government should work according to the issues of the National Assemblies and local governments will be the same under local Assemblies.

35. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

I specially explained these things as several of the friends have asked me what is the difference between the institution of the Guardianship and the Institution of the Pope. It is a very interesting question and the explanation is quite easy. Now, first I ask what is the difference between Jesus Christ and all those clergies at His own time: such as pharisees, Saducees, the Heads of the Synagogues and others? The difference is that Jesus Christ was supported, guided, aided and protected by God and the others were not. The same difference exists between the Guardian of the Bahá'í Cause and any other person who claims to have the power in his own hands. The Guardian is appointed by the Master and the Master is appointed by Bahá'u'lláh. He is divinely appointed. The others are self appointed. He is appointed by the revealed Pen of the manifestation of God, the others are not. About him it is said that he is always under the protection and guidance of God but about them such things are not said.

What is the difference between Peter and the Pope? Peter was appointed by Christ. He said to him you are the rock and upon this rock I will build my church.³⁶ It is an oral saying of the Manifestation of God and we accept it as such that he was appointed as the centre of the covenant of Christianity. But nothing has been said about the Pope; nothing has even been said about the Pope by Peter or people like him.

There is a living example. Suppose I say to you that I am the governor of Yerrinbool. Will you accept it? You say "never". And I say, "Why don't you accept it?" What is the difference between me and the person who calls himself Mayor or governor? You will say that he has something in his hand from the central government to show that he is appointed by the government but you do not have that paper. The difference is very small, but the reality is great. The same difference exists between the Pope and the Guardian. Guardian has something in his hand written down by the revealed pen of God but the Pope does not have anything.

Now people come here and tell you they are doctors. Will you accept them as such? You will never accept them, but only the ones who have their diplomas in their hands, then you say they are doctors. In every little thing we want something in the hand of those who claim things. I say look here now, we accept Peter as the Centre of the Covenant in Christianity only because Jesus Christ has said it. We accept it only because of that. But when the others do not have such a thing then of course we do not accept them as the central figures of a great power on earth.

The difference between the Guardian and the Pope is like the difference between man and the manifestation of God, the difference between Pope and Christ. If the same document had been produced to us by any person we would accept it, we don't have the Guardian because he is Shoghi Effendi.

36. Matthew, 16:18.

No, because in this document it is written you should refer to this person. Anyone who has a divine document, a divine certificate in his hand we accept him as the centre of the covenant.

How do we know that Bahá'u'lláh is the manifestation of God? We know by his word that he has been appointed. And the same man who was appointed by God has singled out 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Centre of the Covenant and 'Abdu'l-Bahá has singled out Shoghi Effendi as his Centre of the Covenant and the Guardian of the Cause. It is one link connected to another one.

It is a school and we want everything to be logical and scientific. Now, the popes claim to be infallible, this station of infallibility is given to them by God or is it a self appointed privilege? They do not have any document to show that it is given to them by God, but some years ago they thought of having this power in their own hands and they claimed it to be infallible.

We had a king in Iran who used to issue decrees and medals for himself. Every week the order would be issued and medals would be worn by him. Well, it is very easy for him to do that, but if it is given to him by another authority then it would be appreciated. The same thing applies to these people. They give themselves authority, privileges, infallibility and other things.

Read the Gospel all through and see if you can find anywhere in the Gospel where it is said by Jesus Christ that in the future, some people will be the heads of my church and they will be infallible and we will accept it. There is no reference like that in all the Bible. We read this before and we read it again:

The sacred and youthful branch, the guardian of the Cause of God as well as the Universal House of Justice...are both under the care and protection of the Abhá Beauty, under the shelter and unerring guidance of His Holiness, the Exalted One (may my life be offered up for them both). Whatsoever they decide is of God. Whoso obeyeth him not, neither obeyeth them, hath not obeyed God...³⁷

It is a divine document in our hand. Whenever there is such a divine document in our hand we accept it and say the others may also have the same power. It is like flowers. Wherever it grows it is a flower. We will accept it as flower. The first difference between the Guardian and the Pope is this: that the Guardian was divinely appointed and he is not. The second is that the Guardian is divinely appointed as infallible and the Pope is not. The third, he has duties to perform and he has only to see to those duties written down for him, but these duties are written down by a higher authority, the pen of 'Abdu'l-Bahá but the Pope has no such duties, no one has outlined his duties, everything is in his own hand and his powers have no end and no limit.

The Guardian is only the Chairman of the House of Justice and of course

he is the one to expound the Book of God for the people, but the Pope is the head of the clergymen of the earth and the clergymen are commanding the people and their powers have no limit.

You see, even some money which goes to the Guardian, Bahá'u'lláh in the Kitab-i-Aqdas and some other Tablets has definitely and explicitly said to which lines and ways this money should be spent. Therefore the Guardian is obliged to follow these rules and duties.

When we see the Guardian in his daily life we see that he follows all these rules and regulations of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His clothing are extremely simple and years and years old, but very clean. He has full 24 hours job, he sleeps only 4 to 5 hours every day, he has no holidays, no off days, no long breaks, no amusement, just work and work and work. Why? He has all the authority in his hand, but he never thinks of himself, just works for the Cause throughout his life. This shows that he is holy, he is under the protection of God and he is confirmed by God.

