Lectures

giving

The Solution *of the* World's Problems

from a

Universal Standpoint
Series No. 4

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[1] Mírzá Asadu'lláh Fáḍil Mázandarání (c. 1880–1957), also known as Jináb-i-Fáḍil or Fazel, was a prominent Iranian Bahá'í scholar, noted for his travel teaching in North America. He was from Bárfurúsh, Mázandarán. He was later appointed a Hand of the Cause of God by Shoghi Effendi.

The light of knowledge hath appeared before which the darkness of every superstitious fancy will be annihilated. The hosts of the supreme concourse are descending to assist all those who rise up to serve their Lord, to subdue and gain the victory over the city of the hearts, to proclaim the glad tidings of the coming of the Lord, and to unite the souls of his creatures.

Abdul Baha

Lectures
Delivered Under Auspices of
Seattle Bahai Assembly



Series four



Published by
The Bahai Literature Center
106 Madison Street
Seattle, Washington, USA.

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Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Thursday, January 27th, 1921, 12:00 pm.
3000 Arcade Building
Seattle, Washington

Man the collective center of all phenomena

Although the world of phenomena and existences are infinite in scope and activity, yet they are limited to four degrees. According to the biological law of progress, we have the mineral kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, the animal kingdom and lastly man—the human kingdom. There is no doubt that every sphere or kingdom is the collective center of the attributes of the inferior kingdom, that is, that kingdom or sphere, has the nature, the virtues and the qualities that are manifest and apparent in the lower kingdoms of life. For example, the law of adhesion and cohesion is manifest in the mineral kingdom; also the law of crystalization and petrification which we find in the mineral is likewise manifest in the vegetable kingdom plus over and beyond another power which is the virtue augmentative, the power of reproduction, the power of growth, so we have in the vegetable kingdom something more than the mineral, plus those of the mineral qualities. Hence

the reality of the vegetable kingdom holds in its palm, the reality of the mineral kingdom; it is a collective center of all those virtues which belong to that and its own kingdom of life. When we enter into the animal kingdom we find it the collective center of the higher forces including the mineral and the vegetable, having the virtues of instinct, of locomotion, of free will to move from place to place which powers were not manifest in the lower kingdoms of life. The animal kingdom is a collective center of all those virtues which belong to the lower realms of existence. In the same manner the reality of the human kingdom is a center for the gathering together of the finer and more subtle elements of the lower kingdoms of life, thus we can truly say that man is the Collective Center of all Phenomena. Above and beyond the subtle forces of the lower kingdoms, man has the reasoning faculty, the power which discovers the invisible laws of nature and unfolds and brings into the arena of activity the inner forces which are latent within him and in the world. Therefore, we may conclude that man is the center around which these circles of these various kingdoms of life revolve. He is the sun and all the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms are like the planets and satellites, revolving around this sun, or MAN. Even from a physiological standpoint the cellular elements composing the body of man have journeyed and traversed throughout all the kingdoms of life before they were brought together in an aggregate body of

man, thus each of these cellular elements is the representative of all the other kingdoms in existence. The universe is consequently nothing other than a vast laboratory in which these outer and inner forces are constantly at work refining the grosser materials into finer and more subtle elements. For example, the atoms deposited in the mineral kingdom, the sun shines upon those atoms, the winds blow, the rains fall causing the growth and the development of all those hidden forces in the mineral atoms bringing them into a higher and vaster plane of activity, thus causing their various potentialities to appear. The same elements, earthly in nature, have been refined and purified and brought together in the vegetable and animal, a higher state of existence. The vegetable ingredients go through a third process of clarification and enter into the body of animals; consequently all these elements of the body of man, each one has been the center of great activity throughout past generations and cycles, and each one has brought with itself the virtues and the powers which were latent in the lower kingdoms. If a person was endowed with a hearing ear, with an attuned hearing or sense, he would listen to the atoms of his own body calling to him saying: "We have traveled through eons and eons of years before reaching this stage. These atoms having journeyed through these various phases of experiences have not been idle; they have been gathering all the time definite, concrete virtues and have at the time

of their death brought up those experiences and virtues into the higher phases of life so that the atoms within us are the representatives or the delegates you may call them of all the lower kingdoms of existence."

The great mystic poet of Persia, Mathnavi, who lived nearly eight hundred years ago, said: "I died from the mineral and became a vegetable. I died in the vegetable and became an animal. I died in the animal and became a man. Wherefore then should I fear; when did I grow less in dying? Next time I shall die from the man and will grow the wings of the Angels. From the Angels too I shall seek advance." Thus the poet here wants to convey the idea that death means an elevation from the contracted narrow environment of one life into the vaster and larger plane of a greater and more beautiful life. Consequently, you can readily see within yourself that you have lost nothing in this world as you have been traveling along the path of life. Each individual has brought with himself the highest and most perfected truths of the ages. Another of the great poets of Persia says: "Dost thou think that thou art a microcosm, a little world? Nay, rather thou art a macrocosm. The universe, the vast universe of creation is hidden within thee. Thou art that great universal volume of God in which one may read the mysteries and the secrets of Truth. All thy disorders and pains and maladies spring out of thyself and all they remedies likewise arise out of thyself." That is why man has become the Lord of the creatures in a phys-

ical, demonstrable manner. He has collected within his own center all the experiences and all the works of those kingdoms of nature which are spread before him. Man has been able to discover the law of flying through the air. Now from a material standpoint man must walk on the earth; how is it and from where does he get this desire to ride over the clouds. He gets that from the bird kingdom, a desire that comes to him because he is representative of that world. He breaks the breast of the briny deep and swims under the water like a fish. Where did he get this innate knowledge of overcoming the gravity of water? From his fish ancestors. Likewise he overcomes or surmounts all the physical laws of nature; he controls and subjects to his dominion all the wild beasts, domesticating them. Man is a controller of the destiny of this globe; he has within himself the power, the dominion, the majesty, the potency of overcoming all the physical ailments and overriding all the obstacles which seemed to his ancestors impassable and insurmountable. To look upon this fact from another standpoint, not man alone has all the praiseworthy qualities of his long line of ancestors, but he has unfortunately inherited all the blameworthy qualities as well of those wild animals of the jungles. Bloodthirstiness, greed, envy, passion, lust and all these dark qualities which we find in the animal kingdom are refined as though through an alembic and represented in man in the highest perfected form. The wolf

tears to pieces a lamb in a day and he is innocent because that lamb is his food. Man kills thousands of his fellowmen in one day, based upon the wrong and mistaken idea of conquest and victory and then we call him a general and a hero. Man is ever dreaming and using his God-given powers to invent a destructive instrument—a bomb or something else—to put under the house of his neighbor. Is this the doctrine of—Love thy Neighbor as Thyself? Probably this is the way he loves his neighbor. He puts the bomb under his house so that he may drive away his neighbor and take possession of his property himself. On the other hand man brings under his ruthless control thousands of poor employees or laborers or toilers and makes them work for twelve and fourteen hours per day giving them most unhealthy surroundings in which to live and work, bringing upon them and their children all kinds of miseries and diseases, while he himself lives in a palace surrounded with the utmost luxury. Then he proclaims himself a benefactor of humanity; of the human race.

