

THE WILL AND TESTAMENT

of

ABDUL BAHA

An Analysis

by

MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Heart Phantasies

The New Humanity

Abdul Baha in Egypt

Renaissance

The Song of the Caravan

Living Pictures (Co-author, Julie Chanler)

I Heard Him Say

Silver Sun (Co-author, Julie Chanler)

The Bible of Mankind

Broken Silence

Abdul Baha's Grandson

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AUTHOR'S STATEMENT

The document herein discussed constitutes matter of grave importance to the Bahai world for the reason that through it the current of thought has been altered and set in a direction which no one, and here I venture to include Abdul Baha himself, could have anticipated or thought possible. The Bahai authorities of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada have set it up as the test of fidelity and accentuated it to such an extent that the very teachings which Abdul Baha devoted his life to uphold and disseminate have fallen into an obscure background. Furthermore, it never is commented on within the movement as it considered the ultimate word.

In view of this condition and prompted by severe duty, I have taken it upon myself to analyze the Will. Abdul Baha left it behind him as a guide to his followers, not as a weapon of spiritual tyranny by means of which minds were to be placed upon the rack and hearts trampled under-foot. Now is the time for those who know and love the Bahai Cause to study these pages and in the light of the Master's life and teachings to strive to ascertain his intention.

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CHAPTER I

THE DOCUMENT

Translation Reaches America

The full translation in English of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha appears in the form of a mimeographed document *issued in accordance with the conditions laid down by Shoghi Effendi*. This was distributed among the Bahais by the National Spiritual Assembly in February 1925.

The instructions by Shoghi Effendi, published on the first page, are as follows:—

I feel that the conditions are now favorable for the circulation of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha only in manuscript form and among recognized believers in America. Every such believer should be trusted with a single copy with the express understanding that no duplicate copies or extracts of it be made or published anywhere.

—From letter written by Shoghi Effendi to the American National Spiritual Assembly on November 27, 1924.

The copy of the Will consists of seventeen pages, 8½ by 11 inches, single spaced. I understand that the translation was made by Shoghi Effendi with the assistance of some American or English Bahais who happened to be at that time in Haifa, Palestine. Abdul Baha had passed out of this life on November 28, 1921 and, according to a note on the second page of the mimeographed copies, this translation was *received at 104 Wall Street, New York, N. Y., Saturday, February 25, 1922—11:20 A. M.* Thus, the time between the departure of the Master and the exact hour at which the translation of his Will reached America was a matter of about three months.

At a much later time a photostat copy of the original Will together with the envelope containing it became available. The latter bears the following statement in the Master's handwriting:—

These are the tablets of the Wills of Abdul Baha.

(Signed) Abdul Baha Abbas.

Then the inscription:—

This is a trust for the distinguished branch Shoghi Effendi.

Upon him be Baha-O-Llah El Abba.

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The above two brief sentences, appearing on the envelope, are not given in the translation of the Will. Instead, on the second page we have the caption:—

The beloved of God and the handmaids of the Merciful throughout the United States of America and Canada.

This was the manner in which Abdul Baha addressed his western followers whenever he wrote them a collective tablet; consequently, in reading this document in the form presented, one receives the erroneous impression that the Master was writing his Will especially for the American Bahais instead of for the whole Bahai community throughout the world.

For the first two or three years after Abdul Baha's departure from this life, the general contents of the Will were known to the leaders and officials of the Cause only. Certain extracts were given out, but, I well remember the time when some of the most firm Bahais could not either acquire a copy or induce the authorities to read it to them in full. Even after Shoghi Effendi's instructions regarding the circulation of the Will had been received, the utmost discretion continued to be exercised. Only *recognized* believers were to be trusted with copies, and this with the expressed understanding *that no duplicate copies or extracts of it be made or published anywhere*. At the time of distribution, I received my copy, together with the rest.

In this manner, the contents of the Will were given out little by little, with much circumspection; and even now, twenty-three years after the departure of the Master from our midst, his last instructions are never openly and frankly discussed. This does not mean that full weight is not given them. On the contrary, the Will is ranked as more important than the actual Teachings; and, this is where a danger lies. A document of such great significance should not remain an enigma. Its implications must be weighed by each and every one. A fundamental precept laid down by Baha-O-Llah, in the *Hidden Words*, reads:—

To know things by thine own knowledge and not by that of any other in the world.

As a result of constant pressure, the National Spiritual Assembly distributed copies of the Will in the original at the Convention of 1942. In *Bahá'i News*, this concession is referred to as follows:—

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It will be of profound interest to the friends to note that local Assemblies and also individual believers may now obtain a photostatic copy of the Will and Testament of Baha'u'llah, and of the Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha, reproduced from certified copies sent us by the Guardian in the form of photographs of hand written originals.

—*Baha'i News* July, 1942, p. 11.

It is evident that this allowance will serve but very little toward the enlightenment of the Bahais, for practically none of them read Persian script; and the need remains to study the Will in all its details. It was left by Abdul Baha for his followers, and unquestionably it is the concern of all of us.

A Personal Testimony

I had the privilege and honor, during eight years, of acting as secretary and interpreter to Abdul Baha, and on this ground my testimony will carry a certain measure of authority. I have seen countless examples of his handwriting and have watched him as he wrote letter after letter. Through those years of close association I became fully familiar with the turns, strokes and trims of the art of calligraphy as used by him, which in Persian is called *Shekasteh*. I have read and copied volumes of his works and am thoroughly conversant with his choice of words, his mode of expression and his manner of phraseology. I have listened to his talks, translated his Tablets by the hundreds and interpreted his lectures before all manner of audiences, both in the East and in the West. Besides these experiences, I have in my possession numerous examples of his handwriting, more than a hundred of which are in the form of Tablets addressed to me, some of the latter wholly in the Master's handwriting; the majority simply signed by him. Now, I have compared the photostat copies of the Will with the handwriting of Abdul Baha which is in my possession, and I find that both are written by the same person.

Therefore, I can assert, without any hesitation and with no mental reservations, that the Will and Testament was written, signed and sealed by Abdul Baha, every word being in his own handwriting.

This reference to my years of personal service to the Master is made with the intention of nullifying if possible, whatever rumors are yet afloat regarding the authenticity of the Will. Claims that this document is a forgery have been set forth, both orally and in writing, but such an allega-

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tion is incorrect. I have proven this to myself and am ready to prove it to any one who has the least doubt concerning the genuineness of the Will. Opposing the Bahai Administration as I do, and placing no faith in the ecclesiastical system which has been built up on the basis of the Will, I feel that this testimony of mine is not devoid of a certain historical value.

Various Forms of Wills

Before entering upon an analysis of the particular Will of Abdul Baha, it is well to enumerate the fundamental properties of wills in general.

A Will or Testament is the legal documentary instrument by means of which a person regulates the *rights* of others over his *property or family after his death*. Technically, *Will* is a general term while *Testament* applies to disposition of personalty; this distinction, however, is seldom observed. The custom which ultimately developed into the will was recognized in many systems. It is clearly connected with ancestor worship, and the continuance of the family. In very early times, a will of personalty was valid if declared by word of mouth by the testator before witnesses, or though unwitnessed, if written in the testator's own handwriting.

The Wills Act of 1837, passed by the British Parliament, declared that every will of property, whether such property was realty or personalty or whether it was legal or equitable, must be in writing signed by the testator in the presence of two witnesses. Usually, the witnesses signed in the presence of each other, but this is not strictly necessary and is only done for greater safety.

In France, wills are of three kinds: (1) A will must be wholly written, dated and signed by the testator; (2) made as a public instrument, i.e., received by two notaries before two witnesses, or by one notary before four witnesses; this form of will must be dictated by the testator and written by the notary; must be read to the testator in the presence of the witnesses and must be signed by the testator and witnesses; (3) the will is to be signed by the testator, then closed and sealed and delivered by him to a notary before six witnesses; the notary then draws up an account of the proceedings on the instrument which is signed by the testator, notary and witnesses.

In the United States, statutes governing the making of wills were modelled closely on English laws. A will, without witnesses but written in the handwriting of the testator is recognized by statute in about one third of the States of the United States. In these cases, the testator is generally allowed full liberty in the disposition of his property.

Now, let us apply these Western legal standards to the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha.

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On the affirmative side, legally speaking, the only thing that can be said of this document is that it was written and signed by the testator's own hand and sealed with his own seal.

On the negative side:

(a) It does not mention or provide for the division of *any property*—realty or personalty—among family or friends.

(b) It was not signed by any witnesses.

(c) It was not made as a *public* instrument. As far as my knowledge goes, no one knew anything about it until after Abdul Baha's death.

(d) It is undated. The student has to conjecture the date of its writing by the mention of certain events referred to in the Will and by other internal evidences.

(e) It was not probated in a court of law, for it contains nothing to warrant the attention of legal authorities.

Approximate Dates of the Three Parts

The Will is a very long document, divided into three unequal parts. In the translated form, Part One covers a little more than ten pages; Part Two a little more than four pages, and Part Three consists of two pages and a half.

Internal evidences in the Will prove that Part One was written about 1905-07. Then, on account of political disturbances, (the usual incidents in the old Turkish Empire under Sultan Abdul Hamid) it was hidden *under ground*. Abdul Baha himself, before starting the writing of Part Two, mentions this incident as follows:—

This written paper hath for a long time been preserved under ground, damp having affected it. When brought forth to the light, it was observed that certain parts of it were injured by the damp, and the Holy Land being sorely agitated it was left untouched.

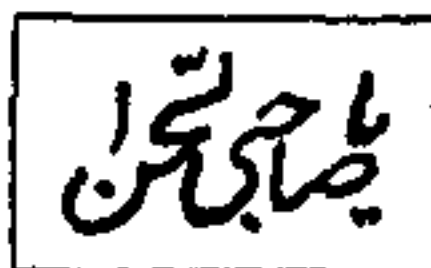
Part Two must have been written after the revolution of the Young Turks and before Abdul Baha's visit to this country in 1912. Part Three may have been written about 1916-1917, or, to be on the safe side, any time between 1912 and 1920. (I would welcome any data from whatever source which would be helpful in dating Part Three more accurately).


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Signature and Seal

In signing his Tablets, Abdul Baha's habit was to affix his initials in this manner: **عع** Persian lettering for A. A.: standing for Abdul Baha Abbas; after that, he pressed his seal on the upper right corner of the letter, or, on extremely rare occasions, just below the signature. This latter method was followed in Part One and Part Two of the Will. The seal bore an Arabic insignia which means: "O my two fellow prisoners." This quotation from the Koran (surah of Joseph, Chapter 12: verse 39) refers to the two fellow prisoners of Joseph who asked him to interpret their two dreams. Abdul Baha may have had in mind two other prisoners — the Bab, in Persia and his father, Baha-O-Llah, in Palestine.

Here is the lettering on the seal, greatly enlarged:—



This custom of signing letters and documents continued without change until 1912 when, during the course of his travels in the United States, Abdul Baha's seal was lost. Following this event, the Master changed his mode of signature. Thereafter, his name appears in full, like this: 

Again, the Tablets addressed to the Western Bahais carried, in addition to the Persian signature, Abdul Baha's full name, written in English, by himself, like this *abdul Baha abbas* Obviously, no Tablet written after 1912 bears the impression of the seal.

Thus, we note that the photostat copies of Part One and Part Two of the original Will are signed in the old way: that is with Abdul Baha's initials, together with the seal, appearing below; while Part Three, which

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is the shortest, consisting of a single page, is signed in the new way, adopted after 1912: the name in full with no impression of seal.

Now, in reference to the envelope which contained the original Wills: the photostat copy shows four legible and clear signatures written in the new way; one appearing on the front of the envelope at the upper left corner, while the other three appear at the back, written across the flap at point of sealing.

Consequently, apart from certain historical events in the Will itself, we can conclude without any doubt that Part One and Part Two were written before 1912, while Part Three was written after Abdul Baha's return to Palestine from his Western trip, that is between 1913-1921. At this latter time, all three Parts were placed together in the same envelope.

Chief Points in the Will

Like the Will of Baha-O-Llah, a very much shorter document, only a little over three pages (see *Bahai Scriptures*, pages 259-262), the Will of Abdul Baha does not provide for the transference of any material objects, such as land, money, property, mementos, etc. From this point of view, it has no legal validity in any Civil, State or Federal Court. The Bahais have accepted it, not because it adheres to the usual procedures established by law, (except regarding the requirement of having been written and signed by the testator's own hand) but because it is binding to them in an ethical and religious sense.

The chief points in the Will are the following:—

1. A detailed recital of internal events in the Bahai Cause, with references and allusions, which only a person well grounded in the history of the movement can understand and appreciate. In it, are described the martyrdoms of the Bab and his followers; the sufferings of Baha-O-Llah, his banishment from Persia and the insubordination of his brother, Mirza Yahya. Likewise, a detailed account is given of the differences that arose between Abdul Baha and his brother Mirza Mohammad Ali, after the departure from this life of Baha-O-Llah in 1892.

2. Appointment of Shoghi Effendi as Guardian of the Cause, and provisions applying to the institution of guardianship. All the references to this subject are contained in Part One and Part Three.

3. The appointment and nomination by the Guardian of a certain unspecified number of the *Hands of the Cause*.

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4. Rules for the establishment of a Universal House of Justice and for National Houses of Justice.

5. Prayers, both long and short. These Prayers reveal Abdul Baha in his rapt moments before the throne of the Eternal God.

