

On Marie Watson's Pilgrim's Notes Titled, "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness"

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I first read "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness" (attached¹) while deepening with Knight of Bahá'u'lláh, Olivia Kelsey sometime between 1971 and 1973. At the time she said that she knew the author and the circumstances under which the notes were taken. (See attached pilgrimage article by Marie Watson.) When the World Centre came out with a list of documents that are not authenticated Bahá'í prayers or Tablets, Olivia put "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness" away and never discussed it again:

Prayers and Tablets, Authenticity of by / on behalf of Universal House of Justice published in American Bahá'í 1992-09: "From time to time the National Spiritual Assembly receives letters from Bahá'ís or local Spiritual Assemblies about the authenticity of certain prayers or "tablets" that are circulated in typed form. The Research Department of the Universal House of Justice is asked to check these writings for authenticity. The following works that commonly circulate in the Bahá'í community are not authentic: "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness" and other instructions to Marie Watson. This so-called tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá is erroneous; Shoghi Effendi has stated that it is not a work by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. http://bahai-library.com/compilation_pilgrims_notes (as accessed on 5/24/20)

The problem appears to be that there were Bahá'ís who referred to "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness" as a "work" or "tablet" of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. However, at the top of the copy I received, it clearly states that they are "notes" based on the words of the Master in Haifa in 1921. To have given them an additional title may have caused the misunderstanding. Other pilgrims only titled their recollections of what was stated as "notes." I do not know what "other instructions" refers to. The term "erroneous" could refer to the notes being considered a tablet or work and/or to the content. But then the content of all pilgrim notes is known to possibly contain error and be misleading. For example, regarding the famous "Haifa Notes" collected by Mrs. Maxwell the Guardian (through his secretary) stated:

With reference to the Haifa notes collected by dear Mrs. Maxwell: These have exactly the same status as all other pilgrims' notes, and as such there should be no objection to their circulation among the believers. While these notes taken down by the pilgrims do not constitute as official pronouncements made by the Guardian, and therefore should not be imposed on the friends, those who wish to share them with the members of the Community should, under no circumstances, be prevented from doing so. Though not strictly official, and in some instances inaccurate and misleading, these notes, as experience has shown, can be of tremendous help, guidance and inspiration to many individual believers, and their value as such should therefore be readily admitted." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 28, 1939) http://bahai-library.com/compilation_pilgrims_notes (as accessed on 5/24/20)

¹ This appears to have been typed by me on the Royal typewriter that I used in college.

When one reads Marie Watson's article on her pilgrimage (especially intriguing is her experience of healing a long-standing, physical disability by riding to the Garden of Ridván on 'Abdul-Bahá's donkey Lightning!), it can be seen that 'Abdu'l-Bahá's comment on tests is nearly the same as it appears in her notes. It is also obvious that Marie Watson, a dedicated and active believer of twenty years, had ample time with the Master to discuss the topics contained in her notes and that she had a qualified translator. In some places the notes definitely do not sound like 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who never spoke of "occult teachings" or "the fit." Perhaps these statements were misinterpretations of the interpreter, misunderstandings or the interpreter, or erroneous note-taking from the interpreter's English by Ms. Watson. In the final analysis, in my understanding, it is not forbidden to read the pilgrim notes titled "Fourth Dimensional Consciousness," but, to be safe, any statement in it, if one wants to be sure that it is a Bahá'í concept or belief, should be cross-referenced with the authorized Bahá'í writings.²

² I did this for a few of the statements in the notes which helped me to write a paper for my doctoral studies titled "The Ecology of Consciousness."