So when we state that man is the Collective Center of all Phenomena, we must not become too sentimental and lose sight of the fact that he is not only the collective center of the good qualities, but he is also the collective center of all the bad qualities of the world. At one time there existed in Persia a very peculiar sect which advocated this doctrine: Man is not man by his outward appearance, but he is man in accord

with the inner figure; the inner likeness which is within him. There are many men outwardly having two hands and two feet walking about; outwardly they are bipeds, but inwardly they are quadrupeds of the most ferocious type—They are hyenas; they are dogs; they are cats. In order to prove this fact they relate a story of a saint who went with his disciples to visit Mecca. You will have heard of Mecca, the sanctuary of the Mohammedans, where it is customary that every good Mohammedan go once in his lifetime to visit the Holy Shrine. Annually three hundred thousand people from all parts of Asia visit this sacred spot. Now this year when this Saint had arrived, standing with his disciples on a hill, they looked over the vast city of tents and hundreds of thousands of people coming to visit the shrine. One of the disciples turned to his teacher and remarked: "Master, is not this wonderful! These people are so God-like, so divine; they have travelled thousands of miles to come here." The teacher replied: "Let me show you the exact situation." Standing, he passed his blessed hands over his eyes and said: "Close your eyes for a moment and then open them." He did and lo, before him were all manner of dogs and cats and hyenas; such screeching and yelling he had never heard. All looked much like a pandemonium. Therefore, man is the composite of the two kingdoms. He has in himself the animalistic nature and likewise the Angelic nature of the kingdom. He stands at the threshold. Looking backward

he has all the material world behind him; looking forward he has all the spiritual principles and development before him. If he makes up his mind to retrace his experiences of the lower kingdoms, he will become worse than all the animals put together, but if he starts to walk in the shining light of intellect, reason and progress, he will become greater than the Angels, higher than the saints. If he lives and goes on travelling, he will finally enter into a paradise wherein he will find all the spiritual attributes before him and that Paradise is within him. To put this in another way man is like unto a mine in the depths of which are deposited all kinds of precious stones and jewels, the surface of which is covered with stones, with thorns and brambles. It is man's duty to brush aside, to excavate and to search and throw away this debris so that the shining and brilliant jewels of the inner qualities may appear. Again he is like unto a fountain in the depth of which is clear limpid water. Around this fountain, the mud and the stones of the ages of superstition and imagination have gathered. The true man, the superman is that person who will clean all around this fountain of his existence and let again this translucent water of knowledge and wisdom flow out of the depth of his heart. He is like a great sun which is covered with the lid of racial, national and religious prejudices and ignorance. The true inspired soul is that one which will take this lid away causing the warm rays of the sun to flood the world. So

it is within your own power; your destiny is in your own hands. Make a supreme effort not to limit, not to surround this Collective Center of all Phenomena with superstitions, with imaginations, with notions which are not elevating and spiritualizing.

The Collective Center of all Phenomena is within thee, why dost thou search all around. That Sun of Divinity, that Sun of the Almighty Deity is radiant and effulgent within thyself, why dost thou search for it in the heavens and in the earth and in the seas and in the trees and in nature? Strive to scatter and disperse these black clouds so that the sun may rise from its Eastern horizon. These smokes which have been collecting for the past many generations, causing men to almost suffocate, must be swept away entirely so that the brilliant stars, the twinkling orbs in the Heaven of Human Consciousness may again irradiate and shed their illustrious light. Thy heavenly Creator has made thee rich, why art thou poor? He has endeared thee, why dost thou debase thyself? He has made thee a King and a Sovereign, why dost thou subject thyself to these petty bickerings? This is, therefore, the significant conclusion that man is standing on the summit of a great mountain: Behind him are the valleys which he has crossed and climbed; before him are the shining heights of spiritual illumination. If he looks down, or he tries to go back, he will be again in the same miserable condition, but if he just tries to advance, and with moral courage and spiritual

enthusiasm overcomes all obstacles, he will become an infinite, intelligent and active principle of life here and hereafter.

—Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Friday, January 28, 1921, 8 p.m.
New Thought Auditorium
Seattle, Washington, USA.

The teachings of all religions are identical

The identity of the teachings of the religions of the world was one of the unknown ideals of the past centuries which has become revealed with greater and greater truth in this age. In former cycles and ages because the religionists of the world were not aware of each other's principles and teachings, they came to believe in the validity of their own respective prophets to the absolute exclusion of all the prophets of other religions. Another cause which prevented the realization of the unity of religions was the sinister power of fanaticism and superstition in the active life of men and women. It is self evident that each individual member of the body politic is born in relation to the whole. One is born in this religious atmosphere and another in an entirely different atmosphere. Nevertheless, all are one. For instance, a child is born in one religious atmosphere, then the parents migrate to another country where the religious belief is entirely different while the

child is very tender in years. Naturally he will adopt many of the beliefs of his adopted country, but at a certain age, on the horizon of his mentality looms commandingly the opinions and religious ideals of his forefathers. It is then he experiences conflict within self and finds it necessary to render to his own conscience a decision for the Truth. God did not intend that this child be brought up or reared in any particular set of creeds or dogmas, but in love, fellowship and unity. It is as though this child's parents dyed his mind with their own special colors of faith and doctrines.

One of the great miracles of this age is this very fact of unveiling the realities of religion. How privileged we are to live in an age when we can realize that all the principles of the past religions have been identical. The lights of scientific investigation, of higher criticism, of the study of comparative religions have dispelled the darkness and the gloom of past obscure antiquity and have brought into the consciousness of man this higher love, this higher affinity and this higher truth of the Oneness of the World of Humanity. During the last one hundred or more years great thinkers and philosophers of the West have devoted their time to the translation of the sacred books of the East and they have brought before our vision greater certainty in regard to these spiritual ideas. These great translations are at our disposal to study and find the Gems of Unification. Especially today we have in our midst many

great and brilliant minds, philosophers and thinkers along every line of thought who define these correlative thoughts contained in the sacred books of the world and have brought them together after many years of study. Thus has been collected the great book, the Bible, and all the other religious books of the world. All of them have been Bibles of truth, but the followers of these have so misinterpreted the thoughts contained therein that they have entirely forgotten the one great underlying principle or creative force; the basis of them all.

One of the fundamental concepts of these various religions has been the belief in the Divinity. No matter by what name it has been called, as we study these sacred books, we find this golden thread running through the writings of all of them, so whatever religious book we may lay our hand upon, we will find they all taught that above and beyond this natural world there is a higher world, a power, an energy, an infinite intelligence or a force, whatever you may wish to call it—the Naturalist calls it Force, the Religionists call it Supreme Creator—however they all believe in a power of divinity which rules and forms this universe. The very fact that there are different names of God amongst the different religions causes dissension. Some are very narrow regarding these various names and go so far as to fight amongst themselves over the validity of same. Few of these people speak about the reality or the Truth of the names, about which they all agree.

For instance, in the dispensation of Moses the supreme force or power was called Jehovah or The Almighty; the Mohammedans called the ruling force Allah and the Christians God. As to the attributes, which is love, generosity, faith, majesty and beauty, they all agree. We find in these different religious books certain attributes given to the good which are evident, but the differences have come in the interpretation by the followers making these great truths incomprehensible. The manifestations attributed certain human nature to the Infinite which their followers misinterpreted, thus the people did not understand and did not realize that these were poetical and allegorical sayings representing the Infinite Source or God.

The second principle in which all religions of the world agree and share is the Immortality of the Soul—All of them speak either in a faint or in a clear manner that there is an essence in mind, something beyond and above this physical body. As regards the principle of Immortality of the Soul they have all agreed. But how does the soul live and when it leaves this world, where does it go? This, however, is a secondary consideration, because it leads man to a speculation to a certain metaphysical concept in the religious and philosophical world. From amongst all the religious books, the only book that does not refer directly and clearly to the Immortality of the Soul is the Old Testament; there we do not find any clear teaching in regard to the

soul, but we have historical evidence in the Orient and in Palestine that many Greek philosophers studied the question of God and the Immortality of the soul from the Israelitish prophets. This exalted hope has always been taught to the various peoples of the world. In regard to the division of evil and the good; the God of good and the God of evil, we find references in many books. This belongs to the two powers which are in man. We read even in the New Testament of Beelzebub who was the Prince of Darkness or Satan. The same ideas are explained in different religions under various names. Similarly in regard to reincarnation; the return of the spirit, we find instances in all these religious books whether among the Christians or the Hindus—in the New Testament we read about the return of Elias at the time when the people said to Christ: "We are expecting the coming of Elias", Christ told them Elias came but they did not recognize him—after a while they came to the realization that John the Baptist was the Elias. Consequently in regard to these supernatural ideas of religion such as God, Immortality, the return of the spirit or its ascension toward the Kingdom or the Power of Good and evil, all the various religions have similar ideas and beliefs.

The phase in which religions have many ideas in common is the historical description of their prophets. Every religion has a history based upon many strange and miraculous events. You all well remember the story of Creation in seven days related

in the book of Genesis. This story is more or less repeated in different languages; among the Hindus and others; all of them beginning the world with a supernatural being. If we interpret the contents of these religious books, their histories, their legends, their allegories, then we can accept them from a reasonable standpoint, but as they are, literally, no sane or sound mind in the line of scientific education could believe them. For example, the story in Genesis—As long as there was no day and no night how could God create the earth and all that is upon it and then even when the sun was shining above the world, how could God create all things in seven days and nights, because a day and night is a result of the revolution of the earth around the sun and before the earth was created, we had no day and night; consequently, the day and night have a spiritual meaning.