6. Sublime exhortations dealing with the universal and constructive principles of Baha-O-Llah. These glorious teachings are the very foundations of the Bahai Cause—the new civilization. They are the pattern of a New World Order.

CHAPTER II

INTERPRETATION

This Mysterious Universe

God is a mystery; the universe is a mystery; creation is a mystery. Man, himself a mystery, has from the beginning of time been trying to interpret the world in which he was born as well as the secrets of his own nature. Thus, a straining toward understanding has ever been manifested by human beings, and Prophets, seers, poets, philosophers, artists, scientists, economists and sociologists, in making their effort to decipher the enigma, have arrived at pronouncing the alphabet of the book of life. So has the process of interpretation been going on; and so will it continue uninter- ruptedly until the hieroglyphic language of the cosmos is rendered plain and the common man is enabled to grasp the significance of each letter and the rationale of his existence..

Baha-O-Llah throws light on this subject when he says:—

The Sun of Truth is the Word of God, upon which depends the training of the people of thought. It is the Spirit of Reality and the Water of Life. All things owe their existence to It. Its manifestation is ever according to the capacity and coloring of the mirror through which it may reflect.

For example: Its Light, when cast on the mirrors of the wise, gives expression of wisdom; when reflected from the minds of the artists it produces manifestations of new and beautiful arts; when it shines through the minds of students it reveals knowledge and unfolds mysteries. All things of the world arise through man and are manifest in him, through whom they find life and development; and man is dependent for his spiritual existence upon the Sun of the Word of God.

—*Hidden Words*, Published by Bahai Publishing Society,
Chicago, Ill., 1905

All things of the world arise through man and are manifest in him. It appears then that man is the very life of the universe; he is the interpreter of creation, and without him everything remains at a standstill.

Baha-O-Llah, as the Cosmic Man, is the Revelator of our age. His teachings lay the foundation of a new interpretation of God and of the world. Referring to this living and vital interpretation, Abdul Baha says:—

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Verily, I declare that these teachings constitute the illumination of humanity; that this is the spirit of modernism; that this is honor everlasting; that these are heavenly teachings and the cause of life never-ending among men.

—*Star of the West*, Vol. VI, No. 2, April 9, 1915, page 20

The Great Interpreters

What then is religion, according to Bahai philosophy? It is the ethical interpretation of the spirit of the Cosmos through men of insight and vision—in other words, through the Prophets. From time immemorial, the Prophets have given us their findings concerning *the Spirit of the Cosmos*; or, according to their mode of expression, concerning *the Will of God*, which *Spirit* and which *Will* must become incarnated in the lives of men. As a result of these varied yet cohesive interpretations, we have the moral conception of a universe; not one consisting of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms, but a universe symphonic with order and a-tingle with harmony and intelligence. Hence, there can be no religion without men of insight and vision and, likewise, there exists no moral order without the interpretations given by these beings of the Spirit of the Cosmos.

Moses, coming to the children of Israel, was such an Interpreter of the Spirit of Cosmos. He had learned the teachings of an older dispensation; had discarded those that were outlasting their usefulness and retained some that yet held practical value. To these latter he added new principles; then, he founded the Jewish religion. The Prophets which followed after him in a long line were likewise interpreters, expounders and renewers of ancient laws; each one translating and adapting those laws to the spirit and requirements of his own age.

Christ was an interpreter of the law of Moses and of the succeeding Prophets. He expanded the law; freed it from legalistic verbiage and accretions; imparted to it fresh significance and conferred upon the world a new understanding of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man. He said:—

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.

—*St. Matthew*, Chapter 5, Verse 17

In expounding the teachings of their master, the authors of the Gospels and the Apostles, especially St. Paul, in turn became the interpreters of the

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words of Christ, and transmitted to the generations yet unborn their conception of his worth and of his purpose.

Six hundred years later in the Arabian Peninsula, Mohammad, acting as interpreter of the Will of Allah, passed on the Divine Command to his people, at the same time enriching it with some of the fundamental principles of the Old and the New Testaments.

In 1844, the Bab took it upon himself to function as the interpreter of Koranic lore and traditions. He invested these with new meanings; rejected the accumulated dogmas that had formed about them, and presented to his fellow believers a purified Islamic faith.

The Book of Certainty, written by Baha-O-Llah, gives interpretation of the symbols in the Sacred Scriptures of the Jews, the Christians and the Mohammadans. Baha-O-Llah was accepted by his followers as the most eloquent exponent of the spirit of the age as it manifested itself in the social, political, economic and religious departments of civilization; and his principles were received by them as the re-interpretation and the re-vitalization of the ideals of all the Prophets.

Thus, for the first time in history, we have in a personal appearance the *Universal Interpreter* of the Spirit of the Cosmos or the Will of God. Like unto a pure mirror, Baha-O-Llah reflects the rays of the Sun of Reality, bestowing, in terms applicable to the maturity of the age, a fuller and more comprehensive understanding of the mystery of God, the mystery of the universe and the mystery of man.

Abdul Baha—the Interpreter of the Twentieth Century

By means of his Tablets, addressed to widely-scattered Bahais in all parts of the world, and of his addresses delivered before sundry audiences in Europe and America, Abdul Baha stands as the illumined interpreter of the teachings of Baha-O-Llah. These teachings were codified, systematized and elucidated by him, and left as a spiritual legacy to the Bahais and to the world.

Now, Abdul Baha was not merely the interpreter of his Father's teachings, but was in his own right a profound and original thinker. His touch was on the pulse of the forces which are perturbing and devastating this era; consequently, he was able to give utterance to some of the most profound truths that have ever fallen from the lips of a religious leader. Abdul Baha's knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures and the literature of the world bordered on the limitless. He was, undoubtedly, one of the foremost spiritual geniuses of all time.

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In 1890, Professor Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University, London, visited Acca, Palestine. He reports his impression of Abdul Baha as follows:—

Soon after this, a sudden stir without announced the arrival of fresh visitors and, a moment after, my companion of the previous evening entered the room accompanied by two other persons, one of whom proved to be the Babi agent from Beyrout, while the other, as I guessed from the first by the extraordinary deference shown to him by all present was none other than Beha's eldest son Abbas Effendi. (Abdul Baha)

Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more. A tall, strongly-built man, holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, long black locks reaching almost to the shoulder, broad powerful forehead, indicating a strong intellect combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk's, and strongly-marked but pleasing features—such was my first impression of Abbas Effendi, "the master" as he *par excellence* is called by the Bahis.

Subsequent conversation with him served only to heighten the respect with which his appearance had from the first inspired me. One more eloquent of speech, more ready of argument, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians and the Muhammadans could, I should think, scarcely be found even amongst the eloquent, ready and subtle race to which he belongs. These qualities, combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial, made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which he enjoyed even beyond the circle of his father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power, no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, Introduction, page XXXVI

A Process of Spiritual Evolution

To a true interpreter of the Moral Order, religion is a tree with roots, leaves and branches. It is an expanding thing, part of earth and sky; not dogmas and creeds, rules and musty books. Religion, like all other institutions, grows old. Its principles must constantly be defined and re-defined; while, at the same time, the new definitions, if they are to last, must continue to be essentially in agreement with the previous ones.

Thus, religion, being a process of spiritual evolution, should at all costs preserve its flexibility and elasticity. If ever it becomes rigid and fixed, a re-defining of it will be necessary in order to change its form to fit changing conditions; otherwise it will die in its hardened cast. During

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great emergencies, only essentials are important, for it has been proven again and again that with the imposing rise of a new Interpreter, men and nations throw overboard their excess baggage and hold on to the things they value most.

The Followers as Interpreters

Now, the interpretive function has never been reserved for Prophets, and founders of religions alone; because, as sacred literature shows, the rank and file of the followers has, throughout the ages, been engaged in evaluating the words as well as the spirit of their Masters. Both Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha set in motion an army of interpreters, teachers and spreaders of the Word of God. These persons, both in the East and in the West, have, through their association, their writings and speeches, expounded, defined and interpreted the principles of the Bahai Cause according to their own knowledge and ability. In this field they were neither restricted nor confined; but were encouraged to go on in full freedom, drawing upon the resources of their minds and spirits in order to expose the broad concepts of the broadest of all causes.

In complete directness and simplicity, Baha-O-Llah speaks:—

Verily, God hath made it incumbent upon every soul to deliver His Cause (spread the Message) according to his ability . . . Whosoever quickens one soul in this Cause is like unto one quickening all the servants. . . . Thus will ye assist your Lord, and naught else save this shall ever be mentioned in this day before God, your Lord and the Lord of your forefathers.

—*Star of the West*, Vol. IV, No. 15, Dec. 12, 1913, p. 257

Again, he reminds us of the principle which he has come to establish far and wide:—

The day is your day, and a thousand Tablets are your evidence. Arise to assist the Cause and be engaged in subduing the minds and souls of the people of the world through the host of utterance. You must show forth that which will be conducive to the welfare and tranquility of the helpless ones of the world. Gird up the loins of effort; perchance the slaves may be emancipated from bondage and find freedom.

—Baha-O-Llah, *Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 22

Every Bahai is a spiritual merchant, and his wares are the Word of God. As expounder and interpreter, he must display that which he possesses

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before the eyes of mankind, speaking in the language of love, and offering the Truth with humility and courtesy.

Now, a good merchant or a good teacher must understand his business; he must be thoroughly conversant with the values that he is dispensing. Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha have instructed us to study things for ourselves and seek out God's intention. The guidance of the Holy Spirit will be available to us if we are sincere and hold ourselves detached from worldly considerations. Abdul Baha said:—

Make ready thy soul that thou mayest be like the light which shineth forth from the loftiest height on the coast, by means of which guidance may be given to the timid ships amid the darkness of fog and the heaving of the sea.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha, Vol. II, page 278*

Again he proclaimed:—

Verily, the gift of guidance, during this great century and this age of lights, is greater than reigning over the earth and all that is in it.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha, Vol. III, page 638*

Once more:—

Night and day confine thy time to the education of the world of humanity. Arise to guide the creatures and spend time in promulgating the teachings of His Holiness Baha-O-Llah, so that lives may find glad tidings, hearts joy, the souls eternal life and the minds extraordinary advancement.

—*Tablets of Abdul Baha, Vol. II, page 417*

A Popular Missionary Movement

Inasmuch as there are no ordained ministers or priests in the Bahai movement, the responsibility of promulgating the Word lies in the hands of each individual Bahai. This condition makes of the Bahai Cause a popular missionary movement for the promotion of peace and goodwill amongst men. Abdul Baha reserved a large portion of his life for the training and education of teachers; after which he dispatched his pupils to various parts of the earth. While these men and women were engaged in the field of service, he wrote to them continuously, assuring them that the angels of the Supreme Concourse were supporting and inspiring them under

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all conditions and circumstances. Such a regiment of consecrated souls arose in Persia; many also in India, England, France, Germany, the United States, Canada and other countries. Their souls kindled with love for the Cause, their tongues eloquent with proofs and arguments regarding the New Revelation, they were examples of fervor and self-sacrifice, of concentration and perseverance.

Scholars and historians such as Mirza Abul Fazl; teachers, poets, writers and speakers such as Mirza Mahmoud Zargani, Haji Mirza Heydar Ali, Sayyed Assadollah Gomi, Dr. Zia M. Bagdadi, M. and Mme. Hypolyte M. Dreyfus, Lady Blomfield, Thornton Chase, Hooper Harris, Howard MacNutt, William H. Hoar, Lua M. Getsinger, Arthur P. Dodge, Sarah J. Farmer, Helen S. Goodall, Shahnaz Waite, May Maxwell, Joseph H. Hannen, Paul K. Dealy, Isabella Brittingham, Mary Hanford Ford, Dr. Susan I. Moody, Ellen V. Beecher, Grace Ober, Martha L. Root, Keith Ransom-Kehler, Alfred E. Lunt, Agnes S. Parsons, Dr. Frederick W. D'Evelyn, Harry H. Randall, Dr. J. E. Esselmont and a variety of brilliant and dedicated personalities can well be considered as interpreters of the Cause. They travelled, wrote and delivered speeches, raising high the cry of *Ya Baha El Abha* as they invited men and women of all races and classes to partake of the incomparable teachings of Baha-O-Llah.

Abdul Baha likewise trained a large number of Persian students who occupied their time with the translation of the Holy Writings. These devoted scholars rendered invaluable service by making available to the Western world the Bahai Teachings which had been revealed in the Persian and Arabic tongues. Their translations were not flawless; in some cases, better ones have and will continue to come into use; but, they transmitted the message of Baha-O-Llah to the best of their ability and may also be considered as interpreters of the Cause.

Bahai literature has been enriched by the contributions of a third type of interpreters. These were a polyglot assemblage of pilgrims who, coming from all directions, wended their way toward Acca. The personal accounts written by these visitors, both published and unpublished, will in the future be considered as most precious documents, for they reveal the impressions made by the Great Teacher on a variety of minds.

These men and women from Orient and Occident, from North and South, were in a spiritual sense, the children of Abdul Baha; and, in time, they became the heralds of the New Dawn, the expounders of the word of God and the interpreters of the teachings of Baha-O-Llah.

