

Scholar Meets Prophet: Edward Granville Browne and Baha'u'llah (Acre, 1890)

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Baha'i Studies Review, Vol. 20 (2014, published 2018): 21–38.

(The original publication (print or PDF) may be ordered online from [Intellect](#).)

Abstract

Rediscovery of contemporaneous handwritten notes by Cambridge orientalist, Edward Granville Browne,¹ of his historic meetings with Baha'u'llah, prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith in Akka (St Jean d'Acre), Palestine, during his stay there – which lasted from his arrival on Sunday, 13 April 1890, to Browne's departure on Sunday, 20 April 1890 – significantly adds to our knowledge of those spiritual and momentous events. Given the fact that Baha'u'llah was to become widely regarded as the founder of a new world religion, Browne's published account of his 16 April 1890 audience with Baha'u'llah takes on added significance as a rare first-hand description by a distinguished contemporary from the West. Although well-known to those acquainted with Baha'i history, relatively little is known regarding the sequence of events. This article will draw from Cambridge manuscripts to add some new details, and will draw a fuller picture of what transpired by use of Browne's correspondence with Russian academics, along with known Baha'i sources judiciously compared with Azali sources. Together, a composite account of that historic encounter between scholar and prophet, Browne and Baha'u'llah, will be offered.

On Wednesday, 16 April 1890, Cambridge orientalist, Edward Granville Browne, was granted his first audience with Baha'u'llah, the charismatic prophet-founder of the Baha'i Faith, in Acre (Arabic: Akka/Akko), Palestine. By having established this new world religion, Baha'u'llah may be considered to be phenomenologically comparable to the founders of other world religions – such as Jesus Christ, Muḥammad or even the Buddha. Many have wondered: 'What was Jesus like?' Or: 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to meet the Buddha in person?' This would be a perfect analogy for characterizing the nature of Professor Browne's extraordinary experience, which it is the purpose of this paper to revisit, with new information that has recently come to light. This new evidence offers a glimpse into what it must have been like to have attained the presence of Baha'u'llah. Indeed, Browne has left posterity an account of that historic encounter, where, as the title of this paper indicates, 'Scholar Meets Prophet'.

The nature of this encounter, as Browne describes it, was nothing short of profound. It is the encounter itself that is ‘historical’ and worthy of note. Otherwise, nothing really changed as a result of this episode. The world [p. 22] went on, without noticing. No headline. No news story. This meeting, after all, was private. Yet it is ‘historical’ precisely because of what it tells us about Baha’u’llah as a personage. So the very thought of entering into the presence of one of those rarest of all historical personalities – one held to be a divinely inspired Messenger of God – is quite extraordinary. It is this experiential gift that endures as Browne’s most enduring legacy.

It makes sense to begin with Baha’i sources, in order to review what is already widely known to students of Baha’i history. Baha’i sources rely heavily on Browne’s own account in *A Traveller’s Narrative* (hereafter ‘TN1’ for the Persian text, and ‘TN2’ for Browne’s translation into English).² The Persian manuscript of TN1 (written by Baha’u’llah’s eldest son, ‘Abdu’l-Baha)³ was given to Browne on Sunday, 20 April 1890, just outside of Akka (Acre), Palestine. First, the narrative presented below is taken from the official Baha’i history, *God Passes By*, written by Shoghi Effendi, Guardian of the Baha’i Faith (1921–1957), in 1944:

It was in that same mansion that the distinguished Orientalist, Prof. E. G. Browne of Cambridge, was granted his four successive interviews with Bahá’u’lláh, during the five days he was His guest at Bahjí (April 15–20, 1890), interviews immortalized by the Exile’s historic declaration that ‘these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come’. ‘The face of Him on Whom I gazed’, is the interviewer’s memorable testimony for posterity, ‘I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one’s very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow.... No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain’. ‘Here’, the visitor himself has testified, ‘did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and un hoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit, which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was, in truth, a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression’.⁴

Here, Shoghi Effendi is quoting Browne himself, from his lengthy introduction to his translation of *A Traveller’s Narrative*. Browne was given an audience with Baha’u’llah. This historic meeting took place on Wednesday, 16 April 1890. Browne’s pen-portrait of Baha’u’llah is doubtless the most oft-quoted passage in all of Browne’s writings.

The relatively recently discovered E. G. Browne’s correspondence with Baron V. Rosen in the Archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg has revealed some interesting new information about Browne’s research on the Babi and Baha’i Faiths.⁵ Browne kept active correspondence with Rosen until the time of the

latter's passing. Most of this scholarly exchange of letters was related to the emerging new religion. It contradicted the common view that the appearance of new religions was only possible in ancient times because it was thought to be characteristic of the early forms of human society. This, most probably, accounts for the keen interest of [p. 23] the European general public and, particularly, scholars and diplomats, in the subject at the time.

These archival materials remained unpublished for more than a century until they were brought together and published with commentaries in Youli Ioannesyan's book: *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities: Exploring Baron Rosen's Archives*.⁶ Browne's correspondence with Rosen comprises 49 letters, dating 1889–1902 (two letters are in Persian, the rest are in English). These letters cover a very wide range of issues and show Browne's close cooperation with Rosen in the course of his research on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths.

Among the issues discussed in the letters is Browne's account of his trip to Cyprus and Palestine during which he met with Baha'u'llah and Mirza Yahya (Şubḥ-i-Azal, younger half-brother and contemporary rival for leadership of the fledgling Babi/Baha'i community). Browne draws a picture of the journey from a slightly different perspective than in his published account of that historic trip. His description of his encounter with the founder of the Baha'i Faith which he shares with his Russian colleague preceded the appearance of the published version (Browne's letter is dated 6 May 1890) and, thus, preserves some details omitted in the version which he presented to the general public. Consequently, the two accounts are complementary, since each contains information lacking in the other. On the other hand, they present the same story expressed in a different language. The published version is as follows:

During the five days spent at Behjé (Tuesday, April 15th to Sunday, April 20th [1890]), I was admitted to Behā's presence four times. These interviews always took place an hour or two before noon, and lasted from twenty minutes to half-an-hour. One of Behā's sons always accompanied me, and once Akā Mirzā Akā Jān [Jenāb-i Khādīmu'llāh] the amanuensis (*kātib-i āyāt*) was also present. In their general features these interviews resembled the first, of which I have attempted to give a description.⁷