Among the Hindus they have another idea of Creation. When Brahma created this earth, the world was too fluid and was moving with such rapidity that no power could hold it in place and keep it firm and so Jagannath with his hands took hold of this running globe and held it firm. Thus the world became firm in its orbit movement. But Jagannath lost his two hands and all his statues are handless. When I was in Burma, India, I went into one of the temples where they have many wonderful statues of Buddha. One of these statues had very long ears falling over his shoulders and I asked: "How is it that these statues of

Buddha have such long ears? I have never read in any of the books of a prophet who has ears so long." He said: "No? Indeed we have it in our books written—Buddha had long ears. But the real meaning is that he needs must have had that kind of ears so that he could hear the music of the spheres, could hear the voices of the angels, could hear the voices of the hearts of men. So you see they have taken this statement literally thus through misunderstanding spoiled the beauty of their religious symbols. From these few instances you will note the narrow vision of the followers of these great prophets. If you even go back amongst the Romans and the Greeks, they have also these allegorical stories about their Gods and Deities. People have taken them literally and thus brought that spirit of one sidedness into the teachings of reality. On the contrary, if we will lay aside prejudice and delve into the depths of the teachings of these ancient prophets then we will have a vast store of mystic knowledge full of significances and beauty. If we take them literally, we have taken life out of religion."

Another phase of the various religions that is similar is the miracles and the extraordinary feats that each one attributes to their respective prophets. It is related in Zoroastrian history that when Zoroaster was born, his enemies knowing that some day he would become a prophet, stole him away from the cradle and carrying him to a deep valley, left him to be trampled under the feet of the horses, but each horse reaching the sa-

cred baby, looked at him reverently, knelt down in worship and passed by. By this time the mother realizing the loss of the baby, ran out of the house and found him peacefully sleeping in the valley under the shadow of an overhanging rock. When the child grew up and became a prophet, he went to the King of Persia and declared his mission. The king and the people asked for miracles. Zoroaster yielded to their demands and asked them to melt copper and pour over his breast, which they did, but God protected him from any harm. This was a sufficient proof for the people to accept him as a prophet.

It is also said that Zoroaster also brought with him a brazier of fire. He said: "I have brought this fire from the Paradise", and the people exclaimed—We have never heard of fire from Paradise; you have evidently come from the other place. He said: "You misunderstand. This fire has the quality that if my friend touch their hand to the flame, it will not burn them, but if my enemy come near it, it will burn them." It is also said that there was a circle of light around his head that could be seen from a distance of many miles. You laugh at these ideas—They believed them to such an extent that if anyone contradicted them they looked upon them as infidels.

The Mohammedans have a long story about how God sent down a wonderful horse of light whose harness was studded with stars. This horse had wings with which it soared through the heavenly atmosphere.

Mohammed rode on this horse winging his way through all the heavenly worlds till he reached the seventh heaven. There he sat down to a table with the Lord and enjoyed a most sumptuous feast and a long conversation. Upon his return he travelled over all the world, telling all those he met of this wonderful adventure. However, when he returned home the key in the door of his home was still moving because it had taken him such a short time, only an instant, to go and come back. Now, if you go and ask them—Where is this heavenly pasture in which this God-like horse grazes, they cannot answer you, but they believe that Mohammed rode into heaven.

We do not need to go further into these facts. You have them even in Christianity, but it showed that in regard to these extraordinary miracles all religions are alike. One is not more wonderful than the other. These phases of the various religions are of little consequence; it is the moral, the ethical, the spiritual laws of these same religions that we must concern ourselves about; the kernel and not the husk. All of these mystic and miraculous events and allegories were intended by those ancient teachers to act as shells to the kernel of religion in order that the meat be preserved from the criticism and transgressions of certain sects that all humanity might be able to partake of the true essence.

For the development of this moral side of life there is spiritual education, the spread of universal civilization throughout all parts

of the globe, the establishment of the law of love and the cosmic consciousness in the life of man and the inculcation of purity and holiness and sanctity in our public and private lives so that all humanity may become like so many golden links in one great chain, like so many limbs and organs of one body each helping and co-operating with the other that there may be happiness and pleasure of all mankind and the establishment of God's Kingdom in the commonwealth of man be realized. If you investigate the different bodies of the various religions, you will find of the quintessence there are a few spiritual exalted ideas and the rest is husk or chaff which must be thrown away in this age. The primal aim of all these sacred books is fundamentally alike, their ideas are unanimous and their thoughts agree.

The progress of religion, we can liken to the progress of light. From the beginning of creation mankind was in need of light and used certain vehicles through which he advanced the effect of light. For example, in the early days, man placed a few branches together and made a torch, then he conceived and brought into evidence the wick which laid around the candle; then the gas and lastly electricity. Through all these various means we can trace the progress of light from the beginning of time up to the present day. Again the progress of architecture gives you another example. In the olden days people lived in tents, following the tent is the house then the little cottages until

today we have the great skyscrapers fifty and sixty stories high.

Let us take one of these moral ideas and show how all these religious teachings are alike. The Golden Rule will demonstrate it. For instance, Moses says: "You must love your neighbor and your relatives." This is the teaching of Love. Christ says:—It is not a virtue for you to love your friends. Anybody can love his friend; the robbers love their friends but it is a virtue for you to love your enemies. He also said—If someone strike you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Mohammed has a similar thought when he advises his followers thus: "If you walk along the street and someone comes to you and curses you or opposes you, just pass by as if you had not seen or heard him, but if he follows still cursing you, just turn to him and say, 'Peace be unto Thee'." Again Mohammed says: "The real believer in God is that man from whose hand no one receives injury." Is not this the teaching of Love only in another language and another manner of presentation? Confucius repeats the same thought when he says: "Do not wish for others that which you do not wish for yourself." In this beautiful way he expresses the thought of the Golden Rule. Zoroaster says: "If you do not injure your own kind, your act is not worthy of commendation, but if you do not injure the animal then you can exclaim—I am a man. You must not kill or injure even an ant, because an ant is endowed with life and life is sweet and precious to that little ant."

He lays down for his followers not one golden rule, but three golden rules in saying that the foundation of all happiness is pure thought, pure words and pure actions. In this the various religions of the world, we find, bear a striking similarity. From the standpoint of impartial and comparative study of the various religions any man will come to this very conclusion that the foundation of all of them is no other ideal and no other desire than to see mankind clad with the garment of happiness and joy and unity. Why then do we find the religions of the world disagreeing along some lines? Why is it they are fighting all the time with each other, looking upon their own founder not as a peaceful teacher for all mankind but as a warring general, the only thought of which is that they must come under the flag of this or that.

The Bahai Movement in the Orient has rent asunder these veils of superstition and narrowness by doing away with many of these misunderstandings, by paving the road for the Brotherhood of all religions and bringing together the ancient sects and denominations that formerly hated one another. Today these fighting sects have become as brothers and sisters. Baha'o'llah in his tablets to the world of humanity has said: "In this day the religion of God and the Faith of the Merciful demands that you should not make these religions the cause of strifes and commotion, of disagreement and discord. You must rather make them conducive to unity and love." That these

spiritual laws may continue, these divine statutes have been revealed from one dawning place of divinity and they have all been brought into existence for one universal aim. These laws and statutes which are outwardly different have been brought into the world in accord with the exigencies of the time and the need of the people, otherwise the aim was one. Then calling upon his own followers he says: "O, ye people! Gird up the loin of endeavor and arise so that with a power of magnanimity and effort you may extinguish this consuming fire of hatred between religions and nations. Religious hatred is like a fire which burns away the flowers of love and unity: Extinguish it with the water of understanding, of unity, of concern, of truth, of mutual assistance."

Today if you go to the Oriental countries where the Bahais are you will find a marvelous spectacle, for these Bahais are brought together from the seven great religions of the world. They are all united and agreed upon the fact that all the founders of these various religions were inspired by God; that their teaching was for the betterment of mankind and that when they worship in the one universal church, they have become the children of one universal Father and the flock of one shepherd.