THE WILL AND TESTAMENT OF ABDUL BAHA

The Final Paragraph in the Will

On the last page of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, these words appear:—*Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words. Also:—To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular convictions.*

These warnings are very definite, drastic even; and many a mind has quailed before them. Now, it happens that the Bahai leaders have accentuated these words to full worth and have applied them right down the line. It may even be said that they have, little by little, substituted them for Baha-O-Llah's cardinal principle:—*Independent Investigation of Truth.* This is a tragedy of extreme proportions, for under such conditions frankness disappears and courage ebbs away; while weaklings take the places prepared by Abdul Baha for the lion-hearted teachers that he dreamed of.

As a matter of fact, the explanation to the words in question is very simple. Both of these quotations appear in the last paragraph of the Will—a paragraph dealing solely with the appointment of Abdul Baha's successor. Here is the text:—

For he is, after Abdu'l Baha, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnan, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him, hath turned away from God and he that denieth him, hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Baha-'u'llah) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular convictions. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Centre of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you!

Now, it must be apparent to even the most casual reader that this entire paragraph applies to a single subject and to nothing else: the Bahais are to gather around Shoghi Effendi and give him their uncompromising loyalty. None are to ask the whys and wherefores; none are to interpret this injunction which needs no interpretation. It is as clear as day.

But, why did the Master impose his wishes on the people in such severe terms, giving them no leeway whatsoever? To answer this question, we must go back and view the conditions under which the Will was made.

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It will be remembered that in the Will of Baha-O-Llah, Abdul Baha was designated as successor; and, after him, Baha-O-Llah's second son, Mohammad Ali. Now, after years of mental anguish, Abdul Baha had come to the conclusion that his brother was no fit leader for the Bahai Cause; so, he made the stupendous decision of setting aside his Father's commands as to the succession. A like step taken even in private life is no easy matter; but, when it applies to the last Will and the best judgment of a Prophet, then it becomes a matter of such import as to stagger the human mind. Did not the Will of Baha-O-Llah contain these words in reference to Mohammad Ali:—*We have surely chosen the Greater after the Greatest as a Command from the All Knowing, the Omniscient!*

Abdul Baha faced this issue, taking the responsibility into his own hands; then, having chosen his grandson, Shoghi Effendi, to substitute Mohammad Ali, he made it incumbent upon all the Bahais to accept his choice wholly and without reservations. The Master realized that after his departure from this life, the believers would find themselves in a state of confusion close to panic; he also feared that the faction which held to Mohammad Ali would use the written word of Baha-O-Llah to full advantage. Therefore, he tried to make matters as easy as possible for his followers by relieving them of all responsibility during the difficult period of re-adjustment. Abdul Baha always was the father, the protector and, above all the interpreter. Baha-O-Llah, in referring to his own departure from this life, had said of him in his Will:—

If the Dove soareth from the Tree of Praise to the extreme concealment, turn for what ye do not understand in the Book to the Branch who is extended from this True Root.

The action of Abdul Baha, wherein he brought into play his own conscience in the face of the written text of Baha-O-Llah, relieves the fabric of religion of the weighty dogma of infallibility. The Master in an urgent crisis lived up to his own teaching, repeatedly pronounced throughout the years, namely: that the station of the Prophet is twofold—divine and human. His words, delivered in the former capacity, are imperishable truths; while those spoken on the human plane, in regard to material conditions, may be subject to change according to the requirements of advancing times. Here, the sentence loved by all free minds, and feared by the majority, echoes back across the centuries:—*The word killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

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In choosing his eldest grandson as supreme leader of the Bahai Cause, Abdul Baha was relying on his best judgment and his hopes rather than on the test of experience; for, it must be remembered that when Part One of the Will was written, Shoghi Effendi was a child; again, when Part Three was written, he was still but a youth or a very young man. The loving concern of Abdul Baha in his regard is expressed in moving terms on the last page of the Will:—

It is incumbent upon you to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from the fruit given forth by the Two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees, that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, and that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

We thus can see that Abdul Baha did everything in his power to provide for the unity of the Cause. Having laid upon his grandson as great a responsibility as any ever placed upon the shoulders of man, he built for the young Guardian's security a fortress composed of his own burning words; which words, each and every one, are seered upon the consciousness of the Bahais. He conferred upon Shoghi Effendi his sanction, his trust, and his blessing; and he expected all those who had loved and followed him to do likewise.

CHAPTER III

THE STORY OF MIRZA MOHAMMAD ALI

Without and Within

The Bahai Cause, product of the last century in Iran, was founded on three great personalities. The Bab, the Forerunner (1819-1850). Opposition to the Bab and his teachings came from *without*; it was manifested by the Mohammedan clergy and the government. Baha-O-Llah, the Revelator (1817-1892). Baha-O-Llah met not only opposition from *without*, on the part of church and state, but also opposition from *within* the ranks of his own family. Abdul Baha, the Exemplar (1844-1921). Abdul Baha, with the movement operating on a world-wide scale, had to face opposition similar to that which Baha-O-Llah had encountered; that is, from *without* and from *within*.

Of the seventeen pages which comprise the Will of Abdul Baha in English form, more than ten are given over to a detailed account of the complications that had formed *within* the Cause. Abdul Baha, doubtless, had some weighty reasons for thus including in this document a record which, on the face of it, belongs to the domain of history; therefore, it is my intention to outline those events and explain the reasons, as I understand them, which caused the Master to include this aspect of the movement in his last Will and Testament.

Inasmuch as the Will, in Three Parts, was written over an extended period of time, the internal history of the Cause appears in all three sections. This is an important point to remember. Abdul Baha, himself, had been such an integral part of these events that each incident had seared itself on the tablet of his memory, linked like a chain and applying in one way or another to the various subjects with which he was preoccupied. This accounts for a certain repetition, as each subject treated is seen from different angles on the same background.

A Religious Drama

The dominant impression made on the reader of the Will is that, to all intents and purposes, he is witnessing a religious drama in which saints and sinners, unprompted by a director, are acting their parts according to their own mentalities and emotions. He realizes, however, that the

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characters are not fictional but actual human beings, displaying all the strength and weaknesses of their individualities. The story, as told by Abdul Baha, glows and flares with stark realism; it is embellished with poetry and imagery which lend it beauty and color, while the law of cause and effect working in the lives of the *dramatis personae*, brings it to a logical climax.

Only a gifted artist such as Abdul Baha could, so deftly, have delineated the character parts of the villains and made evident their motives, as these passed across the stage toward the wings, where they disappeared into the waiting darkness. Only Abdul Baha could have pressed the chords of tragedy with such force that their vibrations continue to pound, and tear at the hearts of the audience long after the final curtain has descended.

The Central Figure

As we follow the story, we realize that Abdul Baha was not only the narrator, but was himself the central figure around which the action developed. His sufferings, so vividly described, have left abiding wounds on his consciousness; and now he is sharing his experiences with his followers for the purpose of appraising them of the fact that the perils which he had encountered are not wholly of the past, but still exist. His agonized concern is lest the Cause, which had cost so high a price in blood and tears, should suffer irreparable injury when he, the protector, were no longer there to carry the whole burden on his own mighty shoulders.

The Bahai Caravan

Abdul Baha addresses himself to the story as it occurred before his time. He tells of the Bab; describes his travels, his afflictions, his martyrdom; recalling that: *ten thousand souls have shed streams of their blood in this path.* Then, dipping his pen into the vial of memory, he evokes the sufferings and trials of his Father, Baha-O-Llah: *his blessed feet were so grievously scourged as to bleed and be sore wounded. . . . His neck was also put into captive chains and his feet made fast in stocks.*

Inasmuch as Abdul Baha, as a young boy, had followed his Father into exile, he gives us a never-to-be-forgotten account of the journey from Teheran to Bagdad; then to Constantinople; from the latter city, on to Adrianople, where he was eventually transferred to the Most Great Prison. This prison was no other than Acca, Palestine, the dreaded fortress to which the most dangerous political prisoners of the Ottoman Empire were consigned. Abdul Baha refers to the Acca of his time as *the prison of highway*

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robbers, of brigands and of man-slayers. It was the end of the road—the Siberia of the Near East.

With our mind's eye, we can see, if we will, the band of Bahai refugees who accompanied Baha-O-Llah on his long journey from Iran to Palestine. Wending its way over mountains and deserts; ill-fed, ill-clad; exposed to the harsh winter and the exhausting summer; always moving on; these men, women and children, who of their own choice had sacrificed home and safety to follow their Master, no one knew where, who were willing to go through hell, just to be near him, were forced to witness Him, whom they loved so much, beset with dangers, not only on all sides but at his very right hand.

Here, with a few rapid strokes Abdul Baha draws the picture of Mirza Yahya who, as an evil genius, attended his brother Baha-O-Llah through all these vicissitudes. He tells us that Baha-O-Llah nurtured Mirza Yahya in his own bosom, ever since his early years, showered at every moment his tender care upon him, exalted his name to them of this world and the next, yet despite all, this man denied him, dealt falsely with him and believed him not. While in Adrianople, he stirred up sedition among the Bahais, raising a storm of mischief. In his jealousy and discomfiture, he reached the last point of iniquity in an attempt on the very life of the Holy One. Finally, he plotted with the officials of the Ottoman government and took part in the final banishment of Baha-O-Llah to Acca.

The Unutterable Repetition

Now, just as Baha-O-Llah met his supreme test in the person of his younger brother, Mirza Yahya, so did Abdul Baha encounter a formidable enemy in his own younger brother, Mirza Mohammad Ali. Here is the incredible drama, the unutterable tragedy, the epic—omnious, elemental, vast! It is a picture before which imagination quails and understanding becomes impotent. It is a repetition that tears the nerves apart and strikes at the foundations of reason.

The story of brothers born to the same father, the one standing on the right side of justice, the other on the left, is not new in the history of mankind. In Genesis, Chapter 4, we read that *Cain rose up against Abel, his brother, and slew him*; and in the same Book, Chapter 37, we find that the brothers of Joseph *hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him*. Likewise, in the New Testament, St. Matthew, Chapter 12, verses 46-50 and St. Mark, Chapter 3, verses 31-35 we study and try to analyze the scene when the mother and the brothers of Jesus *stood without, desiring to*

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speak with him . . . but he answered and said . . . Who is my mother and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother. Here, we come to realize that family associations count for nothing in the realm of understanding, and that in the dimensions of the spirit, flesh and blood are not included.

Thus, Baha-O-Llah tasted of the cup of hemlock offered by Mirza Yahya, and Abdul Baha drank deeply from that same cup at the hands of Mirza Mohammad Ali.

Charges Against Mirza Mohammad Ali

Shortly after Baha-O-Llah's departure from this life, grave disturbance became manifest in his household. Thenceforth, Abdul Baha, whose mind was fixed on the problems of the whole world, sustained crucifixion at home and the spectre of anxiety stalked his footsteps. Only when we come to know something of Abdul Baha's inner tragedy, and realize its stupendous implications, do we understand his reasons for having devoted so much space in his Will and Testament to the account thereof.

It would take too long to tell the story in full, but I here present a summary of the main charges laid at the door of Mirza Mohammad Ali as specified in the Will of Abdul Baha:—

1. Mirza Mohammad Ali, as the Centre of Seditious and Prime Mover of Mischief, broke the Covenant of Baha-O-Llah;
2. falsified the Writings of Baha-O-Llah and interpolated in them his own ideas;
3. inflicted a grievous loss upon the Cause;
4. scattered the followers of Baha-O-Llah and caused their incarceration and imprisonment;
5. delivered into the hands of the Ottoman government the Holy Tablets of Baha-O-Llah—perchance they might lead to the extinction of Abdul Baha;
6. composed slanderous leaflets, letters and documents and distributed them far and wide, to alarm officials, to sow seeds of doubts and cause shedding of blood;
7. caused the dispersion of the people of God and joined hands with strangers and enemies to invoke trouble and bring about difficulties;
8. with bitter rancor, endeavored to hurt Abdul Baha by broadcasting false and foolish reports;

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9. assailed Abdul Baha with bitter enmity and spread calumnies about him;

10. with an axe, he struck at the root of the Tree of the Cause;

11. dealt a heavy blow at the Temple of the Cause and threatened to ruin the Cause of God;

12. cheered and encouraged the enemies of the Cause and circulated untrue accusations against the Bahais;

13. by his actions, revived the blighted hopes of Mirza Yahya's followers;

14. by spreading before them the scrolls of his doubts, he caused the adversaries of Baha-O-Llah to become audacious and arrogant;

15. beguiled the souls of men and breathed his evil whisperings into the hearts of the devoted followers of Baha-O-Llah;

16. through intrigues and machinations, purposed and decreed the death of Abdul Baha;

17. kindled the fire of mischief, arrogance and pride, and accused the believers of God with perversion of truth;

18. in concert with other enemies, he prepared a report teeming with calumny and slander, asserting that Abdul Baha was an adversary of the government. As a result of this memorandum which was submitted to the Sublime Port, a committee of Investigation, sent from Constantinople and arriving in Acca (about 1906-07), proceeded immediately to investigate the affairs and aims of Abdul Baha. Abdul Baha's enemies and ill-wishers surrounded the members of the Committee and enlarged upon the text of the report.

The chief points of this report are as follows:--

(a) Abdul Baha was accused of having raised aloft a flag of revolution, and summoned the populace around it in revolt against the government.

(b) Abdul Baha had claimed to be a king and hoped to be crowned by the people and thus establish a new sovereignty.

(c) Abdul Baha had erected on Mount Carmel a mighty fortress and had rallied around himself all the inhabitants in the land, in preparation for a general uprising.