In his 6 May 1890 letter to Rosen, Browne writes of his five interviews with Baha'u'llah:

After leaving Cyprus (on April 5th) I proceeded to Beyrout, & thence, after a delay of 5 days (for I had to obtain permission from Beha; to approach him) to Acre. This delay unfortunately reduced my time at Acre to 5 days (for the ride thither & back occupied 3 days each way), but during these 5 days I was completely amongst the Babis, who treated me with unbounded kindness. I was granted 5 interviews with Beha himself, but of course I could not ask him any questions.⁸

Both accounts confirm that Browne's visit to Baha'u'llah's residence at Bahjī lasted for 5 days (although Browne was in Acre for eight days, from Sunday, 13 April 1890 through Sunday, 20 April 1890). The letter sheds light on why Browne's stay in Acre was reduced to 5 days. The reason for shortening his trip was the delay for 5 days caused by the need to obtain permission from Baha'u'llah for these interviews. Otherwise, Browne would have spent 10 days at Bahjī, for a total of 13 days in Acre. [p. 24]

There is some incongruity between the two versions concerning the number of interviews Browne had with Baha'u'llah. While Browne states in the letter that he 'was granted 5 interviews with Behá himself', in the published account, Browne puts the number of such interviews at four, saying that he 'was admitted to Behá's presence four times'. However, both accounts confirm the 'unbounded kindness' with which Browne was treated by the Baha'is during his whole stay in the Holy Land, as Browne nostalgically recounts:

The spirit which pervades the Bábís is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. It may appall or attract: it cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but, should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget.⁹

It is most interesting to collate and compare the two versions of Browne's description of Baha'u'llah. The published version is well-known to those interested in or studying the Baha'i Faith. It was even translated into Russian by A. G. Tumanski and quoted in the 'Introduction' to his Russian translation of the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* ('the Most Holy Book'), the most important of all Baha'i scriptures.¹⁰

The pen-portrait of Baha'u'llah that the famed British orientalist draws reflects his admiration for the distinguished prophet whom he met. Recounting his first impression of Baha'u'llah in this historic encounter, Browne experienced 'a throb of wonder and awe' on beholding this venerable and charismatic religious founder:

Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold ..., a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *tāj* ['crown'] by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!¹¹

As for what transpired during the course of this historic encounter, Browne recounts these memorable, and probably immortal statements by Baha'u'llah:

A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: – ‘Praise be to God that thou hast attained! ... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. ... That all nations should become one in faith [p. 25] and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled – what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the ‘Most Great Peace’ shall come. ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. ... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind ...’. Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Beha. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion.¹²

The term ‘audience’ best describes the nature of this meeting, insofar as Browne himself states that he could not ask any questions of Baha'u'llah. Certainly Browne did ask a lot of questions while he was at Acre/Akka, but these were interactions that he had with others in the Baha'i enclave. This may explain why Browne's description of this event is so deeply impressionistic. While the substance of what transpired is effectively conveyed, the nature of the interaction was somewhat analogous to being admitted into the royal court of a king. Although there were no trappings of royalty, or any pretensions to any earthly grandeur, it is clear that Browne was struck – one might say, ‘awestruck’ – by Baha'u'llah's force of personality, especially by the ‘power and authority’ that emanated from Baha'u'llah with such intensity as to practically overwhelm Browne himself. Since Browne was reasonably familiar with Baha'u'llah's teachings, one can say that the nature of his audiences with Baha'u'llah was not so much informational as it was impressionistic.

Browne has left an independent summary of this event. The account in Browne's letter to Rosen, though no less interesting and impressive, gives a different perspective to the reader. Here Browne is more focused on the surprise and amazement he experienced meeting Baha'u'llah:

I sat humbly before him while he talked. His discourse was oracular but rather general in character. He spoke as ‘one having authority’, but not exactly as I had expected – like a Master, and a Prophet – but not as an Incarnation of the Divinity. He is to look at a very majestic old man – but though he must be 70 at least his long beard & hair are quite black. He wears a very tall namad (نمد) 13 cap with a small white turban. His manner is gracious and dignified, but somewhat restless,

suggesting great stores of energy. He talked for the most part of the necessity of all nations choosing one language as a means of international communication & one writing (a sort of sermon on the concluding text of the لوح اقدس¹⁴ & of the necessity of putting down war & international jealousy & hostility. Of doctrine properly so called he spoke little.¹⁵

Both accounts stress the ‘authority’ with which Baha’u’llah spoke, as well as the message of peace which was the central theme of Baha’u’llah’s words. Browne’s letter to Baron Rosen also reveals that the prominent western [p. 26] scholar, despite his deep knowledge and understanding of the Babi (to a lesser extent Baha’i) teachings, had some misconceptions about the status of the prophetic credentials of Baha’u’llah (who, in Baha’i terms, was considered to be a ‘Manifestation of God’) in general and of Baha’u’llah’s theophanic and messianic claims in particular. In his letter, Browne states that Baha’u’llah, contrary to his expectations, was ‘like a Master, and a Prophet – but not as an Incarnation of the Divinity’ (!). In other words, Browne believed that Baha’u’llah had laid claim to being ‘an Incarnation of the Divinity’.

Whether this misconception came from rival Azali sources – and those Azalis with whom Browne kept up active correspondence – or was merely due to the ‘Christian language’ that Browne employed in this description (given the fact that Christians represent Jesus Christ in the very same terms) is very much open to speculation. However, even Baron Rosen himself wrote of Baha’u’llah in a similar vein, saying that ‘even though his identification of himself with the Divinity may appear to us blasphemous, we should not forget that, at least, he [Baha’u’llah] has imagined himself not as a scourging divinity ... but rather a mild, forgiving, loving and peace-making one’.¹⁶ In the light of this letter, we may assume that Rosen might have been influenced in his personal understanding of Baha’u’llah’s claim by what Browne had previously written.

