

# The Story of the Divine Plan

Taking place during and immediately following World War I

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[Title page]

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## By the same author

Heart Phantasies

The New Humanity

Poems on Hollywood Bow (illustrated)

Abdul Baha in Egypt

Renaissance (a booklet)

Message to the Youth of Europe (a booklet)

The Song of the Caravan

Living Pictures (co-author, Julie Chanler)

Silver Sun (co-author, Julie Chanler)

The Bible of Mankind  
Broken Silence  
Abdul Baha's Grandson  
The Will and Testament of Abdul Baha  
The Human Charter  
(edited from the writings of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha)

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To the teachers who will arise  
in the castles of the earth and in the wests thereof  
to carry the message  
of  
**Abdul Baha**  
this book is dedicated

“Formerly they were as moths, but they will become as royal falcons.  
Formerly, they were as bubbles, but they will become the sea.”

[Dedication page]

## FOREWARD

Nearly two thousand years ago, after his earthly mission had been completed, the inspired hero of Israel addressed his disciples:

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (St. Mark, chapter 16, verse 15).

To all intents and purposes, the voice of Jesus had been silenced on Mount Calvary, yet his spirit, so vital that it surmounted the very tomb, appeared to his humble disciples, commanding them to carry on his work beyond the confines of their native land and to the limits of the earth. It was an incredible assignment.

I am ignorant of the phrasing of this sentence in Aramaic, the language supposedly used by Jesus, but the English translation consists of thirteen words and I wonder if any other thirteen words have had such a profound influence on the destiny of mankind. As a result of this injunction, the men who heard it set aside the limitations of birth, upbringing and character, and arose to peaks of valor and accomplishment; after which thousands upon thousands renounced the security and comfort of home to travel in their footsteps. Missionary bands were organized and sent to the five continents and the islands of the seas; libraries, schools, universities and hospitals were built; the New Testament was translated, in whole or in part, into a thousand languages, all to bring the message of the Man of far-away Galilee into the hearts and lives of the people, everywhere.

No more brilliant records can be found than are those of the staunch and selfless teachers who marched the length and breadth of pagan Europe, scaled the snow-capped mountains of Asia, ventured into the jungles of Africa and faced untold hardships in the lands of the Americas. These men and women were indeed the disciples of Christ, for with their spiritual ears they had clearly distinguished his voice as it receded over the centuries, and obeyed it with the awe and devotion of the eleven who had heard it first.

During our times, the command has sounded again: Go ye into all the world — a smaller world, it is true, yet, today as before it is not the glaciers and jungles of nature that obstruct and delay progress, but the glaciers and jungles in the human heart. Frontiers as obtuse as ever on the fair surface of the globe and in the minds of men, with traditions, superstitions and customs grown weightier with the years. It was the name ungainly

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world that Abdul Baha took into his protective arms in the pages of the Divine Plan and upon which he conferred the teachings of his Prophet-father; it was the same rank and file of humanity that he called upon to teach the same message, in an hour of acute need.

Some years earlier, when Baha-O-Llah had arisen to the realms beyond, he had left behind him a plan for the union of all races and nations — a detailed, practical plan to be put into execution by the maturing men and women of modern times. It was a blueprint for the ending of all wars and the establishment of a world civilization. Baha-O-Llah had left this priceless legacy in the care of his great son,

Abdul Baha, and it was during World War I, while he was living in Palestine, that Abdul Baha transferred this trust to the Bahais throughout the world.

The Divine Plan was dictated to me by Abdul Baha in fourteen Tablets and was carried to the United States. Here he considered the needs of all nations and, as a spiritual geographer, took into account the resources of the countries of the earth and the islands of the seas, calling most of them by name. These Tablets with their wealth of knowledge, instruction and inspiration constitute the Magna Charts of a new civilization. It is according to its name, a Divine Plan.

In these Tablets, the teachers of the New Day are summoned so specifically, so personally, that each reader must feel himself addressed and chosen. Then, even as the cautious fishermen were transformed into saints and martyrs, so will posterity, in the actual words of Abdul Baha, evaluate the station of individuals as yet unknown:

“Formerly they were as moths, but they will become as royal falcons.  
Formerly they were as bubbles, but they will become the sea.”

Two thousand years ago, Christ in the most general way commanded his disciples: “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Today, Abdul Baha, calling the countries and islands by name, repeats the same injunction in a more precise manner.

We are in a position to estimate the miracles which were accomplished as a result of the command of Jesus given to eleven men, but can we faintly imagine the nature of our world when the Divine Plan is a story fulfilled?

It is the beginning of a new pilgrimage, launched simultaneously in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South: Go ye into all the world.

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha omitted]

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## THE STORY OF THE DIVINE PLAN

by MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

## CHAPTER I

### THE FARMER OF GALILEE

A sphere is the most complete thing in the Universe: the world itself, the round notes of a lark, the full life that faces all horizons.

To Abdul Baha's searching spirit, every aspect of existence was familiar. He knew the literature of the religions which have dominated the great sections of humanity. He knew the histories of the countries, their customs, manners, aspirations. He knew politics as it should be — an art: he knew it as it was — a tangled web of intrigue and group-interest. He knew the heart of man very well, and he knew the plan of God.

He was familiar with all these things and with others of a quite different nature, for he had been tested in the crucible of experience. He knew the luxury of his father's mansion in Teheran where he had spent his early childhood — the eldest son of a noble and honored house. He knew the lightning change to destitution, the breaking of familiar ties, the long road into exile. He knew the anguish of prison life, the monotony of endless decades of confinement; and then a second lightning change to complete freedom — the touring of two continents, the meeting with thousands of all nations, classes, professions. He knew how to meet men on their own ground, whatever that ground might be.

So, both spiritually and practically, Abdul Baha was fitted to deal with life. In whatsoever circumstances he was the man of God and the man of the world.

When in 1912 he had completed his epoch-making journey through Europe and throughout the United States and Canada, during which he had warned the people and the governments that nothing but a complete reversal of attitude could prevent a world cataclysm, he returned to Palestine as the center of an international movement. There, while the storm clouds gathered in the countries where he, had so lately spoken on file practical ways to peace, he took up his patriarchal life in the quiet town of Haifa.

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After the war had broken and words were of no more avail, he immediately turned his attention to the safe-guarding of the populace of the region in which he lived and those adjoining. He set out for the Sea of Galilee and spent months at Tiberias and Adassieh laying extensive agricultural plans and supervising the planting of corn, wheat and other food stuffs. The latter village especially, inhabited altogether by Zoroastrians became the headquarters of a vast farming project. Thus, through his foresight and resourcefulness, the Bahai community and the poor living on the curve of the Bay of Acca were to a large extent ensured against the calamity that was to follow.

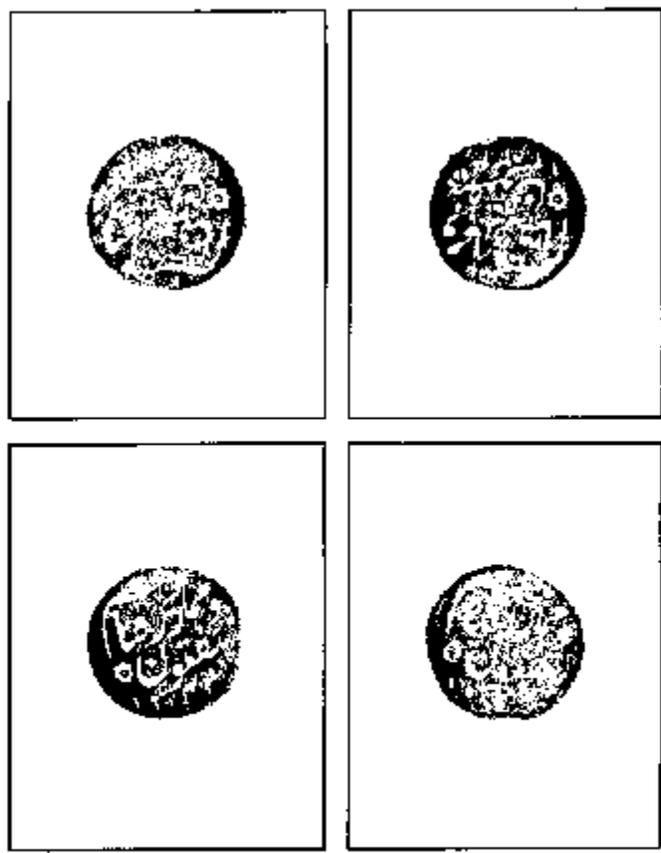
With the transfer of the scene of war from the Dardanelles to Syria, the already depleted inhabitants had been subjected to fines, requisitions and exorbitant taxes. The Turkish government took everything: horses, cows, camels, donkeys, sheep; also wood, iron railings, copper and brass vases. Household furniture was not exempted. The people were deprived of their mattresses, cauldrons, cooking utensils, even their clothing. The majority of houses and shops were swept clean. Then came the famine.

The famine in Palestine derived from several sources, chief among which was the advent of armies of locusts in numbers unprecedented as far as the memories of the oldest inhabitants could reach. At times, these unwelcome guests brought night in daytime as they covered the face of the sky for hours. To this condition, coupled with the extortion and looting by the Turkish authorities, was added the wholesale buying of supplies by the Germans to be shipped to the "Fatherland." In short the land, stripped by locusts

of two varieties, insect and human, was no longer able to meet even a percentage of the normal requirement. Death was the order of the day. Thousands upon thousands prolonged their lives on the peelings of oranges and bananas, the rind of watermelons or simply on grass, and then fell in their tracks leaving none behind sufficiently animate to mourn for them or bury their corpses. In Lebanon alone, more than one hundred thousand persons succumbed to starvation.

The famine killed the finer emotions and sentiment also. Men, impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, became like wild beasts and fought the fight to the finish. At the same time, the girls of the cities and villages, pure and lovely only a short year ago, trod the awful path of prostitution in order to keep alive just a little longer. Thus, communicable and contagious diseases began to spread with such alarming rapidity that the press, braving the restrictions of censorship, came out with statements

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Food coupons as issue by Abdul Baka during the famine in Haifa, Palestine. The writing, in Arabic, is from a verse in the ?Koran expressing God's will to feed the hungry. The author has in his possession nearly two hundred of these coupons, from among the thousands which were distributed. All coupons were numbered. The above, from left to right are 66-69-81-84.

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that the survival of the nation itself was in jeopardy. Finally the sluggish government, goaded into some action, opened a few free clinics.

Although no town could be protected from the perils of these terrible days, the communities of Acca and Haifa lived in a comparative oasis. Trains of camels coming from Tiberius and Adassieh were ever on their way to the Master's house in Haifa. Here, sacks of wheat, corn and barley, and cases of vegetables, olive oil, fruit and nuts were unloaded and piled in the vast store room. Then, after an over-night rest, the caravan returned to the plantations for another consignment.

The soil around and adjacent to the Sea of Galilee, where Abdul Baha's agricultural enterprise was going on, being remarkably rich and fertile, yielded three and four crops in the season. Consequently the supplies were abundant and continuous. The Master managed the project himself, while responsibility for transportation was in the hands of Mirza Jalal Esphahani, husband of his daughter Ruha. My duties lay at the distributing end. The people would call at the house and I would provide them with coupons, were they Christian, Jew or Mohammedan. Some coupons bore Abdul Baha's seal together with specifications in his own handwriting on the provisions to be collected. The Master computed the amount required by each family. It was a thoroughly organized ration system.

All this applied to the very poor, but there were others to be considered also: the formerly rich or well-to-do families, now destitute but still proud. In these cases, the Master himself was the visitor, the bringer of provisions and good-cheer. With all the obligations that rested on him, he was willing to go out of his way in order to shield from possible humiliation those who were not accustomed to ask.

Of course there were impediments to be overcome. I well remember a certain instance which threw all of us into a state of consternation. One day Mirza Jalal arrived alone and strode into the presence of the Master. The caravan had been intercepted in Nazareth and the provisions commandeered by the Turkish officers. On receiving this information Abdul Baha acted immediately. His carriage was ordered and he set out alone for Nazareth.

Few of us slept that night for we knew that in such turbulent times, almost anything might happen; and when morning dawned we gathered at the gate and on the road, waiting for news. A long, long day, another anxious night, and then — late in the afternoon, the carriage came to view.

عبد السلام بن حسن

عبد السلام بن حسن

عبد السلام بن حسن  
عبد السلام بن حسن

Food coupons in Abdul Baha's handwriting given to distinguished families which had become destitute. These coupons bear the name of recipient and the measure of flour or grain to be claimed.

عبد السلام بن حسن  
عبد السلام بن حسن

We raced to meet it, tears streaming down our cheeks, and saw Abdul Baha sitting back very comfortably, a smile of satisfaction on his face.

We didn't learn much about his experience. The Turks had been rough, yes, quite uncompromising in their attitude; and then, all of a sudden, a telegram had been sent to Jemal Pasha at his military headquarters in the interior. Result: everything was to be returned. Mirza Jalal could set out right now and bring back our poor camels and the supplies. I can tell you that there was rejoicing that evening in Haifa. The townspeople crowded around the house and could hardly tear themselves away.

And so the years of war rolled on while Abdul Baha, the father, attended to the needs of his enormous family.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TABLETS TO THE UNITED STATES

After affairs in Haifa had been organized to a point where they could run on without his daily care, the Master would on occasion retire to the other side of the bay and sojourn awhile at Bahjee. In the beautiful house for so long occupied by Baha-O-Llah and where his sacred bones now rest, Abdul Baha would shift his thoughts from things as they were and plan for things to come.

The agonies to which Palestine was subjected were only a small part of the world-agonies. Abdul Baha was acutely conscious of the trials of the people in every country and he feared lest with all their sacrifices they were playing a losing game. He mourned over the inability of mankind to forestall these recurrent calamities. The only hope was a coalition of the nations with agencies that would protect the interests of all. Had not Baha-O-Llah addressed the kings and rulers of the earth on these matters! Had not he himself travelled in his old age and explained to the people of Europe and America the steps that should be taken for the welding of humanity into one family! But no, the mind was slow to relinquish shabby old ideas and grasp new ones, however brilliant these new ideas might be; so, by long and painful process, it must be modernized and turned toward the future. That was the task — the task for the followers of Baha-O-Llah.

During these periods of physical relaxation at Bahjee, it was my inestimable privilege to live at the side of Abdul Baha — to follow him on his walks in the garden and through the meadows, to watch him in his moments of meditation and hear the words which fell from his lips like hyacinths of divine wisdom. One day, he approached me as I was poring over a book, making notes. “What are you studying?” he asked. I laid before him a World Geography published by The MacMillan Company in 1912, which volume had been given me by a student of the University of Beirut on one of his visits to Haifa.

Abdul Baha turned over the pages and examined the maps with interest. “These are the countries that must arise in the cause of peace!” he exclaimed, “Every one of them.” Then he pointed to the text. “Translate what it says.” So I began: The climatic conditions of the different regions, the methods of transportation, the produce, the industries, figures as to

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population, language, commerce. He took up my notes which were in Persian. “Oh, I see, you have started a skeleton listing already. Very good. Now proceed with it, and later bring the material to me.” I still have this geography in my possession — a book which was destined to be associated with a spiritual plan for the healing of nations — a practical plan for world union.

One Monday morning, it was March 26, 1916, Abdul Baha was sitting at the window of his room, looking past the olive grove, over the sea and far into infinitude. Suddenly, he turned and asked me to chant one of the Prayers of Baha-O-Llah. I obeyed, keenly feeling my own unworthiness and the extraordinary conditions under which I lived. When I had finished chanting, the Master looked at me with a soft, dancing light in his eyes and said: “You must be infinitely grateful to Baha-O-Llah for having chosen you to be with me for such a long time. Surely it must be for a great purpose that is not apparent at present. Now bring pen and paper. I will dictate a Tablet to America.” He began:

**To the friends and maid-servants of God in**

**THE NORTH-EASTERN STATES**

**upon them be greetings and praise!**

This was the first Tablet in a series which later was to become known as “The Divine Plan,” a mighty work of the spirit in which Abdul Baha was to call upon the people of North America, section by section, commanding them to arise simultaneously and spread the Cause to all the inhabited parts of the earth. In this first Tablet, he says in part:

**Throughout the coming centuries and cycles, many harvests will be gathered. Consider the work of former generations. During the lifetime of his Holiness Christ, the believing, firm souls were few and numbered, but the heavenly benedictions descended so plentifully that in a short time countless souls entered under the shade of the Gospel. God has said in the Koran: ‘One grain will bring forth seven sheaves, and every sheaf shall contain one hundred grains.’ — In other words, one grain will become seven hundred; and if God so wills, he will double these also. It has often happened that one blessed soul has become the cause of the guidance of a nation. Now we must not look at our own ability and capacity; nay, rather we must in these days behold the favors and bounties of God, who has made the drop to find the expression of the sea and the atom the importance of the sun.**

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[photo of Mansion of Bahji omitted]

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The above Tablet was forwarded to America and caused a great deal of active interest, but during the months that followed, various remarks of Abdul Baha pointed to the fact that the Tablet was not final and that it would be supplemented by another. Then on February 2, 1917, the Master, from his house in Haifa, dictated to me a second and longer Tablet likewise addressed to the believers of God in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Vermont, Pennsylvania; New Jersey, New York.

This Tablet, coming as it does from Abdul Baha who saw all things with the eye of equality, is interesting in the fact that he singles out the region that he in addressing an being unique and especially favored. He begins thus:

**All the regions in the estimation of the True One are one region, and all the cities and villages are ideally equal and similar to each other. Neither holds distinction over another. All of them are the fields of God and the habitation of the souls of men. But through faith and assurance and the precedence of one part over another, the dweller imparts holiness and sanctification to the dwelling and some of the countries becoming exceptional, attain to the most great distinction.**

**For example, notwithstanding the fact that some of the countries of Europe and America are distinguished for the purity of the air, the wholesomeness of the water, the charm of mountains, plains and prairies, and are preferred above the rest, yet Palestine became an honor to all other regions of the world because all the divine Manifestations from the time of His Holiness Abraham to the time of the appearance of the Seal of the Prophets, have either lived in this region or have emigrated to or travelled through it.**

**Likewise Yathreb and Batha attained to the most great bounty, and the lights of the Prophets have shone from that horizon. For this reason Palestine and Hedjaz are distinguished above all other regions.**

**Likewise as the continent of America, in the estimation of the True One, is the field of the effulgence of lights, the Kingdom of the Manifestation of Mysteries, the home of the righteous ones and the gathering-place of the free, therefore every section thereof is blessed; yet because these nine states have been favored in faith and assurance, hence through this precedence they have obtained spiritual privilege.**

The next morning, I took the transcription of the Tablet to the Master. He read it slowly, adding a few words here and there. Then raising his

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head, he said: "Let me see what the friends of God in these States will do. Will they arise with superhuman energy and spread the lights of the Sun of Reality in all those cities, towns, villages and hamlets? I have pointed out to them the highway of service. Will they walk in it? I have drawn for them the plan of God. Will they, like experienced generals, attack the enemy from all sides? And what will you do? Are you going to take a hand in this divine campaign, the birth of which you are now witnessing?"

These were words uttered a long time ago as the Master summoned the North-Eastern States to his side. It was the opening shot.

Abdul Baha sent an initial Tablet to the Southern States: Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Later from his house in Haifa, on February 3, 1917, he dictated a longer and more significant Tablet:

**To the friends and maid-servants of God in**

**THE SOUTHERN STATES**

**upon them be Baha-O-Llah El Abha !**

Again we find that Abdul Baha stresses the specific advantages enjoyed by the people on which he is now focussing his attention. Theirs is an unusual opportunity. He speaks to them as follows:

**The philosophers of the ancients, the thinkers of the Middle Ages and the scientists of this century have agreed that the best and most ideal region for the habitation of man is the temperate zone, for in this belt the intellect and thoughts rise to the highest stage of maturity, and the ability of civilization manifests itself in full efflorescence. When you read history critically and with a penetrating eye, it becomes evident that the majority of the famous men have been born, reared and have done their work in the temperate zone, while very, very few have appeared in the torrid and frigid zones.**

**Now these sixteen Southern States are situated in the temperate zone, and in these regions the perfections of the world of nature have been fully revealed. Consequently the moderation of the weather, the beauty of the scenery and the geographical configuration of the country make great effect in the world of mind and thought. This fact is well demonstrated through observation and experience.**

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**Therefore in these sixteen States, the Divine Teachings should unquestionably reveal themselves with added effulgence, the Breaths of the Holy Spirit display a more penetrating intensity, the ocean of the Love of God be stirred with higher waves, the breezes of the Rose-garden of Divine Love be wafted at a greater speed and the Fragrances of Holiness diffused with rapidity.**

After my copy had been corrected. Abdul Baha said:

“The importance of this Tablet will be revealed in the future. In these vast sixteen States, the lights of the Sun of Reality will shine with great power, and the dark clouds of ignorance and prejudice will be dispelled from their horizon. Tell them: Do not let your thoughts and ideals be crystallized around particular matters. Close your eyes to outward differences and look upon each other with the eye of oneness. . . . Upraise the banner of unity, fraternity, cooperation and reciprocity amongst all the peoples, so that there may be left of prejudice, naught but a name, and of ignorance, not even a shadow; that the religion of God may pitch its tent over the East and the West, the radiance of the Kingdom illumine all hearts, perfect agreement and association be realized between the races, religions and nationalities Find the world of creation find composure and rest.”

According to procedure, both a short and long Tablet were written for the people of Illinois, Wisconsin, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas. The second one was dictated on February 8, 1917, from Baha-O-Llah's room in Acca.

**To the believers and maid-servants of God in**

#### **THE CENTRAL STATES**

**... These twelve Central States are like unto the heart of America, and the heart is connected with all the organs and parts of man. If the heart is strengthened, all the organs of the body are reinforced, and if the heart is weak, the entire physical structure is subjected to feebleness.**

**Now praise be to God that Chicago and its environs, from the beginning of the diffusion of the Fragrances of God, have been a strong heart. Therefore, through Divine Bounty and Providence it has become confirmed in certain great matters.**

**Firstly: The Call of the Kingdom was at the very start raised from Chicago. This is indeed a great privilege, for in future centuries and cycles, it will be as an axis around which the honor of Chicago will revolve.**

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**Secondly: A number of souls with the utmost firmness and steadfastness arose in that blessed spot for the promotion of the Word of God and even to the present moment, having purified and sanctified the heart, they are occupied with the promulgation of the Teachings of God.**

**Thirdly: During the American journey, Abdul Baha several times passed through Chicago and associated with the friends of God. For some time he sojourned in that city. Day and night he was occupied with the mention of the True One and summoned the people to the Kingdom of God.**

**Fourthly: Up to the present time, the effect of every movement initiated in Chicago was spread to all parts and in all directions; just as everything that appears in and manifests from the heart influences all the organs and the structure of the body.**

**Fifthly: The first Mashrekol-Azkar (Temple) in America was instituted in Chicago, and this honor and distinction is infinite in value. Undoubtedly, out of this Mashrekol-Azkar thousands of other Mashrekol-Azkars will be born.**

In reviewing this Tablet, Abdul Baha said: “The believers in America must be like lighthouses, lightships and searchlights, so that in the tempestuous sea of the world, the arks of their lives may reach the haven of security. Each individual Bahai must be a life-saver who, facing the rough waves of the sea, plunges into the whirlpool and saves souls from drowning. To sit, to talk, to listen — there is no virtue in that. To rise, to act, to help that is the Bahai life. The sincerity and earnestness of the friends in the Central States must appear through deeds. Deeds are the standards. I have done all that is necessary. I have drawn for them the plan of God which must guide them through all the coming years. I have explained to them the Principles of Baha-O-Llah. Now the promotion of those principles depends upon their Co-operation with one another and the turning of their faces to the Kingdom of Abha.”