—Translated by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Monday, 8:00 p.m., January 24, 1921
New Thought Auditorium
Seattle, Washington, USA.

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free"

Although this all inclusive statement of Christ is addressed to His apostles in the first degree, from a general standpoint, it belongs to the whole world.

You are all aware of the fact that the country of Persia is and has been in the past ages the cradle of mystics and spiritual teachers. Great poets, scholars and philosophers of that land have delved from time immemorial into the secrets and mysteries of knowledge and wisdom, giving from time to time marvelous poems and spiritual epigrams to the world in regard to their investigation and search. The Western Orientalists have studied deeply the literature of Persia and have expressed their opinion that the spiritual and poetic wisdom given to the world by those ancient mystics is the most precious, the most recondite and the most divine. Most of you are acquainted with the name of Omar Khayyam, who, having the

good fortune to possess the services of such a splendid translator as Fitzgerald, is giving his thought to the Western nations in. poetic form. But greater lights in poetry have appeared from Persia, such as Hafez, Mathnavi, Saadi and Jami, each being the greatest and the most wonderful sage of his own time, their books are masterpieces of Persian literature. Volumes and volumes were written by these great mystics eight or ten centuries ago, all teaching in detail the subject of Truth, the recognition and the search after Truth and how to attain the Truth. Now that I have arrived in this country, I find the thoughts and the ideals of those ancient thinkers being widely discussed by the new societies and organizations springing up everywhere in the United States. These thoughts which are considered new in this country are old as the purple hills in Persia.

In regard to the Truth they have written that Truth is not a limited, finite reality, but it is of infinite boundlessness. Truth is an energy which dominates and circulates through the body of the universe. Truth is the life of phenomena; truth is the light of this world and the foundation of existence. Truth is the ocean and the different manifestations of existence are the waves of the ocean. The existence of the waves is dependent upon the ocean; they are not separate, but inseparable. Truth is indivisible and not subject to plurality. Truth is the sun which is shining upon all phenomena

and each phenomenon expresses as much of the light and heat of the sun as it is capable of expressing.

Just as the spirit in the body of man is the great sovereign, controller, director and functioner of all movement, likewise Truth is the spirit of this universe, which is infinite and boundless in manifestation. Truth is the power-house of the incandescent white light, in the presence of which there can never be darkness or extinction. Truth is the treasury of knowledge and wisdom, in the presence of which there can be no ignorance and superstition. While all around us you may find seeming plurality and division, Truth is the center of the circumference of unity and agreement. Truth is nearer to man than man to himself, but man through his own negligence keeps himself aloof from the shining rays of Truth. One of the Persian poets says: "My beloved is nearer to me than myself, and yet I am far away from her. What can I do? While my beloved is sitting by my side, I am as remote from her as the poles of the globe." The world of existence is symbolically presented as a great palace of crystal with a mirror-like dome. The ceiling, the floor and the walls are all built of mirrors of translucent clearness. In the center of this palace stands a divine being, and wherever she looks she sees the reflection of herself. That spiritual being is Truth and she sees her reflection in all. Another Persian poet, addressing the Truth, says:

“When I look at the plain I see nothing but Thee,

When I see the ocean I see nothing but Thee,

When I observe the meadows, the mountains and the pastures

Thou art standing in their midst, powerful, mighty and supreme.”

The beloved of Truth from the curtain and from the wall is manifesting herself. “0 man of Intelligence! When thou shalt break the heart of an atom, thou wilt find in its core the sun of Truth manifest and apparent.” Every leaf of the trees in the woods or forest is a mighty book revealing to us the secrets of Truth. Although the Truth is most apparent and ever revealed before the sight of man, it is the most elusive of illusive essences that you can imagine. The sun is the most apparent thing in the universe, and yet how many people have that intensity of sight to look into its very disc? Their eyes are dazzled and they cannot look for more than a second.

How can we find the Truth and how can we obtain the knowledge and the essence of Truth? His Holiness, Baha’o’llah says, “The distance between Thee and the Truth is only one step. If thou takest this one step from the world of materiality and plant the second step into the realm of spirituality, thou shalt find the Truth before thy face. If thou reachest the beloved of Truth, thou wilt rend asunder all the veils of obstruction, and thou wilt find thyself

swimming in the Ocean of Light. Thou wilt gain the knowledge of Truth. Thou wilt be soaring in the luminous atmosphere forever and forever. If thou gainest an insight into the nature of Truth, all the chains and fetters of human conditions will be broken and thou wilt be in the Kingdom of Freedom and Liberty."

The mystics of Persia had in their schools certain rules which they imposed upon those who desired to become initiates in their methods and systems. This school was based upon the ideal of self-culture and self-discipline. They required that this self-development extend over a period of forty days, during which time the student had to impose upon himself five rules, executing them most rigidly in all his daily activities. The first rule was silence; second, to eat as little as possible; the third, to sleep very little; the fourth was seclusion; he must be entirely alone during the whole period; and the fifth was meditation and concentration. They had certain positive statements upon which they meditated during hours of the day. These statements were most beautiful expressions of the highest spiritual knowledge gained by former mystics. Their belief was, that if a person goes through these forty days, carrying out these rules, he will free himself from the fetters of superstition; he will gain that innate illumination and light that leads him into all Truth. They further believed that at the end of forty days their partial self would be entirely

obliterated and they would enter into the whole. They were wont to prove their theories by reciting the lives of the former prophets, saying, that they likewise went through these periods of self-mortification in order to attain the heights of illumination. They said Moses spent twice forty days on the Mount of Sinai; Christ spent forty days in the wilderness; Mohammed lived likewise forty days in a cave outside of Mecca. Just as the iron, hard and cold, is placed into the furnace and in coming in touch with the fire loses its heaviness, its density, its unmalleability and becomes soft, radiant and fire-like, likewise they believed these souls, having gone through the furnace of these experiences, would come out selfless, pure and radiant. Then, and not until then, could they receive those spiritual visions, those revelations of God which afterward became the corner-stones of civilization in the world.

However, whether a man reaches the Truth through these material means or through innate enlightenment of the heart, when he attains to the Truth, he will find therein the world of unity, of concord, of Universal harmony; not discord, strife and division. In the station of Truth he will be living in the utmost state of peace and not war, of love and not hate, of light and not darkness; because darkness, ignorance and hatred are the requirements of the natural material world, while the characteristics of the world of Truth are those eternal veri-

ties and unchangeable realities. All the prophets of the past have been the teachers of Reality and have caused the advancement of the people step by step toward the Kingdom of God—Reality. Unquestionably, through the self-sacrifices and efforts made by these divine beings in the past centuries, a limited number of men have gained the knowledge of Truth. However, that was not sufficient. It has been predicted that a time will come when all humanity will be submerged in the ocean of Truth; when all will see the Truth, live the life of Truth and soar in the atmosphere of Truth. Not only Christ said, "O people of the world! A time will come when ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free", but all the prophets of the past expressed the same idea in different wording, Christ saying, that a period will dawn upon humanity at the consummation of the ages when they will know the Truth and the Truth will make them free. Free from what? From chains and fetters of superstition; from ignorance and fanaticism; from savagery and barbarism; from chaos and disorder; from darkness and gloom.

In order to realize fully the importance of this fact, you may picture in your mind twenty people standing at the edge of a desert. They see in the far off horizon something moving; something coming toward them. Immediately they begin guessing and exclaiming one to the other,—"What is this?" One will say,—"It is a man"; an-

other,—"A woman;" and a third might say, —"It is an animal, a horse, cat, a dog" or many other things. However, they are all guessing about the reality of this unknown object moving toward them.

While thus pondering and guessing ,it is thus and so, and their guesses, as the object approaches them, become fewer and fewer as they become more in accord of opinion, suddenly the object merges out of the distance into such nearness that they all see it as one and the same object. Now, the dark ages of humanity were exactly like this. People were guessing, merely guessing about the Truth, and Christ said, "A day will come when they will see the Truth; no more will they guess." In the horizon, what is there? Not fifty things, but one thing only.