We have nine days during which we do not work. These nine days are worst for the Guardian, because during those days he receives telegrams from all around the world and he replies to each and every one of them. Therefore, receiving and answering these telegrams means additional work during those holy days. I say that the guardian is self imprisoned in his library or studio where he always is and lives and works.

Of course, I find such questions as what is the difference between the Pope and the Guardian very reasonable. The world is afraid of such a station and when we say we have a Guardian, they are afraid of another sort of papacy in the Bahá'í religion. As we say in Persian, a man who is bitten by a snake is afraid of a black and white thread (a burnt child dreads the fire). Those who have been under that authority are afraid of having such a thing in the Bahá'í religion. But if they ask and you explain these things point by point, they will understand and I believe, if they understand well they will be thankful and grateful to God for having given us a Guardian who is under the unerring guidance of God himself.

Not all that glitters is gold, but it is only gold that glitters. Of course, when we say that the Guardian is the head of our religion it does not mean that he is like the Pope, we must see to the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and understand the difference between these two powers.

Another example. The sun has set. The world is in darkness. If the moon shines, which one is better - the moon-shine or without it? The guardianship is the moon that receives light from the sun and reflects it to the earth after the absence of the sun of truth. All through this age of Bahá, due to the guardians, we will never have a dark night.

37. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, op.cit., p. 19.

Question: What if the guardian cannot attend a meeting of the House of Justice?

Answer: It is written in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that if the Guardian can not go to the House of Justice and be the chairman, he will send by his own appointment, a representative as such. This also is written there so that in the future, they will not question it in the House of Justice. It is written down.

Question: The guardian who comes after the present guardian, will he be of the same station?

Answer: It's not the first guardian, it is for all the guardians; all will be under the protection and guidance of God.

Question: Will he have more authority than any form of government in Italy or Rome?

Answer: Since the middle ages the pope was extremely powerful. The kings could not become kings in their own countries unless their crowns had been put on their heads by the pope and they should have been blessed by him too. In the churches of Rome, there are statues of the kings kneeling down and the Pope is blessing them. That shows the power in the olden days. But as there were fights between the Popes and the states, little by little the power decreased, but now in Rome his power is so that government is under his influence.

Question: Do you have any information about when the International House of Justice will be established?

Answer: I have not seen anything written down, but as I collect from here and there, my personal feeling is that by 1963 we will have our International House of Justice.

Question: When will we have world peace?

Answer: Lesser peace? Yes. You know we have lesser peace and Most Great Peace. The lesser peace will be by 1963.

No Governments of the Future

There are three more subjects about the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and I want to dwell upon them tonight. First, the states in the future; governments. Second, the judicial power of the Bahá'í administration or the course of Justice. Third, our keeping apart from the Covenant breakers.

This is what 'Abdu'l-Bahá has said about governments in his Will and Testament. We read it first and then the explanation will be given.

This House of Justice enacteth the laws and the government enforceth them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive, the executive must aid and assist the legislative body so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness and justice may become firm and strong, that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.³⁸

You read here clearly that the Master states two forces. He means the legislative power and the executive power. And he emphatically says that these two must harmoniously work together - legislative must aid the executive and the executive must assist the legislative. Another term that he uses for these two forces is government.

You remember, we have three kinds of legislative centres - international, national and local. And here 'Abdu'l-Bahá says the government should put into action what is enacted by legislative power. Therefore, we will have three forms of government - international, national and local.

The executive power or the international government is to put into power the laws and regulations of the International House of Justice. And it is another duty to perform and that is to supervise the national governments, lest sometimes they stand aggressive against another government. In that case the international government should see to it and subdue the aggressive nation or the nation who does not want to execute the laws of the international House of Justice.

A national government will be the executive power of whatever is issued by the International House of Justice and by its own national House of Justice. And whatever is issued by the local assemblies, local House of Justices, the local government will be the executive power. Whatever the national government gives the right to them to follow the rules and regulations issued by the local government, they will perform.

The details of these governments are not put down, therefore it will be the duty of the Guardian and the House of Justice to put down the details and forms of these three kinds of international, national and local governments.

The International Tribunal

The international tribunal of Justice is only to see to the disputes that happen between international governments, and that is what is written in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The exact quotation is:

38. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, *Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, op.cit., p. 24.

*This body of the Hands of the Cause of God is under the direction of the Guardian of the Cause of God. He must continually urge them to strive and endeavour to the utmost of their ability to diffuse the sweet savours of God, and to guide all the peoples of the world, for it is the light of Divine Guidance that causeth all the universe to be illumined. To disregard, though it be for a moment, this absolute command which is binding upon everyone, is in no wise permitted, that the existent world may become even as the Abhá Paradise, that the surface of the earth may become heavenly, the contention and conflict amidst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments may disappear, that all the dwellers on earth may become one people and one race, that the world may become even as one home. Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.*³⁹

'Abdu'l-Bahá in other Tablets has explained how this international tribunal may be formed. He says the members should be from all countries and when they come to this tribunal, they should have credentials from their parliaments and from their governments so that they will really represent their nations and their governments and in that case whatever they vote and whatever they say and decide will be fully accepted by their own nations and their own governments.