Two Tablets were written to New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, California, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Utah. The second one, dictated on February 15, 1917, from the room of Baha-O-Llah in Acca, was addressed to:

### **The believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful in**

#### **THE WESTERN STATES**

Here the Master finds similitude between the furthestmost Western state and the Land of the Prophets. He says:

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**The blessed State of California bears great similarity to the Holy Land — that is, the country of Palestine. The air is in the utmost temperance, the plain very spacious, and the fruits of Palestine are seen in their freshness and delicacy. When Abdul Baha was traveling and journeying through those States, he found himself in Palestine, for from many standpoints there was a remarkable likeness between the two regions. In some instances, the shores of the Pacific Ocean show marked resemblance to those of the Holy Land, the flora even of Palestine appearing there. A study of this phenomenon has led to much speculation.**

**Likewise in the State of California and other Western States, scenes, of the world of nature which bewilder the minds of men, are manifest: lofty mountains, deep canyons, majestic waterfalls and giant trees are wit- on all sides, while the soil is in the utmost fertility and richness. That blessed State is similar to the Holy Land and that region like unto a delectable paradise, in many ways identical with Palestine. Now just as there are natural resemblances, heavenly resemblances must also be acquired...**

**California and the other Western States must earn an ideal similarity with the Holy Land, so that from these regions the Breaths of the Holy Spirit may be diffused to all parts of America and Europe, the Call of the Kingdom of God exhilarate and rejoice all ears, the Divine Principles bestow a new life, the different parties become one party and the once divergent ideas revolve around one**

**unique center; that the East and West of the continent may embrace each other, the anthem of the oneness of the world of humanity confer a new life upon all the children of men and the Tabernacle of Universal Peace be pitched on the apex of America.**

When the original of the above Tablet had been corrected by Abdul Baha, he returned it to me, at the same time slapping me smartly on both cheeks. "It is very good" he laughed, "and this is your wage for copying the Tablet . Now let us take a walk in the town."

As we passed through the narrow streets of Acca, he turned to me and said "Speak!" I had to obey as best I could; so, assembling my thoughts which had been focused on the last Tablet, I began to relate the story of the discovery of gold in the stream gravels of California which had taken place in 1848, and told how, when the news was spread, tens of thousands of persons in the Eastern States left their farms, factories and homes in a mad rush for the gold-fields — many thousands dying on the way. The Beloved thought for a while, then he spoke: "Consider how men, in order to gain wealth and honor, threw themselves into the midst

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[photo of house of Abdullah Pasha where 'Abdu'l-Baha lived in Acca omitted]

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of all kinds of dangers. How cheerfully they accepted all day, the mines of the Kingdom of Abha are being discovered and the precious Jewels of the Spirit are exposed. These mines are inexhaustible. The more they dig, the greater will be the output of the ideal silver, gold and diamond. The believers in the Western States must find their way from these earthly mines to the spiritual mines. They must realize how their forefathers, in order to obtain gold, underwent the most incredible adversities, exposed their lives to danger and accepted all difficulties with firm resolution. The friends also, in order to guide the souls, to promote the Word of God, to discover the unseen treasure of the Kingdom and to prospect the invisible mines of the Realm of Might, must be willing to undergo any difficulty, so that they may achieve results and enrich the world with the boundless wealth of Truth. To the believers of the Western States, the self-sacrifice of the old pioneers and the patient gold-diggers must serve as a great example of perseverance.

Another day, when the Master and I were speaking about the system of irrigation which had turned the wastes of Southern California into a paradise of flowers, he said: "When you travel in those parts, tell the people: The Heavenly Irrigator appeared 70 years ago in Persia and showed his disciples how to flood the dry fields of the hearts. Through his knowledge and inspiration, they were enabled to transform the waste deserts of the minds and souls into luxuriant gardens through which rivers of light flowed from the inaccessible Mountains of God."

He continued. "Say to them:

O ye friends of the Western States! Just as your Government is these extraordinary hardships, and travelled thousands of miles through deserts and over mountains, in order to reach the gold mines. But now in this spending extraordinary effort and money in the matter of irrigation, building dams on the tablelands to save the winter rain, so that the valleys, the plains and the orchards may be flooded during the summer season — you also must exert yourselves in the irrigation of the hearts of men. Learn perseverance from your universal teacher, Baha-O-Llah, who was not disheartened by any obstacle from irrigating the hearts

of humanity. Kings and nations arose against him and banished him to distant lands. Nevertheless, whenever he entered a new place, he fearlessly occupied his time in the spiritual irrigation and the sowing of the seeds of knowledge and wisdom in the prepared fields of Spirit. Through his tender care, the wildernesses were changed into rose gardens, the sad hearts were made happy, the sleepy ones were awakened and the weak ones strengthened. Irrigation! This is the real and permanent irrigation of the

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Lord. One drop of this water will allay the thirst of all mankind, suffering the fields of the hearts to become green and luxuriant throughout all eternity. If the ground of the spirit is flooded with this pure water, it will not be followed by drought; its flowers will not fade and its freshness will never pass away. I hope that the Western friends may become the spiritual irrigators of the Kingdom.”

Again, in speaking of his hopes for the people of the Western States, Abdul Baha expressed himself in glowing terms: “If we concentrate our attention on the spiritual world and the rich results issuing therefrom, we observe that through the Teachings of Christ and the self-sacrifice of his disciples, Europe and America were adorned with the bright jewels of divine civilization, ferocious characters were refined and the love of humanity spread.

“In a similar manner in the Bahai Cause, there must appear extraordinary spiritual geniuses, wonders of the Kingdom of God, souls who in knowledge, sociability, tenderness, loving kindness, universality and joyfulness, may be considered as unique and peerless. Should such heavenly beings appear in the Western States: souls who have discovered their ways to the mines of the Kingdom, souls who are the irrigators of the grounds of the hearts of humanity, souls who are the wonders of the realm of Truth. The power and creative energy of the Kingdom of Abha will become manifest and apparent. Then and not until then will the spiritual creation of the Almighty become perfected in those States, the miracles of the transforming power of the Spirit embodied, the Mysteries of the Holy Rooks revealed and the golden age of pence and brotherhood established.”

In this manner did Abdul Baha call upon the Western States, even as he had invoked the Northern, Southern and Central States, to take part in the great practical and spiritual combat of the Twentieth Century.

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### **Chapter III**

#### **THE TABLETS TO CANADA**

The time had now come for Abdul Baha to turn his attention to Canada and the northern stretches of this hemisphere. In a first Tablet, he gives especial consideration to the inhabitants of Iceland, Greenland and the Franklin Islands. These ice-bound regions shall be tempered with the knowledge of God, and melted with the love of God. In it not said in the Koran: “A day will come wherein the lights of unity will illumine all the world”?

The second and longer Tablet to Canada was dictated On February 21, 1917 in the room of Baha-O-Llah at Acca. It in addressed thus:

**To the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful in the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, Yukon, Mackenzie, Keewateen, Ungava, Franklin Islands and Greenland.**

In opening this Tablet, the Master as usual strikes the note of equality and then proceeds to mention the rare privileges that have been conferred upon Canada together with the promise of its future.

**In the great Koran, God says: 'Thou shalt see no difference in the creatures of God.' In other words, He says: From the ideal standpoint, there is no variation among the creatures of God, because all were created by Him. From the above premise, a conclusion is drawn, that there is even no difference among the various countries; at the same time, the history of the Dominion of Canada is infinitely glorious and its future great. Thus it shall become the object of the Glance of Providence and the manifestation of the Favors of the Supreme Lord.**

The Master admits that he had been warned against visiting Montreal. Many persons had thought that he would not be well received there because the majority of the inhabitants of that province were Catholic. In the estimation of his advisors, they were, submerged in the sea of dogma, imitation and formalism, and in no condition to hearken to the call of Reality. In writing of himself in this situation, he continues:

**But these stories did not have any effect on the resolution of Abdul Baha. He, trusting in God, turned his face toward Montreal. When he**

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Palestine omitted]

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**entered that city, he observed that all the doors were open; he found the hearts in the utmost state of receptivity and the ideal power of the Kingdom of God removing every obstacle and obstruction. In the churches and meetings of that Dominion, he called men to the Kingdom of God with the utmost joy, and scattered seeds which will be irrigated by the hand of Divine Power. Undoubtedly those seeds will grow, becoming green and verdant, and many rich harvests will be gathered. In the promotion of the Divine Principle he found no antagonist and no adversary.**

Then he speaks directly to the believers:

**Do ye not took upon the smallness of your number and the multitudes of the nations. Five grains of wheat will be endowed with heavenly blessing whereas a thousand tons of tares will yield no results and have no effect. One fruitful tree will be conducive to the life of society, whereas a thousand forests of wild trees offer no fruits. The plain is covered with pebbles, but precious stones are rare. One pearl is better than a thousand wildernesses of sand, especially the Pearl of Great Price which is endowed with Divine Blessing. Ere long thousands of other pearls will be born from It. When that Pearl associates and becomes the intimate of the pebbles, they also all change into pearls.**

**Therefore, again I repeat, that the future of Canada, whether from the standpoint of civilization or from the viewpoint of the virtues of the Kingdom is very great. Day by day, civilization**

**and freedom shall increase. Likewise, the cloud of the Kingdom will water the seeds of guidance sown in that Dominion. Consequently rest ye not, seek ye no composure, attach not yourselves to the luxuries of this ephemeral world, free yourselves from every attachment and strive with heart and soul to become fully established in the Kingdom of God. Gain ye the heavenly treasures. Day by day, become ye more illumined. Draw ye nearer and nearer unto the Threshold of Oneness. Become ye the manifestors of spiritual favors and the dawning-places of infinite lights. If it is possible, send ye teachers to other portions of Canada; likewise dispatch ye teachers to Greenland and the home of the Eskimos.**

**In regard to the teachers, they must completely divest themselves from the old garments and be invested with a new garment. According to the statement of Christ, they must attain to the station of rebirth: that it, whereas in the first instance they were born from the womb of the mother, this time they must be born from the womb of the world of nature. Just as they are now totally unaware of the experiences of the foetal world, they must also entirely forget the defects of the world of nature. They must be**

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**baptized with the Water of Life, the Fire of the Love of God and the Breaths of the Holy Spirit; be satisfied with little food, but take a large portion from the heavenly table. They must disengage themselves from temptation and covetousness, and be filled with the spirit. Through the effect of their pure breath, they must change the stone into the brilliant ruby and the shell into pearl. Like unto the cloud of vernal shower, they must transform the black soil into the rose-garden and orchard. They must make the blind seeing, the deaf hearing, the extinguished one enkindled and art aglow, and the dead quickened.**

**Upon ye be Baha-O-Llah El Abha!**

The acid test of every movement is its practicability. The right cause will at first strengthen the character from better habits and enrich the spirit. When this state has been arrived at, the next logical one is that of sharing.

The Bahai Cause is a failure if it simply remains as a source of inspiration to its adherents, because from its inception it was viewed as a creative power for the readjustment of world affairs. Its principles can never be too often reiterated, for each one is an adventure in modern thinking and constitutes a vast field of endeavor: The fact of the Oneness of the world of humanity. The ideal of independent investigation of Truth. Realization that the basis of all the divine religions is one. Emphasis on religion as being the cause of love and harmony; not hatred and discord. A new outlook on religion as being in conformity with science and reason. Equality of the rights of men and women. A universal auxiliary language. Education for all, everywhere. The elimination of want everywhere. Economic justice. A world government.

What a program! And to it is added the knowledge that it has been given to this generation by the list of God's Messengers, the modern Moses who descended from the Sinai of Inspiration with a charter for today. Small wonder that Abdul Baha, the closest companion of the Prophet as well as the closest in understanding, strove with all the intensity of his mighty spirit to share the burden of responsibility with all of us. It is the cause of every man, will he but take it.

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## Chapter IV

### TABLETS TO THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Abdul Baha now writes four more Tablets, all of them addressed to the believers of the United States and Canada as a whole.

#### No. I

In the first, dictated in the garden of Bahjee on April 8, 1916, he speaks of the countries of this hemisphere that are awaiting the Great Message. On the North, Alaska must be visited and the principles of unity divulged and explained. It is a great enterprise: the territory is vast and the call of the Kingdom of God has not yet been raised thereon. Then turning his attention to the numerous countries southward, the Master continues in most specific terms.

Likewise the Republic of Mexico is very important. The majority of the inhabitants of that country are devoted Catholics. They are totally unaware of the reality of the Bible, the Gospel and the New Divine Teachings. They do not know that the basis of the religions of God is one and that the Holy Manifestations are like unto the Sun of Truth, rising from the different dawning-places. Those souls are submerged in the sea of dogma. If one breath of Life be blown over them, great results will issue therefrom. It is advisable that those who intend to teach in Mexico should be familiar with the Spanish language.

Similarly, the teachers to the six Central American Republics, situated south of Mexico — Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and the seventh country Belize or British Honduras — should also be familiar with Spanish.

You must give great attention to teaching the Indians, i.e., the aborigines of America, for these souls are like unto the ancient inhabitants of the Arabian Peninsula, who previous to the Manifestation of His Holiness Mohammad were treated as savages; but, when the Mahammedic light shone forth in their midst, they became so illuminated that they brightened the world. Likewise, should these Indians and aborigines be educated and obtain guidance, there is no doubt but that through the Divine Teachings they will become so enlightened as to shed light on all regions.

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha in Acca omitted]

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**All the above countries have significance, but especially the Republic of Panama wherein the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans come together through the Panama Canal. It is a center for travel — a passage from America to the other continents of the world. In the future it will gain most great importance.**

**The Islands of the West Indies, such as Cuba, Haiti, Porto Rico, Jamaica, the Islands of the Lesser Antilles, the Bahama Islands, even the small Watling Island — all have great value, as have the two black Republics, Haiti and Santa Domingo, situated in the cluster of the Greater Antilles; also the cluster of the Islands of Bermuda in the Atlantic Ocean.**

**Attention must be given to the Republics on the Continent of South America — Columbia, Equador, Peru, Brazil, British Guiana, Dutch Guiana, French Guiana, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Venezuela; also to the islands on the north, east and west of South America, such as Falkland Island, Galapago, Juan Fernandez, Tabago and Trinidad. The city of Bahia situated on the eastern shore of Brazil is notable. Because for sometime it has become known by this name, its efficacy will be most potent.**

**In short, O ye believers of God! Exalt your effort and magnify your aims. His Holiness Christ says: ‘Blessed tire the poor, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.’ In other words: blessed are the nameless and traceless poor, far they are the leaders of mankind. Likewise is it said in the Koran: ‘We desire to bestow our gifts upon those who have become weak on the face of the earth, and make them a nation and the heirs of Spiritual Truth.’ Or, we wish to grant a favor on the impotent souls and suffer them to become the inheritors of the Messengers and the Prophets.**

**Therefore, now is the time that you may divest yourselves of the garment of attachment to this phenomenal realm; be wholly severed from the physical world and became angels of heaven, travelling and teaching through all these regions.**

**I declare by Him, beside Whom there is no one, that each of you shall become the Israfil of Life, blowing the Breath of Life in the souls of others.**

**Upon ye be greeting and praise!**

We know quite well that this world of ours has many races and tribes, but through the law of scientific classification the historians and geographers have reduced them into four groups.

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1. The white or Caucasian people, consisting of 770 millions, are the largest group and the most highly civilized.
2. The black or Ethiopian races consisting of 175 millions, mainly inhabiting Africa. With a few millions in other parts of the world.
3. The yellow or Mongolian people numbering about 540 millions, all of whom live in Asia, mostly in China and Japan.
4. The red man Or American Indian — approximately 22 millions, a few living on this continent and the rest in South America.

All these people, living from the Arctic to the Ant-arctic, in all latitudes and longitudes in the north, south and torrid zones, must come to know God and His Revelation in this latter day, and be taught the lessons of the brotherhood of all mankind.

To this overwhelming mission, Abdul Baha had dedicated himself. Not the smallest island was to be overlooked; and now from Bahjee on April 11, 1916, the Great Teacher writes again to the Bahais of the United States and Canada, offering them the world as field for their activities.

**A group speaking the languages, severed, holy, sanctified and filled with the love of God, must travel through the three great Island clusters of the Pacific Ocean; Polynesia, Micronesia and the adjacent Islands, such as New Guinea, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Philippine Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Bismarck Archipelago, Ceram, Celebes, Friendly Islands, Samoa Islands, Society Islands, Caroline Islands, Low Archipelago, Marquesas, Hawaiian Islands, Gilbert Islands, Moluccas, Marshall Islands, Timor and the other Islands. With hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues making mention of God, with eyes turned to the Kingdom, they must deliver the Glad-Tiding of the Manifestation of the Lord of Hosts to all the people. Know ye of a certainty that in whatever meeting ye may enter, at the apex of that meeting the Holy Spirit shall be brooding and the heavenly Confirmations of the Blessed Perfection will encompass all.**

The Master wishes that he himself might essay the superhuman task, he who never was discouraged by obstacles; but he knew that the time had come for others to grasp the banner that he had upheld for almost a lifetime.

**O how I wish that it could be made possible for me to travel through these parts, if necessary on foot and in the utmost poverty, and while pass-**

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**ing through the cities, villages, mountains, deserts and oceans, cry at the top of my voice: ‘Ye Baha El Abha!’ and promote the Divine Teachings. But now this is not feasible for me, therefore I live in great regret; perchance, God willing, ye may become assisted therein.**

Abdul Baha envisions groups of voyagers setting out on world conquest:

**Likewise, if some teachers go to other Islands and other parts, such as the Continents of Australia, New Zealand, Tasmania, also to Japan; to Asiatic Russia, Korea, French Indo-China, Siam, Straits Settlements, India, Ceylon and Afghanistan, most great results will be forthcoming. How good would it be were there any possibility of a commission composed of men and women, travelling through China and Japan, so that the bond of love might become strengthened and, through this going and coming, they may establish the oneness of the world of humanity, summon the people to the Kingdom of God and spread the Teachings.**

**Similarly, if possible, they should travel to the Continent of Africa, the Canary Islands, Cape Verde Islands, Madeira Islands, Reunion Islands, St. Helena, Zanzibar, Mauritius, etc., and in those countries summon the people to the Kingdom of God and raise the cry of ‘Ya Baha El Abha!’ They must upraise the Flag of the Oneness of the world of humanity in the Island of Madagascar also.**

**Books and pamphlets must be either translated or composed in the languages of these countries and Islands, to be circulated in every part and in all directions...**

**O ye believers of God! Show ye an effort and after this war spread ye the synopsis of the Divine Teachings in the British Isles, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Portugal, Roumania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece, Andora, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Monaco, San Marino, Belearic Isles, Corsica, Sardinia, Sicily, Crete, Malta, Iceland, the Faroe Islands, the Shetland Islands, the Hebrides and the Orkney Islands.**

**In all these countries, like unto the morning stars shine ye from the horizon of Guidance. Up to this time you have displayed great magnanimity but after this, you must add to your effort a**

**thousand times and throughout the above countries, capitals, islands, meetings and churches, invite mankind to the Kingdom of Abha!**

Now the Master asks what result is forthcoming from rest, tranquility, luxury and attachment to this corporeal world. Man will not become as

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independent as the cow, who is at liberty to graze over all the meadow and drink from the rivers and streams; and certainly he will not be as unencumbered as the bird, or live in such exhilarating surroundings. No, man was created for the acquirement of infinite perfections and to be drawn near unto the Divine Threshold.

Later, when the Tablet was concluded, Abdul Baha again spoke of the bird, pointing to one which was flying overhead: "The teachers of the Cause of God in these countries must be like this bird — always on the wing. Should they alight, it must be with the intention of a short rest from fatigue, on that at the next moment they may rise higher and sing more sweetly. Never should they think of a protracted rest. Ever and ever should they soar in the divine atmosphere of the Spirit. Should they for one second think of rest, they will immediately start on a downward course. They must detach and free themselves from all physical limitations, and purify the mirrors of their hearts from the dust of racial, religious and national prejudices. Not the least trace of these prejudices should linger in the minds. They must become spirit personified, love incarnate, truth embodied. They must set aside egotism, selfishness and suspicion. They must always journey through the world of universal ideals. They must not restrict themselves to particular matters, for the Cause of Baha-O-Llah is not sectarian. Let them walk in the highway of the Divine Teachings. Let them look to God, and not to man; behold the light, and not the glass. There is no doubt but that this Cause shall encircle the globe. So long as there remains one soul whose heart is not touched by the love of God and divine Illumination, the friends must not sit silent. This is their duty."

### No. 3

The third Tablet to the Bahais of the United States and Canada was dictated from Bahjee in three parts — the first on April 19, the second on April 20th and the third on April 22, 1916. It is the only Tablet, in the entire series of fourteen, in which the Master's attention is not fixed on special portions of the globe. He is thinking of the teachers themselves, those who are to arise in all countries, hasten to all regions and transmit the message. He speaks of the type that lie is seeking, of the transformation that shall be effected in these persons and of the station which they will attain. With the yearning of a father, with the assurance of a seer, he speaks to them thus:

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**0 ye apostles of Baha-O-Llah may my life be a ransom to you!**

The blessed Person of the Promised One is interpreted in the Holy Book as the Lord of Hosts; the heavenly armies being these souls who are entirely freed from the human world and transformed into celestial spirits. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents. Each one is holding in his hand a trumpet, blowing the Breath of Life over all the regions. They are delivered from human qualities and the defects of the world of nature; are characterized with the characteristics of God, **and clothed with the Fragrances of the Merciful. Like unto the Apostles of Christ who were filled**

**with Him, these souls also have become filled with His Holiness Baha-O-Llah i.e., the love of Baha-O-Llah has so mastered every organ, part and limb of their bodies that the promptings of the human world can make no impression.**

**These souls are the armies of God and the conquerors of the East and the West. Should one of them turn his face in some direction and summon the people to the Kingdom of God, all the ideal forces and lordly confirmations will rush to his support. He will behold all the doors open, and all the strong fortifications and impregnable castles razed to the ground. Singly and alone, he will attack the armies of the world, defeat the right and left wings of the hosts of all the countries, break through the legions of all the nations and carry his attack to the very center of the powers of the earth. This is the meaning of the Hosts of God.**

**Any soul from among the believers of Baha-O-Llah who attains unto this station, will become known as the Apostle of Baha-O-Llah. Therefore, strive ye with heart and soul so that ye may reach this lofty and exalted position; be established on the throne of everlasting glory, and crown your heads with the shining Diadem of the Kingdom, the brilliant jewels of which will irradiate upon centuries and cycles.**

The Master then states that the teacher should comply with certain conditions, firstly: Firmness in the Covenant of God, i.e., Baha-O-Llah has chosen Abdul Baha as his interpreter, as the center of a Covenant with his followers; therefore fidelity to Abdul Baha and adherence to his teachings must be considered as of paramount importance. No other power can conserve the Unity of the Bahai world.