Another example is that seven people may wear different eye-glasses, but each of a different color, and looking at an object, one will see that object blue, another yellow, another red and yet a third green, but, if they put down their glasses, they will see that same object with the light of the sun and there will be no difference or division of opinion. When the child is born into the world, he is purely colorless, but immediately the mother, the father, the relatives and those around him begin to dye him with their own special colorings. They dye him with the color of religious superstition, with the hues of national rivalries, with the colors of racial prejudice, and when he grows up he has to contend with all these colors

with which he has been dyed. He had no thought or choice whatsoever in this matter. So, you see, these divisions, religious, racial, social and political, these truly false conceptions are the eye-glasses that we put on the eyes of our children from the very time they are born, in which falsity and bondage they must grow and grow. These eye-glasses are such, please note, that when some sage of the real Truth tries to remove them, inviting the wearer to view a new and more beautiful vision, thus adding to his pleasure of sight, the wearer jeers and scoffs at him, looking upon him as a heretic or as an insane man. So, Christ, looking through the vista of the ages, saw the time when mankind will become tired of these childish glasses of prejudice and dash them against the stone wall; after which they will take up the clear crystal of Truth, and with their innate spiritual eyes see all as one, beautiful, magnificent and perfect.

The Bahais believe that we are living today at the dawn of a glorious age when the people will increase their sight of Truth, the proof to which is the fact that this Universal consciousness is growing steadily in the hearts of the people; also that universality of thought that is the greatest spiritual insight through which men will see the Truth. We hope, we pray and we work for the day when nations, religions and people will throw aside all these veils which have kept them away from the recognition of the Truth and will enter into that world of light, into that symphony of colors and music

where they will see nothing but the Truth, and shall hear no other music save the melodies of Truth.

Questions and answers

Q. 1 Is truth the reflection of knowledge?

A. Knowledge is the reflection of Truth.

Q. 2 After attaining that state of illumination that the professor mentions, how is it possible to remain in the material world, especially when the human mind makes so many demands upon us?

A. Because man is endowed with the physical life, he must live in accord with physical laws, thus fulfilling the demands and conditions of this physical state to his highest and most perfect conception. When a man gains the spiritual illumination of Truth, it does not mean that he must give up all his needs and wants, nay, rather he will transmute them into that spiritual state; he will look upon them from that noble height, and will elevate them to the state of perfection. The prophets of God have always been our highest examples in the matter of Truth, but they likewise lived the normal and physical as well as spiritual and ethereal lives, all being co-ordinated. This idea that some secret circles have that the Christ or the prophets did not have the material, the physical or natural life and its tendencies, is superstition; or that they did not have certain physical forces and energies that God has given us to function, is

again pure imagination. If they did not have these forces, then they were defective and were not worthy to be the leaders of humanity. The distinction of those people who have attained the Truth is that they will use all the God-given physical forces in nature in accord with the divine will and not for the exercise of passion and lust.

Q. 3 Will you kindly relate the truth regarding the passing of the Bab?

A. The truth regarding the martyrdom of the forerunner of Baha'o'llah is really one of the most marvelous events and one which has never transpired in the life of any former prophet. He was sentenced to death in one of the most populous cities of Persia, Tabriz, in the north of that country. This city was the seat of the heir apparent. On that special day thousands upon thousands of people came out to witness this sight. The Bab was hung on the wall and a regiment of soldiers ordered to shoot him. When they took him out of his prison to this public square for execution his face shone with the light of love; he was not at all disturbed; calm and poised, he walked toward the place of martyrdom. This regiment of soldiers, before these thousands of spectators, fired, and when the smoke was cleared away, the Bab was not to be found on the wall. For the first few minutes they were so wonderstruck that they thought some great miracle had happened, but gaining their senses they began to search and found the Bab unhurt, unharmed in a room

writing his last instructions to his followers. They took him again, brought him out and hanged him on the wall, but the first regiment rebelled, saying, "We will not shoot at this man again, because this was indeed clear evidence that this great man is from the part of God." Another regiment of soldiers was brought forward. This time all fired at once and the body of the Bab became the target of this general discharge of volleys and his spirit ascended to heaven. Occidental historians of the Bahai Movement who have written the history of this cause from a philosophical standpoint (not from a religious standpoint for generally speaking religion brings prejudice, and prejudice blinds the eyes of historians), have made a parallel study of the life of the Bab with the life of Christ. They have said Christ began his ministry at the age of thirty. The Bab started his spiritual work at the age of twenty-four. So, you will see, there was a great spiritual power in the Bab which in the early years of youth made him to arise and start this great reformative movement in that land. His life from the stage of childhood up to the time of martyrdom was so pure, so holy, so graceful, that even his enemies could not accuse him of anything. He had such an attractive and magnetic personality that even his enemies and his jailers invariably became his greatest friends, and as he was exiled from city to city and from town to town, all these men who were his guardians were attracted

to him and were enraptured with his life and teachings. His native intelligence and sagacity were so great that when at the age of eight his father placed him in a school, for only a few months he had mastered all the lessons that the teacher could give him, and finally the teacher was so exasperated that he went to his father and said, "I cannot teach this boy any more. You will please take him out of the school." On different occasions when he entered the great shrines and began to chant and sing, his voice was so enrapturing and so beautiful that everybody else would leave their prayers and their worship and come to listen to him. To continue further the parallelism between the lives of the Christ and the Bab, these scholars of the West say that Christ taught for three years, but was not put in a prison. The Bab taught for six years and had to suffer a great deal of imprisonment and persecutions. In the last meeting when Christ was brought before Pilate, he asked him, "Art thou Christ?" He said, "Thou art saying this"; but when they brought the Bab before a similar meeting where many clergy and leaders of governments were present, they asked him, "Art Thou the promised one about whom these people say so many things, and are these writings Thine?" He answered, "These are the words of God." In brief, power, majesty, authority, and simplicity appeared from the Bab to such an extent that everyone who came in contact

with him were spontaneously elevated and uplifted.

Q. 4 Do the people of Persia accept this Movement that our Brothers so well represent? Do they accept this form of truth readily, or does it seem rather difficult for them to enter into it?

A. Have you not read what Christ said, "No prophet is honored in his own country?"

Q. 5 It is a great truth that it was said to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the people of the earth be blessed." That means all nations, and it was also said to Abraham, "Thy seed shall be like the stars in heaven, like the sands of the seashore." I have many times thought, When will that time come? Are we of this time and age of Abraham's seed?

A. Yes, we are all the children of Abraham, and we hope not only physically but spiritually we may become his children. Christ said that many children of the Kingdom will go out of the Kingdom and the condition of belonging to the progeny of Abraham is to live in the Kingdom of Truth, in the Kingdom of Reality. Not only these people in this hall belong to the progeny of Abraham, but thousands and thousands of people all over the world.

Lecture
delivered by
Prof. Jenabe Fazel

Sunday, 3 pm, January 30, 1921
New Thought Auditorium
Seattle, Washington, USA.

The true meaning of Trinity

A story, attributed to the Israelitish people, is related in the Oriental books that one of their number had committed a sin, and God revealed unto Moses that in order that the sin of this man might be remitted they must sacrifice a heifer. Moses returned to his people with this divine revelation, saying, "In order that your sins may be remitted, you must kill a heifer and offer it as a sacrifice to God." These people began a consultation immediately to determine what color this heifer should be. Turning to Moses they asked him, "Will you go to God and ask Him what should be the color of the heifer we offer as a sacrifice unto him?" Moses went into the secret place of the Most High and brought back the word that the heifer must be yellow. That determined, they began a discussion as to whether this heifer should be young or old, and again prevailed upon Moses to supplicate for guidance from God. This time he brought them the instructions that she should be middling,

neither very old nor yet very young. Still, they did not stop with this discussion, but wanted to decide further as to the advisability of sacrificing an animal that had been used for ploughing or should it be one that had never been under the yoke. Again Moses was prevailed upon to bring instructions from Jehovah. The answer came: She must not have ploughed very many years, just the first or second year. In brief, they went into such infinite details regarding this heifer, and the revelations came back one after another in answer to their pleadings, that due to such folly they had to start an extended search throughout Palestine in order to find this impossible heifer, and you can be sure it was not until they had searched the whole length and breadth of the land that they found her, and when they did, the owner of the heifer, realizing that she was the only one to be had, raised the price enormously. Of course, that is human nature. These people were, however, forced to pay all that he demanded, so that when the heifer was sacrificed, they had to fill her skin with gold and to do this they were compelled to collect all the gold among themselves to pay for her. Now, if they had gone first without asking all these insignificant questions and taken the first heifer they found and sacrificed her, they would not have known such difficulty and obstacles.