As more or less indicated in the previous discussion, Browne had three or four more audiences with Baha’u’llah that same week. Accounts vary slightly. During the course of his visits with Baha’u’llah – from Tuesday, 15 April to Sunday, 20 April 1890 – Browne says that he had five audiences with Baha’u’llah, yet elsewhere states that he had four meetings, while Mirza Badi’u’llah, one of Baha’u’llah’s sons, reports three audiences, by way of this independent account:

We went to Haifa and rented a house. The house was called Oliphant. It was for the purpose of a summer residence. The house was located in German [Templar] colony. After residing in that house for little while, there the news came that Mr. Browne of England, a professor and orientalist at Cambridge, had returned from Iran and that he was coming by way of land to Bahjī (‘Akka). He asked to attain the holy presence of Baha’u’llah. Because it was not proper to accept Mr. Browne into His [Baha’u’llah’s] presence at that house in Haifa, then Baha’u’llah moved back to Bahjī. In the year 1890, ... Mr Browne arrived in ‘Akka. Ghusn-i Akbar (the ‘Great Branch’, Mirza Muḥammad ‘Ali) had gone to India for publication of some holy texts. Ghusn-i A’zam (the ‘Most Great Branch’, ‘Abdu’l-Baha) was residing in ‘Akka.

This writer [Mirza Badi‘u’llah] and Ghusn-i Āthār (Mirza Ḍiyā‘u’llāh = the Purest Branch) was hosting this dear guest [Browne]. . . He was a very learned man. He spoke eloquently well in the sweet Persian language . . .

The first time that he had the honour of attaining Baha‘u’llah’s holy Presence, although he [Browne] had a few questions, [in fact] he only asked one question about discord and disunity of all religions. Then he observed silence and the condition and manner of his behaviour changed.

After he had been dismissed from His [Baha‘u’llah’s] presence, he [Browne] entered the room that we had provided for him. He was dazed [senseless] [p. 27] and was just moving [silently] his lips... After that, he became motionless and quiescent. I asked him, ‘What happened to you? You became completely silent!’ He replied: ‘After He [Baha‘u’llah] looked at me, I saw a power and authority that changed my normal condition. I noticed such penetrating and influential power and authority in His eyes that I had never seen in any of the kings or rulers that I had ever met’. I asked [him] about the reason why he was moving his lips. He said: ‘I repeated [to myself] the reply which He gave concerning the cause of the discord between religions in order not to forget it’.

The time of staying (residing) at the mansion of Bahji was one week. On one occasion, Mr. Browne and the Blessed Beauty went to Junaiynih. He took the book, *A Traveller’s Narrative*, with him, which he translated into English, and published both English and Persian versions of that book and sent a copy of that book [to the Baha’is in ‘Akka] in both languages.¹⁷

What caused Browne to become “dazed”? Baha‘u’llah was known to have typically averted his gaze away from whoever had attained his audience, primarily because it would overwhelm the person upon whom Baha‘u’llah directed his gaze. So the question arises as to why Baha‘u’llah decided to look directly at Professor Browne. Perhaps it was when Baha‘u’llah asked Browne a question, as noted in Browne’s notes: ‘Then he [Baha‘u’llah] said – “You have come to see a prisoner – He went on to speak of his sufferings & the letters he had written to the Kings asking me if I had read them – He then read part of a [*lawḥ*, i.e. Tablet] beginning:’ (Browne Sup. 21(8), Acre, folio 5.) Alternatively, Baha‘u’llah may have looked directly at Browne when the latter asked his question about interreligious discord. Of this historic encounter, Browne noted, in part: ‘Wednesday, April 15th – In morning admitted to audience with Behá – It was wonderful – only one of his sons besides myself was present’ Baha‘u’llah ‘began to talk – marvellous fire & vigour’. (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 4.)

To further complicate matters, Browne, in his Cambridge notes, gives incongruous information regarding the sequence of dates and days:

'April Sat. 12.'	¹⁸		
'April S. 13.'	¹⁹	'Sunday, April 13.'	²⁰
'April M. 14.'	²¹		
'April T. 15.'	²²	'Tuesday, April 14.'	²³
'April W. 16.'	²⁴	'Wednesday, April 15'	²⁵
'April Th. 17.'	²⁶	'Thursday, April 16'	²⁷
'April Fri. 18.'	²⁸	'Friday, April 17, 1890'	²⁹
'April – Sat. 19'	³⁰		
'April – Sun. 20.'	³¹		

So which dates are correct? In *A Traveller's Narrative*, Browne refers to 'Tuesday, April 14th',³² only to contradict himself later on: 'Tuesday, April 15th to Sunday, April 20th'.³³ The available evidence weighs in favour of the [p. 28] following sequence of dates:

Sunday, 13 April 1890; Monday, April 14, 1890; Tuesday, April 15, 1890; Wednesday, April 16, 1890; Thursday, April 17, 1890; Friday, April 18, 1890; Saturday, April 19, 1890; Sunday, April 20, 1890.

Briefly, this was Browne's day-by-day itinerary (assuming that it was dated according to the UK calendar), based squarely on (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folios 13–14), to wit: Sunday, 13 April 1890: 'Arrd at Acre ...'; Monday, April 14, 1890: 'Moved to house of Mírzá Assadu'lláh the Bábí ...'; Tuesday, April 15, 1890: 'Moved to house near BEHA's ...'; Wednesday, April 16, 1890: '*musharraf* ['honored' in Persian, i.e. had audience with Baha'u'llah] (see a few pages back)'; Thursday, April 17, 1890: '*musharraf* ...'; Friday, April 18, 1890: '*musharraf* ...'; Saturday, April 19, 1890: [blank]; Sunday, April 20, 1890: 'Farewell visit to Behá ...' (However, Browne's dates vary in TN2.)

Hasan M. Balyuzi explains why Browne was not granted an audience with Baha'u'llah upon the former's arrival in Acre, as the latter was in Haifa that time:

Also in the possession of the present writer is the letter which Hājī Siyyid 'Alī Afnān wrote on this occasion. His account differs from Browne's on a point or two. Browne mentions that he travelled from Beirut to 'Akkā overland, in the company of Eyres, the British Vice-consul, whereas Hājī Siyyid 'Alī states that he came by sea. Oversight by Afnān in writing 'Baḥr' (sea) instead of 'Barr' (land) could easily account for this. However, these are minor details. Afnān records that when Browne reached 'Akkā, Bahā'u'llāh was in Haifa, and that He returned to Bahjī the following day. This explains why Browne was given hospitality for one night in 'Akkā, in the home of a Bahā'ī, before being conducted to the Mansion of Bahjī.³⁴

Browne describes three meetings that took place during the mornings of the following days: (1) Wednesday, 16 April 1890;³⁵ (2) Thursday, April 17, 1890 ('Met as usual');³⁶ (3) Friday, April 18, 1890;³⁷ (4) Sunday, April 20, 1890 ('Farewell visit of Baha').³⁸ Although not an audience as such, Browne saw Baha'u'llah, on one other occasion, walking in the garden, surrounded by followers, on Thursday afternoon, 17 April 1890.³⁹ Thus it appears that Browne had four audiences with Baha'u'llah, with a fifth encounter, being Browne's sighting of Baha'u'llah in a garden.