The second condition is fellowship and love amongst the believers. They should know one another, become intimate with one another, sacrifice

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[photo of Acca omitted]

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for one another — then the power of the love of God will make of them, the waves of one sea, the flowers of one rose-garden and the stars of one heaven.

As a third condition, the teachers must continuously travel to all parts of the continent, nay rather to all parts of the world, even as did Abdul Baha who journeyed throughout the United States and Canada. He was sanctified and freed from every attachment. Did not Christ say: “Shake off the very dust from your feet”?

Abdul Baha then describes the system that should be adopted: Meetings must be held at which the old Bahais, and those who know the Cause well, should gather with the new souls seeking instruction. They should relate the history of the movement, explain the teachings and interpret the prophesies and proofs regarding the Manifestation of the Promised One, as they are recorded in the Holy Books and Epistles. Through much training, the young ones will be enabled to go forth in knowledge and assurance.

Furthermore in all meetings, whether public or private, nothing should be discussed save that which is under consideration, and all articles should be centered around the Cause of God. Promiscuous talks must not be allowed and contention is absolutely forbidden. Here let it be remembered that whenever contention and disputes occur between two souls in connection with divine subjects — both are wrong.

A committee should be formed consisting of scholars well versed in Persian, Arabic and other languages to translate Tablets and works on this Revelation. Then the books should be published and widely circulated.

The “Star of the West” (magazine at that time published by the Bahais, now out of circulation) should appear with utmost regularity, its pages being devoted to matters concerning the Cause, so that it may be a means of instruction to the people of East and West. In the future, other publications are to be established according to the national or local needs of the various countries.

The teachers travelling in different directions should be familiar with the language of the countries to be visited.

A few days later, in reviewing the conditions under which a teacher should work, the Master spoke of the characteristics to be looked for in the teacher himself. He said: “First of all he must have a sweet disposition. A sweet disposition will make the teacher loved by all the pupils. With arguments, controversies and contention, people are driven away; but with love, gentleness find sweetness, they bloom forth like unto it rose.

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I desire that every one of the believers may become like an ignited candle in the assemblage of the world of humanity, and conducive to the Eternal Life of others. Today, the Confirmations of the Kingdom of Abha are with those who renounce themselves, forget their opinions, cast aside personalities and think of the welfare of others. Whosoever has lost himself, has found the universe and the inhabitants thereof! Whosoever is occupied with himself is wandering in the desert of heedlessness and regret! The master-key to self-mastery is self -forgetfulness. The road to the palace of life in through the path of renunciation.”

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## **Chapter V**

### **THE LAST TABLET**

#### **No. 4**

Abdul Baha had a great appreciation of the United States and he always looked toward this country with expectancy. One day, he spoke to me at length about the American institutions. At that time I could not take down his words, but immediately after he had finished speaking I went to my room, as was my custom on such occasions, and recorded the things he had said to the best of my ability. Through long practice, my memory enabled me to write the sentences spoken in fairly good sequence. These were as follows: “There are some matters that I cannot speak of publicly, because the time has not yet arrived for their disclosure and the people are not prepared to hear them; but I can speak about them to you. For example: The Republican or Democratic form of the Government of the United States is so organized and the relations between the States and the national administration, the Congress and the Legislature so defined and determined that, generally speaking, all work together smoothly for the public weal. The founders of the Republic and the writers of this Democratic Constitution were in reality the well-wishers of the world of humanity. They laid down such a body of laws, the mighty effect of which was to change the

course of history on the surface of the globe. The influence of the American idea of freedom, right and equality and the representative form of government, slowly spreading far and wide, was indeed an inspirational example to other down-trodden nations to rise against absolutism and shake off the yoke of drudgery and serfdom. In the future, all the Governments of the world, including the Asiatic Governments, even this part of Asia called the Near East, will become democratic and constitutional. This is certain. No doubt can be entertained regarding the matter. The spirit of the time will remove every obstacle and crush out every opposition, for the Constitution of the United States gives to men all the sacred rights of political and individual liberty: the protection of life, the pursuit of happiness and the free exercise of religious belief. Every country, with certain modifications and changes having regard to climate, education, aptitude and the progress of the inhabitants, will take that Constitution as a guide to draw up its own Bill of Rights. All the future governments of the world, large and small, will become democratic, based upon the

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[photo of circle of cedar trees on Mount Carmel omitted]

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will of the governed. This also is assured. In the course of years, the North, Central and South American Republics will draw nearer and nearer together, and become united in a general Confederated Democracy; in other words, the various Republics will find their national and international interests so akin and identical, that they will forget all their petty jealousies and apprehensions, and work together for the advancement and prosperity of America, There will be a Pan-American Parliament meeting regularly, at which all questions of a general nature, affecting the vital interests of the Western Hemisphere, will be discussed and deliberated upon. In reality, the Pan-American Union in Washington is already engaged in rendering this great service.”

The closing Tablet in the great series was dictated in Haifa in March, 1917. On reading it, we observe with interest that the Master, having encircled the globe with his attention and concern, fixes his mind yet again on the Republics of the Western Hemisphere. He counts on them to merge their interests in a mighty Collective Center. He trusts that the New World will lead the Old World; and so once again he turns with infinite yearning to the Americas.

Following is the last Tablet of the Divine Plan. It appears in its entirety.

**To the assemblies and meetings of the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful in the United States and Canada**

**Upon them be Baha-O-Llah El Abha**

**He is God!**

**O ye heavenly souls, sons and daughters of the Kingdom!**

**God says in the Koran: ‘Take ye hold of the Cord of God, all of you, and become ye not disunited.’**

**In the contingent world there are many collective centers which are conducive to association and unity among the children of men. For example, patriotism is a collective center; nationalism is a**

collective center; identity of interests is a collective center; political alliance is a collective center; the union of ideals is a collective center, while the prosperity of the world of humanity is dependent upon the organization and promotion of these collective centers. Nevertheless, all the above institutions are in reality, the matter and not the substance, accidental and not eternal, temporary and not everlasting. With the appearance of great revolutions and upheavals, all these collective centers are swept away. But the Collective Center of the Kingdom, embodying the Institutes and Divine Teachings,

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is the eternal Collective Center. It establishes relationship between the East and the West, organizes the principle of the oneness of the world of humanity and destroys the foundations of differences. It overcomes and includes all the other collective centers. Like unto the ray of the sun, it entirely dispels the darkness, encompassing all the regions; bestows ideal Life, and causes the effulgence of Divine Illumination. Through the Breaths of the Holy Spirit, it performs miracles; the Orient and the Occident embrace each other, the North and South become intimates and associates; conflicting and contending opinions disappear; antagonistic aims are brushed aside; the law of the struggle for existence is abrogated, and the Canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity is raised at the apex of the globe, casting its shade over all the races of men. Consequently, the real collective center is the body of the Divine Teachings, which include all the degrees and embrace all the universal relations and necessary laws of humanity.

Consider! The people of the East and the West were in a state of utmost strangeness. Now to what a high degree are they acquainted with each other and united together! How far are the inhabitants of Persia from the remotest countries of America; and now observe how great has been the influence of the Heavenly Power, for the distance of thousands of miles has become identical with one step! How various nations that have had no relations or similarity with each other are now united and agreed through this Divine Potency! Indeed, to God belongs Power in the past and in the future, and verily He is powerful over all things!

Consider! When the rain, the heat, the sun and the gentle zephyrs co-operate with one another, what beautiful gardens are produced! How the various kinds of flowers, trees and plants associate with each other and are conducive to the adornment and charm of one another! Hence the oneness of the bounty of the sun, the oneness of rain and the oneness of the breeze have so overcome all other considerations that the variety of hues and fragrances have increased the adornment, the attraction and sweetness of the whole. In a similar manner, when the Divine Collective Center, the outpouring of the Sun of Reality and the Breaths of the Holy Spirit are brought together, the variety of races and the differences existing between countries will become the cause of the embellishment, decoration and elegance of the world of humanity.

Therefore, the believers of God throughout all the Republics of America must, through the Divine Power, become the cause of the promotion of heavenly Teachings and the establishment of the oneness of humanity. Every one of the important souls must arise, blowing over all parts of

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America the Breath of Life, conferring upon the people a new spirit, baptizing them with the Fire of the Love of God, the Water of Life and the Breaths of the Holy Spirit — so that the second birth may become realized. For it is written in the Gospel: 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit.'

Therefore, O ye believers of God in the United States and Canada, select ye distinguished personages to travel, or may they by themselves, becoming severed from rest and composure, arise and journey throughout Alaska, the Republic of Mexico; in the Central American Republics, such as Guatemala, Honduras, Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama and Belize; and through the great South American Republics, such as Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, Brazil, French Guiana, Dutch Guiana, British Guiana, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and Chile; also in the group of the West Indies, such as Cuba, Haiti, Porto Rico, Jamaica and Santo Domingo, and the group of the Islands of the Lesser Antilles, the Islands of the Bahamas and the Islands of Bermuda; likewise to the Islands to the east, west and south of South America, such as Trinidad, the Falkland Islands, the Galapago Islands, Juan Fernandez and Tobago. Especially visit ye the city of Bahia on the Eastern shore of Brazil. Seeing that in past years this city was given the name BAHIA, there is no doubt but that this was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Consequently, the believers of God must display the utmost effort, upraise the Divine Melody throughout those regions, promulgate the heavenly Teachings and waft over all the Spirit of Eternal Life, so that those Republics may become so illumined with the splendors and the effulgences of the Sun of Reality that they may become the objects of the praise and commendation of all other countries. Likewise, ye must give great attention to the Republic of Panama, for at that point the Occident and the Orient find each other and unite through the Panama Canal. That region shall therefore assume importance in the future and the Teachings, once established there, will unite the East and the West, the North and the South.

Hence, the intention must be purified, the effort ennobled and exalted; so that ye may establish affinity between the hearts of the world of humanity. This glorious aim will not become realized save through the promotion of the Divine Teachings which are the foundations of the holy religions.

Consider how the religions of God served the world of humanity! How the religion of the Torah became conducive to the glory, honor and progress of the Israelitish nation! How the Breaths of the Holy Spirit, through His

Holiness the Christ, created affinity and unity between divergent communities and quarreling families! How the sacred power of His Holiness Mohammad became the means of uniting and harmonizing the contentious tribes and the different clans of the Arabian Peninsula, and this to such an extent that one thousand tribes were welded into one tribe, strife and discord were done away with, while with one accord they strove to advance the cause of culture and civilization! Thus were they released from the lowest degree of degradation and set soaring toward the height of Everlasting Glory. Is it possible to find in the phenomenal world a greater Collective Center than this? In comparison to this Divine Collective Center, the National Collective Center, the Patriotic Collective Center, the Political Collective Center and the Cultural and Intellectual Collective Center are like child's play.

Now strive ye that the Collective Center of the sacred religions, for the inculcation of which all the Prophets were manifested and which is none other than the spirit of the Divine Teachings, be spread in all parts of America, so that each one of you may shine forth from the horizon of Reality like unto the morning star; that divine illumination may overcome the darkness of nature, and the world of humanity become enlightened. This is the most great work. Should ye become confirmed therein, this world will be changed into another world, the surface of the earth transformed into a delectable Paradise and eternal Institutions founded.

Let whosoever travels as it teacher, over mountain, desert, land and sea, peruse this Supplication.

O God! O God! Thou seest my weakness, lowliness and humility amongst Thy creatures; nevertheless I have trusted in Thee and have arisen in the promotion of Thy Teachings.

O Lord! I am a broken-winged bird, yet I desire to soar in Thy Space, to which there is no limit. How it is possible for me to do this save through Thy Providence and Grace, Thy Confirmation and Assistance!

O Lord! Have pity on my weakness and strengthen me with Thy Power.

O Lord I Have pity on my impotency and assist me with Thy Might and Majesty.

O Lord! Should the Breaths of the Holy Spirit confirm the weakest of creatures, he shall attain to the highest station of greatness and possess anything that he desires. In the past, Thou hast assisted Thy servants, and

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha on donkey in Haifa omitted]

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they were the lowliest and the most insignificant of those who lived upon the earth; yet, through Thy Sanction and Potency, they took precedence over the most illustrious of mankind. Whereas formerly, they were as moths, they became as royal falcons; whereas formerly they were as bubbles, they became the sea. Through Thy Bestowal, Thy Mercy and Thy Most Great Favor, they became stars shining on the horizon of Guidance, birds singing in the rose-gardens of Immortality, lions roaring in the forest of Knowledge and Wisdom, and whales swimming in the Oceans of Life.

Verily, Thou art the Clement, the Powerful, the Mighty and the most Merciful of the Merciful

(signed) Abdul Baha Abbas."

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## Chapter VI

### ACCIDENT INSURANCE

During the days when he was dictating the great Tablets, Abdul Baha was exceedingly happy. The sense of responsibility and the anxieties imposed on him by war conditions seemed to have lifted, and his mind and spirit were already on the march in the campaign that was to encircle the earth and extend from pole to Pole.

The fourteen Tablets, now fully corrected, were presently placed in the hands of Noured-Din Zeine to be transcribed on great sheets of velum. Noured-Din Zeine was an expert calligraphist, and the Tablets when completed, with borders of intricate tracery illuminated in gold, were veritable works of art.

As has already been shown, two Tablets each had been consigned to the North-Eastern, the Southern, the Central and the Western States, also to the Dominion of Canada; the first of all of these pairs being very much the shorter. At the time of writing, postal restrictions had begun to set in, besides the contents of the communications were international in feeling, to say the least; consequently, in order to ensure their safe transmission, each of the five short Tablets was copied serially on postal cards and mailed. All the cards arrived safely at their destination.

The question of dispatching the nine long Tablets was one for the future, but the Master was already considering means to be taken. Sometimes I felt that I was to be the messenger, and I realized that it would be a hazardous task to take such documents out of the country. Actually, it was dangerous to have them in one's possession at all.

In order to safeguard the Tablets and ensure the delivery of his message when the time came, Abdul Baha took precautionary measures. One day he called me to him and explained: The Turkish government was suspicious of everybody in these times, and of himself at all times. His house might be searched momentarily and in such case, the Tablets would doubtless be confiscated. Therefore, certain steps had to be taken. Abdul Baha wished to have the Tablets placed underground.

Preparations were made. The fourteen great sheets of velum were rolled up and inserted in a strip of metal tubing. These, together with many other papers of value, were packed in my steamer trunk. Then one dark

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[photo of the Shrine of the Bab and Haifa Bay panorama omitted]

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night, Abbas Goli, keeper of the shrine of The Bab, and I carried the trunk up the slope of Mount Carmel to a secluded spot at the rear of the Shrine, where we dug a pit, approximately six feet in depth. We lowered our treasure to its resting place and covered it with earth.

The second precautionary measure was more difficult and took a much longer time to fulfill. I now learned that the Master's intention was to send me to America, immediately at the close of hostilities. I was to take the Tablets and perform the mission successfully, if this were possible. Otherwise, in case the Tablets were lost or taken, they must remain with me in intangible form. To use other words, I was to carry the text of the fourteen Tablets in my mind.

I set to work on the original copies, starting with the first short Tablets which had already been sent in much unsatisfactory form. Every day I studied, repeating and repeating to myself, and so becoming perfected in one Tablet after another. In the afternoons the Master, manuscript in hand, would hear my lessons, and often on our walks I would recite as we went along. With the passage of time and in my absorption in gaining mastery over new Tablets, the difficulty was to retain fluency in the ones already learned. So I made it a habit to get up very early in the mornings, around five o'clock, and recite aloud

from the very beginning before going on with the material yet to be learned. This work took a long time, many months, but at the end I had committed to memory the fourteen Tablets, in full. It was a feat of mental gymnastics. Looking back, I don't see how I could have done it; yet it must be taken into account that I was quickened by the Master's daily presence. That was enough to make the impossible, easy. Meanwhile, all else had slipped away from my consciousness and I lived only in the Divine Plan. Sleeping and waking, the five continents loomed in my mental vision and the islands of the sea paraded before me; while the globe balanced to the Master's rhythmic words and the nations merged into one.

The translation of a valuable work is of inestimable importance, yet never can it be compared satisfactorily with the original. At that time, no translation of the Tablets had been made or even thought of; they were in the writer's own scholarly and poetic style, just as they had come from him. Incidentally, Abdul Bohn was recognized as a master in the Persian and Arabic tongues. The Tablets were in Persian with a few prayers in Arabic.

When I had reached the stage of letter-perfection Abdul Baha summoned the Bahais to a meeting and we gathered together in the great room

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adjacent to the shrine off The Bab. The women, as was the custom sat in a smaller room to one side, the door between the two being open. It was late afternoon. Before us stretched the waters of the bay, dazzling in the sunlight; around us, the perfume of the orange blossoms clung like a garment. Abdul Baha began to speak: Did his friends think that he had been doing nothing during all these months; that he, for so long accustomed to prison life, had again become resigned to captivity? No, the war was soon to end, the doors would be opened and communication with the outside world established. With this thought in mind, he had made preparations, had drawn up an order of the day concerning all nations and all races, to the end that they might come together in the realization of the oneness of all phenomena and in the consciousness that the source of all inspiration is one. He concluded saying: Now, Mirza Ahmad will recite for you the Divine Plan.

I began to chant the first Tablet to America. The Master's eyes were on me; the Bahais were listening with attentive curiosity. It was just five o'clock. As I proceeded, the heroic words of the message and its scope began to affect the hearers, and they sat immovable hanging on every syllable. A pause, during which no one moved, then I launched on the second Tablet — and the third — and the fourth. Abdul Baha was watching me at times; but for the most part, he was sitting with closed eyes, his face alive as he silently took part in every word. Presently the Bahais, unaccustomed to so long an address or recitation began to relax. The charm of the hour, the perfume of the flowers, the measured insistence of my voice, all took effect. They settled down a little more comfortably; some began to nod. I continued. An hour had passed — two. Some of the sleepers wakened and looked around anxiously; then they took up the watch and others drifted off. Once in a while, Abdul Baha scanned his court and his eyes would meet mine. He smiled encouragement and I went on. We were nearing the end; We Were on the last Tablet — finished it, and I stopped. It was eight o'clock.

Such was my try-out — my dress rehearsal; and a very successful one it turned out to be, for my Master was pleased.

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## Chapter VII

## AMERICAN BAHAIS CARRY ON

While World War I was in progress, the Atlantic Ocean lay, an impassable barrier between Palestine and America. No communication was possible, and during all those years both Abdul Baha and the Bahais of the United States carried on their missions without interchange of thought and according to their own views. We have seen the great patriarch as he lived out his period of seclusion on the slope of Mount Carmel and on the plane of Acca, and have watched the workings of his mind as it reached in agonized yearning to embrace all the people of the earth. Now in order to balance the picture, we might transport ourselves over seas so as to observe the activities of the followers, as they strove in their ways to carry out the teachings of the Master. Meanwhile, as a preliminary, we will go back a few years to better understand conditions,

Ever since the appearance of the Cause in America in 1893, the Bahais had been in a state of constant correspondence with Abdul Baha, receiving direct instructions; also as pilgrims, they had visited him in the Holy Land and had had opportunity to profit at first hand from his Wisdom. Added to this, the Master had come to the United States in 1912 and for nearly nine months had travelled from coast to coast, lecturing before hundreds of Bahai and non-Bahai groups, with the result that, on his departure for the East, he had left behind a very large number of admirers, friends and believers, together with crowds of those who were merely interested.

To me, who had accompanied the great teacher on that historic tour, it was evident that people of widely different social, cultural, spiritual and intellectual background were attracted to him for a variety of reasons, and, through the enchantment of his presence, were caught up in a whirlpool of exaltation and happiness. The noble appearance of Abdul Baha, his benevolent and gentle philosophy, his broad and tolerant viewpoint, his balanced and serene nature, the bubbling fountain of his good humor, his inexhaustible store of oriental stories, his hearty and infectious laughter, his astonishing ability for hard work and above all, the heights and depths of his knowledge — these characteristics and many others had endeared him to multitudes.

Now, the attraction was on the personal plane rather than on that of the teachings, but the Master felt that this attitude would in time de-

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha omitted]

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velop into appreciation of the Cause itself. Therefore, when his American tour was completed, and later during the war when correspondence was halted, the task of keeping in touch with those who were revolving around the circumference of the movement fell into the hands of the Bahais. This opportunity of continuing the work, when the impression made by Abdul Baha was at white-heat, was one that never could return. It required something of the tact and diplomacy of the great educator himself, but more especially it involved understanding of the essential of the message. A lesson must be grasped by the teacher if it is to be imparted to others.

Now, many of the Bahais really valued the message, and practically all of them were irretrievably committed in love and devotion to Abdul Baha. They expended themselves untiringly to serve the Cause and some extremely good work was accomplished. At the same time, certain mentalities which had been

suddenly charmed into liberalism reverted to type with a bang, and the flock, deprived of its shepherd, was witness to some very strange antics, indeed.

An occasion suited to an effective gesture in spreading the ideals of the movement presented itself on the One Hundredth Anniversary of the birth of Baha-O-Llah, falling on November 12, 1917. The Chicago Assembly sent out an invitation to the Bahais of the United States and Canada with accompanying letters, written by the Secretary of the Assembly and the President of the Bahai Temple Unity, wherein the significance of the anniversary was heralded. It was to be a great event and the prospect of taking part in it must have thrilled the hearts of all the Bahais, for another hundred years had to roll into the lap of eternity before a similar gathering could occur, and by that time none of the present generation would be alive. Now, how was the scene prepared for this festival, and to what purpose was the Centenary of Baha-O-Llah to be harnessed? We shall see.

The contents of the invitation and the accompanying letter do not give us any clue; nevertheless it would not be out of place to quote a paragraph showing the declared object of the occasion.