Most of our theological or religious questions are similar unto this story into the details of which we have gone so far, that

we have entirely lost our subject matter. The beginning of such religious beliefs is very simple and very easily understood; so simple in fact that even a child can explain it. The difficulty lies in the fact that these so-called religious teachers come along with their philosophies, with their hair-splitting speculations, and discuss these smaller matters, going to such infinite details that the load is made so heavy that even an elephant cannot carry it; how much more the poor brain of man.

Now, regarding the question of Trinity in the days of Christ, in the days of his Apostles, in the four Gospels, the books of Acts, the writings of Paul and others, you find scarcely any detailed teachings pertaining to this question. It was so simple, so realizable, so understandable that they did not even have to think about or write about it. Do you not think that if it was the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, Christ would have been the first to give it detailed expression, taking care to instruct His followers, or would not the apostles have dwelt upon it in their writings? Surely they would have done so. But, it was the people of Christendom, one or two hundred years later, that brought in these discussions an d began to widen the scope of speculation by theorizing and making creeds and articles of faith to such an extent that little by little they were looked upon as almost insolvable mysteries of Christianity. Many thousands discussed the question of Trinity.

Many of them were looked upon as heretics; they were exiled from their homes; they were burned at the stake. At last a few of them succeeded in forming their school, the various sects and denominations. In the heat of discussion they argued amongst themselves in this manner: Is God endowed with divine nature only? Was Christ endowed with the divine nature or the human nature, or did he share both of them equally, or was he in possession of one more and another less; was he identified with the Holy Spirit? Was God greater than Christ or Christ greater than God? In this wrangling manner they went into such details that they lost themselves in the immensity of these insignificant ideas. Other discussions were based upon, Was Christ endowed with one will or two wills? Was the Son greater than the Holy Spirit or the Holy Spirit the cause of the life of the Son. In brief, all these theories and notions did not help the unification of the Christians one whit, nay, rather they formed and continued to enlarge the gulf between them by bringing into their midst numerous sects and factions, leading to bloodshed and carnage. This was, however, a very simple problem. There was no need whatsoever of these difficulties, and if it was explained in the simple way that the early Christians understood it, it would not have led to all of these strifes. Other religions who deny the question of Trinity as presented by the Christians, likewise have the Trinity in their own religions. The only

difference is that their explanation is not given in the same manner as that of the Christians. For instance, the Jews who believe so much in the miracles that Moses performed and think that he was the only prophet who spoke to God face to face, have the highest belief in him and in his teachings; they did not look upon him as God, but they attributed to him the same power of miracles that the Christians attributed to Christ. Suppose that the Mosaic people had called Moses God; what should he have accomplished more than he did for the Israelitish people? However, the name of God is given even to Moses. In one of the Old Testament books you read that Jehovah reveals the law to Moses and says, "I have made thee God and Aaron will be they prophet." Concerning the title of the Son of God, Solomon in the Old Testament is called the Son of God; David is called the Son of God; nay, rather all the Israelitish people are called the Sons of God. Also, concerning Cyrus the Great, who delivered the Jews from their captivity, and Zerubbabel,[1] one of the Jewish kings, they are called Messiahs, the Deliverers, the Anointed ones; thus you realize that although these different religions have the same reality and attribute the same titles to their prophets, because the names are different, they have made these names the corner stones of division and confusion.

The question of Trinity, therefore, is in the natural world; it is a fundamental law of creation in the world of humanity and

[1] A governor of Judea under Persian rule.

in the world of religion, for in every institution there must needs be three things: One the giver of grace, the other the recipient of grace, and the third the instrument through which the grace is given from the giver to the recipient. In the world of education we have the teacher, the pupil and the text book; the three things that help each other to bring about knowledge and information. In the world of art and painting we have the ideas, the pictures which are in the mind of the painter; we have the painter himself and we have the canvas upon which the painter portrays the invisible picture that is in the world of imagination. In the world of electricity we have a powerhouse in which all electricity is generated, and on this side we have a lamp which receives the light, and then we have the wires that carry the light from one end to the other. The most graphic illustration is: If you think of Trinity as the sun on one end away in the heavens and of the mirror on the other end in the earth, then picture the rays of the sun coming down and reflecting themselves in the mirror; again you have three things—the sun, the mirror and the rays. Similarly you have the furnace, then you have the fire which is the intermediary, and you have the cold iron that you throw into the furnace; the heat of the furnace entering into the iron making it a part of the fire.

Let us apply these many illustrations to the world of religion. On one end you have the Supreme Intelligence, God the Father,

and on the other end you have man, the Manifestation, the prophet, the Son, or whatever you may wish to term it, and lastly, the grace or the rays of the sun, the bounties, the Holy Spirit coming down from the Father, which are being given to this instrument, the prophet, and he in turn distributes it among his fellowmen. Now, when the mirror is turned toward the sun, not one of us in this meeting would ever think that the sun had left its lofty station in the heavens to come down and locate itself in the mirror. No, the mirror is only reflecting the emanation of the sun. The emanation of the sun has become mirrored in this clear translucent surface. If the mirror exclaims, I am the sun, or says, the rays of the sun are in me, it is right in both instances. Consequently, His Holiness, the Christ, was the clear mirror of the Christian dispensation, God was the Sun (the Father) and the rays of the sun (divine teachings) came down shining through Christ (the mirror) and manifesting itself as the Holy Spirit to the world of humanity.

Therefore, this Christian belief is found and expressed in all the religions of the world—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—only in different terms. In the New Testament we have these terms. The Holy Ghost is represented by the dove that John the Baptist saw coming down upon Christ when he was baptized in the river Jordan. Of course, this is merely a spiritual metaphor, an ideal simile, because the Holy Spirit did not belong to the bird kingdom;

it was not like a dove. The dove being pure and white and flying so gracefully through the atmosphere, was most symbolical of the Holy Spirit the prophet wished to portray. It was the simplest way in which he could convey this thought to the people. The same principle is found in the Old Testament under the names of Jehovah, the Burning Bush, the Fire which Moses saw. Was it indeed a literal fire that Moses saw in the burning bush? The physical fire is only a creature of God; it is subject to extinction; it is not God, neither is it the Holy Spirit, therefore the burning bush was no other than Moses himself; he was the tree of existence and the fire was the fire of the love of God, the fire of the Holy Spirit which he witnessed inflamed in the very center of his being. Hence, while Moses was traveling in the wilderness, the revelation came to him and it was interpreted in this symbolical language. This is because all the Eastern prophets write symbolically and spiritually. All the Eastern prophets without exception have expressed their teachings in a metaphorical language. It is said of Christ, that one day he was traveling throughout Palestine. He reached a little town and addressing his apostles said, "There is a treasure hidden in this place. I want to go and find it and bring it to you." The Apostles, being hungry, thought the Master must have reference to coins which he would find and buy for them some provisions, and with this thought came the visualization of starting the journey afresh.