That is what we have about the international judicial power and how it will be formed. More than that, details of other judicial centres are not written down therefore this is something that will be explained and laid down in the future.

Some preliminary steps have been taken so far. For instance, the international council that we have in Haifa now, the Guardian says, is an introduction to the international judicial power. And if you study the 10 year plan, you will see in 5 or 6 Islamic countries the Guardian has ordered that in their capitals a judicial court should be formed and this is another step of judicial powers to be brought into existence by the Bahá'í world during the next 10 years.

The Avoidance of Covenant-Breakers

The third section deals with abstaining from contact with the Covenant breakers.

I first want to explain what is a covenant breaker, who is a covenant breaker. Could a man count himself a Bahá'í and also a covenant breaker. Could these two gather together in the same person. The covenant breaker is one who has broken the covenant of the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh or 'Abdu'l-Bahá. You know each one of them had a certain covenant made with the people of the world.

Anyone who does not abide by these covenants will of course be counted as one who has broken these covenants.

As this is very important and I have been asked about it many times, I want to explain it as fully as possible so that every part of this question will be fully explained. Let's suppose one of the followers of the Báb. The person says I am a Bábí, a follower of the Báb. And as such I don't want to accept Bahá'u'lláh as the manifestation of God, I don't recognise Him as the one promised by the Báb, we call such a man as the one who has broken his covenant with the Báb. But if the same man says for some years I studied the teachings of the Báb and I accepted them. But now I think they are wrong, I don't want this line of religion to be adopted by myself and I will go back to my previous Islamic religion. We don't call a man who has gone back a covenant breaker, he has backslided.

The same thing is true for anyone who says I accept Bahá'u'lláh and His teachings but I do not accept 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the centre of His covenant. This means that he has accepted everything except the most important document of Bahá'u'lláh - His Will and Testament which is written by His own hand. Such a person is called one who has broken the covenant of God. The same man, if he goes back to be a Christian and does no longer accept Bahá'u'lláh as the manifestation of God, we do not call him a covenant breaker.

I again explain the meaning of covenant breaker. The covenant breaker is the one who accepts the writer of the Will and Testament, but does not accept his writings, i.e., his Will and Testament. It is like the one who says so and so is my father but I will never accept his written will after his death. The same thing is true about the one who says I accept Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá but I don't want to abide by the rules of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I don't want to accept Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause, he is a covenant-breaker but if he goes back and does not accept anyone of these, we do not call him a covenant breaker.

In brief, we can never accept a man who says, well, in the process of my spiritual experiences, I have come as far as Bahá'u'lláh but I do not accept 'Abdu'l-Bahá or I have come as far as 'Abdu'l-Bahá but I do not accept Shoghi Effendi. Such a thing is absolutely wrong in all the religions of the world and is not to be accepted by anyone

The first part of the Tablet of the Will and Testament will be read and please pay attention as to how 'Abdu'l-Bahá describes the covenant breakers.

All praise to Him Who, by the Shield of His covenant, hath guarded the Temple of His Cause from the darts of doubtfulness, Who by the Hosts of His Testament hath preserved the Sanctuary of His most Benificent Law and protected His Straight and Luminous Path, staying thereby the onslaught of the company of Covenant-breakers, that have threatened to

39. Ibid., pp. 21-22.

subvert His Divine Edifice; Who hath watched over His Mighty Stronghold and All-glorious Faith, through the aid of men whom the slander of the slanderer affect not, whom no earthly calling, glory and power can turn aside from the Covenant of God and His Testament, established firmly by His clear and manifest words, writ and revealed by His All-Glorious Pen and recorded in the Preserved Tablet.⁴⁰

Again, the covenant breakers are described as such: covenant breakers that have threatened to subvert His Divine Edifice. Can we ever call a man who wants to destroy this divine edifice from the very foundation, can we call such a man a Bahá'í?

And now, one of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers, for they will utterly destroy the Cause of God, exterminate His Law and render of no account all efforts exerted in the past. O friends! It behoveth you to call to mind with tenderness the trials of His Holiness, the Exalted One, and show your fidelity to the Ever-Blest Beauty. The utmost endeavour must be exerted lest all these woes, trials and afflictions, all this pure and sacred blood that hath been shed so profusely in the Path of God, may prove to be in vain.⁴¹

Here you see, he says, one of the most important fundamental principles of the Cause is to shun and avoid the covenant breakers and last night we read another part of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He said anyone who stands against the Guardian of the Cause must immediately be expelled from our community.

Now, you understand why the Bahá'í religion will ever be safeguarded against division and schism. Now, you understand why corruption will never find its way to this divine institution. The hardest point and the most severe treatment in the Bahá'í religion is found only in this case and that is the case of the treatment of the covenant breakers who always try to destroy the divine edifice from its very foundation.