The Secretary of the Bahai Assembly of Chicago wrote:

**And, that the Message of Baha-O-Llah — that dynamic message of love for all peoples and rates, that great unifying message — shall fittingly be acclaimed on this significant occasion, the House of Spirituality, in behalf of the Bahai Assembly of Chicago, calls you to participate in the commemoration of the day... Let the Centennial Celebration be, in reality, a festival of love, and let this Twelfth Day of November, 1917, be forever remembered in the annals of the Bahai Movement. Let this gathering**

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**demonstrate to the world the power of the Message of Baha-O-Llah to dispel all superstitions of the past; to unite the hearts of humanity and bring them into direct harmony with the divine will. A program of great beauty and attraction has been prepared. Prominent speakers from the various Assemblies of America will be in attendance, and altogether the occasion will be one of complete joy and fragrance.**

As President of the Bahai Temple Unity. Mr. William H. Randall, expressed himself as follows:

**The Peerless Century for which all centuries existed, in which all the horizons of the world have been illumined and which encircles the world of man with the Glory of God, completes the span of its centennial, November 12th, the Hundredth Anniversary of Baha-O-Llah... In a world torn with dissensions and rent with division, the Bahai body must be the dayspring of composure, the organism of unity sustaining the breath of the Holy Spirit.... The mystery of unity consists in spiritually breathing together, that the arteries of the world may be purified by the respiration of heaven. In all the Assemblies gathered together on November 12th, lovingly to commemorate with joy and glad-tidings the birth of Baha-O-Llah individually and in Assembly, let us supplicate the Lordly Oneness to bestow upon His servants, as an -organic body, the breath of the Holy Spirit to unite us and show forth to mankind the fruits of unity; for this breath of oneness is the attribute of God in the world Of His humanity.**

(Star of the West. Vol. VIII, no. 11 and 12  
September 27th and October 16, 1917,  
pages 145, 140, 147. 148)

A Report of this Centenary and the speeches delivered by various visitors, along with a general photograph is published in Vol. VIII, No. 14, November 23, 1917, of Star of the West (pages 191, 196, 197 to 203).

The ceremonies attendant upon this majestic and soul-stirring anniversary lasted three days, which days, according to the record, "were full of spiritual joy and heavenly harmony." The record is enhanced by, one of the most beautiful of Abdul Baha's utterances, which reads as follows: "The principles of His Holiness Baha-O-Llah, like unto the Spirit, shall penetrate the body of the world, and the love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the five continents. The East shall become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the oneness of the world of humanity."

So much significance was attached to this Centennial celebration that Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi predicted that: "The names of those who have attended this glorious gathering will be recorded in the history of this great Cause." Dr. Bagdadi's talk, given on this occasion reads in part:

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**Baha-O-Llah broke the chains of superstition and error, proved the unity and singleness of Truth, and removed the chains of imitation. He also removed pride and the feeling of superiority of one nation over another. Another chain he removed was that of prejudice. The most bitter prejudice among Orientals is religious. He proved that the foundation of all religions is one. He also removed racial prejudice, showing the races that their colors are like the different colors of birds and flowers. And so with national prejudice, He proved that the earth was one home. In like manner he freed the women from oppression and proved the harmony between science, religion and reason. He freed the world from the fetters of misunderstandings and raised the banner of the oneness of humanity from his great prison... Do not teach the youth the prejudices of past ages. Baha-O-Llah has revealed the means of harmony and happiness for the whole world... Man, in order to know and have peace, must fill his heart with love. Love is the creator of peace. Let us conquer ourselves.**

Mr. Charles Mason Remey spoke of the birth of the new architecture in connection with the Bahai Temple. Mrs. Corinne True explained the great purpose of the Bahai Movement in the following happy phrases!

**In this day the Sun of spiritual Truth has again arisen in the Orient, and its radiance is seen in the Occident as well. Baha-O-Llah has said that the human family was once one, dwelling together in the greatest state of harmony. Then differences crept in, and racial and religious bias appeared until discord and hatred were found among the children of men. The great purpose of the Bahai movement is to restore the foundation of human solidarity.**

Mr. Louis G. Gregory who wrote the account of the Centennial, lauded the occasion with these words:

**The efforts of the House of Spirituality and the Chicago Assembly to arrange for the comfort and happiness of all, the love of those present for each other, the mingling of the various elements of humanity, the eloquent addresses and spiritual songs, were all signs of the confirmations which descend from the Throne of Majesty... the effect of such gathering is far-reaching, as the hearts are attracted by the fire of divine love. This Festival of Commemoration was an occasion of historic value in the growth of the divine Cause. The friends left for their homes with longing and grateful hearts.**

Now, no intelligent reader could object to anything that was said from the public platform, and nothing to cause anxiety appears on the record save for one allusion, made by Mr. Albert R. Windust, which the uninitiated might scan without being disturbed. This, a distinctly cryptic allusion, runs

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as follows: "The hour has struck. From now on those who serve the Cause must be firm in the Covenant. They must also be well-known as such. . . . This is especially true of those who would teach."

The, above lines do not seem to carry portentous implication, yet they contain the crux of a long and sinister story

During many years, the question of "firmness in the Covenant" had agitated the Bahai World. In simple language, it meant no more and no less than this: Baha-O-Llah, in his Will, had appointed Abdul Baha his successor or as the Centre of a Covenant with his followers, which Covenant the Bahais had to enter into, to keep and to hold.

Now, in spite of the simplicity of the proposition, a battle royal had developed around this issue, and the Bahais, although few in number, were divided into two warring camps: those who held themselves as "firm in the Covenant" and those who were considered as "violators", or to use the Persian term, *Nakezeen*. In time, this Persian word became quite popular, striking terror to the hearts of all who were suspected, or were liable of being suspected of the least trice of *Nakz* or violation-. From the very first, the self-styled firm-ones were the more aggressive, being by nature pamphleteers and letter-writers. Soon they developed quite a body of literature on Firmness versus Violation, and in order to give validity and weight to their arguments, they took advantage of, and incorporated in their writings detached statements from the tablets, speeches and intimate talks of Abdul Baha which had been written or spoken in connection with a variety of local matters.

Notwithstanding the universal and constructive principles of Baha-O-Llah which they repeated in parrot manner on all occasions, certain persons harbored in their minds and souls the most exclusive, the most parochial and the most destructive beliefs — all grounded on the thesis: Firmness versus Violation. The result was that when Bahais came in contact with one another, the spoken or unspoken question uppermost 'n their minds was: Is he firm in the Covenant?

As I stated in the beginning, large numbers from among his audiences had become attracted to the personality of Abdul Baha, and in time these men and women began to study the words of Baha-O-Llah. Presently, some of them set themselves to a campaign of teaching and writing, and in utter innocence, spread their untried wings in the heaven of service. Being as yet unfamiliar with much of the literature of the Cause, they, on occasions, made mistakes in interpretation and even historical errors, natural in stu-

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dents; but the firm ones in the Covenant made no allowances on these points. Therefore the tom-toms beat out, the war-cry was raised and the announcement made that Chicago, Boston, Washington and a number of other cities had become cancer spots of violation, and that something drastic had to be done in order to free the Cause from the disease of *Nakz*. This accusation, mainly directed against the new Bahais who had put their foot in it, included many of the Bahais of long standing who were in opposition to the practice of witch-hunting. To meet this situation, a Committee of investigation was appointed to study, explore, and report at a later date, as to whether violation existed in the United States and, if so, to designate the violators or *Nakezeen*. This inquisitorial Committee consisted of four members: Mr. Louis G. Gregory of

Washington, D. C.; Miss H. Emogene Hoagg of San Francisco, California; Mr. George O. Latimer of Portland, Oregon and Mr. Charles Mason Remey of Washington, D. C., Chairman.

At a meeting held on November 11, 1917, at the house of Mrs. Corinne True, 5338 Kenmore Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, which was one of a series carried on in conjunction with the One Hundredth Anniversary Celebration of the birth of Baha-O-Llah, a Committee of Investigation was founded. The report reads:

**The Condition was discussed, and those attending saw the necessity for taking immediate steps toward an investigation, in order that all might know whether or not a center of violation existed in Chicago. By unanimous vote a committee for investigation was appointed by the meeting to inquire into the matter and to report the findings to the Friends in America.**

This Committee of Four must have accomplished its investigations with lightning speed, for a letter, shortly issued, urged as many Bahais as possible to be present in Chicago to hear its findings on December 9, 1917 — just twenty-seven days later.

The “Report of the Bahai Committee of Investigation 1917-1918” is a mimeographed book of fifty-one pages, single-spaced. It is a strange document the like of which one can find only in the records of the Middle-Ages which were periods of apostasy, heresy, expulsion and excommunication. It is a distorted, abnormal document, replete with fantastic assertions and somnambulistic hallucinations. It is an incredible document for no one would believe in its existence unless he actually read it himself or touched it with his own hands. Having originated at the Centennial of Baha-O-Llah, it constitutes the most gruesome blasphemy imaginable against the Great Teacher of universal tolerance.

In answer to the summons of the Committee, forty-eight Bahais from eleven states and Washington, D. C., presented themselves in Chicago on the appointed day to bear the Findings; their names are registered on page 32 of the Report. The representation stands as follows:

California.....	2	New York.....	2
Washington, D. C. ....	3	Ohio .....	4
Illinois.....	20	Oregon.....	1
Maine .....	1	Pennsylvania.....	3
Massachusetts.....	4	Wisconsin.....	3
Michigan.....	4	—	—
Minnesota.....	1	Total.....	48

Thus, these forty-eight persons, constituting themselves a religious tribunal, under the chairmanship of Mr. Charles Mason Remey, undertook the task of dividing the sheep from the goats. They met at the house of Mrs. Corinne True, because she was considered as one of the few firm ones and they also “knew that in that place ... no sympathizer of violation would venture and if they did come, they could easily be ejected and the meeting made safe.... All the members of the committee had had past personal experience with the Nakezeen, so they were particularly alive to the danger of contamination.”

The friends assembled at 5338 Kenmore Avenue (Mrs. Corinne True's House) at 10 o'clock in the morning of December 9, 1917, but because of belated arrivals, the report was not commenced until about two o'clock the same afternoon. In the presence of about fifty friends... the detailed report and various

testimonies from friends present, were given... In a wonderful and harmonious spirit after lengthy consultation and prayer, a unanimous acceptance of these findings was voted.

So, in a wonderful and harmonious spirit and with prayer on their lips, did these forty-eight self-constituted inquisitors pronounced anathema on all those in whom they thought to have discovered the least trace of violation, while the alleged violators being absent, had no opportunity of pleading their own case.

As soon as the Report had been unanimously accepted by the tribunal of Forty-Eight, copies were made and mailed to all the Bahai Assemblies and to a selected list of individuals. The committee must have considered the Report of unique importance, for the Copies are numbered and marked at the bottom of the page with the words: - "A Limited Number of Copies for Private Circulation Only." The one in my possession is No. 33.

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The members of The Tribunal were apparently not satisfied with the mere circulation of the Report but "prolonged the work of the Committee of Investigation by commissioning them to travel to various assemblies and to explain and elucidate the facts of violation; to warn the friends in all parts of the country of this danger to the Cause."

Then began one of the strangest crusades in the annals of religious intolerance, a crusade, the object of which was to broadcast far and wide the glad-tidings of Nakz (violation).

Mr. Charles Mason Remey, Chairman of the Investigation Committee, wrote:

**Since December 9th one member of the Committee has travelled to the Pacific coast, where in several assemblies, he explained the matter, while the other three members of the Committee have divided their time between Chicago, Boston, New York, Washington and other centers in the pursuance of their labors, and in addition to holding meetings in these various cities, they have written and circulated their report, so that people in all parts could have their definite statement. They have also done individual work of explaining, through personal interviews and correspondence, the facts of the matter in question.**

The purpose of this intensive propaganda was to force the Bahai world to accept the Report. It was not easy, and a murmur of discontent began to reverberate among the Assemblies, finally growing into open revolt. To their credit, be it said, that loud protest came from many of the best known Bahais.

According to the Report, a certain Mrs. Luella Kirchner was one of the most obstinate among the violators and the charge against her was a serious one. Mrs. Kirchner had taken a leading part in opening a Bahai Reading Room in Chicago without permission of the Assembly of that city; and from there had disseminated "injurious teachings" as contained in two booklets by Mr. W. W. Harmon of Boston. Now, in the booklets of Mr. Harmon, the claim was made that God dwelt "within" the individual, a claim well justified in Bahai literature for Baha-O-Llah said: "Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, powerful, mighty and supreme." However, the Bahai teaching includes the theory that God is "without," and as the Bahai leaders were more partial to this latter concept, found in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, they considered Mr. Harmon's attitude rather too Hinduistic and Pantheistic. Consequently, they regarded his writings, and especially his commentary on the Seven Valleys, as misleading and dangerous.

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It seems, from page 24 of the Report, that in the past Abdul Baha had been pleased with the work of Mrs. Kirchner for he had sent her a Tablet, wherein he said: "I became very happy on account of thy sincerity and uprightness." Nevertheless, the Chicago Assembly had thought fit to summon her to its presence, and there she had been put through a gruelling cross-examination conducted by Dr. Zia Bagdadi. It appears that Mrs. Kirchner had accepted all that the Assembly had demanded of her, so Abdul Baha was notified by cable and his answer came: "Friends accept Kirchner."

One would naturally think that Abdul Baha's message would have been sufficient. But no! Other charges, such as causing division among the friends, were trumped-up against this helpless woman, and her situation in the Cause looked pretty black until, one day out of the clear Sky, an open letter printed on one sheet of paper and signed: "Some Washington Bahais," was distributed far and wide. This letter, a sincere and noble document which embodied a rejection of the Report of the Committee of Investigation, stands on the record to the everlasting credit of those who wrote it.

### **Open letter to Mrs. Kirchner**

**Washington, D. C., April 14, 1918.**

#### **Beloved Friend in the Cause of Abdul Baha:**

**We have read with amazement and dismay a report of a so-called "Committee of Investigation," headed by our Mr. Charles Mason Remey, a hitherto beloved and trusted member of our little flock. We can scarcely believe our ears! We do not speak of the charges brought against you, which, taking them as stated by Mr. Remey and without inquiring into your side of the case at all, do not constitute valid charges, but are the querulous complaints of an offended would-be dictator.**

**What amazes us is the general tone of the report. We look for a spirit of Bahai love and tolerance; we look for broad-mindedness, generosity, charity; we look for the all-inclusive spirit of this newest and greatest faith, which will overwhelm all opposition by the sheer weight of undiluted love and we look in vain! We find a writing that might grace the archives of the Holy Roman Inquisition! Instinct with bigotry, intolerance and a narrow interpretation of chosen passages, it declares: "Thou shalt shun the sinner!" Ah, and who is he, who amongst us shall point the finger and cry: "Thou art the sinner whilst I possess virtues, yea, and omniscience too, since I am able to detect these?" Since when Abdul Baha declared it to be the Chief Aim of his followers to search for sins amongst their brethren, and not for sins only, but for the "least trace" thereof? And, which of the brethren is he who shall set the standard of virtue? The reply will readily occur to you, and will give the Key to the animus of the whole "report."**

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You have been too broad for them, Mrs. Kirchner; you have shown too much tolerance; you have been too active in the Cause — too much of a true Bahai, in short, for these narrow and undeveloped souls, who would arrogate to themselves all virtue. Our blessing be upon thee, good and faithful servant. Such charges harm thee not at all.

Are they therefore harmless? Alas, not so. They harm the Cause, perhaps irretrievably. We are all too few for our great purpose, even though we bend all our energies in unison to the promotion of this vast enterprise, which is no less than to unite all mankind in, the bonds of the love of God. Not convert nor proselytize; not to found a new religion nor usher in a new dispensation; no, our task is to show to all men

that the foundations of all religions are one, even as one God reigns supreme, and therefore disharmony can exist only through ignorance and misunderstanding. Our task is to clear away the clouds of ignorance, to dispel the vapors of sects and creed; to broaden, broaden, expand and include. With enmity for none and charity for all, to forge upward toward the light

What then of this report? Oh, Mrs. Kirchner, can we mention it in the same breath? Fifty believers, headed by our once beloved and trusted Mr. Charles Mason Remey (yea, still beloved!), have been engaged in detective work, suspicion, charges, the inquisitorial chamber, the harsh decision, the excommunication! And they call themselves Bahais! Would that they did not, for how shall we now present this broad and inclusive Cause to the world as it should be presented? Bahais! And engaged, in such deeds! Oh, the indignity, the stultification, the prostitution of our beloved Cause! Wolves in sheep's clothing! They made their charges against you, Mrs. Kirchner! We wonder that they dared!

Go on with your labors, beloved sister. Heed not such charges; fear not such "Committees!"; listen not to the barking of the ravening wolves. There will be more of such things. And know that not all the believers have been deceived by this "investigation."

We are not going to write you our names. The others have done that, and for us to do likewise would be to array believers against believers and make an open division in our midst. We will, not do that. We love them, all still. They are but blinded by ignorance. Peradventure they may learn to see. It will be our task to help them, and to show them by our example what miracles can be accomplished by love, patience and tolerance — Bahai love, Bahai patience, Bahai tolerance — can anything be greater or more long-suffering? We beseech for you the Confirmation of El Abba.

(signed) SOME WASHINGTON BAHAIS.

It is obvious that such a plain and unequivocal statement, earning from "Some Washington Bahais" (the identity of whom was unquestionably suspected by Mr. Charles Mason Remey, himself a member of that Assembly) was very disturbing indeed. Besides, voices of protest from other parts were becoming audible. Something had to be done, unquestionably and immedi-

ately! Therefore, the Open Letter of the Washington Bahais was met by "An Open Letter to the Bahais in America," dated March 21, 1918. This is an eight-page, single-spaced mimeographed document with the following introduction:

**Written to refute certain erroneous statements which are being made with reference to the activities of the Bahai Committee of Investigation in its endeavor to free the Cause of Baha-O-Llah from the spirit of Violation.**

Like the Report itself, this letter tries to prove the righteous attitude of the Bahai Committee of Investigation and then goes on to answer twelve objections raised against it by the Bahais of the United States. Mr. Remey wrote:

**People have spread false reports and stories, and letters misstating facts have been circulated in various parts of this country, until the minds of many souls are confused and troubled. Therefore, I feel moved to write this letter in order to try to protect the minds of the friends from some of the slander and untruths which are being circulated about the country regarding the stand of the Bahai Committee of Investigation in its endeavor to protect the Cause from the subtle and disintegrating effects of the violation.**

The last page bore the facsimile of another letter, prepared by Mr. Remy himself and addressed "To the members of the House of Spirituality in Chicago and to all who stand with them." The letter commended the action of the Committee of Investigation and carried the signatures of 27 Washington Bahais. Now, a careful study of these signatures very clearly revealed the names of the members of the Washington Assembly who did not figure on the list. In other words, "Some Washington Bahais" who had signed the Open Letter to Mrs. Kirchner were, by this means, unmistakably spotted. In explanation of the transaction, Mr. Remy wrote:

**A sincere effort was made in order that every Bahai here in the District, (Washington, D. C.), should be given an opportunity to sign this letter to the Chicago friends, if he or she so desired. This was in no sense put forth as a test to the firmness of these friends, but it was an expression, to our brothers and sisters, co-workers and upholders of the standard of firmness in Chicago, of our appreciation of their good work, for prior to the drawing up of the letter in question, the Committee of Investigation in several meetings had rendered verbally a comprehensive report of the violation in Chicago, so these friends were fully informed of the affair before the matter of the letter was presented to them. It was well known among those who took an active part in arranging and sending the letter that certain of the well known and staunch Washington Bahais, for reasons of their own, which they explained, deemed it wise not to affix their signatures to this document. The Committee has never questioned the wisdom of their stand in this matter, nor their firmness in the Covenant.**

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The Committee of Investigation was the fruit of the First Centenary of Baha-O-Llah in America. It was a ghastly tribute laid at the threshold of Him who came to the world with his mind and heart laden with love. May it be that the Bahais on this continent will find a more fitting offering to present on the occasion of the Second Centenary!

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## Chapter VII

### BAHAI COMMITTEE OF INVESTIGATION

The Committee of Investigation, which had come into being at the One Hundredth Anniversary celebration of Baha-O-Llah (whether or not in tribute to that occasion. I do not venture to state), had been enjoined to travel throughout the country and warn the various Assemblies of the fact that the Nakezeen were in their midst. It was a provocative task, one which the Chairman of the Committee himself did not shirk. In the eyes of the firm ones, he appeared as the Angel of the Lord descending sword in hand upon the irregulars; and the regulars showered their blessings upon him as he journeyed from city to city, a veritable Peter the Hermit, preaching on the dangers of Nakz.

During this time, as an auxiliary service, Mr. Remy managed to write a great deal on the subject of violation. Two such documents are in my possession: the first one, entitled Firmness, is a mimeographed pamphlet, of five pages, single-spaced; the second, named Protection, is another mimeographed pamphlet of twenty-eight pages, single-spaced. These articles, which were released on the same date, March 27, 1918, were intended to bolster up and fortify the Report of the Bahai Committee of investigation. In them, the author relates his personal experiences in the East and West during the many years of his travels in the interest of the Cause; and the argument goes to prove that violation or Nakz is contagious like a poison that

pollutes the water supply, like a disease that eats into the vital organs of the spiritual community. Many of the anecdotes and stories in Protection have little or no bearing on the problem under discussion, but the author, through a strange process of rationalization, tries to make them applicable and conclusive. He ends thus:

**Now that we are all awake to the present vital issue in the Bahai Cause in America, let all the firm friends who have come through these fires of tests unite in the fulness of the love of the Covenant, rejoicing in the cause to which God in bounty and mercy has called us, to go forth to give this message to the world.**

The Bahai Committee of Investigation had done a noteworthy job. To sum up: in less than a month, it had produced a voluminous Report which had been unanimously accepted by the religious tribunal of Forty-Eight, sitting in Chicago on December 9, 1917. It had mimeographed the Report

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[group photo of early American Bahai leaders including Windust, Remy and True omitted]

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and mailed it to all the Bahai Assemblies in the United States; after which, the members of Committee had made a coast to coast pilgrimage, giving lectures and interviews, and corresponding with those who could not be reached in person. Besides, the Chairman had written three apologetic pamphlets, namely: An Open Letter to the Bahais in America, Firmness and Protection, all of which had served as campaign literature; yet, in spite of all this, a percentage of the Bahais remained unaffected by the propaganda, and a complete black-out of conscience had not been obtained. What was to be done?

Now, the Tenth Bahai Convention was in the offing and this even, held great possibilities. If the Report could be adopted (unanimously, if possible) by the Bahai Assemblies of the United States and Canada in convention assembled, then it would be as though the very conscience of the American Bahais had spoken; then the Report would have authority equal with the Word of God, and woe unto any who would oppose it! If such would indeed arise, that man would himself be branded as a rebel, a blasphemer, a child of perdition — a Nakez.

The plan was a risky one, for if it failed the committee would be in a tight place. Therefore it must not fail! All the ingenuity of the Forty-Eight and their sympathizers would be used to bring the issue to a triumphant finish.

I can give but a brief review of this historic event which took place in Chicago, from April 27th to 30th (inclusive) 1918. Those who are interested may read the dramatic story of this Tenth Bahai Convention in the three successive issues of Star of the West, Vol. IX, Nos, 4, 5, 6 May 17, June 5 and June 24, 1918.

At preliminary proceedings, a Committee on Credentials had been appointed, the duty of which was to see to it "that no representatives of the said group (suspect persons) be admitted to this Convention or seated therein as delegates. Thus, the undesirables (alleged Nakezeen) were eliminated, and the Tenth Bahai Convention opened its doors to the delegates and the perfectly safe visitors.