Christ departed. He entered the village beyond and passed through many narrow lanes and at last knocked at the door of a home. An elderly lady came out and looking at Christ with His majestic, serene and spiritual countenance, welcomed him, and took him into her humble abode. In those days there were many robbers; it seemed there was a wave of crime going through that country too. The governor had ordered that nobody leave the house after sunset, and when this elderly lady realized that this man would have no place to sleep in the evening, she invited him to remain in her house. As he sat down and the woman began to talk with him, realizing His fatherliness, His extreme kindliness and sympathy, she opened her heart, saying, "I have something I would like to relate to you and perhaps you can help me to solve my problem." She continued, "I have a son who is the only means of my sustenance. He goes every morning into the forest to cut wood. In the evening he returns, selling his wood, and in this way we live, but during the last few weeks he has become so self absorbed; he is grieved and sorrowful over something, and when he comes home he sits down and will not say anything during a whole evening. He has become so lean and emaciated that I am much worried for his health. I do not know what to do for him." Christ said, "You wait and when he comes in I will speak with him and will find out the cause of his unhappiness." After a while the boy entered the home. He was in such a

state of preoccupation that even he did not see Christ sitting in the room. Finally the mother entered and introduced her son to her guest. The boy looked into His face and was struck with the glory and majesty of His presence, so Christ sent away the mother and began to speak with the son. He inquired about his health and his methods of life and finally asked him, "What is the matter with you? Why are you so unhappy?" The boy replied, "I have a terrible load on my heart and I cannot tell you because you are not in a position to help me." Christ said, "No, you just rest assured that whatever unhappiness or misfortune you have, I have a power that can overcome it and heal your wounds and can bring you that beatitude and joy for which you are seeking." Like the frozen snow he was melted little by little by the rays of the sun of the love of Christ, and finally unlocked his heart and said, "I have fallen in love with the daughter of the king of this country and you know how difficult it is for a man in my position, a woodcutter, to seek the hand of such a royal princess. I have not even a way to send her a message." To his surprise Christ said, "Do not worry, I am going to arrange it for you in a short time." The young man could not believe it, yet there was a strange sense of confidence that all was well. The next morning Christ left the house and went to the palace of the king, and through his marvelous power arranged everything for the marriage of this young man and his beloved

He returned, giving the boy this message: "The bride is ready for you. Everything that your heart desires is prepared." The boy could hardly believe this, but when he went to the palace, the king was very well pleased with him and was happy to give his daughter to this humble youth because he was industrious and was in love with her. At the last moment, when he was going to meet his bride, Christ came and took the boy's hand and said, "Well, my boy, I have accomplished all that you wish, now, fare-thee-well. I am going to leave you." When the wedding was ready and the young groom was with his bride and was in that utmost ecstasy and bliss, suddenly an idea came to him: Is it not strange that this man who is so powerful, so omnipotent, should do this thing! Why did he not arrange all this thing for himself? He could do all these things better. He must have something higher, something greater, that he looks on all these things with the eye of contempt and as unimportant. For a few moments he pondered in silence while this thought took great hold upon him. He could not shake it off, and the more he tried to put it aside the more it seemed to grasp him through and through. This man must have something extraordinary; something miraculous and I must go and find out about it. He turned to his bride: "Fare-thee-well. I must go." He left the wedding chamber and ran out through the street hither and thither to find Christ, and when he found him, after hours of search, he said to the Master, "You

were not just toward me." Christ said, "Why, did not I fulfill all your heart's desires and wishes?" The young man exclaimed, "No, you gave me something that was not as great as that which you have. If this was just the greatest thing in the world, you would have kept it for yourself. Now, I have come after that thing you have; that great treasure you have in your possession. I want to have that most of all." So Christ revealed unto him the glories of the heavenly kingdom, of the world of immortality, of the guidance of God, of the love of humanity, and he showed him the mysteries of the Kingdom in such a way that the boy said, "From now on I have dedicated my life to you." Christ took his hand and came out of town. He returned to his disciples, bringing this boy to them. Addressing them he said: "This is the treasure that I have been seeking and I have brought him for you." The apostles at first were a little disappointed because it was not a worldly treasure, but later on they realized that this was the greatest treasure of the world of humanity.

This and many other stories and parables of Christ are told to show you that they mean spiritual truths, stories which abound in our Eastern literature and are the most beautiful gems, showing that the writings, the teachings and the works of these great spiritual beings were all based upon metaphors.

Back to our talk, the fire in the burning bush, which was in the body of Moses and

was the Holy Spirit, is the same fire about which Christ said, "I shall baptize you with the fire and with the Holy Spirit." Hence we have again this great question or belief of Trinity in the Old Testament—Jehovah on one end of the divine Trinity, Moses on the other, and the Fire of the Love of God, the Holy Spirit, burning in the heart. In the Zoroastrian religion we have again the same Trinity where it is mentioned that the essence is "Ashura Mazda". "Bahman" is the first intelligence or the Holy Spirit, and then "Zoroaster completes the number. These three stations, consequently, you will find them clearly and lucidly explained in all the religions, the details of which we do not need to go into this afternoon.

When His Holiness, Baha'o'llah appeared in Persia, creeds and articles of faith had caused similar differences of opinion and had established in the hearts of the inhabitants hatred one for the other, but he explained them as we have explained them to you today, so that they now have come to understand the real meaning of these spiritual teachings and have set aside all their differences and hatefulness and have become as the members of one family. When the Mohammedans came in contact with the Christians, not understanding the question of Trinity, they were always arguing with one another, but Baha'o'llah, explaining it in this intelligible manner, removed all obscurities from their minds and united them with the golden chain of divine understanding. So the religions of the world have been

struggling along this path of the question of Trinity for many centuries to no avail. They have made it the cause of great misery, but in this day it has been made plain and through the teaching of Baha'o'llah the adherents of different religions in the Orient are coming together; through this broad Universal, intellectual and spiritual explanation, the way is being cleared for the Brotherhood of Man and Comity of Nations.

Questions and answers

Q. 1 Was not this problem rather solved in the Rubayyat? Was not Omar Khayyam of this same philosophy?

A. Omar was a Persian poet who lived nearly seven hundred years ago, and the Bahai Movement started only about seventy years ago in Persia, but you are right regarding his philosophy that he did not favor much theological discussion of creeds. He went to the heart of the subject and such iconoclastic philosophers have been in all countries and all ages who have frowned at unproductive discussions and tried to teach humanity to speak only about those things which would yield them certain definite results. Not only Omar Khayyam was such a writer and poet, but we find among the Greeks and the Romans and even in the middle ages some great philosophers who did not look upon these hair-splitting philosophies with the eye of favor. However, all these peoples and ideas were isolated at that time and they did not exert a universal

influence over the minds of men. We are living in this age in which all these matters will become universal; so this is the age in which we must talk less about these disputatious subjects and increase our deeds and our actions and see to it that we may become the temples of the Holy Spirit. The minds of the people have become really tired with carrying along these heavy burdens of theology. They want to throw them aside, making their minds the recipients or receptacles of spiritual truths.

Q. 2 Does not the superiority of your methods lie in the simplicity of expression of old truths?

A. Yes, that is true. This being the age of revelation, we must speak about these problems in a simple and understandable language, thus renewing the old truth so that every son of man may be able to take some benefit from it.

Q. 3 What is the idea of monumentalizing[1] this revelation in the form of a temple?

A. This is rather the realization of the dreams of all the prophets that a day will come when there will be a Universal temple of worship, the doors of which will be open to all the religions and all the nations and races of the world. This Universal temple of worship is not a church; it has no priest; no ceremonies and no rituals, but its doors are open to every man and every woman whether he believes or does not believe thus and so. He may go there and worship according to his highest concept of his Creator or God.

[1] "enshrining".—M.W.T.

Q. 4 It is the purpose of our schools here in the Western Continent to teach that the individual heart is that temple and there continue to be their own personal selves and be always in that personal temple of worship.

A. This is an excellent thought. The real divine temple is the heart of man. God is not in a temple of stone and brick and lime. He is in the temple of the heart of man. The outer temple is simply a place of congregation so that these people of all the religions and all the nations may come together and associate with one another and practicalize[1] that inner love, that inner spirituality, which is in their hearts, for it is only through association with our fellowmen that these things can be brought about.

Q. 5 What is the individual soul?

A. Just as each soul has its own physical temple, likewise it has its distinct spirit. It is the individualized idea of truth and the divine in man. We are all like unto the little drops of rain, each one having his own individuality and in his own receptacle. Because we have so many individual souls we have so many notions, ideas and opinions. If they belonged to one common origin and would lose their individuality, then there would never be such differences of opinions and ideas.

Q. 6 What is the meaning of Jesus came from Heaven?

A. Christ says, "That person will go to heaven who has come down from heaven." That is, everything coming from heaven

[1] "practice".—M.W.T.

will return to heaven, and anything that originated in the earth will return to the earth; therefore, the spirit of Christ, the reality of Christ, was heavenly, divine and celestial. It had to come down from the loftiness of the spiritual kingdom, and when he was crucified that spirit returned to its original abode. Did he take on a body?

A. There are two kinds of bodies—the physical and the spiritual body. Christ left his physical body here on this earth and ascended to the Kingdom with his spiritual body.

