

Informal talk by Mr. Artemus Lamb before the West Hollywood Baha'i Community on the night of the Feast of Power, Nov. 4, 1953. Artemus Lamb lives in Costa Rica, Central America and he had just returned from a long trip including attendance at the Baha'i International Conference held in New Delhi, India, in Oct. and a visit at the Baha'i International Center in Haifa, Israel, where the First Guardian of the Baha'i Faith resides.

At this Intercontinental Conference in New Delhi last month there were 500 Baha'is present, mostly Oriental. This was the first occasion for the Baha'is of Australia to enjoy contact with the Baha'is from the rest of the world. The sessions were held in large tent adorned in a festive manner with many national flags and colorful flowers. The setting for this momentous gathering was in an oriental garden and made a picture.

English and Persian languages were the principle ones spoken as almost every one could speak one or the other. The conference lasted nine days. The spirit generated by the Persian believers was remarkable. There is no word to describe describe it for it is of another world. They have an understanding of the Faith that we do not have and a devotion that we do not have.

If the Guardian wants something, they give it right away. If he wants something done, they do it right away, right now. If he asks for anything, their money, their life, their home, they do it right now. A call was made for pioneers in the Asian area. Seventy-four said "Yes" at once. Of these there were 25 who offered to go at once from the Conference with out going home, even those who had come unprepared. These places, many of them primitive, are regions where religious persecution abounds. Private funds for the Temple sites in New Delhi and in ** were contributed immediately to an amount of \$40,000. Immediately they came forward and made their contributions. One man gave \$5000 five thousands pounds, many left their jewels, their pens, their rings, whatever they had. A boy who had lost his father had a ring from him for remembrance. This was all he had. He gave it. Some one came forward and bought the ring and then returned it to the boy. One man arose and said that the clothes he wore had been borrowed so he could come, that all he could do would be to offer a prayer, which he did. Another said, "I pledge (so much) in this man's name", giving an answer to that prayer right then. This spirit was in the Conference all during the entire nine days.

Someone told about the Baha'i school up in the mountains (in India) a place for general education. moral and spiritual training of the youth. He told about the hardships in getting the school started. The treasurer had to mortgage most of his business in order to make the down payment on the property and then they were still very short of funds. One of the believers then remarked, "If you make another call for contributions, we will have to go home in a sarong". Then someone asked this question. "What are we to do about it?". So, they raised around \$4,000. more for the school.

All the Persian Hands were there. Mason Remey was the Guardian's representative. Mother Dunn from Australia was also there.

Question: When you were in Haifa, did it turn out to be all that you expected?
 Yes, but much much more, I often wondered why the pilgrims when they returned did not say more about the Guardian and now I think I understand. It is because one feels so inadequate. Anyone's description of the Guardian does not and cannot do him justice. Maybe in speaking of the Guardian some one else would fit such a description, but it does not fit that of the Guardian. He is different from anyone else. You have all your meals in the Pilgrim House, and that is where you live during your visit. Mason Remey, Leroy Ioas live there also. Ruhyyih Khanum comes over for food with us and we sit around and chat and we feel very much at home. If the Guardian feels all right he comes over

for dinner. He usually spends two hours when he does come. He is tied hand and foot to his work. It is a wonderful experience when the Guardian comes for dinner, I can assure you. The first two nights he did not come. He was upset over some things. You cannot imagine how he suffers. R. Khanum said that the Guardian is like a sensitive machine. Everthing that happens in the cause affects Him. The third night he came. As we went into the room toto meet him, the first few minutes I did not notice his personality. All I could think of was the force sominated him. It so takes away from the personality that one does not see that. This gave me an idea of the Station of the Manifestation. How Little one understands either the Station of the Guardian or that of the Manifestation. It is tremendous. As time goes on you do see his human personality. So far as he himself goes, he is the most gracious, hospitable, kind person I have ever met in my life. He treats all persons exaactly alike. Every single pilgrim that comes he makes feel perfectly at home immediately. As he talks to you he knows where you are from. He knows about the economic conditions as well as the Baha'i work going on there. And usually he states what should be done and how to do it. As i see it, he knows what is going on in that country because of his study of these things. The things that are to be done, as I see it, he knows by intuition.

Questions: Does he speak as he writes, rather involved?

No he speaks more simply. His sentences are beautifully constructed and his words are perfectly chosen. He does not speak rapidly when talking ordinarily but when he speaks of the Cause he does sovery rapidly and with power and it is then that you feel the force in him.

We asked about the war. He said that it would be more than a war. It will be a world upheaval, social, political and economic. It will be similar to the collapse of the Roman Empire. only it will be on a global scale. The upheaval may be so severe that it may affect the physical atmosphere and cause physical disturbances.

Question: Any indications as to the time?

It depends, the Guardain said, on the folly of the politicians. He did no indicate that it would be right at this moment. The U.S. would be a storm center, he said.

Question: Did He say which places would be affected?

The british Isles, Western Europe, the Holy Land, Persia, and the Pacific would be gravely exposed. The Guardian went on to explain that while we may heard this before, it is much more clear now, and this is it: He said that there are twp plans in operation. God's plan is one, and the other is our plan as revealed by Abdul' Baha. God's is the world upheaval. This plan of God's is mysterious and it is not our province to know or to see how it is to be operated. Our plan, the one Abdul Baha gave us, is the world order. The Crusade, etc. He also said that our responsibility naturally is the carrying out of our plan. Obviously if we don't do that and if we don't obey the Guardian, we will upset the timine. We must be confident that everything will be best for the Cause. God's plan may do much more for the people than our plan. We must look at it that way. Not fear the World Upheaval; not stop our work for it. It does not metter. It is only temporary . We shouldn't speculate on it. Go ahead and do what we have to do. ol.....