In order to prepare the ground Mrs. Claudia Cole spoke on obedience, stating that we must recognize and realize that violation is, as it were, pathological, like gangrene in the spiritual body of the world, even as are other poisons in the physical body. Unless one can realize that, one does not understand the actual meaning of violation,

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Mrs. Edward Struven made it plain that people receiving Tablets from Abdul Baha could not count very much on his commendation at a time when "this great question of their firmness in the center of the Covenant is before us to decide."

Mrs. Imogene Hoagg made a distinction between love and obedience. "It seems to me today that we have to have more than love, we have to have obedience. . . . Let us call for obedience, and love will come."

Then Dr. Zia Bagdadi, one of the most zealous of the Nakezeen-hunters who was also at times a constructive speaker as I have shown earlier, delivered a long talk on the necessity for firmness in the Covenant: "The most important subject to the real Bahais is firmness and obedience. We know a violator when we see him as we know a donkey, because violation has a pungent odor, a pungent smell — a sickening smell. We must inhale with the nostrils of the spirit, then we can distinguish between violation and firmness."

After giving an outline of the difficulties that, on account of violation, had descended upon the Cause in Chicago, and the consequent dwindling of believers, Dr. Bagdadi continued:

**We have tried many experiments. I have seen that. But now, praise be to God, that cancer is cut out, and the body of the Cause is perfect. Many, on account of ignorance and self-interest tried to spoil the work. . . . On the 12th of November (the Hundredth Anniversary of Baha-O-Llah) that great feast was held in perfect harmony, and the Committee of Investigation was elected, and they were efficient, and whenever communication is resumed, you will hear commendation from the Center of the Covenant, for always he recognizes, always he confirms those who stand for the Covenant; always he shuns those who oppose the Covenant. The members of that Committee have sacrificed their time, their energy and their money, and they have received arrows of criticism from all parts and they have come here and finished their work. . . . Criticisms were raised and yet those souls who criticized the Committee, never contributed any help in removing the conditions. That is, they did not remove the stagnation in Chicago, and they did not cut any of the cancerous tissues. . . . It is characteristic of the violators to sit down and criticize, and do nothing else. The friends in Chicago are not tying the bands of anybody. Those who want to work in harmony are welcome. . . . There is no compromise where violation is. . . Baha-O-Llah never said, "Pray for the violators." His only command was to shun them. Maybe the opinion of one is not to shun them, the opinion of another to be a little kind. But what is best? . . .**

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[photo of Dr. Zia Bagadadi omitted]

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**The Committee of Investigation has done its part, and the Convention is here. If any one did not receive the Report, a copy can be had by asking for it; and if they wish, let them withhold judgment until an opportunity can be had to read it. But I beg of those who have read the Report to stand with a rising vote and commend the committee for its work, and they may rest assured that the divine confirmation will surround them.**

This sudden command of Dr. Bagdadi, which was intended to stampede the Convention into a rising vote, must have taken the Chairman of the Convention, (Mr. Alfred E. Lunt) by surprise, for he said:

**I did not hear your closing remarks, Dr. Bagdadi.**

**DR. BAGDADI: May I repeat them?**

**THE CHAIRMAN: Yes.**

**DR. BAGDADI: I said let those of the friends here who have not yet received the Report of the Committee wait and read the entire Report; but I beg of those who have received the Report of the Committee of Investigation, if they find that it has done a great piece of work — in order to preserve the Cause, in order to stop the stagnation in this city, that they stand up and commend the Committee.**

**MRS. MAY MAXWELL: May I make a motion that this Report of the Committee (if Investigation be accepted?**

**DR. BAGDAD: That is what I mean, by a rising vote.**

**THE CHAIRMAN: The matter now before us is that the Report of the Committee of Investigation on violation in America be accepted. Are you ready for the question? All those in favor will rise. The purpose of this, as I understand it, — if I am mistaken, Dr. Bagdadi will inform me. . . .**

**DR. BAGDADI: Delegate or non-delegate, all those who received the Report.**

**THE CHAIRMAN: The secretary will call the roll.**

**The delegates arose and remained standing during the roll call.**

**THE CHAIRMAN: It appears officially that the Convention has recorded its unanimous approval and acceptance of the Report of the Committee.**

**MR. GREGORY: I suggest that we let all the friends vote.**

**THE CHAIRMAN: All right. Kindly sit down, you who are delegates. Now, for a general expression, which I know many of you wish to make,**

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**those who are not delegates, who are present, kindly rise, if you share this feeling.**

The remainder of the attendance at the meeting arose to their feet.

**THE CHAIRMAN: Are there any who vote no on the motion? If so, please rise. It appears that by the unanimous vote of the entire body gathered here this morning, you have approved and**

**ratified the Report in full of the Committee of Investigation on violation in America. AND I SO DECLARE IT.**

In this manner, the most sanguine expectations of the four members of the Bahai Committee of Investigation were fulfilled. The chain of slavery, forged on the anvil of fanaticism, was officially fastened on the Cause by the entire body of delegates and visitors, on Tuesday morning, April 30, 1918, at the Tenth Bahai Convention held in the Auditorium Hotel, ninth floor, Chicago, Illinois under its permanent chairman Mr. Alfred E. Lunt and its permanent secretary, Mr. Louis G. Gregory. A masterful stroke of political strategy had been effected. The plot had succeeded. That hour, when the chairman pronounced the words: "And I so declare it," was the zero hour of the Cause of Baha-O-Llah in North America. It was an hour of degradation for the Movement; it was one of despair for the vanquished forces of liberalism, and of triumph and jubilation for those now in complete control.

To all outward appearances the American Bahai conscience died at that Convention; and the black pall of a full-fledged inquisitorial policy fell upon its mutilated body, as it was laid to rest under the rising feet of the delegates and non-delegates. Then upon the grave-site, and without loss of time, the Bahai leaders turned to the election of the executive committee for the coming year.

Here, Mr. Charles Mason Remey suggested:

**Before we proceed with this election, we have a few moments of prayer and supplication, that we may elect a Board, that we may entrust into the hands of those who are most fitted for it, the work of this Unity for the next year. We are up against many, very, very vital problems. We have had some very vital problems to meet this last year, and we have met many in this gathering yesterday and today. And it occurs to me to make this suggestion of prayer, that we may be spiritually guided.**

Following the prayer, the Chairman, Mr. Alfred Lunt, spoke:

**We have been sent here this year as no body of delegates has ever been sent in the history of the world. You have been sent here after hearing**

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**the divine injunctions towards firmness in the Covenant, you have been sent here because you are firm . . . therefore, what cannot you accomplish if you realize your oneness ... and what it has meant to us ever since we came into this room? and if we will only come in line with that center, . . . will we not all become melted into one soul, one thought and one purpose, to choose those whom he desires to be chosen today to represent this Bahai Temple Unity of America? And not only to choose them, but to perform every act which this Convention has come here to perform.... So shall we not enter into this blessed flame of the love of God at this moment, and do his will?**

Then Dr. Bagdadi again raised his voice, prophesying: —

**Whatever you do under this roof will be proclaimed from the housetops. That is the law. "The whole world is looking toward America.... All of you are confirmed; all of you are firm and steadfast believers; otherwise we would not be here. The time has come for the separation of violation from firmness. There is no doubt about the sincerity and firmness in this cause of God on the part of all those who are here. If you become members of the Board, it means one, and if one becomes the Board it means all.... And the main issue, which is firmness in the Covenant, is the greatest qualification in all elections of committees.**

As a master magician, Dr. Bagdadi well knew the methods with which to arouse the religious emotions of the already overwrought delegates, and how to appeal to their loyalty to Abdul Baha in order to

control their votes. The right people had to be chosen to direct the affairs of the Cause in the months ahead, or all the work of the Committee of Investigation might yet be undone. He therefore dramatized the sufferings of The Bab and Baha-O-Llah, enumerated the martyrs and closed by picturing the meeting, face to face, of each and every one with Abdul Baha, when the words: Well done would be the reward of those who had voted wisely. Listen to Dr. Bagdadi: —

**Abdul Baha wants us to look in our hearts at this moment and see how we stand, and each one will be the cause of making others who are firm, firmer. This is in obedience to Abdul Baha, and I am going to do as we all must, think of that in this election. So far, my dear friends, we must not think of it as if he were my friend or my sweetheart, or my old friend, or my associate — the time has come when we are on a plane higher than that. To show that this Cause is the Cause of God, the Bab gave his life; Baha-O-Llah spent his life in agony; Abdul Baha has lived in prison; 24,000**

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**or more gave their lives. We are to serve such a Cause. Who is going to be my friend, my wife, my child, when I look at the sacrifices that have taken place? Will it not be a shame, more than a shame, to put any name on this paper before I in my heart and soul hear Abdul Baha say to me, "Well done." Because I am going to face him; you are going to face him sooner or later. We are facing him now in the spirit. He is watching and counting all these things we are doing now. What can I say more than these words of his, those who are to be elected must be well known Bahais; they must be known for their firmness in the Covenant. Can I make a statement stronger than this? Is it possible? Let us begin.**

Following this appeal, the delegates were herded into the center section of the hall and the roll call of delegates and alternates was read.

The outcome of the election was completely satisfactory. From the point of view of the High Command, it could not have gone better. Three from among the four members of the Bahai Committee of Investigation were elected to the National Board on the first ballot, to wit: Mr. Charles Mason Remy, Chairman; Miss H. Emogene Hoagg and Mr. Louis G. Gregory, simon-pure champions of orthodoxy against whom nothing could be said or thought. Five other persons were likewise chosen: Dr. Zia Bagdadi, evangelist of the Bahai Committee of Investigation; Mrs. Corinne True, in whose residence the Bahai Committee of investigation had held its sessions; Mr. Alfred E. Lunt, Permanent Chairman of the Convention; Mr. I Harlan F. Ober, Delegate from Cambridge, Mass., and Reporter Of the Convention and Mrs. May Maxwell. Completing the Board of Nine, entailed some difficulty. Mr. William H. Randall, President of the Board which was going out of office had on various occasions laid himself open to the charge of liberalism and, although he had voted on all the proposals Of the Convention, he still did not quite come up to the mark. Therefore, on the first two ballots he fell short of a majority, but he came to the front on the third, and was elected with a small number of eighteen votes. Mr, Charles Mason Remy was chosen as President for the coming year and Mrs. May Maxwell as Vice-President.

The election of the Board of Nine. completed the infamous structure of Bahai orthodoxy as dreamed and planned by a small group of reactionaries who now found themselves in undisputed possession Of the Cause, standing ready to impose their decisions upon the helpless Bahai Assemblies throughout North America. The Convention had been a success from start, but the election had capped it to an exhilarating climax.

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Through its report, we are given a glimpse of the new Board of Bahai Temple Unity at its first meeting, held immediately after the election; and it seems that the members were so overpowered by the complete victory that had been obtained, that all were well-nigh speechless. Mr. Harlan F. Ober, who had been chosen as Secretary for the coming year, interpreted the silence of the group with more transcendent significance than I can allow. He writes the following:

**One of the greatest evidences of the unity and love of the Convention was found in the first meeting of the Executive Board, which was held in the evening of April 30th immediately after the Convention. The members of the Board gathered and began the meeting with prayer and chanting, which was followed by an indescribable quiet and peace. No one spoke, for it seemed that the door of the Rizwan (Paradise) had opened, and the breath of the holy Abha spirit had encircled all. We found infinite rest and wonderful consolation beyond the capacity of words to describe.**

It may have been a moment or many moments, we could not tell, but with hearts overflowing we turned to each other, and from all lips came the words: "This is unity." "This is the mystery of unity."

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## Chapter IX

### THE DOORS OPEN

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of the people of Palestine on the memorable day of September 23, 1918 when, at three o'clock in the afternoon, isolation and oppression were suddenly substituted for glorious freedom. It would be impossible to give a fair account of their bewilderment and ecstasy when the final scene of the war, as enacted in the East, came to view.

The first indication of release was the sound of stray shots among the hills; then detachments of a Hindu cavalry regiment appeared simultaneously on the crest of Mount Carmel and in the adjoining valley, converging on the town of Haifa. As the riders tore down the mountain-side at full speed, I ran out on the road, in my excitement forgetting the Master's orders that all of us were to keep indoors. Never will I forget those troops as they thundered past, and especially one horseman who descended upon me, lance poised, the fire of battle in his eyes. He missed me by an inch, and I scuttled back to the house with my curiosity definitely assuaged.

The Turks and Germans had raised a barricade on the waterfront, but the Hindus drove straight toward it, their leader falling in the impact. Then, wild with rage at this loss, they cut down everyone in sight, natives as well as soldiers, and they drove their enemies before them through the streets of Haifa and around the bay, continuing past Acca and down the road toward Tyre and Sidon. At evening General King, arriving at Haifa at the head of the British troops, received the keys of the city.

The first words of General King were these: "Is Abbas Effendi safe?" and, the answer being in the affirmative, he was presently conducted to the house of the Master. The general carried with him a little gift which he presented to Abdul Baha. It was a package of sugar, an almost forgotten luxury, sent with the compliments of General Allenby.

That night, the plane of Haifa from end to end glimmered with, the lights of the bivouacking troops. The fighting was over.

The work of readjusting civil conditions began immediately, and the cooperation of the natives was needed; so a request was made of Abdul Baha to recommend, from among his entourage, men of education who could speak English. There were many to come up to the requirements and

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an interview was arranged for. General King met us and conversed very affably; then he made his choice. Abdul Baha was ready to comply on all points, but when it was found that I was included in the selection, he said "This one, you cannot have. I have other work for him to do."

By this time, the news agencies had cabled the announcement that Abdul Baha and his followers were safe and well on Mount Carmel, but this news did not reach the American Bahais until October 4th. "Star of the West", of October 16th, published the following telegram from Mr. William H. Randall:

**Just received cable from London saying official cable received there states Master well and protected. Notify friends. Abha greetings.**

A short editorial follows:

**Allaho Abha!**

**Momentous changes are taking place in the Holy Land. The doors of communication between Abdul Baha and the outer world are opening. A few days ago the above telegram was received by the Star of the West. The full significance of these events cannot be grasped at this moment; only the future will reveal them. It is likened unto the appearance of the sun after long obscurity.**

**The dark clouds seem to be scattering.**

**A tumult of happiness and expectation reverberates in the hearts of the Bahais.**

**Ya Baha El Abha!**

Immediately after the opening of the doors, Abdul Baha instructed me to write a series of letters and post-cards to individual Bahais in the United States, giving snap-shot news of the happenings in Palestine, and quite a number of these were published in "Star of the West", Vol. IX beginning with issue no. 14, November 23<sup>rd</sup>. One of the communications was addressed to Mr. Alfred Lunt, who was a liberal at heart and a sincere Bahai well loved by the Master, although he at times, and against his own better judgment, became involved with the orthodox. As has already been pointed out, in this letter, I described a quiet afternoon on Mount Carmel and finished with some informal Words of Abdul Baha which I had taken down in my note-book. These words, so fortunately preserved, are one of the jewels of the Master's utterance and constitute an immortal page in Bahai literature:

**The darkness of this gloomy night shall pass away.**

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**Again, the Sun of Reality will dawn from the horizons of the**

**Have patience-wait, but do not sit idle.**

**Work while you are waiting.**

**Smile while you are wearied with monotony.**

**Be firm while everything around you is being shaken.**

**Be hopeful while the ugly face of despair grins at you.**

**Speak aloud while the malevolent forces of the nether-world try to crush your mind.**

**Be valient and courageous while men all around you are cringing with fear and cowardice.**

**Do not yield to the overwhelming power of tyranny and despotism.**

**Serve the cause of democracy and freedom.**

**Continue your journey to the end.**

**The bright day is coming.**

**The nucleus of the new race is forming.**

**The harbinger of the new ideals of international justice is appearing.**

**The trees of hope shall be clothed in verdant leaves,**

**The copper of scorn and derision shall be transmuted into the gold of honor and repute.**

**The arid desert of ignorance shall he transformed into the luxuriant garden of knowledge.**

**The threatening clouds shall be dispelled and the stays of faith and charity will shine in the clear conscience of the children of men.**

Following the Armistice, streams of communications from all parts of the world began to pour into Haifa. Once more, Abdul Baha was in touch with the Bahais of Persia, India, China, England, France, Germany and other countries where the Cause had taken root, and his relief and gladness knew no bounds. But what of America!

One night, Abdul Baha called me to his room and handed me a package which had just reached him. "Open it," he said. I cut the envelope and drew out four mimeographed manuscripts: (1) "Report of the Bahai Committee of Investigation", (2) "An Open Letter to the Bahais in America" (3) "Firmness", (4) "Protection", (5) A few recent issues of "Star of the West" containing an account of the Tenth Bahai Convention.

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While I paged these documents in an effort to grasp their general purport, the Master was watching me narrowly. "Come. Mirza Ahmad," he urged. "Don't keep everything to yourself. Tell me the news."

My heart was palpitating and my eyesight had become blurred; actually, my hands were shaking so much that the papers fell to the ground. Abdul Baha arose, gathered them together very quietly and handed them back to me. Then I made a supreme effort arid, without further visible emotion, started to translate aloud the four documents. It took a long time.

For nearly an hour, the Master sat motionless: then he jumped to his feet and began to pace the floor. His face was flushed and he was pushing his turban back from his brow; taking it off, putting it on again, and walking, always walking. If I slowed down, he thundered at me "Go on, go on! I must hear all." So I read to the end and when I stopped and looked up. I saw the tears running down his cheeks.

"What have they done to the Cause!" he was speaking as if to himself. "What have they done to the Cause!" Then he went on, saying that he had been waiting for such a long time to receive news from America and this was the news! Did we have so many believers that we could spare even one; and was the birthday of Baha-O-Llah a fitting occasion for persecuting the innocent children of the All-Merciful? Who had given these people authority to excommunicate? And now they expected commendation and approval. No, he had no commendation to give, and no approval.

Then he went on: Something must be done. Something can be done. Baha-O-Llah will not allow this condition to remain in the Cause. He looked straight at me: "You will go to America. You must dispel these clouds. The time has arrived when you are to render a mighty service."

I gasped, and started to make excuses. This was the one time, within scope of my memory, that I balked at the Master's commands; but he would have none of it. "Baha-O-Llah will support you," he assured me", and I will pray for you. Have no fear. This division amongst the believers must be removed; the two factions must be brought together without delay. You will leave at the earliest possible moment in order to reach America in time for the Convention. This Eleventh Convention shall, God willing be one of reconciliation and unity!"

I left Abdul Baha's presence and went out. Slowly, I dragged my feet up the familiar slope of Carmel. My nerves quivered as if ice-water were being poured over them; my face was burning. Half way up, I stopped and looked at the night, and a million stars descended upon me; then, close at

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[photo of 'Abdu'l-Baha walking on slopes of Mt. Carmel omitted]

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hand I heard the words ""Shoja-at, Mosafar! Shoja-at!" It was the voice of Rahmat-U-Llah, caretaker of the shrine of The Bab, who was standing on the veranda of the Pilgrim house, lighting my way with a flickering candle. "Courage Pilgrim, courage," he repeated as I passed him and entered my room. I stretched myself on the bed. "Courage, pilgrim, courage," I murmured to myself, as I fell asleep.

The next few weeks was a period of intensive training. Almost every day, I followed Abdul Baha on his long walks and when we reached our turning point, I watched him as he sat on a rock facing the Mediterranean Sea, and listened as he outlined the course I was to adopt on my arrival in the United States. Immediately after returning home, I would retire to my room and make copious notes for my guidance in the future. Following the more specific instructions, the Master would conclude along general lines in words such as these: Now the time has come! Out of this Divine College you must go into the world. Purify and sanctify your heart from every desire. I am sending you forth with the Powers of the Kingdom, the Breathe of the Holy Spirit, the Confirmations of the Merciful and the Glad-Tidings of the Supreme Lord. This will constitute your capital. You must be the means of the reconciliation of hearts; you must create love and fellowship amongst the friends. Soar always in the atmosphere of universal concepts. Do not attach yourself to particulars. Do not interfere in local affairs. I will pray for you at every midnight.

Rest assured. I will be with you in your journeys and in your sojourns. You must do your utmost to be present at the Convention. Associate with the people with love and kindness. Gladden the hearts of friends and strangers. Endeavor as far as you can to sadden none. Sorrow is the dust over the mirror; cleanse the mirror and let the light of the sun of happiness reflect therein. Ponder day and night over my words, deeds and life. These must serve you as general and particular examples. If all the people of the world turn their faces from you, and God is with you — you are victorious. Do not engage in fault-finding and backbiting. If anyone comes to you and opens the first chapter of such a book, tell him: O my dear friend, I have not come here to listen to these talks! I have come to call the people to the Kingdom of Abha. I have come to tend assunder the veils of old superstitions and traditions. I have come to call you to love, friendship, unity and the brotherhood of the human race. These stories and this gossip are conducive to the extinction of the fire of the love of God; they are like poisonous winds which, blowing over the flowers and hyacinths of the spirit, wither them; they are like gloomy, black clouds that prevent the shining of the Sun of Reality. Baha-O-Llah has not commissioned us to

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discuss these petty questions and infantile problems. You must be the vivifiers of the world — light-bringers to the inhabitants of the globe.

These daily instructions, given by the Master, were energized by his personality and heightened by his self-oblivion. Sometimes, he utterly forgot that I was the only witness to the rush and tumult of his inspiration and emotion. He was addressing thousands in distant lands — and there I stood a solitary spectator to a divine drama, a very ordinary human being caught in the whirl-pool that ever surrounds the chosen of God.

The words of Abdul Baha made me realize that in the task ahead, I was to rely not only on his support but also on my own mental and spiritual resources. Consequently, I began to write numerous letters and post cards to the American Bahais in which I embodied, in a general yet unmistakable way, the broad instructions given by Abdul Baha. These letters containing news of the Master, and direct and indirect messages from him, were on receipt copied and distributed far and wide. They likewise gave hints of my early return to the United States.

It was clear to me even at that time that the contents of those letters and cards, pouring upon the American Bahais, would disturb the minds of the orthodox and especially those who had voted for the adoption of the Report of the Committee of Investigation. These persons had fully believed in Dr. Bagdadi's promise that Abdul Baha would commend them and approve their Report, and now apparently commendation and approval were not forthcoming. On the contrary, these letters of mine contained implications which boded no good to the anti-liberals.

The letters and post cards were written in long hand and no copies were kept. However, I find the contents of two of the cards published in "Star of the West", Vol. IX, no. 17, January 19, 1919, page 199. In order to show the reader how I started on this campaign of education I will reproduce one of them as an example.