The man who says I accept the Bahá'í religion but I do not want to obey the rules and regulations of the Guardian, he will not be considered to be a healthy man. In many tablets we read that such a disease of the spirit is like leprosy. As leprosy is most dangerously contagious, so the disease of the covenant breakers is also contagious. And that is why 'Abdu'l-Bahá, wanting to keep us healthy in body and spirit, has advised us to avoid and shun all these people.

Wherever persons of this nature have been found, covenant breakers, they have been treated very faithfully and seriously. The friends have followed the

advice of the Master and have been extremely serious about it, they left them alone to themselves and never had anything to do with them. But we have in Persia, people who came to the Assembly and said, we don't want to be Bahá'ís, please cross out our names from the list, we want to live as Muslims - well, they remain friends as they were before, but they will no longer participate in the Bahá'í activities.

If in the ages gone and the past religions, in the very beginning had they been as severe as this with the covenant-breakers, the history of the world would not have been written with the blood of the followers of these religions. We would have been much more prosperous and happier now. The wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in writing these severe words is that the history of the past will not be repeated in the religion of Bahá'u'lláh.

If we want to show compassion to a wolf, would it not be an open cruelty to many many lambs and sheep? Should we be kind to snakes and let them be free in the society of mankind, what shall we do to protect our own children? If the Bahá'í administration acts against three or four of these spiritually diseased persons, it is just to protect so many other healthy ones in the community. I have found an example which illustrates the Bahá'í world. I believe the Bahá'ís throughout the world are like a band of musicians who want to give a certain performance. Everyone of them has a special musical instrument. Everyone has a special part of the music. All are playing their parts. If everyone is playing his own part by himself regardless of the conductor, no one will ever want to go and listen to them perform. But the moment the conductor goes in the front and all look to his hand, and all wait for the start of his movement, though everyone has a different instrument, and different notes of music, the result of the music played under the guidance of one conductor will be most beautiful music that will delight everyone and everyone will listen. This is the station of the Guardian with the Bahá'ís one in the south, one in the north, one in the east and one in the west, everyone with different backgrounds, yet working harmoniously together.

When I reached Australia and saw some of the cities, I could never compare the life in Australia to the life I have seen in the East. But when I meet the friends in different centres, it is as if I met the friends from other parts of the world. They had the same idea, the same purpose, the same plans, the same enthusiasm and the same faith and all working harmoniously together the same as the people of the East. Apparently different, but spiritually the same. Had it not been for that divine guidance we would not have such harmony amongst the friends. Australia would work in one way, the east another way, and none of them would ever resemble each other.

Man has a soul, and one of the reflections of the soul is the power of the brain. The brain keeps all the members of the body in equilibrium, even though the members appear absolutely different to each other yet they work harmoniously together in keeping up the body of man. Now, the same man, suppose

40. Ibid., p. 7.

41. Ibid., p. 31.

something happens to him so that his brain does not work sanely, healthily. The hand which is supposed to take a morsel of bread to feed the body will take a huge stone and hit it's own head and hurts it. The man who has been healthy and using his teeth for the purpose of chewing, will chew his own hands rather than the thing that is given to him. Other religions of the past did not obey the centres of their covenants therefore the central power of the brain stopped working and the whole body started to do work but detrimental to the body itself. Now, we are fortunate that we have that divine, spiritual leader and all the members of this body of humanity under his guidance are working harmoniously together.

Question: What do we do to help covenant breakers?

Answer: There is no door closed to anybody in the Bahá'í Faith. The Guardian has left this door open. He says anyone who is cast out of the community because he has deliberately broken the Covenant of God, he must refer to myself in any difficulty. If he wants an answer to a question, he must refer to myself. If he wants to repent, he must refer to myself. If he wants to return to the Bahá'í community, he must write to myself and I am always ready to help such people, to assist them, to bring them out of their plight. He says the others are not able to help them. It is the same as a doctor who says that this man has T.B. If you are his nearest relative and go to him, you will catch it too. Please don't have anything to do with him because I can defend myself and I can cure him. Is it clear?

Question: How do we discover a covenant breaker and what authority says they are a covenant breaker?

Answer: I thank you for this delicate question. Individuals have no right to protest against anyone. It is the duty of the administrative centres, local and national. When the institutions are sure of the conduct of some people and recognise them as such they inform their Local Assembly, they report it to the National Assembly who at this time, report it to the Guardian. Now, if an individual sees the traces of ill-conduct or things that lead to being a covenant-breaker, detrimental to the spirit and foundation of the Cause, his religious duty, conscientious duty is this. First of all not to say anything to anybody, even his nearest relatives and friends. He should go directly to the assembly and report what he has witnessed with his own eyes. And after that he should keep quiet about it and feel sure that he has done his religious duty and he has nothing more to do about it. Why should he not say anything to someone else? If I should see something wrong from a friend of mine and he is committing some sort of sin which is not worthy of a Bahá'í, detrimental to the Cause of God, if I go and explain it to another person, I will be worse than the first one

because I am back-biting, the worst thing ever described in the Bahá'í religion. As it was explained, my first duty is to go directly to my administrative body and report it and bring proofs of what I say so that the doors may be open for them in their investigation. Suppose I drink and a Bahá'í sees me drinking. If he reports this to his wife or his friend he is backbiting, and then he will be worse than I am. He must directly go to his Assembly, report to them and then bring the proof as to where and when I was drinking, leave the matter there and go out and keep absolutely silent. Then the Assembly will investigate it, take its course of action. The individual's duty is concluded by that. Of course you all know that backbiting is absolutely forbidden in the Bahá'í Cause because it absolutely destroys the foundation of the Cause. The communities where the individuals do not commit this great sin, flourish, increase in number and strength every day.