Question: What about the "Most Great Peace."?

As the Baha'is establish the New World Order of Baha'u'llah, the governmet must establish the world state, which is the Lesser Peace. The World State will need a world language and this will come about in in the formative period of the Faith. As the majority of the people becomes Baha'is, they will establish the Baha'i states and eventually these states states will

establish the world commonwealth and this will bring about the establishment of the "Golden Age". The Guardian said that the entire Administrative Order including the Universal House of Justice will be established by 1965.

He is very happy about the World Crusade and is surprised at the response of the believers. The fact that the Guardian is not well is due to mental anguish and work, work. He gets up at dawn day after day, week after week.

Question: What about opposition to the Faith?

It is commencing and will extend to the Church of England, the Lutherans, and he said the Papacy would disappear but that some of its institutions would remain. We should regard the opposition as providential and be happy over it; as it in itself will arouse the people and the power will be regenerated. The repelling power of the Cause are these crises. This is the force that makes the Cause grow.

Question: Does the Guardian have anything to say about having visitors?

It is for everyone to visit Haifa and the Guardian. Make your reservation. He treats everyone alike. Every one in his turn.

Prime Minister Nehru of India was a representative in New Delhi.

Question: Did the Guardian speak about Communism?

We really did not talk about or ask questions. An interesting statement that he made was that Communism is materialistic and atheistic. The Americans are materialistic but not atheistic. You will find both of these among the Baha'is. We should not at the present time approach Communists. In the first place they probably would not accept entirely the Teachings. In the second place it would arouse difficulties with the authorities. We must not do anything to arouse the authorities. We would be arousing suspicion. It would not be worth it. There are several Baha'is who are trying to get behind the iron curtain and the Guardian is encouraging this. He considers that a meritorious act.

Another thing the Guardian said was that the Americans have organization and drive but they lack the deeper understanding of the Faith. In speaking about materialism he brought out this point.

When the Guardian was talking about the Baha'i World State he said we should not mention that this will be a state within a state, from which people might get the impression that we are political, which we are not. The Baha'is World State will come about by force and not by our mingling in politics, but by conversion.

Question: Can you tell us anything about Haifa and the Shrine of the Bab?

As one approaches Haifa, either by land or by sea-- by sea is even more noticeable-- the first thing that greets your vision is Mount Carmel. It is a very long, low mountain and probably one thousand feet high. It arises immediately out of the Bay. One looks for the Shrine of the Bab and you see it at once. Its position is right in the heart of the mountain half way up. It is a gleaming white marble structure with a petalled beautiful dome. You see it from everywhere, wherever you are.

Question: Do the people who visit the Shrines and Gardens think they are something unusual and marvellous?

Yes, they certainly do. So many people to guide through. 1200 on a Jewish holiday, I recall. People from Switzerland, South Africa, from just about every country, They are mainly tourists, they see it as they come into the city and naturally want to know about it.

The Guardian himself, is the essence of graciousness, kindness, goodness,

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intelligence. He is not pious at all. He is humble. He is spiritual. He does not like rituals and he does not want us to establish any. The oriental Baha'is are accustomed to prostrating themselves when they pray. This is all right the Guardian says. They were brought up that way before they became Baha'is. Everyone should do as he feels in his heart. It is not necessary for the Occidental Baha'i to do as the Oriental Baha'i does. He made it clear that there is uniformity in fundamentals and diversity in the other things, this is the way....

The Guardian's farewell to us was exactly this; Pray for me. Your prayers sustain me the same way that I hope mine sustain you. He is not ill but he is tired. The power of the prayers sustain him. Praying for the Guardian brings a unity; the contact between the Guardian of the Cause and us.

Question: Did the Guardian have anything further to say about teaching those who have been in the orthodox way of life and religion?

We should not seek out the orthodox people. We should look for the liberal element in those who are spiritually-minded. Those were his exact words. Anything else is a waste of time. The building of the institutions of the Cause will awaken the people and will arouse the opposition of the churches and that will be good. It is this that will awaken the people.

Question: What about teaching the Cause in Haifa?

Israel is religious state. Our world center is there and the fact that it remains there is due to the goodwill of the authorities. If they get the idea that we are converting the brown people, this would not do. The Guardian asks the Friends to live the life, establish the best relations with the people, show them the Shrines, and answer their questions but not to get them to believe.

Question: What is the tourist reaction to the Gardens and Shrines?

There are those who say the Gardens are very beautiful, that is all. Then there are others who are profoundly affected. I remember three visitors from England who, as is the custom when one goes inside the Shrines, took off their shoes at the threshold of the Shrine of the Bab. They went inside. They were in there several minutes and when they came out one of them, a woman, said; "If it weren't for these people holding the Light, what would happen to the world?."

At the Shrine there is no need to pray or to feel the power. There is no effort involved in contracting the Spirit. IT IS.

Pilgrims to Haifa stay in the Palace of Bahji 36 hours. This is something you do not talk about. You never forget it.

Notes taken by Mildred Swingle Bates
Transcribed by MS.
West Hollywood Baha'i Community.