**Haifa, Palestine  
December 2, 1918**

**"Dear brothers and sisters:**

**The friends in Colorado are especially remembered by the Beloved, and to them he conveys his noble Abha greetings. He desires them to be the promoters of good-fellowship among the nations of the world and the torch-bearers of unity between the disunited children of men. Like unto the**

**Rocky Mountains, they must raise their heads above the low plains of human thought. They must be the cause of the descent of the rain of mercy upon**

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**the dark and barren desert of humanity, suffering the hard hearts to be covered with verdure, blossoms and fruits. Are you able to render this service to the Cause of your Master?**

**(signed) Ahmad Sohrab"**

Letters such as these brought hope to the routed Bahais and discomfort to the reactionaries in high places; and the latter, feeling in their bones that a show-down was at hand, began to strengthen yet further the ramparts of orthodoxy, preparing themselves for the assault.

The stage was set for the impending struggle.

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## **Chapter X**

### **MY STEEPLE-CHASE**

According to army regulations, only government officials could obtain leave from Palestine during the months following the Armistice. I made a series of appeals for a pass, one of them addressed to Major W. Tudor Pole, Deputy Assistant Administrator stationed in Cairo; and when this attempt was unsuccessful I realized that if Major Tudor Pole, who was a Bahai of long standing with a good deal of authority, could not help me, all the others to whom I had written would be unable likewise. So Abdul Baha, took the matter in hand and wrote a personal letter to General Allenby. Shortly afterwards I was called into his room.

"Baha-O-Llah has performed the miracle," the Master said. "Here is your permission. Now, go and pack. You will leave Haifa tomorrow."

So suddenly did it come about: my sanction to go to America — my dismissal from home and all that I held dear!

That night, I assembled my things which were few and of no consequence, and packed them in my bag with the long metal tube which for so long had lain underground and was to me the object of the greatest consequence in all the world. Then I bade farewell to the mountain slope of Carmel and to its canopy of stars.

After breakfasting in the usual manner on tea, bread and cheese, I came down from the Mountain of God and took leave of my friends and associates. Then I sought the presence of the Master.

I was with him for three hours, from eight until eleven, and when I arose to leave, he kissed me on both cheeks, gave me some strings of rock-candy, a handful of gold sovereigns and his tablet — my spiritual passport to America. Then he blessed me and bade me farewell. According to my notes which I recorded at the first opportunity, some of his words were as follows:

"Concentrate all your time in the service of the Cause. Soar ever in the atmosphere of universal concepts. Attach not yourself to particulars. Endeavor, as far as possible, to sadden no heart. I will never forget you. Day and night you are before my sight. Few souls have stayed with me for so long a time. I declare by Baha-O-Llah that always at midnight I shall pray for you, saying: Oh God! Confirm Mirza Ahmad, my son."

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[two photos of Sohrab omitted]

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As I looked into those eyes which mirrored all of life and eternity too, and listened to that heart-stirring voice, I well realized that the separation would be a long one, but how long — that I could not have imagined. On the morning of December 22nd, 1918, I stood before Abdul Baha for the last time on this earth.

The train steamed out of Haifa at eleven thirty. It was full of officers, so Dr. Aflatoon, a Bahai on his way to Bagdad, and I thought fit to tell them a little about the Cause. They seemed interested and we left them at Toul-Karem in a position either to continue investigation or to drop the matter out of their lives.

In Toul-Karem, the dark skinned West Indian soldiers afforded us shelter from the inclement weather and made us feel welcome. They were very receptive to conversation pertaining to the New Testament and themselves had a great deal to contribute. The following afternoon, we boarded a train which was packed with Mohammedan Indian soldiers returning home. The train which was composed of open cars was receptive also, in this case to the torrents that were now pouring from the heavens: but the physical discomfort did not impede discussion, between ourselves and our Muslim fellow-travelers, on the modern aspects of Islam. Arriving at Ludd in the late afternoon we were enabled, through the kindness of some soldiers, to find space in another train bound for Kantara. Here we fell in with a Persian Jew from Jerusalem and passed the time most agreeably in reviewing the prophesies of the Old Testament and computing the time of their fulfillment,

After a long night in cramped quarters, we awoke to find ourselves speeding through untrodden wildernesses of sand, the very wilderness in which Moses and the people of Israel had lived during forty years: and my mind was struck by the change that had been brought in this region since those times. especially in that all of it had been accomplished in the last few years under war conditions. Now, a double-tracked, broad-gauged railroad stretched from Cairo to Toul-Karem, and this was shortly to be extended to Haifa and Acca — a vast engineering feat due to the ability and resourcefulness of the British.

As we began to move about, bidding sleepy good morning to our companions, we became conscious of the fact that this was no ordinary day. Far from it, for the date was December 25th. It was Christmas; it was a holiday, and long before our train reached Kantara we could observe the British soldiers as we passed their camps, already engaged in their various sports and games. In Kantara, the frontier town which actually was but a populous city of tents, our luggage came up for examination.

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A customs house is always a little nerve-racking, but in my case, knowing as I did that it was simply out of the question to carry papers or documents of any kind over the border line, the moment was one of unadulterated fear. The British official went through my things minutely, penetrating deeper and deeper into my capacious bag, and then from the very bottom he drew up the metal tube. "What is this?" he asked, balancing it between his fingers. My heart was in my mouth, so I was not in a position to answer. Everything in me was calling for help: Abdul Baha! Abdul Baha, don't forsake me now! The inspector extracted the parchments and spread out the heavy roll. As I wondered how he could be so deft about it while the tent was rocking. The tent appeared to be caving in on our heads, his as well as mine; but he was speaking again — no he was reading from the first Tablet which lay on top: "Kodah" and again "Khodah, Khodah." He had picked out a word that means God, probably one of the few Persian words that he knew, and was finding it here and there on the page. Then he looked up, obviously pleased with his scholarly attainment: "Your diploma, I suppose." Yes, yes, I nodded as the tent regained its equilibrium and the blessed Britisher passed on down the line. "Thank you," I called after him and began to gather up my things: then in a lower tone: Thank you, Abdul Baha.

Hurdle number one in my hazardous steeple-chase — goal: America in good time for the Convention; but before I could take even a breath of relief, the next hurdle was pressing in upon me, high and imposing. Just around the corner, the travellers were being separated into two groups: Occidentals, having the privilege of boarding the train for Cairo, and Orientals to be retained in quarantine for six days. Six long days every one of them valuable to me!

When I realized what was happening, I boldly addressed myself to the officer in charge: "Why this discrimination? — and was told that a certain malady was prevalent at that time, to which Orientals were subject. "But I'm not an Oriental," I flashed back, so quickly that I actually spoke without thought. "I am of Aryan descent, just as you are, just as the French and Germans are, and all Europeans." Then, having become familiar with the idea, I concluded forcibly: "Persians are Europeans you know."

The officer eyed me with distaste: "Can you corroborate this statement?"

"You might call up Cairo find speak with Major Tudor Pole of the Intelligence Department," I offered casually. So my friend was called to the telephone on the spot and within my hearing.

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"I never heard of such a thing.," the officer blustered, when he got the connection "A man — name Sohrab, a Persian, mind you, and he says he's European. What's your impression?" "Pause — a long one, then: "What! I have to pass him? It's all right? Well, if he's a European, I'm a . . ." he turned and looked me up and clown; then he began to laugh: "Very well! Hurry along, your train is leaving." Hurdle number two!

We preceded on to Cairo through the fertile lands of Egypt which spread themselves around us in smiling detachment from the devastation of war. Arriving at evening, we put up at Eden Palace Hotel, travel-strained and weary; but I could not remain indoors simply to rest. Five years of the quiet life of Haifa had made me hungry for people and action; so I sought the brilliant streets and walked about for hours, a veritable country boy, round eyed and doubtless open-mouthed too.

Dr. Aflatoon and I had many friends in Cairo whom we saw the next day: Mohammad Taki, a pioneer Bahai; Sheikh Mohyeddin, pupil of the great Mirza Abul Fazl and himself a brilliant teacher, and others, all anxious to receive tidings of Abdul Baha. We lunched at a Persian restaurant and dined with a Persian family, and talked much, both in groups and tête-a-tête; but the next morning I went to work seriously. First, I visited Major Tudor Pole, who gave me a hearty welcome and promised to help me through the maze of officialdom in acquiring a passport; and later I called on the Persian Consul General for the same purpose. I had my picture taken, so as to be in readiness in case the coveted passport were granted suddenly; conferred with editors in newspaper offices and dropped in at the shipping agencies. This procedure, with the exception of the photo-taking, was repeated regularly for weeks. On January 12th., I

received a letter from Shoghi Effendi which informed me that Abdul Baha had sent the following cablegram to Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm: "Ahmad Sohrab will soon reach New York;" so, as time was dragging on and help from my side of the water not forthcoming, I decided to appeal to Mr. Wilhelm in New York: "Request State Department send permission Consulate immediately, waiting." I cabled a similar message to Mr. Joseph Hannen in Washington.

Waiting indeed! How long would this waiting last, and the Master also was counting the days. January had brought me no luck. We now were in February. An urgent Tablet from Abdul Baha reached me on the 7th.

**Verily, I have received the letter which thou hast forwarded care of Shoghi Effendi and have become acquainted with its contents. In regard to thy journey to America, it is incumbent on thee to make the utmost haste and if possible to get a direct passage from Egypt to the United States. Thy**

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**presence in America is an absolute necessity. Hasten, hasten to fulfill this obligation and do meet Mrs. Parsons.**

**It is incumbent upon thee to make the utmost exertion to leave now at once for America, to display the greatest effort to unite the friends around the Word and dispel the clouds of sorrow and misery.**

**Upon thee be greeting and praise!**

**(signed) Abdul Baha Abbas**

"It is incumbent upon thee to make the utmost exertion." What might be done that I had not thought of as yet? I racked my brains, but could bring up no original, thought, so, after making the daily rounds of Consulate and shipping agencies, I resigned myself as usual to spending the time with my friends.

Here in Cairo. I had run across one of my fellow-students at the University of Beirut, Alphonse Toniatti by name. Half Italian, half Arab, he was an amusing personality, hiding a warm heart with small success behind a casual and even cynical attitude. He was one of the many with whom I could pass agreeable hours, but my mind was set in one direction — America — and I could not content myself for even a little while, with less.

The American Consulate was an imposing building into which I had never penetrated further than the outer office, which was always crowded. One morning, as I wedged my way in, the secretary greeted me with unusual affability. "We have good news for you. Come this way." I was led into a large, luxurious room which was occupied by the Consul and a tall, well dressed American traveller. The Consul looked up: "Your permit has arrived, though how you did it I can't imagine. You must have some good friends in Washington."

Here the American began to indulge in a series of explosions. "This is preposterous! It's a crime! It's a travesty on our country and all that it stands for! A permit for this Oriental — when I have been hanging around your office for weeks! What has he got that I haven't?"

What, indeed! Hurdle number three!

There was nothing now to keep me in Cairo, so I went that night to Port Said where I stayed in the apartment of Mirza Ahmad Yazdi, Persian Consul and son-in-law of Abdul Baha. It was home to me in a way, for I had lived there and worked in Ahmad Yazdi's store years before when I was a boy; and I immediately fell in with the old routine, spending regular hours behind the counter. However, my first daily duty consisted of visits to the shipping agencies, of which there were many; in fact all the great

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lines have offices in Port Said, and these were always crowded with frantic persons waiting for steamers that apparently did not exist. Actually, none had as yet sailed for America. "Yes, you can put your name down if you wish," they told me. "There are four hundred ahead of you."

Feeling that I must give an account of myself to the Master. I sent him a cable stating that my passport was in order but that there were no ships. Almost immediately the answer returned: "The ship is coming."

On a certain morning as I was working in the store, one of the assistants ran in to inform me that a Japanese freighter was sailing into port on its way to America. I dropped my work and ran to the Japanese shipping bureau: Could I get passage?

"Impossible," was the answer. "We carry only cargoes. Passengers not allowed."

"But I will pay," I insisted. "Anything! I will bring my own food, sleep on the deck."

"Sorry. Against the rules."

I hastened to the apartment of Ahmad Yazdi, my heart beating with determination, and found among my effects an old passport which I had used in the days when I was secretary at the Persian Legation in Washington. I returned to the agency and without a word, laid the open passport on the desk. The clerk examined it and raised his eyebrows: "Official business?"

"Yes," I answered.

"Well, in that case-all right,"

I flew home, picked up my things, bade farewell to Ahmad Yazdi and was on the wharf in no time. "Yeboshi Maru," the argosy of my desire, lay alongside. I passed up the gang-plank and placed my two bags on the deck. "This way, please," an officer addressed me politely. "You are to have the doctor's cabin."

"But the doctor," I objected. "Where will he sleep?"

"He will bunk with another officer. Come please. It is all right."

And so, taking hurdle number four with a high heart, I landed on the broad bosom of the Mediterranean and went into the home-stretch.

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## Chapter XI

## THE TUBE AND THE BOOK

Yeboshi Maru was a primitive little craft, making two hundred miles per twenty-four hours. Its officers and crew were friendly, and there was much information to be acquired on both sides. I made no secret of the Cause and what it stood for, as a program for establishing World Peace; while my hosts brought me up to date on current news, for I was totally unacquainted with the developments that had brought about session of hostilities. There also was the Japanese language to be dabbled with, and the immediate necessity for learning to eat with chopsticks. It was a long passage of thirty-eight days, during which we were the recipients of every attention from the weather.

Sometimes, while the little boat was laboring on its way, the deck submerged by swirling, foaming cascades of water, it seemed to me, as it did to Aeneas in the long ago, that the pounding torrents were driving us to the very bottom of the sea, where the yawning waves would uncover unknown lands upon which their surges were breaking. Yet through it all, I knew that we would reach our destination. Abdul Baha had so promised, and that was enough for me.

Living in a walnut shell surrounded by the expanses of the universe, and to all intents and purposes alone, was a new experience in which I sought to find myself. For years, I had been in the presence of Abdul Baha, as a fish swimming in the translucent lake of his dreams and hopes; or as a lump of warm wax upon which the images of his ideals had been printed. Now I was thrown on my own resources and could find out what the me within me really was. I could be an individual. So I paced the deck for hours; stood at the rail, delving into the horizons — and what did I find? Abdul Baha was there. He had not followed me, he was not, at long range exerting his influence upon me; he simply was of me and in me. Now at a distance, I knew that I could never again say: These thoughts are glorious and beautiful, but they are not really mine.

As I proceeded with my meditations, day by day and night by night, a great joy began to take hold of me and I realized, as I never had realized before, that the disciple must become identified with the teachings of the Master. Unless he does so, he is merely a parrot repeating words that he does not understand: or a plastic disk recording a glorious song.

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[photo of Dr. J. Uyeda, ships doctor with Sohrab; another view from the ship, both omitted]

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When, in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, this truth was unveiled before my soul, I became a new being, endowed with assurance coming from myself. The light that Abdul Baha had shed across my path was my light; the Cause that he had endowed me with, was my Cause. His divine Springtime had come to stay in the garden of my own being.

These excursions into the abstract did not divert my mind from the duty in hand. I was the guardian of a treasure, consisting of the metal Tube which contained the Divine Plan and, even as valuable (for the Divine Plan was recorded in my mind word for word), a Note Book in which were set clown the dates in which the Tablets had been revealed, together with the places and circumstances connected with them; the Master's instructions regarding each and every one, and his supplementary talks, some of which were as important as the Tablets themselves. These two objects, the Tube and the Book, were to me the greatest treasure between earth and heaven; and no anxious duenna, tending royal princes, could have had a more acute sense of responsibility than was mine. The Tube lay under my pillow, a magnet that drew me back to the cabin every few hours; but the Book was with me always, in my coat pocket by day and along side of the Tube by night. Sometimes, I would wake out of my dreams, thinking that the long fingers of Neptune had closed about one or the other of my darlings and swept it out to sea. After such dreams I

would take firm hold of them both and, after the beating of my heart had subsided, fall asleep again, exhausted and happy.

As Yeboshi Maru sailed into American waters, I began to concentrate on my coming encounter with Bahai officialdom. What were my assets? The Plan itself, of course-tangible evidence of my mission. I carried besides Abdul Baha's written permit to return to the United States a copy of which had sometime previously been sent to Mr. Joseph Hannen, in Washington. I learned afterward that Mr. Hannen had forwarded a copy of this communication to "Star of the West" with his note which read as follows:

**I am in receipt of a letter from Shoghi Effendi in which he quotes the Tablet which Mirza Ahmad Sohrab will bring with him to America, the original being in the Master's hand. I think it would be well to publish this in the Star as soon as possible, so that all may know of his coming with permission, as I have heard this question raised.**

Star of the West — Vol. IX No. 17, Jan. 1919

A third asset which I valued greatly was my deep friendships with Bahais all over the country. I had lived in America before the World War

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and had taken part in all the activities of the Cause. Also for more than five years, I had served as secretary to the Persian Minister in Washington during which time I had made of the legation a headquarters for the distribution of Bahai information. Finally, I had made extensive preparations for Abdul Baha's visit to this continent in 1912, and had accompanied him throughout his travels in the United States and Canada. My happy memories of association in this country were limitless, giving me much confidence; but I had liabilities too.

I was born of a liberal family and taught never to connive with any brand of orthodoxy, were it Mohammedan, Christian or Bahai. I was brought up in the environment of Abdul Baha, and the flame of liberalism within me was fanned at the very altar of his heart. I believe that he kept me with him for so long a time because of this characteristic. At the same time, this liberalism had repeatedly brought me into sharp conflict with many American Bahais. Because I could not agree with some of their interpretations of the Cause, which seemed to me both antediluvian and infantile, they had come to look upon me as a menace. Consequently, in order to discredit me in the sight of Abdul Baha and my fellow Bahais, they had fabricated numerous stories about me which had been spread far and wide. Actually, for the preservation of the orthodoxy they had appended to the Cause, their zeal knew no bounds. I will relate one instance of this, among many.

During the Master's visit to Chicago, he stopped with a certain Bahai lady, and she later on gathered her friends about her and confided to them a secret. The secret was that Abdul Baha had on an occasion summoned her to his room and, through an interpreter, had warned her as follows: "Do not trust Ahmad Sohrab."

After my return to Palestine with the Master, this confidence, treated as most confidences are and doubtless as many are intended to be, was extensively circulated. In fact, the lady herself carried the news to the Assemblies throughout the land. Thus it was not long before every Bahai had received the message, still transmitted with bated breath, with the result that the phrase: "Do not trust Ahmad Sohrab" became a pass-word in the Bahai underground.

Naturally the story reached Haifa, creating a situation that was bizarre to any the least. There was I, opening and translating to the Master a flood of letters, addressed to him in the care of various members of his family, which began something like this: "Mrs. .... of Chicago says that you told her in secret 'Do not trust Ahmad Sohrab'. So, as Ahmad Sohrab is



your secretary, I am mailing this care of ..... ." Then came listings of my alleged delinquencies, rascalities and villainies which would have stood up very well in the police courts of Chicago itself; while of course, "the snake in the grass" and "the wolf in sheep's clothing" figured prominently in these character studies, forwarded to the Holy Land by the sons and daughters of light in America.

"Well, well, Mirza Ahmad" the Master would say. "you are indeed a clever man. Such a record of crime, piled up under my very eyes, while I was totally unaware of what was going on! Possibly. you have a double!"

He would laugh, yes, but presently he would change his tone. "These are your brothers and sisters — ignorant, deceived and attentive to every whisper; yet believers in the Cause. Come, sharpen your pencil. We are going to drown them in an ocean of love."

Such memories were brought to mind in the stocktaking of my liabilities; but the time for dwelling on the past had come to an end. Yeboshi Maru was nearing port and I had to express my thanks to the crew for the comradeship which had been extended to me. Then dinner at the Captain's side, at which he complimented me at my proficient use of chopsticks, and a hard and fast engagement made with a number of the officers (which included the generous doctor who had lent me his cabin) to meet them some days later on the train to Washington. I promised them and myself that we would have a good time together in the nation's capital and that a fraction of my deep obligation would be repaid,

Next morning I was up early, still pacing the familiar deck but with a new spring to my stride. The Statue of Liberty was rising out of the mist; the dawn was breaking on Manhattan; I had reached New York.

Scarcely glancing at my two small valises, the Inspector of the United States Immigration Service handed me a piece of paper bearing the word "Passed" and I descended the gang plank. I looked for customs officers, but none were in sight; so I left the wharf and took a taxi to a small hotel in the downtown district, from where I called Washington on the telephone asking to speak to Mr. Joseph Hannen.

Mr. Hannen was taken off his feet when he heard my voice, and his questions came over the wire like shots out of a gattling gun. I answered few of them for I was intent on receiving news myself; and after a short conversation, proceeded to ring up a succession of Bahais in New York. Soon, the news of my arrival began to spread and I did not have to make

any more calls. For the rest of the day, the line was kept busy, while the hotel lobby as well as my room filled up with eager excited friends, all of whom were firstly anxious to hear about Abdul Baha and secondly concerned with imparting details regarding the harrowing condition of the Cause in the United States.

I well remember a visit which I paid a day or so later to Mr. Mountford Mills in his apartment on upper Broadway. Mr. Mills, a man of distinction and accomplishment, was one of the very valuable Bahais of those early days. He gave me a graphic account of the situation in the Cause and took no pains to hide his disillusionment and grief. It was clear that he considered the orthodox element to be in full power and on the ascendent, and although I injected into the conversation some of my optimism and enthusiasm, I felt that I had not been able to lessen his discouragement. I left him, asserting that a concerted effort against the forces of dogmatism would be made and that I had no doubts concerning the outcome.

The Feast of Nau-Rouz (Persian New Year — March 21st) was the occasion of my first public address. The Bahai community arrived in full force; the majority settling in their places with the light of hope in their eyes, while a few neophytes of the newly established system watched the proceedings with furtive attention. My talk, which I thereafter repeated in several cities, with few changes, ended along this line:

"These are the days of Armistice; it is an era of adjustment. The nations are forming a Covenant of Reconciliation. The sword is sheathed and the hatchet is buried. Let us pocket our affronts, gather around the camp-fire and smoke the calumet of peace. Unresentful and unavenged, let us hold out the olive branch to friend and stranger alike. As Bahais, we have the chance to set this new example to the distracted inhabitants of the world."

The next morning I began to receive numerous telegrams, some of them from members of the National Executive Board. I will quote a single one from Boston coming from Mr. Alfred Lunt under whose chairmanship the "Report of the Committee of Investigation" had been ratified. Mr. Lunt's message read:

**"Loving welcome, yearning to consult with you. Great good can be done if possible for you visit Boston now."**

My answer in part was as follows:

**"Important meet members Board. Telephoned Hannen inform Remy**

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**return Washington for consultation. If you come to Washington soon, you will be fully repaid."**

My short sojourn in New York was crowded with activity, and on the final day, I made calls and delivered talks from morning till night. My last engagement was at "Stepping Stones" in the Bowery, a unique establishment presided over by the very genial and original Urban Ledoux, better known in the newspaper world as Mr. Zero. Here, hundreds of derelicts of all kinds were fed without charge or at a nominal cost, while their host, who gave his life and all his money to this work, drew no line between himself and the most wretched of his visitors. Instead, he was a comrade to all, a confident and guide; and the men loved him and accepted his word in all things.