(d) Finally, Abdul Baha had caused disruption in the religion of Islam and had entered into a secret compact with the Christian governments to overthrow the power of the Ottoman Empire.

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The actions of Mirza Mohammad Ali and the charges made by him against Abdul Baha, as above enumerated, are repeated and amplified in the Three Parts of the Will. Abdul Baha substantiates most of them, by quoting recorded proofs and published accounts of the time.

The Centre of Dissension

To many of the old Persian Bahais, who had been acquainted with the details of the situation, having watched it since 1892, the above charges are not news. They have read them in hundreds of Tablets written by Abdul Baha to his followers, both in the East and in the West. Likewise, those who were engaged in the Master's service have often heard him speak on these matters, recounting stories of the treacheries and intrigues of his enemies, inspired and headed by Mirza Mohammad Ali.

In the case of Baha-O-Llah, the transgression of Mirza Yahya and the evil results ensuing from it had affected his whole life, for he had been forced to devote a great deal of his precious time to speaking and writing on the subject in order to dispel the clouds of misunderstanding that hung low over the horizon of the Cause. In the case of Abdul Baha, this condition was duplicated, only on a larger scale and under conditions that were yet more portentous. Mirza Yahya was the apple of discord in the garden of Baha, but Mirza Mohammad Ali became the center of commotion and dissension in the Bahai Movement as it reached out, under the guidance of Abdul Baha to the far corners of the earth.

Therefore, on the basis of the above charges, Abdul Baha felt logically justified in passing sentence that:—

The Centre of Sediton, the Prime Mover of Mischief, Mirza Muhammad Ali, hath passed out from under the shadow of the Cause.

Again, he wrote:—

It is thus evident that should this man succeed in bringing disruption into the Cause of God, he will utterly destroy and exterminate it.

And again:—

Had not the promised aid of the Ancient Beauty been graciously vouchsafed at every moment to this one, unworthy though he be, he surely would have destroyed, nay exterminated the Cause of God and utterly subverted the Divine Edifice.

Finally, a warning and a prophecy:—

And now ye are witnessing how the wrath of God hath from all sides afflicted him and how day by day he is speeding towards destruc-

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tion. Ere long will ye behold him and his associates, outwardly and inwardly, condemned to utter ruin.

Chants of Lamentation and Victory

So stricken was Abdul Baha by the spirit of rebellion and opposition, as manifested by Mirza Mohammad Ali, that he uncovers before us his bleeding heart, saying that:—*the eyes of the loved ones of Baha-O-Llah were deluged with tears of blood.* Then, in the mystical symbology of the East, he transports us to the world beyond and reveals the concern and grief that have penetrated to the highest places:—

Because of this iniquity the dwellers in the Pavillon of the Abha Kingdom have bewailed, the Celestial Concourse is lamenting, the Immortal Maids of Heaven in the All-Highest Paradise have raised their plaintive cries and the angelic company sighed and uttered their moanings.

Although these sledge-hammer thrusts and shocks had left indelible scars on the body of the movement, yet the innate spirituality and divine energy inherent in the Cause of Baha-O-Llah healed its wounds and restored its shattered health, so that, Phoenix-like, it was able to rise, from the ashes of despair, into the starlit heaven of joy and gladness.

It must have been the realization of this recuperative power, and his observation of the spreading influence of the Cause that made Abdul Baha chant this victory verse:—

But, praise be to the Lord, the triumphant assistance of the Abha Kingdom was received, the hosts of the realm above hastened to bestow victory. The Cause of God was promoted far and wide, the call of the True One was noised abroad, ears in all regions were inclined to the Word of God, His standard was unfurled, the ensigns of Holiness gloriously waved aloft and the verses celebrating His Divine Unity were chanted.

The Will of Baha-O-Llah

When Baha-O-Llah departed from this life in 1892, he left behind a precious legacy—his Will and Testament. The contents of this document, consisting of only three pages in the translation, applies, not to property, but to ethical and spiritual values. This is pointed out in the opening paragraph:—

Although the Supreme Horizon is devoid of the vanities of the world, yet in the Treasury of Trust and Resignation, We have placed a priceless and unequalled inheritance for the heirs. We have not placed (therein) a treasure, neither have we added to the pain.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 259

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At the same time, Baha-O-Llah leaves two clear and definite orders for the future direction of his Cause.

First:—He instructs the members of his family, his relatives and the *Afnan* to turn after his ascension to his eldest son, Abdul Baha, and to accept him as his successor and as the center of a Covenant which he, Baha-O-Llah, had entered into with him.

Second:—He further states that the station of his younger son, namely, Mirza Mohammad Ali is after that of Abdul Baha; and consequently, this younger son is to succeed Abdul Baha as the leader and acknowledged head of the Cause. No provision is made as to a successor after the death of Mirza Mohammad Ali.

The Greatest Branch and the Greater Branch

It has been the custom of the leaders of the various movements in the East, especially religious movements, to adopt for themselves and to bestow upon their sons, their relatives and a few of their faithful disciples, honorific titles. For instance, Mirza Ali Mohammad became known as the Bab, which name signified *The Gate*; Mirza Hossein Ali assumed the name Baha-O-Llah, meaning *The Glory of God*, and Abbas Effendi chose to be called Abdul Baha—*The Servant of Baha*.

Likewise, Baha-O-Llah, during his lifetime, conferred the title of *The Greatest Branch* upon his eldest son, at that time known as Abbas Effendi, while his second son, Mirza Mohammad Ali, received the designation of *The Greater Branch*.

In the light of the above explanation, let us read that part of the Will of Baha-O-Llah which relates to the question of succession:—

This is the Testament of God, that the Branches (sons of Baha-O-Llah), Twigs, (descendants of the Bab) and Relations must each and every one look to the Greatest Branch. Reflect upon that which is revealed in My Book, the Aqdas: "When the Ocean of My Presence hath disappeared and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your faces towards Him whom God has purposed, Who hath branched from this Pre-existent Root." The aim of this blessed verse hath been the Greatest Branch. . . . Verily God hath ordained the Station of the Greater Branch after the Station of the former. Verily, He is the Ordainer, the Wise. We have surely chosen the Greater after the Greatest as a command from the All-Knowing, the Omniscient.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, pp. 260-261.

Here is an ordinance that is neither enigmatic nor obscure; it is not written in metaphor nor phrased in parable. It certainly is not a design-

tion; it is an unequivocal command—the command of Baha-O-Llah and of God. *God hath ordained* that Mirza Mohammad Ali should succeed Abbas Effendi. *We have surely chosen the Greater after the Greatest as a command from the All-Knowing, the Omniscient.* This is the last word spoken, the last order given. The fact is—God Almighty *had ordained* the succession; it was registered in the chancellery of heaven; it was recorded in the Will of Baha-O-Llah. Where then was the man who would dare say: *cancelled!*

The Chamber of Agony

If there were anyone in this wide universe who accepted the fact that Baha-O-Llah was the Manifestation of God and that his Words were eternal truths, that one was Abdul Baha! If there were anyone on the face of the globe who believed that Baha-O-Llah was the incarnation of wisdom and foresight, that one was Abdul Baha! If there were anyone in heaven or on earth who was *servant* to Baha-O-Llah, that one was he who had assumed the very *name*: The Servant of Baha! And yet:—

Was the Cause which Baha-O-Llah had brought to the world at the instance of God, the Cause for which thousands had suffered and died, the Cause for which he, himself, had labored sleeplessly, unremittingly, which was the legacy of mankind, to be consigned to the keeping of a man whom Abdul Baha considered unworthy, in the most sweeping sense of the word? *Was this to be?*

It is not for us to remotely imagine the conflict that must have taken place in the arena of Abdul Baha's conscience; nor to attempt to measure his mental strivings, his spiritual effort, his soul-searching. The test was his, and his alone. No soul, of present or future, ever could penetrate the chamber of agony. Abdul Baha, in the silence, *wrestled* with his God *until the breaking of the day. . . . And he said, I will not let Thee go, except thou bless me* (Genesis, Chapter 32, Verses 24-26).

The Great Decision

When he passed out of the valley of search for Truth, Abdul Baha, empowered by the right of conscience, took matters into his own hands, and in a gesture of ultimate courage, the like of which is unrecorded in the annals of this planet, he cancelled the *succession* as ordained by the Prophet of God. Thus, the written words of Baha-O-Llah: *We have surely chosen the Greater after the Greatest as a command from the All-Knowing, the*

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Omniscient, were set aside and replaced by the written words of Abdul Baha: Mirza Mohammad Ali hath passed out from under the shadow of the Cause.

As Abdul Baha reviews the conditions which resulted in this action toward his brother and those who had ranged themselves behind him, he makes comment:—*Verily, we wronged them not, but they have wronged themselves, and he asserts that he:—hath in no wise borne, nor doth he bear a grudge against anyone; toward none doth he entertain any ill feeling, and uttereth no word save for the good of the world.*

Having come to his great decision, Abdul Baha, in the First Part of his Will, appointed as his successor his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, then a child of some eight or nine years of age. It was, as I understand it, with a view of protecting his young heir, and the Cause as well, during the difficult period of transition after his own departure from this life, that he included in his Will the story of Mirza Mohammad Ali.

Thus did Abdul Baha, through whom the pulse of his great Father was beating and will forever beat upon the heart of the world, pass through his Gethsemane. Under the whispering olive branches, in the loneliness of his unique responsibility, he broke the Will of Baha-O-Llah—the Manifestation of God in this day.

CHAPTER IV

CONDEMNATION AND BLESSING

The Attitude of the Prophet Toward Evil

The Sacred Books of the world Faiths reveal the Founder of each religion under two aspects: as he lauds the qualities of the good and condemns the characteristics of evil. These aspects complement each other, for so long as man is imperfect, the process of improving and refining his nature proceeds, slowly but surely, under the guidance of seers and reformers whose mission it is to censure the acts of iniquity and extol those of integrity and rectitude.

All the while, however, the attitude of the Prophet toward evil is detached and completely impersonal. In this, it differs fundamentally from that of the followers. The Prophet castigates the sin, the followers castigate the sinner; the Prophet denounces tyranny and oppression, the followers denounce the tyrant and the oppressor; the Prophet points to bigotry and fanaticism, the followers, themselves becoming bigots and fanatics, point to other bigots and fanatics; the Prophet judges the deeds of the people according to moral and ethical standards, the followers judge them according to theological and dogmatic standards.

It is, therefore, evident that a wide chasm exists, psychologically and spiritually, between the Prophet's moral stand and that of his followers; consequently, when men shall have grasped the significance of the attitude of their teacher as well as of his words, when they shall strive to imitate the one while they adhere to the other, then, and not until then, will they have learned the secret of true and practical relationship among themselves.

The Eternal Pattern

No Prophet has maintained a more unequivocal posture toward sin than did Jesus of Nazareth who, at the same time, dispensed unlimited compassion and even indulgence toward the sinner in person. In his moment of supreme agony, as he looked from the cross upon the most hideous expression of humanity, he prayed:—

Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.

This phrase of divine forgiveness has come pulsing through the ages with a force that has never weakened. It reveals the Christ-attitude more

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poignantly than do any teachings. It constitutes the eternal pattern raised before men, whose lesson it is to chisel reproductions of it out of the marble of their own hearts.

Nearly two thousand years later Abdul Baha, in his Will and Testament, calls upon God to pardon those who had requited his loving-kindness with treachery and malevolence. Through his words, regarding Mirza Mohammad Ali and his associates, Abdul Baha has revitalized the principle of forgiveness, and, even as Christ the Redeemer, has offered himself as the sacrifice for the sins of others.

Let us, with humility, stand before the throne of the Almighty, listening to Abdul Baha as he offers his prayer on behalf of his foes. If possible we will repeat it after him:—

I call upon Thee, O Lord my God! with my tongue and with all my heart, not to requite them for their cruelty and their wrong-doings, their craft and their mischief, for they are foolish and ignoble and know not what they do . . . O my Lord! Have mercy upon them, shield them from all afflictions in these troubled times and grant that all trials and hardships may be the lot of this Thy servant that hath fallen into this darksome pit. Single me out for every woe and make me a sacrifice for all Thy loved ones . . .

O God, my God! Lowly, suppliant and fallen upon my face, I beseech Thee with all the ardour of my invocation to pardon whosoever hath hurt me, forgive him that hath conspired against me and offended me, and wash away the misdeeds of them that have wrought injustice upon me. Vouchsafe unto them Thy goodly gifts, give them joy, relieve them from sorrow, grant them peace and prosperity, give them Thy bliss and pour upon them Thy bounty.

Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Help in peril, the Self-subsisting!

Give them joy, said Abdul Baha, relieve them from sorrow, pour upon them Thy bounty. This, indeed, is more than forgiveness. This is divine humanity expressing itself in affectionate concern.

No Respector of Persons

Abdul Baha was one who could not witness with equanimity the cruelty of man to man. Even as the Prophets of old, he rose to the heights of awesome grandeur as he fulminated against the practitioners of falsehood, fraud and knavery. Here, as nowhere else, he shone as a fiery sun, the shafts of his indignation passing through and through the clouds of hate that enveloped him and others. As he stormed the citadels of hypocrisy and the strongholds of invested interests, he was restless, impatient, vhe-

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ment—a power-house of tumultuous emotion. He was facing the enemies of God and humanity, and the exposing of them was no small part of his mission.