Question: How do we reconcile that the Cause is impregnable?

Answer: Well, the question is extremely easy. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says it is impregnable. No one can ever destroy this great fortress of God. Why? Because he has ordered his soldiers to be vigilant, to be prepared for the onslaught. If He had not said this, of course they could have come in and destroyed it. But as he has put soldiers on every place, told them to safeguard the fortress of God, then those who want to destroy it can never approach it. The one is supplementary to the other. The covenant breakers desire the destruction of this. Potentially they could destroy it, but the Bahá'ís will be defending it. It is like a bomb, it has the power to destroy, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá says never let it fall here and the Bahá'ís keep watch against it.

Question: Do all try to destroy the Cause or are some just inactive?

Answer: This desire of destruction is the second nature of all these people who become covenant breakers. It is just like a snake biting. When it is cold it can not do anything, but whenever it is warm and it finds a suitable situation it bites. The same thing is true about the covenant breakers. In a place where the friends are very strong, they are frozen, they can't do anything, but the moment they find an opportunity, then they bite and want to destroy. If you find that they are quiet and don't do anything, it is due to the strength of the friends and they can not find a suitable situation to destroy the Cause. Bahá'u'lláh especially in His Book of Aqdas says beware lest you be overtaken by pity in the Cause of God. He says pity can sometimes be a cause of harm. We have to obey the injunction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and exactly comply with it. We should have pity on the sacred blood of the Báb and the Ancient Beauty.

Personal Investigation of Truth

I believe that the topic for this evening, personal investigation of truth, is a very important one which we are asked about in our daily lives. One of the Great principles of the Bahá'í Cause is investigation of truth and we often very proudly say independent investigation of truth. It means that the Bahá'ís search for the truth, they try to find it wherever it is, they are not imitators of others and they do not accept things as inheritance from their parents. Often it happens that about some little subjects or important ones there will be created misunderstandings. To avoid such a thing I want to make this subject quite clear by giving some illustrations. First we believe that God has given every individual enough power and capacity to understand the truth for himself. He has the power to investigate after the truth, find it, grasp it and comprehend it absolutely. As far as fundamental principles of any religion are concerned, blind imitation is absolutely forbidden. It means that as God has given individuals the capacity to search and find the truth, he must fulfil whatever God has given him. He must use his gifts, divine gifts, to seek the truth for himself and never blindly follow the others, no matter how close those persons may be to him.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in one of His addresses has clearly stated that blind imitation has always been the first and the greatest obstacle between the people and the Manifestations of God. The Jews did not accept Christ because they had been told by their fathers and grandfathers or their clergymen. The Muslims did not understand the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh because they had the same disaster in their creeds and ideas and social life.

In the Qur'án sometimes God explains, by the verses written there, the behaviour of the deniers of the manifestation of God. For instance, when Muhammad declared His mission to them and called them to worship the one God. Now, these are the words as if it were the words of the deniers: "we found the beliefs of our fathers and grandfathers and we have to follow their footsteps."⁴²

That is why Bahá'u'lláh has made this independent investigation of the truth one of the fundamental principles of the Cause, so that the people would not follow their clergymen, will not follow the learned men of their own time, will not follow the religion of their fathers and grand-fathers. They would search and find the truth by themselves.

Now, I explain another principle of the Bahá'í religion, which may apparently appear opposite to this independent investigation of truth. And we want to know how to reconcile these two together. Now in another part of the writings of Bahá'u'lláh he says anything revealed and written in the Books of God must be accepted and obeyed by all the followers. Faith has no other meaning but obedience. He says we must know God as this: He does whatever He wills and He orders whatever he likes and He is never to be questioned. The Báb says if the Manifestation of God who will come after me and by that

He means Bahá'u'lláh, if he tells you that this is heaven and that is the earth you do not have the right to question Him why and how. Now he says we have to reconcile these two. Apparently they are opposite to each other, opposite to independent investigation of truth.

Bahá'u'lláh in the Aqdas and in many other Writings says the essence of faith is this, that every believer should know God as this: He does whatever He likes. He orders whatever He wills and He is never to be questioned by the believers. He says that if you ever want to be protected against transgression of any of the rules of God, you must always have this in mind. He does whatever He likes. He goes on further - make it a standard, a flag, let it go ahead of you always, follow it so that you will always be on the right path of God, you will never be a transgressor of the rules of God.