As previously stated, Browne's first audience with Baha'u'llah (on Wednesday, 16 April 1890) lasted around twenty minutes,⁴⁰ during which time Baha'u'llah recited a Tablet that Browne copied, in his own hand,⁴¹ and later translated in TN2 itself.⁴² These likely constitute some of 'the words which, besides many others, I heard from Beha', to which Browne refers, and therefore supplement any reconstruction of this significant meeting. In effect, these words are an accurate and added record of what the prophet imparted to the scholar in this rare and historic meeting. This was not a meeting of equals, however, as the charismatic power and intensity of Baha'u'llah simply overwhelmed Browne. At the end of this session, 'Soon we were dismissed'.

43

The translation by Shoghi Effendi ('Abdu'l-Baha's appointed successor and leader of the Baha'i community from 1921 to 1957) is provided below. Shoghi Effendi's translation, which is current among Baha'is today (and [p.29] which may easily be compared with Browne's own rendering in TN2),⁴⁴ reads as follows:

The Purpose of the one true God, exalted be His glory, in revealing Himself unto men is to lay bare those gems that lie hidden within the mine of their true and inmost selves. That the divers communions of the earth, and the manifold systems of religious belief, should never be allowed to foster the feelings of animosity among men, is, in this Day, of the essence of the Faith of God and His Religion. These principles and laws, these firmly-established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source, and are the rays of one Light. That they differ one from another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated. ...

The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. He Who is the Day Star of Truth beareth Me witness! So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.⁴⁵

Here, Baha'u'llah 're-revealed' a 'Tablet' (i.e. epistle, considered a sacred text) previously 'revealed' (i.e. extemporaneously dictated, while inspired by divine 'revelation,' according to Baha'i belief) quoted in Baha'u'llah's last revealed book, The Epistle to the Son of the Wolf (c. 1891). The original Tablet, in the hand of the celebrated Baha'i calligrapher Mishkīn-Qalam, is published in its entirety.^{46, 47}

Later, that same day (Wednesday, 16 April 1890), Browne was in the company of Baha'u'llah's eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Baha, wherein Browne records the following notes (transcribed to the present writer's ability to read Browne's clear, yet idiosyncratic cursive):

Soon we were dismissed – [...] Visit from [?] 'Abbás Efendi, who spoke much of humanity & civilization. [...] (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 8.)

Then, a most interesting comment regarding Baha'u'llah's personal secretary:

Aká Mírzá Aká Ján also came & talked with great eloquence for a while, saying amongst other things – that Behá had said – (speaking of me) '*Agar nusratí 'azím az dast-i-ín peydá bi-shavad ba'id az lutf rabb nist* – (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 8. Transliteration is Browne's.)

A more complete transliteration may be ventured as follows:

Agar nuşrat-i 'azím az dast-i-ín peydā bi-shavad ba'īd az lutf-i-Rabb nīst –

The following provisional translation has been proposed by Nahzy Abadi Buck:

'Should there be any support [service] [to the Cause] by this [fellow, i.e. Browne], that will not be far-fetched from God's bounty'.⁴⁸

If this is an accurate reconstruction of this statement attributed to Baha'u'llah by Mirza Aqa Jan and as reported and recorded by Browne himself, the [p. 30] purport seems to be that Baha'u'llah was stating that it is quite possible that Browne, through his future publications, had every potential of rendering a great service in providing accurate information and insights regarding the nature of the Baha'i Faith which, as Browne later came to recognize, was a nascent world religion, in the making. In substantive support of this interpretation, it may be pointed out that, sometime later, Baha'u'llah, in an epistle to Āqā Mírzá 'Alī-Muḥammad Khān, Muwaqqar al-Dawla (d. 1921), recognized Browne's genuine interest in investigating this new world religion, which was just dawning on the world's historical horizon:

The youth [Browne] mentioned therein attained Our presence. Although this Wronged One had not consorted for many years past with people from foreign lands, We received him on several occasions. Portents of sincerity could be discerned on his visage.⁴⁹

Besides the first meeting of Wednesday, 16 April 1890, one other meeting of note stands out: (1) Friday, 18 April 1890. Since no account of these subsequent meetings is to be found in *A Traveller's Narrative* (apart from the mention of the fact that Browne had four audiences with Baha'u'llah), one further episode warrants description in some detail, as the evidence permits. So the following information is now made public for the very first time:

Friday – April 17 [18], 1890: Admitted to audience with Behá in morning for some 20 min. or 1/2 an hour. He said amongst other things (as nearly as I can remember)

–

بعد از دو سال همه ایران بابی میشود
50 شاه یا باید بابی بشود یا باید ول کند

*Ba‘d az du sāl hami-yi Īrān Bābī mīshavad.
Shāh yā bāyad Bābī bishavad yā bāyad val kunad.*

‘After two years, all of Iran will become ‘Babi’. The Shah should either become a Babi or quit.’

These particular (and somewhat peculiar) words, as taken down by Browne (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10), are open to serious question and may not withstand scrutiny once critically read and evaluated. For it is highly doubtful that these words were either spoken by Baha’u’llah directly or written down correctly by Browne. Baha’u’llah, moreover, disclaimed any ‘political’ pretensions, and would not have spoken of the Shah in such a crass fashion. One only needs read Baha’u’llah’s lengthy *Lawḥ-i Sulṭān*, ‘Tablet to the Sultan’ (King of Persia), to appreciate the difference.