This group later on chose to designate itself as the "Old Bucks and Lame Ducks," and through its various doings and antics gained much notoriety; but at the time of my visit, it consisted simply of Mr. Zero's boys who were eager to hear of the great being whom their benefactor called "Master."

It was long past midnight when I returned to my room in the hotel, and I was to be up early to meet the officers of Yeboshi Maru on the train to Washington. I threw myself on the bed and immediately went to sleep.

On waking, I hurriedly gathered up my things and stuffed them into the bag. I drew the Tube from its accustomed resting place and laid it on top. Everything ready, I could leave. Only the Book. I again felt under the pillow, but could not find it. It must be there; it always was! No! Maybe, it had slipped under the covers! I tore them off. Under the mattress! Nothing! My heart began to thump; then I thought: I had been so tired when I went to bed, I had forgotten to take it out of my pocket. I felt my coat; I pulled all my pockets inside out — empty. Then I sat down, while a burning wave spread over me from head to toe. The Book of the Divine Plan was gone!

A few moments passed while the heat in my body slowly turned to cold — painful transformation from life into death; but I still could think. Very dispassionately, I summed up the situation: The Book was

missing and my train to Washington about to leave. Would I stay; would I go? On the one hand there was the apple of my eye, my first responsibility, my duty to the Master; on the other, a casual connection with persons who were nothing to me, and my word given. For the fraction of it minute I weighed the two obligations; then I decided: I would keep my appointment with my Japanese benefactors.

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What came next? I thought of Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, a whole-sale coffee merchant who carried on a successful business with plenty of Bahai work on the side; or, to be more exact, I should mention the Bahai work first with the business as a supplementary issue. Now, Mr. Wilhelm was blessed with a secretary, Nellie Lloyd by name, an assistant whom any executive might covet-both of them would come to the rescue. I could count on that. I crossed the room and spoke to Mr. Wilhelm on the telephone:

A book had been lost, very valuable to me. Would Nellie take a cab find call at all the places I had visited yesterday, and at the "Lost and Found" departments of the taxi, subway and surface car bureaus? Would she insert advertisements in the afternoon newspapers, offering a reward - a thousand dollars if necessary. Would Mr. Wilhelm keep me posted? I was on my way to Washington. I was leaving the matter in his hands.

The supreme sacrifice having been made for my Japanese acquaintance, I should have lived up to it by making of myself a fairly agreeable travelling companion, as I think I had been in the past; but I found that I could not even make an attempt at conversation, much less, show a trace of good humor. The trip was long and depressing and it was a relief to all of us when we parted at the station in Washington. Mr. Hannen and Mr. Gregory who were awaiting me, conducted me to a cab. They must have wondered at the dull-eyed, pallid-faced messenger from the Holy Land whom they had been looking forward to greet, but they were too polite to question me. At the house of Mr. Hannen, the door was opened by his mother. I brushed by, unable to respond to her affable welcome, "is there a telegram for me?" "Why, yes," she answered, "I have one here. It just came." I tore open the envelope, read the message and with a shout threw the paper into the air. Then I grabbed the bewildered lady, carried her bodily into the drawing room and proceeded to shower her with kisses. A strange messenger from the Holy Land! Mr. Hannen and Mr. Gregory looked at each other anxiously, then Mr. Hannen picked up the telegram from the floor and read:

**"Ahmed Sohrab**

**C/o Joseph Hannen  
1252 — 8th Street, N W  
Washington**

**Detective Nellie Lloyd has found book. Sending registered today.**

**(signed) R. C. Wilhelm Co."**

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21 NYPE # 9  
NY NEW YORK MAR 22 1919 1636  
ALINAD SOVIAT  
CARE JOS HANNEN 1252 8TH ST NW WASHN  
DETECTIVE NELLIE LLOYD HAS FOUND BOOK SENDING REGISTERED TODAY  
R C WILHELM CO  
1116A  
Telegram from Roy Wilhelm.

As I afterward learned, the Book had been found at Mr. Zero's "Stepping "Stones" in the Bowery; but for the moment, it did not matter where or how. It certainly did not matter if my friends thought me crazy, or if I actually were. I knew only that the Book was safe; that life could go on, and that the worst day in all my experience was over.

## Chapter XI I

### PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONVENTION

Now that I was actually in America with my treasures in my possession, the campaign for reconciliation had to start without delay. In a letter to Shoghi Effendi dated March 25th, I wrote: "I have called a meeting of a number of prominent believers of New York, Boston and Chicago, as well as a few here in Washington, to meet with me that they may have a clearer vision of the Master's hopes."

The meeting was scheduled for the evening of March 26th at the house of Mrs. Agnes Parsons. Mr. Mills and Mr. Wilhelm of New York accepted the invitation, as did Mr. Randall, Mr. Lunt and Mr. Ober of Boston; likewise, Mrs. Maxwell of Canada, and Mr. Gregory and Mr. Hannen of Washington. There remained Mrs. Corinne True and Dr. Zia Bagdadi of Chicago, but try as I would by telegraph and telephone, I could not alter their decision to be absent. Mr. Charles Mason Remey, chairman of the Bahai Committee of Investigation, who was in South Carolina, also declined. So stood the group which made up the meeting, with possibly a few others whom I do not remember.

To these outstanding Bahais thus hastily gathered together, I presented the Master's plan, outlining the contents of the Tablets to the Northeastern, Southern, Central and Western States; those to Canada, and the four final Tablets addressed in conjunction to the Bahais of the United States and Canada

— the Magna Carta of the New Humanity. Then I brought out the metal tube, drew forth the fourteen Tablets and unrolled them to public view for the first time.

The effect made by the vast panorama of ideas was instantaneous. All were swept off their feet. Silently and with utter humility, they touched the parchments, examined the elegance of script and illumination, the while trying to grasp the portent of the stupendous plan that had so suddenly been revealed to them. Mr. Randall pressed my hands with tears in his eyes, saying: "My God, and all these years we thought that we were serving the Cause! What have we done! How do we dare call ourselves Bahais?" Mr. Lunt picked up the telephone and spoke, right then and there, to Mrs. True in Chicago: She and Dr. Bagdadi had to come to Washington right away to take part in a most important conference, and he would not take no for

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an answer — he would not consider no! But no, it turned out to be, just the same. Then he wrote out a telegram to Mr. Remey, as follows:

"New and epoch-making plans and authentic instructions, Master, for complete organization, Convention, and great work of future. Call for new solidarity in Cause and for immediate cooperation. Your temporary return Washington for conference Ahmad and friends urgently needed. Responsibility to make this the great Convention desired by Master rests upon each one."

I do not know who signed the above telegram, but I have the copy in my possession as it was written by Mr Lunt and corrected on the spot.

The hastily improvised committee meeting was conducted in a spirit of harmony and happiness; the past was forgotten, while these lending personalities of two camps applied themselves to the task at hand — preparations for the Convention. It was thought advisable to hold it in New York.

This issue set the opposition into immediate motion. Mrs. True, Dr. Bagdadi and Mr. Remey were determined to hold the Convention in Chicago where the anti-violation forces were firmly entrenched. This was exactly what Abdul Baha did not wish, and he had told me so explicitly. Although I was not at liberty to divulge his views on particular matters. I had to bring them about through other means.

In order to be in a position where I could meet without restraint the opposing groups, I rented a small apartment in Washington. Here every day, from two to five o'clock, I kept myself free to receive whoever wanted to call on me; and many came. It was quite an uphill work, and much tact was needed to prevent clashes when three or four were in the room together; but I kept in mind the Master's command that the two factions were to be united in love before the Convention, and did my utmost to promote a spirit of tolerance and good humor. I took part in many meetings, besides; did some visiting on my own part, and little by little became conscious of the fact that the atmosphere was beginning to lighten.

Meanwhile, I was deeply engaged in translating the fourteen Tablets into English, together with the explanatory notes and the instructions so contained in my note book. These were arranged in sections, to be used consecutively at the coming Convention on April 26th, and also to be printed in book form for distribution at that time. As these sections were completed one by one, I turned them over to Mr. Hannen to be typed. Thus, we worked together at top speed, many a night until 5 A.M. and completed our task on April 15th when we gave the material to the printer. I did not know any

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[photo of National spiritual Assembly of 1935-1936 omitted]

one in those days who could have assisted me as "Brother Joseph did — so much efficiency, enthusiasm and devotion; nor do I know many now, after twenty-six years.

This task completed, I took a flying trip to Boston where I stopped with Mr. and Mrs. William Randall. Under their benevolent care, I came in contact with small groups and individuals, and together we spoke of the true aims of the Cause. Mr. Randall, a man of much wealth who had given his all to the Cause in money and time, sat at these meetings, his face shining like the sun; and, under his warm sponsorship, we saw the traces of suspicion becoming less apparent, and felt the vapors of misunderstanding drifting away. Truly, the spirit of Reconciliation was on the march!

[photo of William Randall omitted]

The preparations for the Convention were now in full swing and the Bahais were working in complete cooperation with one another. The place set was New York and the time was drawing close. On April 22nd, I took the midnight train from Boston and installed myself in the Hotel McAlpin at Sixth Avenue and 34th Street, where the Eleventh Bahai Convention was to be held.

The Convention had before it two definite objects:

1. To cancel in an unofficial and natural way the Report of the Bahai Committee of Investigation, adopted at the Tenth Convention in Chicago,

and to remove from the hearts of the members all ideas of limitation and exclusion.

2. To inaugurate a universal campaign for the promotion of the teachings of Baha-O-Llah, and to set before the world a new standard of international relationship, based on all-inclusive fraternity, comradeship and self sacrifice.

From that March morning in Bahjee when Abdul Baha had dictated to me the first Tablet in the mighty series of the Divine Plan, through February of the following year, when in Haifa, he closed with the last Tablet, and on to the time when his followers were to gather at the Convention to receive the instructions thus set forth, the one concern of the Master was to awaken the Bahais to their responsibility and prepare them for a field of service no vast, that it cannot be likened to any task imposed by the initiators of the religions of the past. Shall we use other words, fewer and more concise: Abdul Baha gave us the world!

Preparations for the Convention were proceeding apace; every detail had to be worked out in conference. Committees had been appointed, such as publicity, music, decoration, finance, all of which to a large extent were working under the personal supervision of Mrs. Maxwell. This beautiful, delicate and altogether charming personality was able to combine a mystic fervor with unusual practical ability. From the time of my arrival in Washington, when a small group had united in purpose, I had been in constant communication with her by telegraph, telephone and through the mail. She wrote: **"We are all one in heart and spirit, and united in the most glorious service that has ever been offered to any people . . . Sutherland (Mr. Maxwell) has certainly been inspired regarding the frames for the Tablets. They are to be in turquoise and gold . . ."**

In regard to publicity, she continued:

Salita Salano is not a Bahai consciously, but she loves Abdul Baha, which is the kernel of the whole matter; and the proof of this is that she is willing to do things for him. She is willing to undertake all the press work in New York and in any other papers that she can reach during a period of twelve days, if we will pay her one hundred dollars. Any other press agent would charge from three to four hundred. . . . This arrangement will not preclude the work that Horace Holley can do in his own line or any big pull that Zoraya Chamberlain may have with the Associated Press . . . Berthelin Osgood has charge of one album of photographs of the Beloved to be prepared for exhibition at the Convention, and Edith Inglis of another.

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Marjorie Morton is going to cut in two a most gorgeous piece of blue velvet she has to make curtains for the unveiling of the most Holy Tablets. She has also offered a contribution of one hundred dollars, and I wish to give a similar one; for I feel that this is no time to hold back either spiritually, bodily or financially, lest we be carried out dead, like Ananias.

So, everybody was working, everybody was happy, matters were proceeding well in New York; and in regard to the Bahais throughout the country, I personally had mailed two letters to everyone. These have been incorporated in "Star of the West" vol. X, no. 2, pages 21, 22, 23. Following are some extracts from these letters.

**Dear brothers and sisters in the Cause:**

It is indeed a great joy to be back in America and feel the warmth and heat of the love of Abdul Baha in the hearts of the friends . . . . I had brought for you his boundless love and greeting . . . his earnestness and enthusiasm to serve the Cause and promote love and unity amongst the friends. Aside from these ideal gifts, I have carried with me from his presence some most wonderful, world-wide, heavenly instructions; the unfoldment of which will give the vision of the future humanity, perfected and beautified . . .

From every standpoint, the coming Bahai gathering will be unique the history of the movement . . . Let us come to the Convention with nothing but love in our hearts, and with nothing but the light of service on our faces, and with nothing but humility and submission at the Threshold of Baha-O-Llah . . .

The whole world, now weary with war and bloodshed, must receive great spiritual blessing from the Bahai movement, and now is the time for us to show and demonstrate whether we can rise to the heights of this golden opportunity; whether we can serve our fellow men unitedly and with one accord; whether we can forget the past and, grasping the imperial sceptre of light, walk in the pathway of the Kingdom of Abha and raise a great acclamation of rejoicing in the hearts of the people of the earth.

Hoping that we will all meet in that sacred Convention, receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit and go forth into the world with a new power, a new vision, a new strength, and dedicate anew at the Convention, our service to the world of humanity through the divine teachings of the Center of the Covenant.

**Your sincere brother in the Cause  
Ahmad.**

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[photo of Miss May Bowles, prior to her marriage to Wm. Sutherland, omitted]

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The official invitation, which is to be found in "Star of the West." Vol. X no. 2, pages 20-21, reads in part as follows:

**Eleventh Bahai Convention and Congress  
To be held in New York City, April 26th to April 30th.**

**Letter sent forth by Bahai Temple Unity — April 9, 1919.**

**Dear friend in the love of the Most Glorious.**

**The Eleventh Bahai Convention and Congress will be held at the Hotel McAlpin . . . This attendance should not be limited to delegates and alternates, but should include everyone who is attracted to the universality of the divine teachings. The doors are flung open to the lovers of Truth everywhere.... To a degree never before known, these gatherings are being planned and carried forward under the direct guidance of Abdul Baha. In a more wonderful sense than ever before realized, it is the Convention of Abdul Baha. The program for the Convention and Congress will revolve around these great messages which will be brought forward in nine presentations.**

The writers of this letter unquestionably felt the guidance of Abdul Baha: his spirit had re-entered their hearts, and the misunderstanding of past years was melting away. The invitation ends thus:

**In the name of Abdul Baha, we bid you welcome, all ye who are thirsty, all ye who are hungry, all ye who are confused, all ye who are longing, all ye who are hopeless, for He has come. The doors are open, the call is raised, the sacrificing hearts are yearning for servitude. Will ye come?**

**In the love of the Spirit**

**Convention and Congress Committee of the Executive Board**

**by Harlan Foster Ober, Secretary.**

The headquarters of the publicity, and of other committees, installed in the Hotel McAlpin were now beehives of feverish activity. Releases had been sent out to the press, and advance notices began to appear in the metropolitan newspapers. The delegates from North, South, East and West were arriving hourly; photographers clamored for pictures of the leading Bahai personalities. I was a much interviewed and photographed man, and some press pictures of myself in Oriental robes, looking I admit more like an Arab bandit than a dignified emissary of Abdul Baha, caused a measure of anxiety in the ranks of my co-workers; but this concern was swept away by the rolling waves of a spiritual revolution. Enthusiasm was mounting;

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excitement, happiness swelled and rocketed; affection shone in all eyes. Abdul Baha's banquet table of Reconciliation was spread, and on April 26th at eight o'clock in the evening, the doors of the Eleventh Bahai Convention were flung open.

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### Chapter XIII

#### THE CONVENTION OF RECONCILIATION

The Convention was conducted under highly favorable circumstances. Bahais of all colors, figuratively speaking, were there in full force; the friends of the Cause from years back had assembled expectantly, while public interest was demonstrated to such an extent that, as the sessions succeeded each other, people thought themselves fortunate to gain standing-room, as others milled through the corridors unable to get even a glimpse of the beautifully decorated Convention Hall.

In nine successive afternoons and evenings, I delivered an address and presented one by one the great Tablets which were concealed behind folds of silken curtains. These were drawn aside at the proper moment by young girls dressed in white, to the accompaniment of music, while lighting effects designed and executed by Miss Beatrice Irwin added to the imposing effect.

I cannot convey an idea of the impression made on the audience by the Tablets of the Master. The people sat spell-bound, faces glowing and eyes brimming, and after the meeting they walked about in semi-trance, rapturously recalling what had taken place that day and in hushed anticipation of that which the morrow would bring. The spirit of service, awakened by the clarion call of Abdul Baha, pounded in the hearts of all. Women stripped off their jewels as an offering, men emptied their pockets and, as far as could be judged by appearances, the entire meeting dedicated itself then and there to the propagation of the Bahai principles throughout the world. At the close of the sessions, the following cablegram was dispatched by the Teaching Committee to Abul Baha:

**Convention united all hearts, all differences removed. Convention appointed teaching committee, nineteen members, to send teachers. Teachers already selected start immediately. This committee unanimously begs Beloved permit Abroad Sohrab by cable travel and teach United States and Canada. His expenses already provided.**

**(signed) Randall, Ober, Mills.**

A cable from Abdul Baha in response to the above arrived Shortly:

**Appointment of committee conducive to joy. Abroad Sohrab permitted to travel throughout states. Let him inform us from Washington.**

**(signed) Abbas.**

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[photo of Joesph H. Hannen omitted]

The Convention wound up with the distribution of a book of 82 pages entitled "The Unveiling of the Divine Plan," which contained the translation of the fourteen Tablets together with the incomparable talks of the Master as recorded in my note-book. The edition of 2,000 went in no time and a second one of 5,000 was duly ordered. A detailed official report later put out constitutes a record of the proceedings. We have also a panoramic photograph taken on the steps of the Post Office, just across the street from the Hotel McAlpin, which serves as a graphic exhibit.

In conjunction with the Convention, a banquet was held in the hotel a few days earlier which in many ways was as inspiring as the Convention itself. The guests included many personalities of note in New York who gave outstanding talks. Rev. Dr. Percy Stickney Grant, Rector of the Church of the Ascension on lower Fifth Avenue, will always have a niche of his own in Bahai annals, because of the fact that he was the first minister in this country to invite Abdul Baha to give an address from his pulpit. Dr. Grant spoke in a beautiful and poetic manner, saying that introspection and communion in a garden marked the beginnings of the Bahai Cause. It became the religion of a prison. Now it must go forth into the practical affairs of men and rear the structure of the divine civilization.

Mr. Topakyan, Persian Consul General in New York, spoke of the deep feeling which every true man and woman experiences in honoring Abdul Baha, who has devoted his life to the enlightenment of his fellow men. Dr. William Norman Guthrie, of St. Marks in-the-Bowery, pointed out that even as Christianity had brought a new power, a new passion, a new perspective which gave life to the ideal thoughts of the past, So the Bahai movement is bringing a new power to the great social program, and unity and fusion to the many splendid individual thoughts of past and present. Khalil Gibran, Syrian poet and artist, spoke of the appearance of the Prophet, the seer, who comes from time to time in history to string again the heavenly instrument, and Mr. Alfred Martin of the Ethical Culture Society of New York summed up the value of the Cause in the following succinct words:

I am drawn to this movement because it is not a sect, but a fellowship. While the vast Christian church is but a sect, the vaster Buddhist church is but a sect, the little Bahai movement is no sect at all, but a fellowship; because it lives not for a sectarian end, but rather for the purpose of serving as a leaven through which the world shall be helped to live up to the level of its own highest and noblest ideals. May I express my very fervent hope that you of the Bahai movement will remain true to your present distrust of organization.

ای حواریون بسا، اله روحی لکم افلاک نفس بیدارک موعود در کتاب  
نفس برت بخود تغییر گشته یعنی خود آسمانی و مقصود از جنود آسمانی  
نفسی هستند که بجای از عالم برتریت بسج و شقیب نفوس مکتوبه  
و ماکو آسمانی گشته اند این نفوس آسمانی شمس حقیقت اند  
که آفتاب را روشن بنمایند در هر یکش صورتی در دست و نغمه حیات  
بر آفتاب میدهند از صفات برتریت و عالم طبیعت نجات یافته  
تخلق با خلاق الهی گردند و بجنب نعمات رحمانی شوند مانند حواریون  
مسیح که اولاد مسیح شدند این نفوس نیز ملول از حضرت بسا، آنگردند  
یعنی محبت بسا اله جهان ستوی بر اعضا و اجزاء دارکانت آنها گردد  
بگر عالم برتریت را حکم نماید .

این نفوس جنود الهی هستند و نایب شوق و ذوق اگر نفس از  
این نفوس توجیه بجتنی نماید و ذوا بملکوت الهی کند جمیع قوای معنویه و  
تأثیرات روانه معنویه و ظواهر او گردد و در سلطنته با او آلاء

A page from the book of "The Divine Plan" in Persian script as copied by  
Mirza Ahmad Sohrab, beginning : "O ye apostles of Baha-O-Llah".

"To the believers of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful of the Bahai  
Assemblies in the United States of America and Canada!  
Upon them be Baha'o'llah El Abha!

*He is God!*

"O ye apostles of Baha'o'llah - May my life be a ransom to you!

"The blessed Person of the Promised One is interpreted in the Holy Book as the Lord of Hosts, i. e., the heavenly armies: By heavenly armies those souls are intended who are entirely freed from the human world, transformed into celestial spirits and have become divine angels. Such souls are the rays of the Sun of Reality who will illumine all the continents. Each one is holding in his hand a trumpet, blowing the Breath of Life over all the regions. They are delivered from human qualities and the defects of the world of nature, are characterized with the characteristics of God, and are attracted with the Fragrances of the Merciful. Like unto the apostles of Christ, who were filled with Him, these souls also have become filled with His Holiness Baha'o'llah, i. e., the love or Baha'o'llah has so mastered every organ, part and limb of their bodies, as to leave no effect by the promptings of the human world.

"These souls are the Armies of God and the conquerors of the East and the West. Should one of them turn his race toward Rome direction and summon the people to the Kingdom of God, all the ideal forces and lordly confirmations will rush to his support and reinforcement. He will behold all the doors open and all the strong fortifications and impregnable castles razed to the ground. Singly and alone he will attack the armies of the 'world, defeat the right and left wings of the hosts of all the countries, break through the lines of the legions of all the nations and carry his attack to the very center or the powers of the earth. This is the meaning of the Hosts of God.

"Any soul from among the believers of Baha'o'llah who attains to this station, will become known as the Apostle of Baha'o'llah. Therefore strive ye with heart and soul — so that ye may reach this lofty and exalted position, be established on the throne of everlasting glory, and crown your heads with the shining Diadem of the Kingdom, whose brilliant jewels may irradiate upon centuries and cycles.

"O ye kind friends! Uplift your magnanimity and soar high toward the apex of heaven — so that your blessed hearts may become illumined more and more, day by day, through the Rays of the Sun of Reality, i. e., His Holiness Baha'o'llah; at every moment the spirits may obtain a new life, and the darkness of the world of nature may be entirely dispelled — thus ye may become incarnate light and personified spirit, become entirely unaware of the sordid matters of this world and in touch with the affairs of the Divine World.