If he were alive today, Abdul Baha would not choose the role of silence nor would he withdraw from the field of activity. Instead, whether within the limits of their influence or outside of it, he would direct the blasts of his denunciation against the dictators of our age, even as he, a captive, denounced his captors, the Shah of Persia and the Sultan of Turkey. Abdul Baha was no respecter of persons. He condemned infidelity wherever he saw it—around the circumference of the nations and at his own fire-side.

Abdul Baha, teacher of universal amity and love, was the advocate of the poor and the dispossessed. Consequently, he was the assailant of hypocrisy, mendacity and cruelty, and he heaped upon the oppressors the live coals of his wrath and lashed them with the tempest of his displeasure.

Fortunately, for our age which hungers for the bread of social justice, we have in him a prophet who did not cry in the wilderness, but who walked in the broad avenues of our European and American cities and discoursed in the marts of commerce and industry—a practical prophet, impatient of the malefic forces that were disrupting and discouraging social relations; a stern prophet, denouncing the abuse of power; a humane prophet, recoiling at the practice of war.

“Deliver Us From Evil”

Abdul Baha taught us that God never punishes mankind, but that mankind punishes itself through its own misdeeds and misdirected energies. Free choice is given to all; but while the thoroughfares of righteousness and unrighteousness are pretty well defined, it is the many by-paths criss-crossing between the two that bewilder us and lead to our undoing. The Prophets help us to keep our footing on the right road, for if we slip we lose ourselves in the wild jungles of human desires. Was it not the Christ who taught us to pray to the Father:—*Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.* Obviously, all temptations are not of the flesh; there are more dangerous and sinister forms of this peril, such as personal ambition, bigotry and perversion of truth.

In his Will and Testament, Abdul Baha was mainly concerned with this latter type of temptation; and in writing about the disloyalty of Mirza Mohammad Ali, and in warning his followers to have nothing to do with him, he was not considering the man proper, but the characteristics in the

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nature of his brother which implied a danger to others. Therefore, he issued his commands as follows:—

A thousand times shun his company. Take heed and be on your guard. Watch and examine; should any one openly or privily have the least connection with him, cast him out from your midst, for he will surely cause disruption and mischief.

Hence, the beloved of the Lord must entirely shun them, avoid them, foil their machinations and evil whisperings, guard the law of God and His religion, engage one and all in diffusing widely the sweet savours of God and to the best of their endeavor proclaim His Teachings.

The center of sedition was thus confounded in his craftiness, afflicted by the wrath of God, sunk into a degradation and infamy that shall be lasting until the Day of Doom. Base and wretched is the plight of the people of evil deeds, they that are in grievous loss!

The sum and substance of the above is contained in the last two sentences: *Base and wretched is the plight of the people of evil deeds. They are in grievous loss.* Evil deeds produce evil fruits. This is a universal criterion. As you sow, so shall you reap. The teacher cannot affect the outcome of our actions; he simply is a warner, an admonisher. Mirza Mohammad Ali alone was responsible to his God; and Abdul Baha was determined that his people should hold themselves aloof from the subtle influence that had caused so much havoc.

Be Rich that You May Give

Leave Mirza Mohammad Ali to his Maker; this was the burden of Abdul Baha's instructions. Do not hate him; you have more important things to do. Keep him out of the current of your thoughts. True, he has committed evil, but the results of his actions do not apply to you; your part is to learn a lesson from these events and to persevere in well-doing. Pray for him, as Abdul Baha has prayed for him. If you cannot forget him, forgive him; if you cannot forgive him, forget him; and if you are able to do both, you will be the better off. Be engrossed in the proclamation of the Teachings of Baha-O-Llah; thus engaged, you will have no time or inclination that will not be expended in loving the whole world. This is what our poor humanity needs!

Constructive thinking and straightforward doing! The futile negativities of Mirza Mohammad Ali belong to the past. We cannot build on the shifting sands of plots and counter-plots. These would be forgotten if we did not apply ourselves to reviving them. Men want the bread of

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life, not the stones of infidelity and dishonor; seekers strive after truth, not falsehood; people long for harmony, not discord. The essence of the Bahai Cause is not contained in the disloyalties of Mirza Mohammad Ali, but in the loyalty of Baha-O-Llah to God and to all of mankind. So did Abdul Baha, in his own words, admonish us in his Will and Testament.

And so, he tells us to be rich that we may give to others:—

Therefore let your faces be more radiant with hope and heavenly determination to serve the cause of God, to spread the pure fragrance of the divine rose-garden of unity, to awaken spiritual susceptibilities in the hearts of mankind, to kindle anew the spirit of humanity with divine fires and to reflect the glory of heaven to this gloomy world of materialism. When you possess these divine susceptibilities you will be able to awaken and develop them in others. We cannot give of our wealth to the poor unless we possess it. How can the poor give to the poor? How can the soul that is deprived of the heavenly bounties develop capacity to receive those bounties in other souls?

—Abdul Baha—*Promulgation of Universal Peace*,
Vol. I, page 5.

The Two Aspects of Moses

In the Scriptures of the Jews, much space has been allotted to condemnation. Moses hurled a succession of curses against the children of Israel, because of their disobedience. In the 28th Chapter of Deuteronomy, from among its 68 verses, 54 are given over to rebuke in its most fearsome sense. I have not come across any tract of the Sacred Scriptures that so develops, and maintains to the very last word the high spirit and the literary and scientific aura of the curse. Let us listen to the wrath of Moses:—

Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field.

Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep.

Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly . . .

The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land . . .

The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the

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sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish.

And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.

The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed . . .

The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness and astonishment of heart.

The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch that cannot be healed, from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head . . .

Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed . . .

And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to naught . . .

Moses, doubtless, was the most severe among the Founders of the Great Religions; yet, I take it for granted that he knew how to choose the language that would have the most efficacy for the immature tribes that he was guiding toward spiritual and physical safety. His was the vocation of the father—unremitting concern over every action and circumstance that affected his unwieldy family, and it is a safe guess that his tender moments were not few nor far between.

Now, we will listen to one of his inheritors in an exalted moment of assurance:—

Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reaches unto the clouds. Thy righteousness is like the great mountains; thy judgments are a great deep: O Lord, thou preservest man and beast. How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life; in thy light shall we see light.

—Psalms, Chapter 3, Verses 5-9.

The Two Aspects of Jesus

In like manner did Jesus let loose his indignation:—

And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all of them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto

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them, It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

—*St. Matthew, Chapter 21, Verses 12-13*

On another occasion, in a mood of divine impatience, he stated that the entire generation of his time was *faithless and perverse*, and he questioned how long he should be with these people and suffer them. (*St. Matthew, Chapter 17, Verse 17*)

Again, when Peter had rebuked his Lord, Jesus turned to him impetuously and said unto Peter, *Get thee behind me Satan, thou art an offence unto me.* (*St. Matthew, Chapter 16, Verse 23*)

There was a time when Jesus thundered in regard to entire cities, such as Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, *wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not*, prophesying that, on the day of Judgment, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon *than for you*; further, Capernaum, which had been *exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell.* (*St. Matthew, Chapter 11, Verses 21-24*)

Even the holy city of Jerusalem did not escape the scourging wrath of the Christ, for it was branded as the stoner and killer of the Prophets. (*St. Luke, Chapter 13, Verse 34*).

In the course of his admonitions, when he sent out his twelve disciples, he said to them:—

But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

—*St. Matthew, Chapter 10, Verses 33-37.*

More than often, Jesus lifted his mighty voice, warning his disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. He specified the scribes, Pharisees and lawyers as fools and serpents, and he capped his bill of indictment by accusing their fathers with the murder of the Prophets. It is no wonder that the whole ecclesiastical order, which had become the butt of such uncompromising condemnation, lay in wait for him, *seeking to catch something out of his mouth that they might accuse him.* (*St. Luke, Chapter 11, Verses 40-54*)

The condemnatory aspect of the teachings of Jesus is recorded at length in *St. Matthew, Chapter 23, Verses 13-33.*

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But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hyocrites! for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

And, whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty!

Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifieth the gift . . .

Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly but are within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness.

Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, if we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

The above citations reveal Jesus in a very characteristic attitude: that of an intrepid reformer, marching, without hesitation or precaution of any kind, on the fortresses of authority. In order to unmask the hypocrites,

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he threw discretion to the winds, and he sacrificed his life for the sake of the truth as he saw it.

But oh, the gentleness of the Christ under daily circumstances! His words are like flowers glistening with dew; the scent of which assails our hearts in the morning and at night, following us through the centuries with an enchantment that is imperishable.

Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God.

—*St. Luke*, Chapter 18.

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

—*St. Mark*, Chapter 11.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another.

—*St. John*, Chapter 13.

Be ye therefore merciful, as your father also is merciful.

—*St. Luke*, Chapter 6.

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

—*St. John*, Chapter 14.

The compelling quality of this teaching, even as the teaching of Moses, can be seen in that its spirit was transmitted to those who loved the Master. Let us listen to the disciples:—

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

—*Epistle of St. Paul, Ephesians*, Chapter 4.

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

—*Epistle of St. Paul, Colossians*, Chapter 4.

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three: but the greatest of these is charity.

—*St. Paul, I Corinthians*, Chapter 13.

Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath . . .

—*James*, Chapter 1.

Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

I Peter, Chapter 4.

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Heaven-Born Lyrics

In retrospect, it can be seen that however necessary and urgent were the stanzas of rebuke and condemnation which the Prophets directed toward the cruel and unruly of their times, it is their heaven-born lyrics of indulgence and acceptance that have rung down through the ages, catching up the generations in a perpetual rhythm. From the beginning of time, these streams of blessings have poured like cataracts upon the sensibilities of men, changing the sterile deserts of heedlessness into rose-gardens of consciousness; then, spreading into wider regions, they have continued on their redemptive course into dimensions that we know not of.

Three thousand and five hundred years ago, Moses sung his Hosannas of blessings, which have echoed and re-echoed in the minds of the children of Israel and of the children of God everywhere.

Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field.

Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep.

Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store.

Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

—Deuteronomy, Chapter 28, Verses 3-6 (1451 B. C.)

Two thousand years ago, Jesus, seeing the multitudes, went up into a mountain, and when he was set, his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying:—

Blessed are the poor in spirit for their's is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peace makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.

—St. Matthew, Chapter 5, Verses 3-12.

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Toward the latter part of the nineteenth century, Baha-O-Llah set in motion the mystical torrents of his favor:—

Blessed is the sleeper who is awakened by My breezes!

Blessed is the dead who is quickened by My breaths!

Blessed is the eye that is enlightened by My beauty!

Blessed is the seeker who sought the tent of My majesty and My greatness!

Blessed is the affrightened one who took refuge under the shadow of My domes!

Blessed is the thirsty one who hastened to the Salsabil of My favor!

Blessed is the hungry one who hastened away from desire because of My passion, and was present at the Table that descended from the Heaven of My grace for My elect!

Blessed is the lowly one who held to the rope of My might, and the poor who took shelter under the shade of the canopy of My wealth!

Blessed is the ignorant one who desired the Kawther of My knowledge, and the heedless one who held to the rope of My remembrance!

Blessed is the spirit who was stirred by My breath and entered My Kingdom!

Blessed is the soul whom the fragrance of My union shook and attracted to the Day-spring of My command!

Blessed is the ear which heard, the tongue which witnessed, and the eye which beheld and knew the soul of the Lord, the possessor of Glory and Dominion, and the Lord of Majesty and Might!

Blessed are those who have attained!

Blessed is whosoever is illumined by the Sun of My Word!

Blessed is whosoever adorned his head with the Wreath of My love!

Blessed is he who heard My grief and rose up for My assistance among My people!

Blessed is he who redeemed himself in My path and suffered tribulations for My name!

Blessed is he who was assured in My Word and stood up among the dead for My remembrance!

Blessed is he who was attracted by My melodies and rent the coverings by My power!

Blessed is he who performed My Covenant and was not prevented by the world from entering the court of My holiness!

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Blessed is he who cut himself off from all other than Me, soared in the ether of My love, entered My Kingdom, perceived the dominion of My might, drank the Kawther of My favor and the Salsabil of My grace, and was informed of My command and of whatsoever was hidden in the treasuries of My Words, and shone forth from the horizon of inner significance in My commemoration and my Praise! Verily, he is of Mine. May My mercy, grace, favor and glory be unto him!

—*Baháí Scriptures*, pages 128, 129, 130.

In 1913, Abdul Baha visited Germany and, from that land of militarism, he sent forth his message of tolerance and compassion to all races, far and near:—

Blessed is he who is charitable, for he shall inherit eternal life.

Blessed is he who overlooks the faults of others, for he shall enjoy divine beatitude.

Blessed is he who associates with all with joy and fragrance, for he has obeyed the commands of BAHÁ'O'LLAH.

Blessed is he who loves mankind, for he has heeded the advice of BAHÁ'O'LLAH.

Blessed is he who is kind to his enemies, for he has walked in the footsteps of Christ.

Blessed is he who proclaims the doctrine of spiritual brotherhood, for he shall be the child of light.

Blessed is he whose heart is tender and compassionate, for he will throw stones at no one.

Blessed is he who will speak evil of no one, for he hath attained to the good pleasure of the Lord.

Blessed is he who will not uncover the sins of others, for he will become favored at the threshold of the Almighty.

Blessed is he who hath a forgiving nature, for he will win the spiritual graces of God.

Blessed is he who diffuses only the sweet fragrance of the flowers of friendship and mutual association, for he will obtain a goodly portion of the bounties of the Merciful.