Leaving aside its content, the main reason for questioning the authenticity of this passage, or at least its wording, is the nature of the language that Browne attributes to Baha’u’llah. On sociological grounds, it is highly doubtful, if not altogether surprising, that in 1890 – only two years before Baha’u’llah’s ascension, after the *Kitab-i-Aqdas* (c. 1873) had been revealed and the Baha’i community had fully taken shape, with a clear Baha’i self-identity – that the charismatic prophet-founder of the Baha’i Faith would still refer to this religion as ‘Babi’ and to its followers as ‘Babis’.
51 [p. 31]

By that time (in 1890), Baha’is had long been referred to in Baha’u’llah’s writings as ‘the people of Bahā’ (*ahl-i Bahā*). That Baha’is already applied this term to themselves is also attested by Baha’u’llah’s epistles to followers in Ashkabad and by the poem in honour of the Russian emperor composed by an unknown Baha’i poet from Ashkabad (recently discovered by Youli Ioannesyan in the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, Russian Academy of Sciences, and published, with a Russian translation).⁵² However, at that time, it is true that Westerners and Russian writers still referred to Baha’is as ‘Babis’, although the term, being an anachronism, was already obsolete.

Browne continued his notes of that meeting:

He again insisted very strongly on the necessity of unity & concord amongst the nations, & spoke of the *صل اکبر* which will come soon (1886–1887) [sic] ??? (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10.)⁵³

Note: Considering that the year was 1890, Browne's reference to '1886–1887' is puzzling. Here, Baha'u'llah speaks of 'The Most Great Peace' (*ṣulḥ-i akbar*), which represents the international peace plan that Baha'u'llah offered to the political and religious leaders of the world by way of a series of open epistles, as part of the general proclamation of purpose and nature of Baha'u'llah's prophetic purpose and mission.⁵⁴ Browne's further account is as follows:

There must be one language & one writing – The former may be either one of those now existing, or one invented for the purpose by a conference of savants of all countries. All nations must bind themselves to combine & put down any nation which attempts to disturb the general peace – ⁵⁵

Behá also spoke of the بيت العدل [Bayt al-'Adl, 'The House of Justice'] which, he said, is to settle all disputes. The members of this will be 'inspired' مُلهم [Arab./Pers. mulham – 'inspired']. Jihád is entirely forbidden in this ظهور [Zuhūr = 'Manifestation' (of God)].⁵⁶

Of the الواح سلاطين [Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn 'Tablets to the Rulers'] the only ones actually sent to the Kings were – : –

1. The لوح سلطان [Lawḥ-i Sulṭān, 'Tablet to [the] Sultan'] was addressed to the Sháh and conveyed by بدیع [Badī'].
2. The لوح ملك پاریس [Lawḥ-i Malīk-i Pārīs – lit., 'Tablet to the King of Paris'] to Napoleon –
3. The لوح رئیس [Lawḥ-i Ra'īs, 'Tablet of Ra'īs'] to Sultan Abdu'l-Azīz.⁵⁷

Note: This reference by Baha'u'llah to the 'House of Justice' is quite significant. It shows that this institution was one of the foremost topics and teachings that Baha'u'llah privileged as among the salient features essential to the religion that Baha'u'llah imparted to Browne during the course of that historic interview on Friday, 18 April 1890. That the members of the 'House of Justice' would be 'inspired' indicates the divine nature of that institution, as conceived. In keeping with Baha'u'llah's mandate, one of the principal purposes of the Universal House of Justice, according to its 'Constitution', is 'to provide for [p. 32] the arbitration and settlement of disputes arising between peoples; and to be the exponent and guardian of that Divine Justice which can alone ensure the security of, and establish the reign of law and order in, the world' – a function (as told by Baha'u'llah to Browne) that has not yet been formally exercised, yet is preordained and destined as part of its mission, purpose and service (as an arbiter of international disputes) in the future.⁵⁸

Browne introduces the topic of Baha'u'llah's proclamatory epistles addressed to kings and ecclesiastics, referring to these public letters by using the general title, Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn ('Tablets to the Rulers') as the collective name of this historic

correspondence. Browne then lists three specific Tablets. He first speaks of the Lawḥ-i Sulṭān ('Tablet to the Sultan') as being 'in his possession', and, in a letter dated 22 August 1889 to Baron Rosen, expresses his doubts as to whether a related text, known as the Sūrat al-Mulūk ('Sura of the Kings') was actually authored by Baha'u'llah:

[P. 10/b] ... I confess that the point which puzzles me most at present with regard to the Babi literature is the relation of the سورة الملوك described by you to the الواح السلطين [Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn – 'Tablets to the Rulers'] in my possession. The differences of style are so great that it would seem as if they could hardly be by the same author ...

[P. 12/a] On the whole I cannot help thinking that the letter described by you must be by one of the other Babi chiefs, but it is curious that the ميرزا حسين على [Mīrzā Ḥusayn-'Alī] since Beha's name is certainly على بن حسين author calls himself حسين بن على [Husayn bin 'Alī] since Beha's name is certainly مازندرانى ميرزا حسين على [Mīrzā Ḥusayn-'Alī Māzandarānī].⁵⁹

It should be noted that Browne conveyed these serious reservations about Baha'u'llah's authorship of the Sūrat al-Mulūk in 1889, well before his trip to Palestine. His doubts were later dispelled by Rosen's counterargument and further dispelled, most probably, during his trip to the Holy Land.⁶⁰

Browne elsewhere writes of 'the text of the instructions [i.e. by Baha'u'llah] to the bearer of the لوح ["Tablet," i.e. Badī', the youth who bravely approached the Shah, delivered Baha'u'llah's epistle, and was then subjected to brutal torture and killed] of which I had only heard the general purport at Acre'.⁶¹ This is further evidence that Browne had asked questions about Baha'u'llah's epistles to kings and ecclesiastics, while at Acre. In fact, Browne had prepared to do so by bringing with him his original manuscript of Baha'u'llah's Tablet to Napoleon III:

By the way I have copies of the الواح سلطين⁶² which I made from Kirman MS. with some idea of printing these before I knew that you intended to publish the whole of سورة هيكل⁶³. If they would be of any use to you for purposes of collation I should be very pleased to lend them to you. I meant to say this before, but forgot & I fear that it is now rather late in the day – as you [P. 13/a]58 have already got to the لوح پا پا⁶⁴ and the لوح ملك پاريس⁶⁵. And / besides I expect that your MS. is a very good one & would gain but little by collation with the not very accurate text I have. The original of this latter I took with me to Acre to clarify certain points about it, & the Bábís would hardly let me have it back again, saying it was a corrupt text & had better be destroyed! However I told them that it was the only one I had of these writings, & I should like to keep it till I got a better one, so they rather unwillingly gave it back to me ...⁶⁶ [p. 33]

Saturday, 19 April 1890: This day is a complete cipher. Browne records nothing for that day.