Apparently, these two seem contradictory. But, if we understand these two orders we will find out that they are not contradictory, they are two screws of one machine, placed in their own places. The machine of our Faith will be steadfast by these two screws and the explanation will be given. Bahá'u'lláh says Independent investigation of truth, this means a preliminary step to reach the truth. You do your best, examine, read question, criticise as much as you can until you reach the truth, and then you say now I have found it. When you have found it then the stage of obedience will start. There is a rule in logic which says when you have found something and you keep searching for it there must be something wrong with you. He says now it is day and if we see someone with a lamp in his hand walking around the garden we say why do you have a lamp in your hand. He says I want light. You say it is daytime, we have light, you don't need a lamp, there must be something wrong with you. When you have the truth, when you find the manifestation, then you don't need to search after the truth any more. You have the truth in your hand. Therefore, whatever is written, ordered, commanded by Him is the truth and nothing else.

Now suppose someone says I have found the truth, then he does something against what the truth is telling him, it is a deviation from the truth. We don't call it faith, we don't call it anything. And we don't find that claim to be true, it means that he has not really found the truth. If he has found it, then he must follow it.

Now, I give several examples so that this principle of our faith will be clear to everyone. Suppose someone has an illness. Now, suppose before he goes to the doctor he may write to the ministry of health and ask for the name of a good doctor. He may ask his friend and inquire here and there about the best doctor. He may read all the signboards for the doctors and when he has found the right one, he goes in and explains about his health problem. After that, he starts the stage of obedience to the doctor. The doctor commands whatever he likes, and there is no right for the patient to ask him anything. If he asks him why do you do this, the doctor explains to him and will say this is my place as

42. *Qur'án*, 43:21.

a doctor and this is your place as a patient. You must obey. If he says take this medicine, we will obey, because we believe that he will cure all our diseases.

When he gives you the medicine and he wants to explain why he has given you the medicine, it is his kindness and bounty and if you understand then it will add to the pleasure of taking the medicine against the disease. But suppose there is no understanding, it is beyond the understanding of the man why he should take these drugs, then the only thing for him to do is to obey the doctor and wait for his cure.

Suppose, I want to take a trip by boat. I go to the different companies and find one that comes from Bombay to Australia. In Bombay I am sure about the boat and the captain, I go to the boat. As soon as I enter the boat I must obey the captain. The boat goes this way and suddenly goes that way. Shall I go upstairs and knock on the door of the captain and say why was the boat going that way yesterday and this way today. And if again I go to the captain and say yesterday the boat was going very fast and today it is going very slow, why and why. The first time he will be very kind but by the fourth time he will send me to somebody and tell him to keep me aside until we reach the shore and then deliver me to an asylum, because there is something wrong with me. And he is right to do so because he says you understood well about the ship and the captain and the capacity of the ship, and since you honoured us with your presence on the ship you must rest assured, be comfortable that you will reach your shore. Have a good time here and never bother yourself about what the captain does.

It is the most surprising thing that we know everyone on the earth does whatever he likes and says whatever he likes except God Himself. The least thing that we do represents the point. The minute I reached Sydney I took a taxi to Lang Road, the headquarters. The driver took me from this lane to that lane, down this street and that street. It took me three quarters of an hour to get there but I never said to him why do you go this way, why that way. He does whatever he likes, I had my life in his hands, but I was sure that after some minutes I would reach where I wanted to get to. In such little things we surrender everything, but not to God. We send our children to the school, to the teachers. And if our children do not obey their teachers we punish them because the children do not recognise that the teachers say whatever they like and do whatever they like.

The same thing exists in our school. We gather together in the summer school and they give us a certain programme. And they tell us whenever you hear the bell ringing you must come to the class. We all obey. Suppose we did not have this attitude. One would say it is better to start at five o'clock in the morning. Another would say ten o'clock, another would suggest eight o'clock. There would be no system, no order, no benefit out of the whole school. But as we surrender our will to the one who is the manager of the school, the whole

programme runs smoothly and we get benefits out of it.

Let's consider the other side of it. Suppose we are all in bed and we hear the bell ringing. Well, one says I must investigate to see if there is any truth in the ringing of the bell. Is there any necessity for the bell to be ringing and who is ringing the bell? Who has made the bell? Another one will say we need a bigger bell for ringing. Another one will say no, we don't need it, we will wake up by ourselves. And so on, and so forth, the day will be finished and we will be dispersed in beds and baths, in the dining room, and in the parks and gardens and no class will ever be formed.

Investigation after truth was till the door of the school. Up until then we were free to learn about the rules and regulations of the school but when we entered and wrote our names down as students of the school then it is the stage of obedience and that is why we see our classes in order and our lessons going on from the beginning of the day.

That is why in the Bahá'í administrative order we give papers to people to sign. They come to the assembly and say "we have found the truth. We are fully convinced that the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are manifestations of God and the Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá is our rule and order of life" and so on.

Session Four : Temples

You all know or have read that we already have two temples in the world. One in Ishqabad and the second at Wilmette in America. The second one is the holiest of all temples that we have had or will have in the history of the Bahá'í Cause, because the cornerstone of this Temple have been laid down by the hands of `Abdu'l-Bahá and no temple will have such an honour in the whole world. That is why we call the Temple at Wilmette the holiest of all temples and the mother temple of the West.