Blessed is he who teaches union and concord, for he will shine like unto a star in heaven.

Blessed is he who practices loving-kindness and cooperation, for he will be encircled with celestial benediction.

Blessed is he who comforts the downtrodden, for he will be the friend of God.

—*Star of the West*, Vol. VII, June 5, 1916, No. 5. pp. 38-9.

These are the life-imparting drops which have been drunk by the people of the world at the hands of the Cup-bearers of Eternity.

CHAPTER V

THE GUARDIANSHIP

Provisions in Regard to the Guardianship

1. *Appointment of Shoghi Effendi*

The leading feature in the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha is the institution of guardianship and the appointment of Shoghi Effendi Rabbani as the first Guardian of the Bahai Cause. Shoghi Effendi is the son of Zia Khanum, Abdul Baha's eldest daughter, and Mirza Hadi who is descended from the family of the Bab.

At the time when Abdul Baha wrote the *First Part* of the Will (probable date 1905-07), Shoghi Effendi must have been very young, maybe seven or eight years old, and had Abdul Baha passed away shortly after this period, the Bahai Cause would have had a minor as its Guardian, and no one can judge of the effect upon the movement of such a contingency.

Thus, in the *First Part* of his Will and afterwards in the *Third Part* (which was written several years later), Abdul Baha clearly states that following his departure, the members of his family (Aghsan), the descendants of the Bab (Afnan), the Hands of the Cause (teachers) and the believers in Baha-O-Llah must turn to Shoghi Effendi, whom he describes as *the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the Two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness*. This is a way of stating that Shoghi Effendi is the child of a union between an Afnan (of the family of the Bab) and Abdul Baha's daughter (descendant of Baha-O-Llah). Once more Abdul Baha, referring to Shoghi Effendi, writes: *He is the Sign of God, the chosen branch, the guardian of the Bahai Cause*.

2. *Injunction to cherish Shoghi Effendi*

In the last two paragraphs of *Part Third* of the Will (written between 1913-21), Abdul Baha calls upon his faithful ones to take the greatest care of Shoghi Effendi; to see to it that no dust of despondency and sorrow stain his *radiant nature* so that he may, day by day, wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality and in time *grow to become even as a fruitful tree*.

3. *Attitude toward Shoghi Effendi*

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Abdul Baha requires of the believers that they render obedience to Shoghi Effendi. To obey him, is to obey God and to turn away from him, is to turn away from God. He that denies him, denies God. He that rebels against him, rebels against God. He that opposes him, opposes God. He that disputes with him, disputes with God. Whoso disbelieves in him, disbelieves in God; whoso deviates and separates himself from him, has deviated and separated himself from God.

Shoghi Effendi is under the shelter and *unerring guidance* of Baha-O-Llah and is cared for and protected by him. The members of the Universal House of Justice, the members of Baha-O-Llah's and Abdul Baha's families, the descendants of the Bab, the teachers of the Cause must show their obedience, submissiveness and subordination unto the Guardian and, turning unto him, *be lowly before him*.

4. *Line of Guardians*

Abdul Baha further explains that the institution of guardianship is a hereditary one, reserved primarily for the descendants of Shoghi Effendi. Shoghi Effendi should, in his own lifetime, appoint him that shall become his successor; and this successor should be the first born of his lineal descendants. Nevertheless, Abdul Baha makes two reservations on this point:

(a) The Nominee or Appointee must manifest in himself the fear of God, together with knowledge, wisdom and learning. Should the first-born of the Guardian fail to manifest in himself the above qualities, in other words, should his lineage be unmatched with a goodly character, then must the Guardian *choose another branch to succeed him*.

(b) The *Nine* appointed from amongst the *Hands of the Cause of God* must give their assent, whether unanimously or by a majority vote, to the one chosen by the Guardian as his successor. This assent must be given in such wise that the assenting and dissenting voices may not be distinguishable (*secret ballot*).

5. *Duties of the Guardian*

(a) The Guardian must nominate and appoint the *Hands of the Cause of God* (the number is unspecified); which body, in turn, must elect from amongst themselves *Nine* persons who shall at all times be occupied in the service of the Guardian. All the *Hands of the Cause* must obey the command of the Guardian and *be under his shadow*.

(b) Inasmuch as the Guardian directs the *Hands of the Cause*, he must continuously urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their

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ability to diffuse the sweet fragrance of God and to guide the peoples of the world; for through the light of divine guidance the universe is illuminated. The *absolute command* of teaching is binding upon everyone and should not be disregarded even for one moment. If the Hands of the Cause of God devote their time and energy to this work of guidance and teaching, the world will become as the Paradise of Abha, contention and conflict will disappear from amongst the nations and governments; all the dwellers on earth will be considered as one people and one race, and the world as *one home*.

(c) The Guardian of the Cause is the president, or head of the Universal House of Justice, and its distinguished member for life; and if, at times he is unable to attend its deliberations in person, he must appoint one to represent him. The Guardian likewise is given the power, at his own discretion, to expel from the Universal House of Justice any of its elected members whereupon the people must elect a substitute. This expulsion is on the grounds of the commission of *a sin, injurious to the common weal*.

(d) The Guardian is the expounder of the words of God.

(e) Abdul Baha provides for the collection and distribution of a *fixed money offering* (Huquq), or Tithe. He states that although God is all-possessing and exalted above the need of any gift from His creatures, this *fixed money offering* will cause the people to become firm and steadfast, drawing *divine increase upon them*. It is to be offered to the Guardian of the Cause, that it may be expended for the diffusion of the Fragrances of God and the exaltation of His Word; also for benevolent pursuits and the common weal.

Comments on Provisions

Sections 1 and 2. A close examination of the Will and a careful study of its *Three Parts* reveal the fact that the institution of guardianship is the crux of the matter. *Sections 1 and 2* hardly need elucidation. A well-informed student of the Bahai Cause does not question the authenticity of the Will; consequently, he accepts the appointment of Shoghi Effendi. He knows that this is the wish of Abdul Baha, stated in writing over a long period of time, and he sincerely hopes and prays that Shoghi Effendi may, day by day, wax greater in happiness, joy and spirituality and that in time he may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

Whether or not the student of the Will is a Bahai, his heart would, after attentive reading, respond with a great deal of sympathy to this *youthful branch* into whose hands has been placed the destiny of a universal cause.

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He would wish the Guardian godspeed on his difficult path, and success in his almost superhuman undertaking. Most of all, he would realize that the appointment has been made by one of the greatest spiritual leaders of all time. In case the reader is a Bahai, this fact would carry a tremendous and overwhelming significance.

Section 3. The substance of this Section has puzzled many a liberal believer, and is apt to confound the students who are not Bahais, for they compare this section of the Will with Abdul Baha's teachings, given during his lifetime in regard to independent investigation of truth, freedom of conscience, liberty of thought and the conformity of religion with science. These persons remember that, during his journey throughout the United States, Europe and Canada, the Master never lost an opportunity to state and re-state in hundreds of addresses, using striking and homely examples and animated by glowing conviction, the above cardinal principles of a new social religion, which, in every instance, he attributed to the revelation of his father, Baha-O-Llah.

This Bahai Dispensation was a mine of precious gems, a garden of fragrant flowers and a heaven studded with luminous stars! This Bahai Dispensation was a rational, spiritual movement which did not require blind *and unthinking obedience to any set of rules or to any leader!* This Bahai Dispensation was reason illumined, spirit freed, soul a-wing, emancipation actualized! This Bahai Dispensation was a Message, not a warning; a tract of heaven, a benediction and an unqualified blessing!

Is it then true that there are two sides to the teachings of Abdul Baha? Can one draw the conclusion that these two sides, these two aspects, which are to be found in all former religions, exist in the Bahai Dispensation as well? Let us consider them.

The Two Aspects

In *Section 3*, Abdul Baha enjoins his followers to implicitly obey Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause, and, to all intents and purposes, to accept him as an infallible leader. The matter of obedience is accentuated to such a degree that it apparently reduces the status of the believers to the level of intellectual and spiritual serfdom. If one takes Abdul Baha's injunctions literally (and the present-day Bahais are super-literalists), agreeing that to obey Shoghi Effendi is to obey God and to oppose him is to oppose God, there is no escaping the conclusion that the Master asks of us the surrender of our wills, minds and reason to the Guardian—a surrender which is fraught with far-reaching consequences for

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it implies a betrayal of the very Bahai ideals which the Master himself spent his life sharing with the world.

Doubtless, the deepest and the most searching desire of every enlightened Bahai is to obey God and Abdul Baha; but are we really honest with ourselves, are we sincere in our faith in Abdul Baha, if we believe and teach that he deliberately wished to divest us of all our reasoning faculties and turn us into a community of fawning, cringing, snivelling, mealy-mouthed sycophants, flatterers and flunkies before the awesome throne of the Guardian? To interpret this section of the Will in such a literal sense, is, to say the least, utterly short-sighted and a complete subversion of all the glorious teachings of the Bahai Cause.

We do not need to roam very far in Bahai literature to re-discover the fact that Abdul Baha admonished us over and over again not to be imitators nor the blind followers of any soul; to reason things out for ourselves; to become the torchbearers of spiritual freedom and democracy; to be the vanguard of the army of progress and the custodians of the civil and spiritual liberties of humanity. As shining globes in mid-heaven, we are supposed to pour the luminous and life-imparting rays of a new civilization upon the children of men and, like unto selfless and fearless pioneers, lead the harassed pilgrims out of the wilderness of despair into the verdant lands of hope.

Here is one of the countless statements on this subject made by Abdul Baha. Its meaning is as clear as sunlight:—

Know ye that God has created in man the power of reason whereby man is enabled to investigate reality. God has not intended man to blindly imitate his fathers and ancestors. He has endowed him with mind or the faculty of reasoning by the exercise of which he is to investigate and discover the truth; and that which he finds real and true, he must accept. He must not be an imitator or blind follower of any soul. He must not rely implicitly upon the opinion of any man without investigation; nay, each soul must seek intelligently and independently, arriving at a real conclusion and bound only by that reality.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. II, page 285

The Two Aspects in the Gospel

If we study, with the eye of perception, the religious literature of the past, we discover in it the same apparent contradictions. Let us take the New Testament for our illustration. Here, we find the Sermon on the Mount, which embodies some of the most lofty and spiritual exhorta-

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tions ever uttered by a prophet. These teachings are so sublime, so glorious, so utterly beautiful that for two thousand years the churches of Christ have been trying to emulate them; and yet they have fallen miles short of their goal. These teachings have been the despair of saints and seers alike. Throughout the wide stretch of the centuries, they have served as beacon lights, inspiring the wayfarers to greater exertion in their search after truth. To many Fathers of the Church, the fulfillment, in the daily lives of men, of the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount appeared well-nigh impossible; therefore they called them *Counsels of Perfection*,—ethical and moral lessons that a layman could read and try to emulate, at the same time realizing that he might just as well attempt to gather all the stars in his bosom.

Now, side by side with these spiritual teachings in the New Testament, we have certain definite and concrete injunctions. They are in the nature of commands given by Christ; yet is there any Christian who has put them into practice, literally?

Here they are, from *St. Matthew*, Chapter 5, verses 29-30.

And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee, for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The same commands are repeated in a slightly different way in *St. Mark*, Chapter 9, verses 43 to 47:

And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out; it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

These are very clear-cut and definite instructions; one cannot escape the feeling that each sentence carries with it a finality of authority. The simplest mind can understand their meaning and implication, and yet even the saints, as far as I know, have not felt justified in putting them into practice.

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Why then these instructions? What is the real object back of them? It is hard enough for us mortals to live up to certain heights of moral grandeur, without having it made harder. Why tell us to pluck out our right eyes and cast them off, if we are not actually to do so? We know that, at one time or another, we have used our hands and feet for purposes that were not praiseworthy, but would it help matters if we were to maim our bodies and make ourselves objects of horror in the sight of men, and incidentally a drag on the public treasury?

If even a tiny fraction of conscience-stricken Christians tried to follow literally the command of their Lord and Master, wouldn't all the hospitals and sanitoriums, as well as the streets of our European and American cities become filled with single-eyed, single-handed and single-footed human beings (all lefts, by the way)? And how about the Last Day, when mankind is supposed to be resurrected in the body! What a dreary festival it would be, when the hosts arise from their graves and gather before their Maker—armies of the maimed and mutilated, with never a one presentable in both body and spirit; for only those who had disobeyed would be whole! Would not the Lord say to his followers: *The letter killeth!*

Science of Magnification

Obviously then, both reason and spirit tell us that these teachings have a higher and a more mystical meaning. Often a prophet, in order to heighten the effect of his words, touches on the realm of the impossible. This tendency can very well be termed the spiritual science of magnification in which hyperboles are used for graphic purposes. Through this means, the prophet enlarges images that are minute in the sight of the hearer and brings them into high relief. He sets up a criterion, a measuring-rod of perfection, intending to shock his followers into a realization of his aims. All the while he counts on the import of his teachings as a whole, and on the understanding which he has striven to develop among the people.

Naturally, Oriental terminology is more lucid to the eastern mind than to the western; and the student of Bahai history is especially competent to evaluate it. Such vivid expressions of curses and blessings are found in practically all the sacred Scriptures. For example when Isaac blessed Jacob he said:—

Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine;

Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: cursed be everyone that curse thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee.