Sunday, 20 April 1890: Browne's record of his final audience with Baha'u'llah is laconic in the extreme: 'Farewell visit to Behá'.⁶⁷ Balyuzi provides a useful summary of what last transpired right before Browne's departure back to Cambridge University:

Siyid 'Alī Afnān corroborates in his letter Browne's statement that books were presented to him. Browne names two books: a manuscript copy of the Kitāb-i-Īqān (The Book of Certitude) in the handwriting of Zaynu'l-Muqarrabīn, and a copy of A Traveller's Narrative, also in manuscript form, in the handwriting of the same eminent scribe. Afnān mentions a copy of the Tablet to Nāṣiri'd-Dīn Shāh as being among the gifts. He corroborates, too, the statement of Browne that they travelled back together overland to Beirut, which they reached on April 22nd.⁶⁸

In a letter dated 4 August 1890, 'Abdu'l-Baha, in the first of a series of letters in years to follow, expressed to Browne high hopes that Browne would publish what would come to be regarded as 'the undisputed authority' and even as the definitive 'sacred history' of the origins of the Baha'i Faith:

You had referred to history; you should so endeavour that in future centuries your history may become the undisputed authority, nay be considered sacred history, and accepted both by the communities of the people of the Kingdom and by the just amongst the people of the world, because the greatness of this Cause is not as evident as it should be, due to repressive measures repeatedly taken by the Government of Persia, and the severity of assaults, but ere long will its Truth, like unto the luminous sun, be seen and discerned.⁶⁹

In this 'mission', Browne only partly succeeded. His work was tendentious to a fault, something for which he later tried to apologize to 'Abdu'l-Baha when the latter was in Europe.⁷⁰

Conclusion: This study contributes to a fuller understanding of the events that transpired during the week of 13–20 August 1890, in Acre, Palestine, especially of Edward Granville Browne's historic audiences with Baha'u'llah at the latter's mansion at Bahji. Four sources were judiciously drawn upon to further reconstruct the events that transpired during that academically and spiritually momentous encounter: (1) Baha'i historical sources; (2) an Azali historical account (*Memoirs of Badi'u'llah*); (3) recently published archival correspondence edited, with critical annotations by Youli Ioannesyan (*The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities: Exploring Baron Rosen's Archives*); and (4) previously unpublished archival manuscripts from Cambridge University Library, obtained by Christopher Buck.

The information that was previously unavailable was primarily details of Browne's audience with Baha'u'llah on Friday, 18 April 1890, which Browne described in some detail. Beyond corroborating most of what was already known about this episode in Baha'i history, and in addition to providing heretofore unknown and/or little-known details that combine to present a fuller picture in greater appreciation

of these memorable events, this study serves to accentuate and amplify the emotional impact that this [p. 34] experience had on the Cambridge orientalist, and further heightens the disappointing aftermath wherein this otherwise judicious scholar betrayed a certain bias in favour of Baha'u'llah's rival (but not rightful) claimant, which is fully discussed in Balyuzi's book and, more recently, in Buck and Ioannesyan's 2013 *Baha'i Studies Review* article.⁷¹ Buck's 2014 *British Writers* article⁷² on Browne may serve to rehabilitate Browne somewhat, by pointing to positive contributions on Browne's part, in what perhaps may be considered a partial (although by no means complete) fulfilment of Baha'u'llah's reported statement: 'Should there be any support [service] [to the Cause] by this [fellow, i.e. Browne], that will not be far-fetched from God's bounty'.⁷³

Professor Browne's narrative of his audience with Baha'u'llah has taken on a life of its own, far and away above and beyond Browne himself. This episode, as described in *A Traveller's Narrative*, and as corroborated in the supplemental sources discussed in this paper, has achieved a kind of immortality that transcends all considerations of the author himself. What Browne has done is to re-create an experience into which we, as individuals, can enter and vicariously relive. The narrative is a 'time capsule' in the truest sense, since no one can doubt the authenticity of the experience that Browne has indelibly impressed in the annals of history, when 'scholar meets prophet', as happened when Cambridge orientalist, Edward Granville Browne, met Baha'u'llah in Acre, 1890.

Suggested citation

Christopher Buck & Youli Ioannesyan, 'Scholar Meets Prophet: Edward Granville Browne and Baha'u'llah (Acre, 1890)', *Baha'i Studies Review*, 20, 2014, 21–38.

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Endnotes

1. Edward Granville Browne, *Notebook entries for the dates of 14–21 April 1890*. Browne Manuscripts, Cambridge University Library, Classmark: Browne Sup. 21(8). Ordered by Christopher Buck, University Library Image Order, RoW N2724 (CAM125186, 600 dpi Studio Images). *Cost of digital scans underwritten courtesy of Mr. Sahab Mahboubi, with grateful acknowledgment for his generous support of this research.*
2. 'Abdu'l-Baha, *A Traveller's Narrative written to illustrate the Episode of the Bāb (Maqālah-'i shakhshī-i sayyāhkih dar qāziyah-'i Bāb nivishtah ast)*. Edited in the original Persian, and translated into English, with an Introduction and Explanatory Notes. Edited by Edward G. Browne. Volume 1: Persian Text; Volume 2: English Translation and Notes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1891; paperback edition, 2012.
3. *A Traveller's Narrative* is thought to have been written in or around 1866 by Abbas Effendi (1844–1921), surnamed 'Abdu'l-Baha ('Servant of Baha') who, after his father's passing, served as Baha'u'llah's designated successor, interpreter and exemplar, whom Browne met on Tuesday, 15 April 1890, which left a lasting impression, which Browne describes as follows:

Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more. A tall strongly-built man holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, long black locks reaching almost to the shoulder, broad powerful forehead indicating a strong intellect combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk's, and strongly-marked but pleasing features – such was my first impression of 'Abbās Efendī, 'the master' (*Ākā*) as he par excellence is called by the Bābīs. (Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. xli.)

4. Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, Wilmette, IL: U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979 [first edition, 1944] 194.