You all know things in their own right have no value, but they have value in proportion to something else. When anything is related or belongs to a person, that thing will have a certain value to us. The greater the person the greater the value of that thing, therefore something that belongs to God, the greatest of all things must have the greatest of all values.

For example, there are plenty of houses in the world, but we have a certain value for a certain house because we say in that house a great poet, some great man had been living. As it belonged to that man, therefore it has value to us. When I was in Germany, I went to Frankfurt and found many houses that were ruined during the war. Laws had been laid down that they had to be demolished, except for one house, which had been repaired, remodelled and that house had belonged to the great German poet Goethe⁴³ and every day 50 or 60 people used to go and visit the house because it had been the house of a great poet of the country.

43. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), German poet, dramatist and novelist. His famous works are *Faust*, *The Sorrows of Youth Werther*, and *Westminsterly Divan*.

Therefore, we understand that the value of things depends upon to whom they belong. The higher the person, the greater the value. Now a House is built in the name of God, and they say this House belongs to God. That shows how great the house is in our hearts, and what a great value the house has in the history of mankind.

Bahá'u'lláh in his book of Aqdas says that whenever you build a House in the name of God, you must decorate it to the best possible manner that you can because it belongs to God, to a great power ruling all over the world. You all know that these Temples that we have built to the best decoration, but by decoration I mean it has the words of God inscribed on the entrances, on the inside and outside. We are forbidden to put pictures or statues in our Temples.

All the Houses of God that have been built in all the religions of God have been for the same purpose but you know as religion corrupts the main purpose little by little fades and disappears.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said that when it is finished, that will be a new decade, a new age in the struggle of the Cause all through the world. We must expect such a great resolve as the Temple itself is a great silent teacher. I was there when it was completed and dedicated. Hundreds of newspaper men were gathered there and they all wrote about different aspects of the Temple, how it was constructed and when it was finished. They also said from different broadcasts from different centres in America and they also showed it by television to different parts of America. These articles will be written down again and again and the news of the Temple will be broadcast from different centres, therefore you see it is not a simple building that is being built, it is a divine construction for the propagation of the unity of mankind. It introduces the Bahá'í religion to everyone who sees it and it introduces the basic principles of the religion of God as they pass by every day.

In conclusion I want to say that these pictures are taken with exquisite beauty and talent and yet you must not be satisfied with this, pictures will never do justice to this building, you must go and see it with your own eyes. I congratulate you and the whole Bahá'í world community for having such a great Temple of light and such a great divine edifice in this age of God.

Before I start my lesson, and as all the friends are glad that they are going home, I must tell you a story. In about 850 AD it is written that once a man came to the court of one of the Califs⁴⁴ and claimed to be a prophet. The Calif asked him: "do you also receive inspiration?" The man said: "yes." The Calif said: "but we had a prophet some time ago by the name of Muhammad who said: "there is no escape and I receive inspiration and I am a prophet." The Calif said: "put this man in prison now," but he ordered the gaoler not to treat him as a common prisoner as the man claimed to be a prophet. After a few months the Caliph remembered that there was a man who claimed to

44. Calif Mámun, son of Harun-El-Rashid (Aaron the upright) from the Abbasid of Baghdad.

be a prophet and ordered the man to be brought to him again. They went and brought him back to the court. The Calif found the man happy, well off, fat and quite all right in health too. He said: "are you still a prophet?". "Yes". "Do you still receive inspiration?" He said: "yes, I received one that said 'don't leave this place it is very good for you'". Now, this is the story of my going home, and the Summer School and the kindness of the friends - I really must not leave this place.

I believe that you have read or have heard that the Báb in one of His Writings said "Well be it of the one who looks at the order of Bahá'u'lláh and thanks His God". It is extremely important as He clearly mentions the name of Bahá'u'lláh in this verse of His Book. And in the Book of Aqdas, there is a verse, and I am sure that you have all read the translation, what I say is not the exact translation. He says the World Order is confused by this great order which God has brought to mankind. The world order is again mentioned in the Works of Bahá'u'lláh. There are two very important words in this verse, please be careful to study them. First, He says "new" world order, and the second is the eyes of heaven and earth have never seen similar to it.

This world order is explained by Bahá'u'lláh in His many books and Tablets such as the Aqdas, the tablet of the World, the Tablet of Effulgences, Splendours, Ornaments (Tajalliyyat, Ishraquat, Tarazat, etc.) and many other Tablets. But these are the most important ones, in which He has given the basic principles of the world order.

'Abdu'l-Bahá in many of His Tables has explained and given the details of this world order especially in the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which is supplementary to the Aqdas. He has given the framework, the foundations of the world order. And as you have seen in the letters of the Guardian, he gradually showed us the practical ways of putting it into action: "this World Order of Bahá'u'lláh." Now, the importance in this World Order lies in the fact that the one who foretold it was the Báb, a great Manifestation of God, He first foretold in His Writings the order which would be founded by Bahá'u'lláh. The founder of this order is the Promise of all Ages, the great manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh himself. The expounder of this World Order, is the mystery of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the exemplar of the Bahá'í life. And the one who established it is the Guardian of the Bahá'í Cause.