—Genesis, Chapter 27, verses 28-29

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On an occasion, when the Bab was bidding farewell to Mullah Hossein, his first disciple, he spoke as follows:

The hosts of the invisible Kingdom, be assured, will sustain and re-inforce your efforts. The essence of power is now dwelling in you, and the company of His chosen angels revolves around you. His almighty arms will surround you, and His unfailing Spirit will ever continue to guide your steps. He that loves you, loves God; and whoever opposes you, has opposed God. Whoso befriends you, him will God befriend; and whoso rejects you, him will God reject.

The Dawn-Breakers, Page 96.

These words, addressed to Mullah Hossein, are a very close parallel to those written by Abdul Baha in reference to Shoghi Effendi, and one does not have to make any further research in order to catch the spirit of loving and loyal support as expressed by the Teacher in regard to his chosen follower and representative.

Now, it is to be hoped that we understand Abdul Baha's purpose when he enjoins us in his Will to obey the Guardian at all times, and at all costs. I know that he did not mean us to divest ourselves of the rights and prerogatives of our God-given reason. I am certain that he did not desire us to turn into abject creatures in order that the sadistically-minded might enjoy the sight of our mental misery and spiritual poverty. I am confident that it was not his intention that we look upon the Guardian as the incarnation of an infallible God; and I naturally would expect that the Guardian himself would be the very last person to impose on his followers such inhuman servitude. It would seem clear that he is much more in need of wide-awake, independent and resourceful cooperators than of timorous serfs, deprived of self-respect and of the respect of their fellows.

It is my considered opinion, arrived at in all sincerity, that Abdul Baha wished the Bahais to gather, most loyally and devotedly, around Shoghi Effendi to serve the Cause of Baha-O-Llah as he himself had served it; and although there is apparent contradiction between this section of the Will and his lifelong teachings, we would, if we could but master the prophetic nomenclature and phraseology, realize that they are the two aspects of the same question, worded differently, but to be understood in the one spirit.

Loyalty to the Group or Loyalty to God

Besides, a very important point is this one: The appointment of Shoghi Effendi to the guardianship automatically cancelled the provision for succession as specified by Baha-O-Llah in his Will. The situation was extraor-

dinary; therefore, extraordinary and unequivocal terms must have seemed necessary in order that, after the Master's departure, the believers should not be left in a state of uncertainty which might lead to their breaking into two camps.

I am fully conscious of the fact that what I have here written is pure and unadulterated blasphemy in the eyes of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, which has abrogated all the universal teachings of the Cause and placed in their stead blind and unquestioned obedience to Shoghi Effendi and, through his authority, to themselves. This attitude of subservience and servility among the believers has been studiously cultivated by Mr. Horace Holley who, in an article *On Present Day Administration of the Bahai Cause*, Bahai Year Book, Vol. I, 1925-1926, on page 55 writes: *The individual conscience must be subordinated to the decisions of a duly elected Spiritual Assembly.*

Now, it happens that Abdul Baha thought otherwise, as can be seen in *A Traveller's Narrative*, written as far back as 1874. After referring to a number of historical cases in which organized groups, official and non-official, have tried in the past to interfere with *the conscience of man*, he writes:

These are effectual and sufficient proofs that the conscience of man is sacred and to be respected; and that liberty thereof produces widening of ideas, amendment of morals, improvement of conduct, disclosures of the secrets of creation, and manifestation of the hidden verities of the contingent world.

Moreover, if interrogation of conscience, which is one of the private possessions of the heart and the soul, take place in this world, what further recompense remains for man in the court of divine justice at the day of general resurrection?

Convictions and ideas are within the scope of the comprehension of the King of kings, not of kings; and soul and conscience are between the fingers of control of the Lord of hearts, not of His servants.

—*A Traveller's Narrative*, pages 164-165.

With this divine exposition before them, which states that *the soul and conscience are between the fingers of control of the Lord of hearts, not of His servants*, how do the members of the National Spiritual Assembly in general and Mr. Horace Holley in particular dare to *subordinate* conscience to *the decisions* of any Spiritual Assembly, elected or otherwise? Do they think that the public is willing to overlook the teachings of the Master? Abdul Baha's words remain in black and white, and neither the Administration nor its followers can tear these pages from the volumes of immortal literature.

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I myself hold to the individual conscience. I believe that it is the *still, small voice* which has been placed in our hearts to guide us aright. I consider that the crimes of the nations and religions are perpetrated because of the fact that the people place loyalty to the *group* above loyalty to God; and I know that Baha-O-Llah came to awaken the individual, and through him to save the world. Therefore, I do not propose to condone injustice, wherever it appears; nor to appease, nor to stand aside and let affairs take their course. I am a Bahai, responsible to my Maker and to Abdul Baha, and I do not yield one jot nor one iota of my love and reverence for my Master in studying out his Will to the best of my ability and in drawing my sincere conclusions.

CHAPTER VI

THE SUCCESSION

Hereditary Guardianship

Section 4. The question of hereditary guardianship comes in this section of my analysis. Historically, it is a well-established principle that the quality of greatness is rarely inherited; and it is a fact that there have been but few cases where a son has equalled or exceeded in ability and achievement an outstanding and unique father. Naturally, the law of mutual association plays a very significant part in the development of character and is of precious educative value. Abdul Baha himself has developed this subject of innate response to outer stimuli in many of his tablets and public lectures. Now, rare as is the transference through inheritance of talents and mental gifts, a like transference of spiritual gifts is well-nigh impossible. Vision and illumination are innate attributes, seldom received and not bestowed by heaven in a direct line. The amazing instance of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, as father and son, each in his own right a spiritual super-genius, may stand as the exception that proves the rule.

During several centuries, many liberal sections of humanity have taken part in a supreme struggle to discredit and overthrow the dynastic monarchies which were founded on laws of inheritance and, it is pointed out that, thanks to the self-sacrifice and heroism of a succession of political martyrs, much of the race's democratic aspiration has come to fruition. This same struggle has been going on in the religious domain for, if the modern mind distrusts, and in some quarters rejects the idea of a totalitarian autocrat who claims *L'Etat c'est Moi*, the heart likewise finds unacceptable the claim of a *spiritual dictator*. It is not to be doubted that we are entering an era of unprecedented liberty of conscience and freedom of expression in philosophy, politics and religion; and we are girding our loins to meet and overcome whatever opposition looms large in our path. Abdul Baha advises us: *Do not yield to the overwhelming power of tyranny and despotism. Serve the Cause of democracy and peace.* (*Star of the West*, Vol. LX. No. 14, Nov. 4, 1918).

Democracy

Those who had the privilege of meeting Abdul Baha in person, instantaneously felt that he was the supreme spiritual democrat of this age.

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Incidentally, the Master never failed to express his admiration for the American Democracy. On repeated occasions, he spoke on this all-absorbing subject and, in most eloquent language, directed the attention of his hearers to the excellence of this system of government. No amount of explanation would give a better understanding of his attitude on this question than do his own words which are recorded in *The Unveiling of the Divine Plan* on pages 51-52:—

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 Legislatures, so defined and determined, that generally speaking they 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 the change of the course of history on the surface of the globe. The influence of the American idea of freedom, right, equality and representative form of government traveled to all parts of the world, and was indeed an inspirational example to other downtrodden 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 this 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 those sacred rights of political and individual liberty, 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 progress of the inhabitants, will take that Constitution as a guide to draw up their own Bill of Rights. All the future governments of the world, large and small, will become democratic, based upon the Will of the Governed. This is also assured. In the course of years, the North, Central and South American Republics will be drawn nearer and nearer together, and will become united in a general confederated Democracy;—in other words, the various Republics will find their national and international interests so identical and akin, that they will forget all their petty jealousies and apprehensions and work together for the advancement and prosperity of all America. There will be a Pan-American Parliament, meeting regularly in which all questions of a general nature, affecting the vital interests of that Western hemisphere, will be discussed and deliberated upon.

To be historically exact, it was on March 8th, 1917 that Abdul Baha delivered the above talk in Haifa, Palestine, and in the light of what has

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transpired since, regarding the United States and her improved relations with Latin America, his words appear singularly prophetic.

Now, in the face of all these facts which were known to him, how did it happen that Abdul Baha instituted in his Will a system of hereditary guardianship for the conduct of a spiritually democratic Cause? Here, I have no satisfactory explanation and can give no answer. To me, it is one of the insolvable mysteries. All that I can say is that *I do not know*; and I am sure that Abdul Baha does not think me a less sincere and devoted follower of his because I am incapable of understanding this point.

The bewilderment which I feel on this subject was at first experienced by many of the older Bahais when the contents of the Will became known. This temporary mental disturbance and confusion was not on account of the appointment of Shoghi Effendi as Guardian, but because of the fact that Abdul Baha had never in speech or writing given the slightest indication that there would be a successor to himself. On the contrary, a number of addresses delivered by him on various occasions had made the opposite impression. Consequently, it took several years before a section of the Bahais could adjust themselves to the new situation.

The system of hereditary guardianship, as instituted by Abdul Baha, together with the Hands of the Cause was, to many minds, suggestive of the Catholic Church with its Pope and Cardinals. At first glance, this conclusion is a shock, yet, on closer study, we find that there is a greater concentration of authority in the Bahai body. For instance, when a Pope dies, all the Cardinals living in different parts of the world are summoned to Rome where, in conclave assembled, they elect a new pontiff; while in the Bahai institution, the Guardian chooses his first-born or another as his successor, and the Hands of the Cause have no part and no voice in the selection, their participation consisting only in voting for or against the choice of the Guardian.

The fact that Shoghi Effendi has been likened to the Pope, and the Hands of the Cause or the members of the Universal House of Justice to the house of Cardinals, has been recognized by the Bahai Administration, which has included this subject in a mimeographed booklet, entitled *Twenty Lessons in Bahai Administration* issued by the Bahai Publishing Committee in 1935. The reference is couched in the form of questions which are found on pages 4 and 5.

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How would you answer an inquiry as to how a guardian differs from a Pope?

In what respects does the Universal House of Justice differ from the House of Cardinals?

In order to arrive at answers to these and other questions, references to writings on the Administration are included in the booklet.

Provisions for Succession

The Guardian's successor must, according to the Will, be *the first-born of his lineal descendants*. This requirement opens wide the door of speculation, for, should the first-born be a daughter, she would be the lawful inheritor; and even if sons be born to the Guardian at a later date, the situation would remain unchanged.

At the same time, it is provided that the Guardian be the President of the House of Justice and this is where a certain doubt arises. Baha-O-Llah, in addressing the future House of Justice, begins thus: *O, Men of the House of Justice!*, and in dwelling on the variety of national and international offices which the women of the future would hold, Abdul Baha has made it plain that membership in the aforesaid body was not to be included. The following quotation from his writings proves this point quite definitely:—

The House of Justice, however, according to the positive commandments of the Doctrine of God, has been specialized to the men, for a reason or exercise of wisdom on the part of God, and this reason will presently appear, even as the sun at midday.

—Abdul Baha, *Bahai Scriptures*, page 476.

This subject is treated at length in *The Wisdom of Abdul Baha*, pp. 169-70-71.

Nevertheless, this point is not referred to in the Will; therefore, taking the document as it stands and without interpretation, there is the possibility of a girl succeeding to the guardianship.

(A) Abdul Baha has made the provision that should the *first-born* of the Guardian fail to manifest spiritual attributes in himself, the Guardian should choose another branch to succeed him; but a strange point is that, search the Will from beginning to end, analyze it line by line, and there will be found no text or provision for the appointment of another successor in case the present, or any future guardian has no issue.

(B) It has been provided by Abdul Baha that the Nine Hands of the Cause of God should assent, either unanimously or by a majority, to the

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choice made by the Guardian of his successor. Thus, according to this law, the successorship is dependent on the existence and approval of this body, and no appointment would be valid or spiritually binding, nor would it be acceptable to the Bahai world, unless it had been so ratified.

Now, let us suppose a future situation when the majority of the Hands of the Cause would vote against the choice made by the Guardian. What kind of power could the Guardian legitimately wield in order to induce these independent or recalcitrant *Hands* to fall in line? Again, there is no provision in the Will to solve this delicate problem.

We must not forget the important fact that the entire body of the Hands of the Cause is nominated and appointed by the Guardian himself and that these in turn are commissioned to elect Nine from amongst themselves to assist the Guardian in his work. In other words, these Nine owe their original appointment to the Guardian, while they hold office in the body of *Nine* through the democratic process.

It is significant that, although Abdul Baha in his Will allows the Guardian power to expel the members of the Universal House of Justice, he has given him no sanction, whatsoever, to dismiss any of the *Hands of the Cause*. Once nominated and appointed by him, the members gain an immediate and solemn immunity, enjoying their position and title for the rest of their lives. The nine members of the Supreme Court of the United States are similarly protected; when appointed by the President they enjoy immunity of office and title, and are recalled only by death. The House of Cardinals, appointed by the Pontiff of the Catholic Church, operates in like manner.

Abdul Baha, however, states that the Hands of the Cause must obey the commands of the Guardian, and he further points out that should any, within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God, disobey and seek division, *the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him*.

Now, still referring to the succession, let us suppose that the *Hands of the Cause* feel well-grounded in their opposition to the choice of a successor as made by the Guardian, and that the words, *the wrath of God and His vengeance* do not disturb them in the least. They may consider this phrase as a picturesque bit of archaic language (as it indeed is) which Abdul Baha owing to his intimacy with Jewish, Christian and Islamic religious literature, used to enforce a point.