5. For a general description of the Babi and Baha'i manuscripts archived in the St Petersburg Collection, see Youli Ioannesyan, '[The St. Petersburg 19th c. Collection of Materials on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths: Primary and other Sources](#)'. *Written Monuments of the Orient* (English version) 2.2 (2015): 85–107.
6. Youli Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities: Exploring Baron Rosen's Archives*. Iranian Studies Series, London and New York: Routledge, 2013. See Christopher Buck, Review of [The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities: Exploring Baron Rosen's Archives](#), by Youli Ioannesyan. *Nova Religio* 18(4), 123–125. Accessed 25 February 2018. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/nr.2015.18.4.123>.
7. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. xli.
8. Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities*, 143–144.
9. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, pp. xxxix.
10. See A. G. Tumanski (1899) *Kitabe Akdes. Svyashenneyshaya Kniga Sovremennykh Babidov: Tekst, Perevod, Vvedeniye i Prilojeniya* (*The Kitāb-i-Aqdas, The Most Holy Book of the Present-day Babis: Text, Translation, Introduction, Supplements*), Mémoires de l'Académie impériale des sciences de St.-Petersbourg, VIII Série, vol. 3, St Petersburg: Royal Academy of Sciences, p. xxv.
11. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, pp. xxxix–xl.
12. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. xl.
13. 'Namad', i.e. the same word spelled in Persian.
14. Literally, 'The Most Holy Tablet' which, probably, implies here the Most Holy Book.
15. Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities*, 144. [p. 36]
16. See V. R. Rosen, 'Poslaniye Blagiye Vesti' ('The Glad-Tidings Epistle'), *Memoirs of the Oriental Branch of the Russian Archaeological Society* (ZVORAO) 7 (1893b): 183–184. (Youli Ioannesyan's translation.)
17. Mīrzā Badi'ullāh, *The Memoirs of Badi'ullāh, Bahā's Youngest Son*, 10–11. Translation courtesy of Adel Shafipour. [Persian text online](#). Accessed 25 February 2018. Accessed 25 February 2018. Translation previously published in Christopher Buck and Youli A. Ioannesyan, '[Baha'u'llah's Bisharat \(Glad-Tidings\): A Proclamation to Scholars and Statesmen](#)'. *Baha'i Studies Review* 16 (2010): 3–28 [25]. Accessed 25 February 2018. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/bsr.16.3/1>. **Note:** The translation published here is verified, emended as needed, and supplemented by the present co-author, Youli Ioannesyan.
18. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 13.

19. Ibid.
20. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 1.
21. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 13.
22. Ibid.
23. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 2.
24. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 13.
25. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 4.
26. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 13.
27. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 9.
28. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 13.
29. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10.
30. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 14.
31. Ibid.
32. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. xxxv.
33. Ibid. Vol. 2, p. li.
34. Hasan M. Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1970, pp. 52–53.
35. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 4.
36. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 9.
37. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10.
38. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 14.
39. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 9.
40. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, p. xl.
41. See Browne's meticulous transcription of those portions of this Tablet that Baha'u'llah read aloud, which Browne copied in a clear, Persian script: Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folios 5, 6 and 7.
42. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, Vol. 2, pp. xl–xli.
43. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 8.

44. See Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative* Vol. 2, pp. 71–72 for Browne's translation of this Tablet. For the Persian original, See *ibid.*, Vol. 1, pp. 91–93.
45. Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, Wilmette, IL: U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1990, 287–289.
46. The original Tablet (untitled) is published in '[*Ishrāqāt va Chand Lawḥ-i-Dīgar*](#)' (first published circa 1892–93 in Bombay, India), pp. 133–143 (the portion Baha'u'llah read to Browne is in pp. 133–135). Accessed 25 February 2018. (Reference courtesy of Omid Ghaemmaghami, personal communication, 1 October 2017.) [p. 37]
47. Baha'u'llah, *Epistle to the Son of the Wolf*, Wilmette, IL: U.S. Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1988 13–14.
48. Provisional translation by Nahzy Abadi Buck, personal communication, August 11, 2015.
49. Translated by Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 52. The recipient of this Tablet was Hasan Balyuzi's father, Mírzá 'Alí-Muḥammad Afnán Shírází. (This information courtesy of Adel Shafipour.) Balyuzi's father "knew Edward Browne intimately in London", was referred to as "Mírzá 'Alí" in Browne's *A Year Amongst the Persians*", and was "instrumental in facilitating Browne's visit to 'Akká and to Bahá'u'lláh". (Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, p. 6.)
50. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10.
51. In a letter dated dated 1 November 1899, written shortly before his trip to Palestine in 1890, Browne writes of 'Behaists' (i.e. Baha'is'), which is the first instance in which Browne actually referred to the Baha'is by their proper (or at least approximately so) name:

I hope that you are well, and that your official work leaves you some time free for the Babis. I think I told you that the sect has established itself in America. And has several hundred ardent behaits [sic: read 'Behaists'] in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. I had a visit from one of them last June. As a rule they seem to know very little about it, but some of them perform pilgrimages to St. Jean d'Acre [Akka].¹ Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities*, 189–190 (citing Deposit: 777/Inventory: 2/Unit: 47).

52. See Youli A. Ioannesyan, Бахаи в Российской империи. Первая организованная община за пределами Ирана/'Baha'is in the Russian Empire: The First Organized Community Outside Iran', in *Strany i Narody Vostoka (Religii na Vostoke = Religions of the East)*. Irina Fedorovna Popova; Tat'jana Dmitrievna Skrynnikova (eds), Moscow: Nauka – Vostocnaja Literatura, 2015, Vol. XXXVI, 72–96 (in Russian).

53. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 10.
54. See Christopher Buck, '[The Eschatology of Globalization: Baha'u'llah's Multiple-Messiahship Revisited](#)'. In *Studies in Modern Religions, Religious Movements and the Babi-Baha'i Faiths*. Moshe Sharon (ed.). Numen Book Series: *Studies in the History of Religions*, Vol. 104. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004, 143–178. Accessed 25 February 2018.
55. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 11.
56. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 11.
57. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 11.
58. See '[The Constitution of the Universal House of Justice: Declaration of Trust](#)' (adopted 26 November 1972). Accessed 1 October 2017.
59. Deposit: 777/Inventory: 2/Unit: 41. See discussion in Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities* 138–139.
60. See the recent discussion in Ioannesyan, 'The St. Petersburg 19th c. Collection of Materials on the Babi and Baha'i Faiths: Primary and other Sources', 97–98.
61. Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities*, 148 (citing Deposit: 777/ Inventory: 2/Unit: 42).
62. *Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn* ("Tablets to the Rulers").
63. 'Sūrat-i Haykal'.
64. 'The Tablet to the Pope' [Pius IX] which is part of Baha'u'llah's *Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn* (Tablets to the Rulers').
65. 'The Tablet to the French (lit.: Paris) King [Napoleon III]' is also part of Baha'u'llah's *Alvāḥ-i Salāṭīn* ("Tablets to the Rulers").
66. Ioannesyan, *The Development of the Babi/Baha'i Communities*, 146–147 (citing a letter dated 20 July 1890, Deposit: 777/Inventory: 2/Unit: 42).
67. Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 14.
68. Balyuzi, *Edward Granville Browne and the Bahá'í Faith*, 53–54.
69. Translated by Balyuzi, *ibid* 98–99. [p. 38]
70. Mina Yazdani, 'Chapter 6. Orientals Meeting in the West: Foes Become Friends', in *Abdu'l-Baha's Journey West: The Course of Human Solidarity*, Negar Mottahedeh (ed.), New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, 145–170.

71. Christopher Buck and Youli A. Ioannesyan, '[The 1893 Russian Publication of Baha'u'llah's Last Will and Testament: An Academic Attestation of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Successorship](#)'. *Baha'i Studies Review* 19, 2013, 3–44, doi:10.1386/bsr.19.1.3_1. Accessed 25 February 2018.
72. Christopher Buck, '[Edward Granville Browne](#)'. In *British Writers*, Supplement XXI. Jay Parini (ed.). Farmington Hills, MI: Charles Scribner's Sons/The Gale Group, 2014, 17–33. Accessed 25 February 2018.
73. Provisional translation by Nahzy Abadi Buck, personal communication, August 11, 2015.

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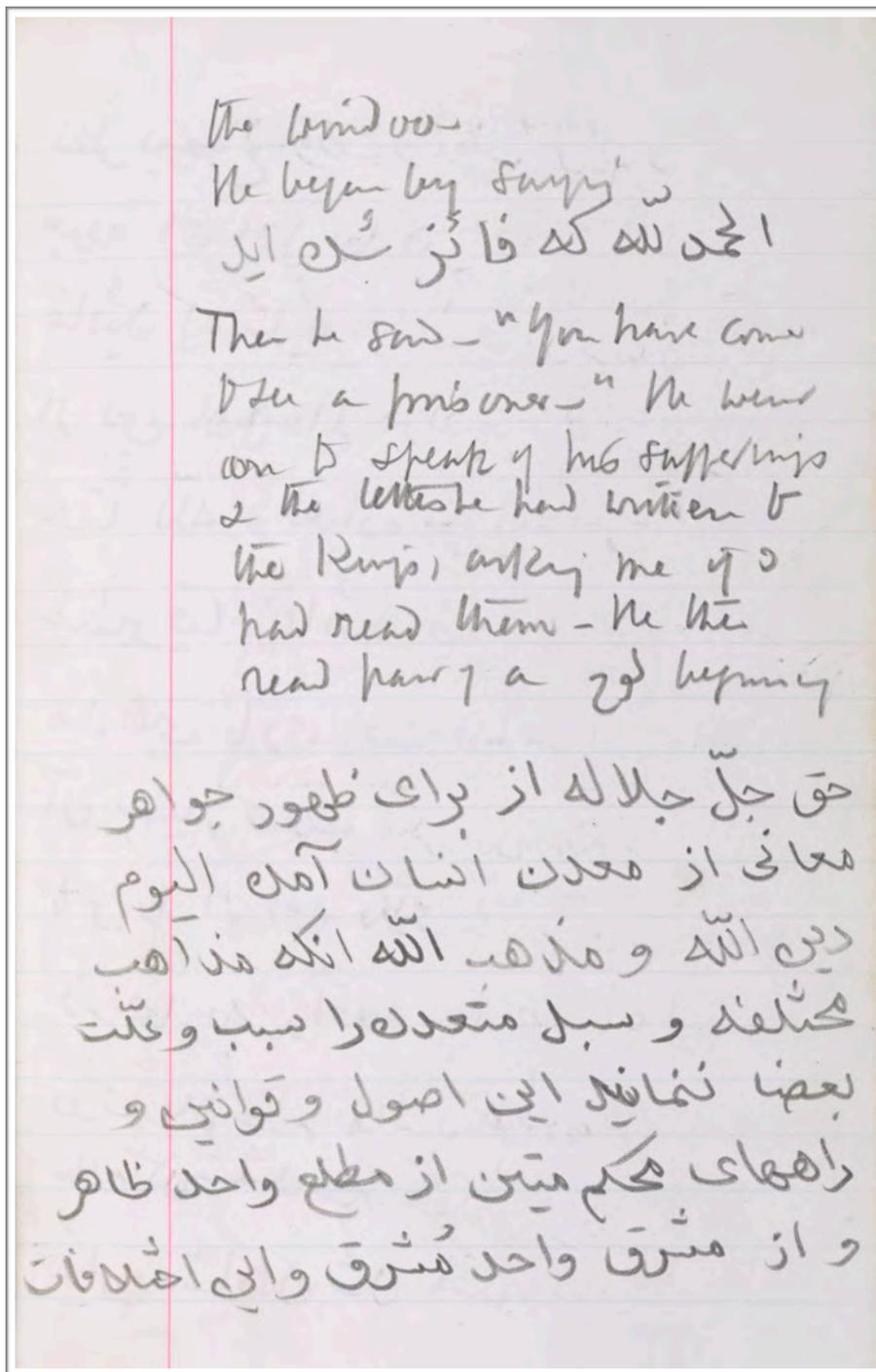


Figure 1: Notebook entry by Edward Granville Browne, memorialising his historic audience with Baha'u'llah on Wednesday, 16 April 1890. In this image (digital scan), Browne records the opening passage of the Tablet that Baha'u'llah read aloud in Browne's presence. (For a partial English translation, see Section CXXXII of *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*.) Source: Browne Manuscripts, Cambridge University Library, Classmark: Browne Sup.21(8). (Browne Sup.21(8), Acre, folio 5. Courtesy of Cambridge University Library.)