The Guardian has especially warned us in many of his writings that we must never say that it is similar to any prevailing order in the world. It is never resembling aristocracy, democracy or autocracy or any other divisions of these three great systems of government in the world. It is none of these orders, and yet it is an order by itself, the similar of which has not yet been created in the world.

It is the nature of man, that whenever he hears something new, he compares it with his own self or some near one. If you say to a child that Einstein

is the greatest physicist in the world today, he will say that he is like my dad. Or if you tell him more than that, the child will say, alright a little bit more than him. If you say to a villager about Newton and the great discoveries he made in science, he will say he must be like the Mayor of our city. If not equal to him, a little bit higher than him. He will never be able to enlarge his ideas and reach the high station of these people. This is the nature of man.

The same thing takes place when we first hear about the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. We immediately say it is like our own country, like France, like England. We resemble it to something we know, but we must not do this before we study it thoroughly. We remember and we believe that all the civilisations of the past have been created by the manifestations of God. Therefore there will be found some good elements in all these systems of government. In the Bahá'í World Order you will not find any one of the institutions or systems of government, but a mixture of the best elements drawn from these systems; a beautiful mixture of all these things which have been created as a new and beautiful order.

I am sure that you know all these expressions, but I only repeat them so that you will remember them better. Democracy is derived from two Latin words - demo and cracy. Demo means "the people", "cracy" means government.⁴⁵ Therefore it means government of the people on the people. And it has several different forms and shapes. It may be in public, it may be like the election system that takes place in Russia, a general sort of election which takes place in America or any other part, which is called democracy or the elected who rule over the people and who are chosen by the people.

An aristocracy means the government of the best. It is the sort of government which Plato advised in his book *The Republic*, and he said the people should be divided into two parts, the good and the best - the best must always be the rulers. The best in oratory, the best in genealogy, the best in ideas, learning, science must be the rulers of the people, therefore they call it aristocracy.

Autocracy means self styled government - someone makes himself the ruler of a country and rules without restraint - such as the rule of Nicolai in Russia or the rule of Wilhelm in Germany.

Please remember these three forms of government, study them in your leisure time and see the forms they have. You will find that every one of them has many sides of corruption. Then, compare it with the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and you will find the best elements are gathered here. When I say the best elements are gathered here, I don't mean that Bahá'u'lláh laid out these three forms in front of Him and chose the best elements - no - all these systems are the remnants of the civilisations which have been the direct result of the manifestations of God and now this is a new World Order

45. The root of the word comes from the Greek language as: *demós*, "the people" and *kratein*, "to rule" and so *demotrakia* (democracy) means rule or government by the people.

revealed to Him by God and it will be the best at keeping the world in order in the future ages, belonging to the Age of Bahá'u'lláh.

Please remember at present we say Administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh and then we have another term World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. We want to make sure that we know the exact differences between these two. Administrative order of Bahá'u'lláh is what we are practising now. We are putting the World Order on a very small scale - for ordering the affairs of the Bahá'ís themselves. But as time passes and the communities will grow and the Cause of God will spread and will be world embracing, then the time will come when all these administrative institutions will give their place to the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. It is in the embryonic state of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. It is the first step for the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh at a time when all the world will live under the order given by Bahá'u'lláh in His books and tablets.

There is no difference between these two - the difference is only in size. Both are perfect systems, but one is very very small. It is like the earth compared to the sun. We are practising in this Bahá'í Administrative order until the time when we will give it to the world as the World Order.

When we say that in 1963, as it is promised by Daniel thousands of years ago, the Bahá'í Faith will be established in the world, we don't mean that in the world at that time we will not find any non-Bahá'í. What we mean is this, the child is gathering all the limbs of the body and all things required for growth. In that year the child will have everything that it needs, the child of the Cause will be perfect in everything, will have eyes, hands, limbs and then he will be ready to grow, to march on. This is what we mean by being well established in the world and nothing else.

The world order of Bahá'u'lláh is not yet born, it is still in its embryonic stage. It is growing, is gathering strength, and in the year 1963 the child will be born and that is why we celebrate that year, the birth of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. For instance, in our Administrative Order now, we don't have the International House of Justice, some of our National Assemblies are not yet formed, the Institution of the Hands of the Cause is not yet complete - the Guardian says he gives them gradually. During these 10 years, little by little all the details of this great edifice will be completed by the Guardian and from 1963 on the child of the World Order will be born and will start to grow.

Now, when we say the child will be born, let us not think that really it will be a child and will grow very slowly, steadily and lazily. No, this child will do the work of 100 years in one day, and you must take some gifts for this child when he is born. From now, get ready and prepare your gifts of faith, of pioneering, of steadfastness, of certitude, bravery and encouragement that you have and bring them all to the great celebration that will be in Baghdad for the birth of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

In conclusion, I want to thank all of you for the kindness that you have

bestowed on both of us. If there have been any shortcomings in my services to you I apologise for that. I always consider myself as a humble, weak and meek servant in front of the friends of God, and I am sure that I can not do what they deserve. I need your prayers. Alláh-u-Abha.