The same posts from the book of "The Divine Plan" in English as distributed at the close of the Eleventh Bahai Convention held in New York April 1919.

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At the banquet, besides the distinguished guests, the outstanding personalities in the Cause took part also; but in the Convention itself, all the addresses were given by Bahais, such as Mr. Mountford Mills, Mr. Louis I. Gregory, Mr. Charles Mason Remey, Rev. Albert R. Vail, Mr. Harlan Foster Ober, Mr. William H. Randall, Mr. Joseph H. Hannan, Mr. Hooper Harris, Mr. Howard Ives, Mrs. May Maxwell and many others.

In this manner was conducted the Eleventh Bahai Convention — the Convention of the Divine Plan. It was carried on in accordance with the wishes of Abdul Baha and remains to this day the high-water-mark of public Bahai activity. Actually, we well may call it the Convention of Reconciliation for so it was. Through the spirit of the Master, through the power of his Tablets, through his support by cablegrams and letters and through the fervent cooperation of those who loved him — those who understood the Cause as he taught it, the impossible had been accomplished and the Bahais were get again on the path of unity and service.

Such was the Convention in fact and implication for the future, but the road had been hard; many a time the outcome had wavered in the balance and from first to last, I was walking on thin ice.

My main difficulty was in myself presenting the Tablets at the Convention even as I had been commanded by the Master. The moving spirits in the "Orthodox Party" thought that the Tablets should be read by different persons in succession, for they openly doubted the authority which I claimed and even the authenticity of my credentials. My translation of the Tablets was likewise questioned, the addresses which I intended to give were objected to, and when the press came out with references to me as the "Ambassador of Abdul Baha," the cup of their exasperation overflowed.

In addition to the personal element which actuated so much suspicion in my regard, there was also the certainty of what I intended to do. To put it in one word, it was "Reconciliation," no more, no less; and this was the last thing desired by those who had created and firmly established the Bahai Committee of Investigation.

On the morning of the second day of the Convention, I appeared at request before the National Executive Board and was put through the third degree, the points in question being the following: my authority; my tablet of permission from Abdul Baha; my rumored repudiation of the Report of the Bahai Committee of Investigation; my unyielding determination to unveil the Tablets one by one, according to the Master's instructions; the elimination which I had engineered of certain individuals from important

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committees; the "undignified and flamboyant" publicity; the use of the Tablets of Abdul Baha to "lionize myself"; my "socialistic and communistic tendencies," and my repeated allusions to a coming era of Reconciliation. A few members of the Executive Board, who had been caught up in the spirit of tolerance and liberality, which I had tried to impart and which was now coming in frequent messages from the Holy Land, watched me in helpless anxiety as the inquisitorial flames rose high and menacing.

Fortunately for me, my hide contained an element of asbestos, and my tongue a coating of honey, I answered back question after question, not defiantly, but with assurance and truth. My opponents were discomfited, but not beaten. I watched them as they shifted in their chairs, exchanging glances, and in a flash read what was going on at the back of their minds. "Come friends" I assured them, "Don't feel awkward about it. Play your trump card."

What is that? ", the inquiry came in a cold voice.

"Are you not thinking of an alleged confidence which Abdul Baha made to a lady in Chicago. The words being: 'Don't trust Ahmed Sohrab'?"

"Do you claim to be a mind reader?" I was asked.

Not at all" I answered. "It is as plain as two and two. For eight years I have heard about this confidence. News of it has travelled from coast to coast, and across the Atlantic and Mediterranean. It is an underground pass-word. Every Bahai knows it, even I, for I have translated it to the Master in numberless letters written to him. So, when I looked at you a minute ago, I couldn't help seeing that old slogan written on your faces."

They remained silent, and I continued:

"Now, I propose that this message has been circulated for the last time. The cable office is open. Write out the following, addressed to Abdul Baha. 'Mrs. True of Chicago claims that you warned her in secret: Do not trust Ahmed Sohrab. Is this so?' And if the answer comes back: 'it is so.' I will retire from the Convention and leave all its affairs in your hands."

This demand took immediate effect. The committee as it whole, blanched, wavered and broke up. Needless to say, the cablegram was not sent. Undoubtedly, I had scored a victory, but equally certain is it that I had not come to the end of my troubles.

At one of the afternoon sessions of the Convention, in the presence of the delegates and the Bahai community, I was put on the carpet in a more public manner, the main objection being that it was I who was reading the

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Tablets to the audience night after night. Why not some one else? At any rate, I did not have to add historical data on how, and when, and where the Tablets had been revealed; and then who knew whether or not I had incorporated some of my own words in this Holy Writ and were all the time playing a dastardly trick on the whole Convention!

Chiefly, my newspaper title: "Ambassador of Abdul Baha" rankled. Was it I who had put forward such a claim, and, if so, on what authority? I was asked to make a public recantation in the very newspapers which had printed these articles.

Here Mr. Louis Gregory spoke in my defense, something along thin line: He did not see anything wrong in the title. Kings and presidents sent ambassadors to foreign parts, and was not Abdul Baha a spiritual king? Whether Abroad Sohrab is called an ambassador, or a representative, or a messenger, it is all the same. He has come to us from our Master, from whom we have been waiting to receive news, lo, these many years of war. Mr. Gregory felt that he had witnessed in me signs of humility and devotion to the Cause. I was very grateful to him at that moment,

But the demands continued, unceremoniously; then my character went up for dissection, while I sat quietly in my seat in the audience, wondering if it was really I who was the cause of no much tumult. Of course Mr. Joseph Hannen spoke for me, he always did; and my other friends felt for me, they always did; but the opposition was so overwhelming, it had been gathering force ever since I had set foot in America, and the stakes were very high. If the Convention continued in the spirit in which it was going, all the work of the Bahai Committee of Investigation, and its plans for the future, would be set at naught. It amounted to that and to nothing less.

At last the Chairman of that session turned to me and asked if I had anything to say in my defense, and I slowly arose from my seat and began speaking from the floor. According to my notes taken down later (and my memory was in the pink of condition at that time), my argument ran as follows:

"As an opening statement, I must confess that I am no lawyer. The most friendless criminal would not accept my services; but I can tell a story. You see, when at a very early age I was driven from my home in Esphahan, because I was a Bahai — and Bahais are not liked in Persia (it seems that they are not liked anywhere). I was forced to earn my living in some way, as I wandered from hill-village to hill-village, and so I told

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stories to the people and they rewarded me with food and presents. Therefore, as my talent lies in this direction, and forgetting that this gathering which I thought was a feast of love has assumed the aspect of a court of justice, I will just tell you a story.

Not long ago (yet it seems like hundreds of years), there came to this country a Wise Man from the East. Maybe you saw his picture in the newspapers; maybe you remember his name — a strange one to American ears. In English, it means the Servant of God; in Persian, it is Abdul Baha.

Now this visitor to our shore taught an unusual and unwanted doctrine, namely: Universal Tolerance, Universal Charity, Universal Love, and he passed through the length and breadth of the land summoning all men and all women to the Kingdom of God. Thousands heard his message; hundreds acclaimed and followed him, and a few believed in him.

When the Servant of God had completed his mission in this country, he returned home, taking with him a boy whom he had befriended in the East at an earlier time and found again here; and in the Holy Land, he educated this boy and trained him for work that lay ahead.

When the appointed time had arrived, the boy presented himself in New York, not as an ambassador, for his Master was no king; his Master was a Servant, sending a servant to serve his servants. This was the Master's understanding of the matter. He never dreamed of an Order of Nobility within his domain; and if such there is, then he surely is out of place in it, or around it, or adjacent to it.

The boy did not come empty handed. He carried with him a gift of such value that anyone in his right mind would recognize the donor. He also carried his credentials in the Master's own handwriting and his instructions which he is trying to carry out. He wants very much to tell you about this gift and to show it to you, jewel by jewel, so that its refulgent splendor may not blind the beholders so that they may become accustomed, little by little, to the sunlit plains of the Master's vision

Now this country boy was unaccustomed to the arts and exhibits of city life, and in fairness to you I must say that even if you have not honored him with your trust and confidence, as he had so much hoped, you have at least prepared for him a rare entertainment. This particular session of the Eleventh Bahai Convention contained all the elements of comedy, tragedy melodrama and farce, to say nothing of burlesque and opera bouffe. Of course, the performance was uneven in spots, because it probably was unrehearsed; likewise, there was no proper lighting and no orchestral music

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to relieve the tension created by the outbursts of the actors and actresses. Maybe the audience got a little on edge; but all were wide awake throughout, doubtless on account of the fervor, even passion, of those who played the stellar roles. So I must thank you, on behalf of this boy, for the performance and assure you that he has appreciated the theme of the drama and the intention of the producers.

You are free to repudiate the credentials given by the Master, his cables, his letters, every message written by him; but there is one message that you cannot repudiate, because it is not a written message but an oral one. It is a command, if you wish to look upon it as such; it also is an invitation. Here it is:

'The hour of dogmatic separation is past. In this Cause, do not shun nor expel a person on either human or divine authority. You must heal the wounds that have caused this division. Compose your quarrels. Raise the call of union. Lift up all barricades and pave the path of Reconciliation.'

That is the message of Abdul Baha; and now I leave the various questions that have arisen in your hands, to decide as you see fit."

It was then unanimously voted to wait and see the unfolding of the Divine Plan according to program.

In a letter to Shoghi Effendi, dated April 30, 1919, Mr. Joseph Hannen wrote of these events for the information of the Master. I quote from it for corroboration:

The business sessions of the Convention were attended by a large number of Delegates, probably between 250 and 300, more than had attended business sessions at any time . . . It is with deep regret that I must chronicle here a spirit of opposition to Ahmad Sohrab (at the second session) which was evidenced by several of the friends, seemingly a group led by Dr. Zia Bagdadi and Mrs. Corinne True of Chicago. There were a very few who followed this leadership, or the suggestion which it brought of suspicion or the lack of full cooperation. Your faithful messenger, Mirza Ahmad was besieged with inquiries as to his "credentials," and to tell the contents of the Tablets yet to be unveiled. There developed a spirit of antagonism, which in the minds of the most of us was wholly unwarranted and unexplainable, save upon the basis of a desire for personal prestige or leadership. In the face of it all, Mirza Ahmad remained firm and impregnable, standing by his instructions from the Beloved, and urging the friends to defer action on the teaching plans and program until the Tablets should have been revealed and unveiled, and the plan made clear in its entirety.

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There were brave and strong defenders of this stand, and finally the day was won; and the convention voted unanimously to suspend further action until Thursday morning, after the last of the Tablets and the final instructions had been given. The opposition went so far as to attack the validity of Mirza Ahmad's mission, although he has exhibited on all occasions, when asked for it, the Tablet of Permission from the Beloved, and all of us feel that his spirit is redolent of the Power of the Centre of the Covenant, and the Tablets themselves need no further authorization or plenipotentiary power for the one who has been privileged to bring them to us.

All are filled with the spirit of the work to be done and I am sure the power of that inspiration will conquer every smaller consideration, and unity be reached. Surely it will, unless some cannot set aside the veils of self. I go into all these details at my own initiative, and that you may know how faithful your messenger to America has been and is being, and what opposition he is meeting in the most unexpected quarters.

Another incident that also had its amusing side! One morning, as we were nearing the close of the Convention, an old Bahai associate took me to the lounge of the hotel, where we sat down.

"Ahmad," she began, "I have come on a painful mission."

"Go ahead," I answered. "There can be no embarrassment between you and me."

"All right, then here it is. Strange things are happening at this Convention, and it seems you are to blame for all of them: You have filled the hall with unfamiliar faces; you have placed strangers in the very front seats; you have put the Nakezeen on the committees and have ignored the firm Bahais; you have driven into a corner the faithful followers of Abdul Baha."

"All this," I sighed.

"All this" she repeated, "and much more. You have aroused the forces of Socialism and Bolshevism. Actually, you have started a revolution."

Dear me, dear me!" I shook my head. "I wonder if I realized what I was doing!"

"You have been doing something very criminal, and I think very deliberate. Furthermore, you have been doing something very sacrilegious."

"Now you surprise me!" I exclaimed. "Please tell me how I have been sacrilegious."

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

صاحب میرزا احمد سہووب نازدندہ ہم باہر کا پروندہ فرشتہ و پیر دریا  
 بخت پردازینہ درخشاں لاجم ہر نونہی و مجاہد انسان تقدیر کون  
 عبد الباقی

abdul Baha abbas

"Tablet of Permission" in Abdul Baha's handwriting, with his signature in English, commissioning the author to sail for America and carry out his assignment.

"Mr. Hooper Harris wept over it all night. This morning his eyes were blood-shot. You should have seen him — the picture of desolation."

"But what did I do?" I was getting impatient. "Please come to the point."

"We are not fools nor dumbbells. We have seen Abdul Baha. We know how he walked, how he talked. We remember his grand gestures."

"I do too."

The lady arose from her seat. "Yes, that's just the trouble. Now I am sent by those who love the Master, I am commissioned to tell you: When you appear on the platform, you walk like Abdul Baha; you talk like Abdul Baha; you make gestures like Abdul Baha. We are determined that this mimicry shall cease."

Her face was as white as chalk and her lips quivered. As I looked at her, I recognized the fact that she and countless others, who probably had seen the Master for only a few fleeting moments, had retained his picture in their hearts where it was engraved as if on granite. That was their shrine, and it seemed that I had violated those shrines. I held my peace for a few moments, then I answered.

"I am going to return a message to those who sent you and, believe me, it carries the same sincerity as did theirs. The message is this: When I left Haifa, the Master whom we all so adore said to me: 'Mirza Ahmad! When you arrive in America, I want you to walk as I walk, speak as I speak, move as I move, think as I think, act as I act and live as I live.'

Now, I never expected to fulfill the Master's injunction in this particular instance, although at times I have tried to obey him; but if you think that I have succeeded, then I can only be very happy as well as very much surprised. Please tell this to your friends.

The public sessions in the great hall of the hotel McAlpin succeeded one another while the soul of Abdul Baha brooded over the Convention. Sometimes it seemed that he really was there, so much were the people caught up by something outside of themselves, something that burned away the trite preoccupations that assail all of us, and set them on the broad level of receptivity and awareness. During those days, a little group had formed itself behind the scenes. It was largely composed of leading Bahai officials, many of whom had in the past yielded their consciences, more or less willingly, to the inquisitorial demands of the Bahai Committee of Investigation;

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it also included a few persons whose tolerant and liberal spirit had remained unimpaired in spite of all the tests that had crowded in on that harassed community. Now, this group supported me so magnificently that it was mostly owing to these friends that the Convention proceeded with out break toward an outcome that left nothing to be desired. At the time, my sense of appreciation knew no bounds and, to this day, I recall the memory of each and every one with a very full heart. Some of them were: Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hannen, Mr. and Mrs. William H. Randall, Mrs. May Maxwell, Miss Juliet Thompson, Mr. Mountford Mills. Mrs. Agnes Parsons, Mr. Louis G. Gregory, Mr. Roy C. Wilhelm, Mr. and Mrs. Harlan Ober, Mr. William Hoar, Mrs. Isabel Fraser Chamberlain, Mr. and Mrs. Edward J. Kinney and Mr. Alfred Lunt.

When the last word was spoken from the platform on the last night of the Convention and the crowd had melted. Away, I sought my room with uncertain steps. Since my arrival in the United States, just forty-two days before I had been burning candle at both ends. What effort had gone into that Convention, what emotion! No thought of ease had been possible, no opportunity for a moment's composure. During the final days, I had kept going by sheer force of will, though I often had to sit down wherever happened to be, and turn my mind to Abdul Baha. If only he could see me through till the last Tablet had been read. I did not care what happened next! The child of Abdul Baha was being given to the world — the child conceived in that mighty brain of his, nurtured in that heart which knew no frontiers, which in itself had no limits — the Divine Plan was being set up for the guidance of nations? Then, when my task was accomplished and my mission fulfilled to the best of my ability, I just went into non-existence. During four days I was in delirium, so the doctor and the hotel maid told me later; after which I rested with mind as blank as a white sheet of paper. I did not even know that I was resting.

So the Eleventh Bahai Convention went into history, and plans were initiated for embarking on a great program of teaching. Speakers, including myself, presently set out in all directions; the spirit of exertion and sacrifice took possession of all, while the Bahai Committee of Investigation was so dead, so disintegrated, that not even a bone of it remained to warrant a funeral ceremony. It passed into oblivion, leaving behind simply a record and a ghost; one which has haunted all religions since man first learned to bow his head before God in community with his fellows. That ghost will always be amongst us with its sickle of death, cutting down the fresh flowers

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of spirit; but the Words of Love remain, spoken by those who knew; and our deeds of love remain and increase in volume; and the Divine Plan, for the drawing together of all races and nations, remains as charter for this era, given to mankind by the Servant of God.

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## Prayers in the Divine Plan

Abdul Baha's primal wish for his teachers was illumination of the soul, and he was certain that the state of illumination could not be attained without prayer. For this, and other reasons as well, he adorned the Tablets of the Divine Plan with a few moving prayers, some to be repeated by the teachers themselves, and others by the friends who accompany them in spirit on the lonely trail of the pioneer. He was at one with Tennyson in that: "More things are accomplished by prayer than this world dreams of." He hoped that the teachers of the Oneness of the World of Humanity would make of their very lives a prayer, and act of faith, a voice of truth. In his eyes, prayer and toil were to be mingled in fair proportion, for it is under such conditions that God responds to the one and rewards the other. Thus prayer without action, action without prayer, were equally fruitless, while the two conjoined made a sturdy vehicle — a golden chariot for the soul to mount heavenward.

To Abdul Baha, prayer was another word for the love of God and the love of men, and these were to be mingled in fair proportion. Approach the Threshold of the Almighty for the sake of His servants, and the gates will swing wide open. Prayer is a mighty instrument of which only a few notes have been sounded. The keys await our touch, along the infinite scale of man's aspirations and of God's destiny.

Sometimes the fog settles over a vessel's deck, leaving the topmast clear. Then a sailor goes aloft and views the scene, while the helmsman steers the ship according to the sailor's instructions. Even so does the soul rise in prayer, above the mists of disharmony and confusion, to discover the hidden course that lies ahead. Hence, the Divine Wisdom has given these prayers for the illumination of the soul, so that the teachers may steer the Ship of the Cause through the ocean of adventure into the harbor of security.

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## For Teachers

"O Lord, O Lord! Praise and thanksgiving be unto Thee for Thou hast guided me to the Highway of the Kingdom, suffered me to walk in this straight and far-stretching path, illumined my eyes by beholding the lights, made me listen to the Melodies and attracted my heart with Thy love among the righteous ones.

"O Lord! Confirm me with the Holy Spirit, so that I may call in Thy Name amid the nations and give the Glad-Tidings of the manifestation of Thy Kingdom amongst mankind.

"O Lord! I am weak; strengthen me with Thy power and potency. My tongue falters; suffer me to utter Thy commemoration and praise. I am lonely; endear me through my entrance in Thy Kingdom. I am remote; cause me to approach the Threshold of Thy Mercy.

"O Lord! Make of me a brilliant lamp, a shining star and a blessed tree adorned with fruits, its branches overshadowing all these regions! Verily Thou art the Mighty, the Powerful, the Unconstrained!

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"O God, O God! This is a broken-winged bird and his flight is very slow. Assist him, so that he may fly toward the apex of prosperity and salvation; wing his way with utmost joy and happiness throughout illimitable space; raise his melody in all regions in Thy Supreme Name; entrance the ears with this Call, and brighten the eyes with the beholding of the Signs of Guidance!

"O Lord! I am single, alone and lowly; for me there is no support save Thee and no sustainer beside Thee. Confirm me in Thy Service; assist me with the Cohorts of Thine angels; make me victorious in the promotion of Thy Word, and suffer me to speak out Thy wisdom amongst Thy creatures. Verily, Thou art the Custodian of the poor and the Defender of the little ones, and verily Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty, the Unconstrained!

O God, O God! Thou seest me enamored and attracted toward Thy Kingdom of El Abha; enkindled with the fire of Thy love amongst mankind; a herald of Thy realm in these vast and spacious countries; severed from aught else save Thee, relying on Thee; abandoning rest and comfort, remote from my native land; a wanderer in these regions; a stranger fallen on the ground before Thine exalted Threshold, supplicating Thee in the middle of the night and in the heart of the evening, invoking and entreating Thee at dawn and at twilight, that Thou mayest assist me in the service of Thy Cause, in the promotion of Thy teachings and the exultation of Thy Word in the easts of the earth, and the wests thereof.

Oh Lord! Strengthen and confirm me in my servitude, and leave me not to myself in these foreign lands.

Oh Lord! Associate with me in my lonelines, and accompany me in my journeyings.

Verily, Thou art the Confirmer of whomsoever Thou willest, in that which Thou desirest, and verily Thou art the Powerful, the Omnipotent!

### **On Sending Out Teachers**

"Praise be to Thee, O God! Verily these are Thy servants, who are attracted by the fragrances of Thy mercy, enkindled by the ignited Fire in the Tree of Thy Singleness and brightened by beholding the effulgences of the Light in the Sinai of Thy Oneness!

"O Lord! Loosen their tongues in Thy commemoration amongst Thy people; suffer them to speak Thy praise through Thy favor and grace; assist them with the cohorts of Thine angels; strengthen their loins in Thy service, and make them the signs of Thy guidance amongst Thy creatures!

"Verily Thou art the Powerful, the Exalted, the Pardoner and the Merciful.

"O God, O God! Thou beholdest this weak one, begging the strength of Thy Kingdom; this poor one, supplicating the treasures of Thy Heaven; this thirsty one, longing for Thy Fountain of the Water of Eternal Life; this sick one, invoking perfect recovery through Thy boundless mercy, which though hast designated for Thy chosen servants in Thy Supreme Kingdom!

"O Lord! I have no other helper save Thee; no other comforter beside Thee, and no other sustainer except thee!. Assist me with Thine angels in the diffusion of Thy Holy Fragrances and the dissemination of Thy Teachings amongst Thine elected people!

"O Lord! Suffer me to sever myself from aught save Thee, holding fast to the Hem of Thy Garment. Make me sincere in Thy Religion, firm in Thy love and living in accordance with that which Thou hast commanded me in Thy Book.

"Verily, Thou art the Powerful, the Mighty and the Omnipotent!

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"O Thou Incomparable God! O Thou Lord of the Kingdom! These souls are Thy heavenly army. Assist them with the cohorts of the Supreme Concourse and make them victorious, so that each one may become like unto a regiment and conquer these countries through the love of God and the illumination of the Divine Teachings.

"O God! Be Thou their supporter and their helper, and in the wilderness, the mountain and the valley, the forests, the prairies and the seas, be Thou their Confident — so that they may cry out through the power of the Kingdom and the Breaths of the Holy Spirit!

"Verily Thou art the Mighty and the Omnipotent, and Thou art the Wise, the Healing and the Seeing.