Q. 8 What is God?

A. God is an Infinite Intelligence which rules and governs the universe. His attributes and His powers are manifest in all the atoms of existence; the world is filled with His presence. His greatest Manifestation is man and the greatest man in the world of humanity is His Manifestation. Therefore, when we find the divine superman, he represents to us all of God or the attributes and qualities of God that we are capable of knowing of.

Q. 9 What is your opinion of Mazda's philosophy?

A. The Zoroastrians' teachings, the belief of the Zoroastrians' religion was that this world is governed by two co-eternal, coequal forces and powers. To one they attributed all that which was good and to the other they gave all that which is evil, but this philosophy was not really taught by the founder, but was something brought into

his religion by the leaders who came after him. Today, through the revelation of the Bahai movement in Persia, the Zoroastrians have come to know that evil does not exist; that this whole world is governed by a Universal power of good and mercy and kindness.

Q. 10 In quoting different prophets down the ages you have mentioned Zoroaster and many others. As a body representing the Bahai Movement, in what respect would you teach cleanliness, that is, clean living or purification of living or purification of the corporeal body? Is not that an absolute necessity before we can have Universal peace, and does not each man and woman need to understand that absolute law before we can begin to realize peace?

A. You have struck the right cord, and it is indeed well taken, because we teach that as long as the individual life of man is not the embodiment of paradise, of cleanliness, of purity, not only outwardly but inwardly, there shall never be a Brotherhood of Man or Universal Peace or any of those ideal conditions about which we talk or dream. All of the wars of the world are the results of unclean thinking, and when the minds of men are cleansed of these defiled thoughts and they have learned cleanliness of physical living, then automatically we shall have peace everywhere.

Q. 10 (continued) I speak purely from the standpoint of elimination of the evils of the flesh. I feel justified in saying Mazda realizes only good; no evil whatsoever.

Only from good to better. When the conscience, the heart and the minds of men are purified and cleansed from all these things, then we have uprooted the tree of evil, of war and strife. Evil in the world does not exist. God has given us a power and free will, and we have that power within us to use or misuse, thus bringing either good results or evil results. For instance, God has given man wealth. Now, if the owner of that wealth spends the money in relieving the unfortunate conditions of his fellowmen he has done well, but if he is expending it in extravagance and in spendthrift ways, he has brought upon himself the evil consequences. Likewise God has given us religion. If we use the power of religion in spreading love and amity amongst mankind, we will have golden fruits, and if we misuse the same power in spreading hate and envy, enmity, we have misdirected that divine energy.

Q. 11 Remark: It occurs to me that the Bahai movement is a practical and very simple answer to the question which Jesus asked when he said, "Wherefore say ye unto me, 'Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?' "

A. The world of religions have been crying Lord, Lord, loudly so that the sound has gone to the utmost parts of the earth and pierced the ears of all listeners, but what have they done but to spread discord? The Bahai Movement is touching the hearts of the world and bringing to the consciousness of every individual the realization that they

are a part of that heart, the heart of love, living to serve and to do good.

Q. 12 St. Paul said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me." It seems to me people do evil simply through ignorance, and that there is a law in nature which causes them to do evil. Kindly explain this.

A. Man has the power within him to bring under his control that unruly power of that sinful tendency or that dark animal side of his nature. God has given man the potency and the power to control and subjugate that evil tendency within him.

Remark: He must have two powers within him then. In man there are two powers, one the natural physical power and the other the divine and spiritual power. The physical power which is in man is shared by the animals, the same physical force that is in the animal kingdom. This physical nature in man is ever ready to gratify its own selfish desires, to trample over the rights of others without the least compunction to his conscience, and will, if it can, put aside all human rights, so that he may be able to live and enjoy life. If man lets that physical nature overcome him, he is worse than the beasts of prey, but if he listens to the divine power in him, that spiritual force, then he will have a controlling factor in reforming, in regenerating, in reshaping his whole life; then he is as the angels, he is in paradise and in heaven.

Q. 13 Does the Bahai Movement, as a philosophy or a system of life, believe that man can reach his highest understanding

from a triune standpoint so long as he takes fresh cells and uses animal meat?

A. The whole question of food will be changed entirely in the future. The Bahai Movement is not a sponsor and a guardian for the food of the people. This is a development of the law of physiology and hygiene and whatever will be conducive to the development of the sound mind and a sound body. A sound heart is welcomed by the Bahais, and no doubt the question of meat in the long run will be entirely eliminated from our social economy, because our teeth are not made as carnivorous animals. The very fact that we resort to cooking meat and going through various ways of preparing it shows we are not carnivorous.

For the information of those who know little or nothing of the Bahai Revelation

The Bahai Revelation—the religion of the disciples of Baha'u'llah, an outcome of Babism.—Mirza Husain 'Ali Nuri Baha'u'llah was born at Tihran in CE 1817. From 1844 he was one of the first adherents of the Bab,[1] and devoted himself to the pacific propagation of his doctrine in Persia. After the death of the Bab he was, with the principal Babis, exiled to Baghdad, and later to Constantinople and Adrianople, under the surveillance of the Ottoman Government. It was in the latter city that he openly declared his mission. He was "He whom God would make manifest", whom the Bab had announced in his writings, the great Manifestation of God, promised for the last days; and in his letters to the principal Rulers of the States of Europe he invited them to join him in establishing religion and universal peace. From this time, the Babis who acknowledged him became Bahais. The Sultan then exiled him (CE 1868) to Acca in Palestine, where he composed the greater part of his doctrinal works, and where he died in CE 1892 (May 29). He had confided to his son, 'Abbas Efendi 'Abdu'l Baha, the work of spreading the religion and continuing the connection between the Bahais of all parts of the world. In point of fact, there are Bahais everywhere, not only in Muhammadan countries, but also in all the countries

[1] When Bahá'u'lláh, the Supreme Manifestation for this age, first heard of the Báb's Revelation prior to His own declaration, He instantly acclaimed its truth, and arose to champion and promote His cause. He became known incorrectly as a "follower" and a "disciple" of the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh's role during the Ministry of the Báb was characterised as a "supporter" and "champion" by Shoghi Effendi, reflecting His unique position as someone who actively promoted and defended the Báb's Cause without being a mere follower.

of Europe, as well as in the United States, Canada, Japan, India, etc. This is because Baha'u'llah has known how to transform Babism into a universal religion, which is presented as the fulfillment and completion of all the ancient faiths. The Jews await the Messiah, the Christians the return of Christ, the Muslims the Mahdi, the Buddhists the fifth Buddha, the Zoroastrians Shah Bahram, the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna, and the Atheists—a better social organization! Baha'u'llah represents all these, and thus destroys the rivalries and the enmities of the different religions; reconciles them in their primitive purity, and frees them from the corruption of dogmas and rites. For Bahaism has no clergy, no religious ceremonial, no public prayers; its only dogma is belief in God and in His Manifestations (Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, etc., Baha'u'llah). The principal works of Baha'u'llah are the Kitabu'l-Iqan, the Kitabu'l-Aqdas, the Kitabu'l-'Ahd, and numerous letters or tablets addressed to sovereigns or to private individuals. Ritual holds no place in the religion, which must be expressed in all the actions of life, and accomplished in neighborly love. Every one must have an occupation. The education of children is enjoined and regulated. No one has the power to receive confession of sins, or to give absolution. The priests of the existing religions should renounce celibacy, and should preach by their example, mingling in the life of the people. Monogamy is universally recommended, etc. Questions not treated are left

to the civil law of each country, and to the decisions of the Baitu'l-Adl,[1] or Houses of Justice, instituted by Baha'u'llah. Respect towards the Head of the State is a part of respect towards God. A universal Language, and the creation of tribunals of arbitration between nations, are to suppress wars. "You are all leaves of the same tree, and drops of the same sea," Baha'u'llah has said. Briefly, it is not so much a new religion as Religion renewed and unified, which is directed today by 'Abdu'l-Baha.'—(*Nouveau Larousse Illustre*)

[1] Baytu'l-'Adl.

A few publications

For complete price list of publications in English of the Bahai Revelation, address Miss Mary Lesch, 4319 Lake Park Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

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will live as brothers.—Abdul Baha

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