They, probably, may be more conscious of the Master's own original words, when he said:—

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We must exercise extreme patience, sympathy and love toward all mankind, considering no soul as rejected. If we look upon a soul as rejected, we have disobeyed the teachings of God. God is loving to all. Shall we be unjust or unkind to any one? Is this allowable in the sight of God?

Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. II, page 280.

Man must spiritually perceive that religion has been intended by God to be the means of grace, the source of life and cause of agreement. If it becomes the cause of discord, enmity and hatred, it is better that man should be without it. For in its teachings we seek the spirit of charity and love to bind the hearts of men together. If on the contrary we find it alienates and embitters human hearts we are justified in casting it aside.

Promulgation of Universal Peace, Vol. II, page 322.

Therefore, the possibility exists that the choice of a successor, as made by the Guardian, may remain unratified by the *Hands of the Cause* and that at this point, considering that the members of this body cannot be dismissed or expelled, a mighty deadlock might ensue.

The obvious conclusion to be drawn from this part of the Will is that unless Shoghi Effendi nominate and appoint the Hands of the Cause of God in his own lifetime, so that they may be in working order and in turn gather together and elect the *Nine* from amongst themselves, there will always remain a crying void in the Cause. Furthermore, according to the clear text of the Will, a successor specified by Shoghi Effendi (whether from his glorious lineage or from another branch) will neither be acceptable nor valid in the estimation of the Bahai world unless and until the *Nine Hands of the Cause* have endorsed the choice either unanimously or by a majority.

In brief: Without the appointment of the Hands of the Cause, there can be no *Nine*, and without the vote of the *Nine* there can be no guardian after Shoghi Effendi.

Requirements made of the Guardian

Section 5. Abdul Baha made many requirements of the Bahais in regard to the guardian; he also made several requirements of the Guardian. These are listed in *Section 5* of this analysis of the Will. Some of the duties of the Guardian, as enumerated in this section under (A) and (B) have already been discussed, namely: the appointment of the Hands of the Cause and the supervision and direction of this body by him. The first requirement is after twenty years still unfulfilled; and the second, being

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dependant upon the first, is obviously unfulfilled also. We now come to Section (c), which deals with the association of the Guardian with the House of Justice.

The House of Justice will be similar to a Parliament or Congress, where elected members gather to discuss the needs of their constituents. In this case, however, it will be a World Parliament, concerned with the affairs of mankind as a whole.

Now, the postulate of a line of hereditary guardians as permanent Presidents of the House of Justice, with supreme authority over the *elected* representatives of all peoples and power to *expel* on the grounds of a *sin injurious to the common weal*, is a point that has baffled many students, both within and without the Cause. They argue that the rights, thus conferred, are so stupendous that it is inconceivable that any man, however mentally and spiritually developed, would be fitted to wield it. Further, even if such a man happens to hold the guardianship when the House of Justice finally comes into being, could one expect that his character and ability be transferred to his son? This point in the Will brings up problems which the mind of today cannot solve, and the requirement of Section (c), involved as it is with a far-flung future is, of necessity, unfulfilled.

In paragraph (d) Abdul Baha confers upon the Guardian the station of expounder of the Word of God. Here, much depends on the significance of the verb, *to expound*. The dictionary tells us that it means: to set forth; to lay open, to expose to view; to interpret; to expound a text, a word, a meaning.

In the Bahai Cause, the greatest emphasis has been set on teaching, therefore, it is not surprising that Abdul Baha, having placed the Hands of the Cause under the Guardian's direction, has designated the Guardian as *expounder of the Word of God*. Thus, we have a picked body of teachers under the generalship of the Guardian, himself as a super-teacher; and can catch the Master's vision of Haifa as a center of spiritual learning, a headquarters of incessant activity and a point of unity on the face of the earth.

The activities of Shoghi Effendi, during his years of office, may be classified as mainly literary. He has translated into English some of the works of Baha-O-Llah and has published several books, which are: *Bahai Administration*, 1928; *The World Order of Baha-O-Llah*, 1938; *The Advent of Divine Justice*, 1939; *Messages from the Guardian*, 1940, and *The Promised Day is Come*, 1941. The above, and a few pamphlets are

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published by the Bahai Publishing Committee and can be acquired from the Bahai Assembly, 119 West 57th Street, New York, N. Y. These are compilations of letters and cablegrams, addressed to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada, with a few to individuals, all of which mainly deal with the organization of the Bahai Administration; the formation of Assemblies and groups; the building of the Bahai Temple in Wilmette, Ill., together with the raising of funds for this object, and the expenses of salaried officials, teachers and committees.

Now I, myself, do not venture to make claim or disclaim as to whether these works come under the heading: *exposition of the word of God*, but will leave to others the proposition as to whether or not this requirement has been fulfilled.

The Tithe

Paragraph (e) applies to the collection and distribution of the Tithe (Huquq). The collection of the Tithe was a system, practiced in the days of Abdul Baha, whereby the believers in all parts could contribute toward the maintenance of the Cause: Through this means, the Master was enabled to keep the affairs of the growing movement in working order and to make of Acca and Haifa centers of benevolence, where assistance was given to Bahais in limited measure, and to non-Bahais in unlimited measure because of the fact that the latter were in the great majority. The system of Tithe was practised in the days of Baha-O-Llah also.

Abdul Baha in his Will asserts that God is the All-Possessing, exalted above the need of any gift from his creatures; yet, he considers that a fixed money offering causes the people to become firm and steadfast and draws divine increase upon them. Therefore, it was his intention that the system of the Tithe should be put into practice by the Guardian and the money expended along the same lines where he himself had expended it, and with growing scope. Abdul Baha specifies the purposes to which this income is to be devoted:

1. The diffusion of the Fragrance of God.
2. The exaltation of His word.
3. Benevolent pursuits.
4. The common weal.

This requirement, namely the collection of Tithe, has been met by the Guardian to some degree. In Persia and in other eastern countries, it does function; in this hemisphere it has been exercised on and off.

THE SUCCESSION

This fund, which is supposed to be contributed by the Bahai community throughout the world for specified purposes and which is contributed to some extent, becomes a Public Treasury with the Guardian as Treasurer, and as such entails periodical accounting. Abdul Baha never did this, but his movement was not an organization. Offerings poured into his hand, mainly from the East, and poured out again with equal flow and before the eyes of all. In his day, Haifa was a center of hospitality where natives and pilgrims learned of the Cause at its source; teachers trained by him were sent out in all directions and maintained, while the religious institutions of the Jews, Christians and Arabs, the schools and hospitals of Palestine and Syria, as well as the poor in those parts turned to him as a benefactor who never wearied of giving. In fact, during the World War a considerable section of the populations of Haifa and Acca were saved from starvation through his endless efforts and ceaseless care.

The Bahai picture is different now. The movement is an *organization* run by an administrative body along lines of laws and by-laws; and to be consistent with this new aspect, the financial department should be regulated according to institutionalized custom. This is extremely important; for the present Guardian, being the first, naturally sets the example to future guardians: He, as treasurer, should see to it that a certified accountant give to the members of his community a detailed report on this fund to which they have subscribed. What amount has been received during the years of trusteeship; what sums have been expended and for what purposes, and how much balance remains in the Treasury. In this way, a sound financial basis would be laid for the future, with books wide open as guarantee to donors and administrator alike. This has not been done up to date, although twenty-one years have elapsed since the departure of the Master: however, it is to be hoped that such a comprehensive report will be presented in the near future and that thereafter annual financial reports in regard to the Tithe will be given out from Haifa and become part of the administrative functioning of the movement.

A Public Treasury can carry with it great blessing—a Bahai Public Treasury might be the main source for practicalizing the principles of Baha-O-Llah.

CHAPTER VII

THE HANDS OF THE CAUSE

Spiritual Knighthood

A feature in the Will that strikes the imagination and stirs the emotions, is the institution of *the Hands of the Cause*. In the early days, this designation was one that was applied by Baha-O-Llah to the leading teachers of his time. A number of souls, on account of their sincerity, devotion, knowledge, sagacity and spirituality, became distinguished amongst his followers; and these persons, in recognition of what had actually been accomplished in the field of teaching, deservedly received the title: *Hands of the Cause of God*.

When in 1892, Abdul Baha took leadership of the Cause, he recognized and maintained the institution which had been developing, slowly and freely, which institution may, in more familiar terms, be called: a *college of universal teachers*. Here, the students learned their lessons in the school of life and received their diplomas at the hands of the Great Teacher himself.

The Hands of the Cause of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha

While I was engaged in the service of Abdul Baha in Egypt and Palestine during 1913-18, a number of these *Hands of the Cause* arrived from Iran to make report concerning their missionary work in the far-flung areas of their activities. They were indeed a group of sanctified beings, dedicated, wise, astute, witty and utterly charming. They were unlike any other class of men that I had met before, and I well remember the vivid impression that they made on me. Their simplicity puzzled the sophisticated and their selflessness embarrassed the self-centered. Through some mysterious process, they had learned the secret of being assured, yet humble; reserved, yet easy of access. They were upright, but not punctilious; aspiring, but not ambitious; bold, but not imprudent, and brilliant without effort and in an utterly natural way. Their knowledge of human nature and its frailties was astounding, and yet they were as innocent as new-born babes. For the most part, they were calm, serene and majestic, like the towering Himalayas; and then, a twist of the conversation, a little amusing anecdote and presto, they were converted into bubbling fountains of laughter and good cheer. What men they were, how human, how deft, how powerful! The *Hands of the Cause*, indeed!

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It was a great privilege to meet them and listen to the account of their travels and hardships. Their experiences were surpassed by their accomplishments; their tests, by their resourcefulness, and their persecutions by their loving-kindness. They were the undaunted pioneers of the Cause, who had crossed the sun-scorched deserts and scaled the snow-capped mountains of the Asiatic continent, enduring burning heat and punishing cold, hunger and want; who had faced swords and cannons, chains and prisons, nay even torture and death itself, in order to carry out their trust to Baha-O-Llah; and now, they were in the service of Abdul Baha, they had come to receive his blessings, to hear his instructions, and were on the eve of setting forth again on the perilous path of devotion.

Abdul Baha loved these champions of the Cause and placed in them his entire trust and confidence. They were his missionaries, who filled the countries of the East with the clamor of the message of Baha-O-Llah and carried his teachings of the fellowship of religions to the distant corners of the Orient. To bear testimony to their heroic self-sacrifice, he thus celebrates their mention in his Will and Testament:—

Salutation and praise, blessing and glory rest upon . . . the Hands of the Cause of God that have diffused widely the Divine Fragrances, declared His Proofs, proclaimed His Faith, published abroad His Law, detached themselves from all things but Him, stood for righteousness in the world, and kindled the Fire of the Love of God in the very hearts and souls of His servants.

I never was aware of the exact number of the Hands of the Cause of God, and now I do not know whether any of them are alive and if so, whether these are engaged in the service of the movement under the new regime; but, wherever they happen to be at this hour, whether in this world or in the world beyond, let me pause for a moment and offer them the homage that springs from a heart brimful with love and reverence, and from a mind crowded with memories of their heroic record.

The history of religions presents numerous shining examples of discipleship. Every prophet gathered around himself a band of devoted followers and companions, whose faith moved mountains and whose pilgrimages caused the diffusion of the light, which had been received first-hand, to multitudes in their own country and in the lands beyond the seas. Nothing to my mind is more stimulating than are the heroic tales of these men of God, these heralds of the Sun of Reality, these adorers of the Beloved of the world!

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The Hands of the Cause of The Bab

Preceding Baha-O-Llah, the Bab established an institution called *The Letters of the Living*. Eighteen disciples, chosen at the inauguration of his ministry, received the above title; and these travelled throughout the length and breadth of Iran, proclaiming the coming disintegration of the Old World and the imminent appearance of the *New*. Their superlative achievements, followed by their martyrdom, glow like stars on the pages of Babi history. They were the inspired harbingers and forerunners of the cycle of Baha-O-Llah, the Cosmic Prophet of our Age.

The Hands of the Cause of Christ

Two thousand years ago, Christ chose twelve disciples from amongst those who followed him, and in time these twelve scattered to different parts and, through their mighty labors, brought the generations to worship at the feet of their Lord. They filled the earth with the repercussions of the divine romance of Galilee; they enthroned in the hearts of millions the authority of the Father; established through the expanse of the earth the love of the Son, and brought within the reach of both mighty and lowly, the Graces of the Holy Spirit.

And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples; and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles.

—*St. Luke*, Chapter 6, verse 13.

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

—*St. Matthew*, Chapter 10, verse 1.

After this spiritual ordination, he gave them the command:—

Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . . teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

—*St. Matthew*, Chapter 28, verse 19-20.

Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

—*St. Mark*, Chapter 16, verse 15.

And they did the work; Twelve men, poor, ignorant and alone; yet they possessed the love that made them godlike and the faith that could work miracles.

The Hands of the Cause of Christ, and what mighty hands!

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Provisions for the Hands of the Cause of Today

The provisions for the Hands of the Cause of God, as enumerated in the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, are as follows:

1. *Appointment*

The Hands of the Cause of God must be appointed by the Guardian. The number, whether large or small, is left to his discretion.

2. *Election of the Nine.*

The Hands of the Cause, thus nominated and appointed by the Guardian, will elect from amongst themselves *Nine* persons who will constitute, what may be described in American governmental terminology, a cabinet to the Guardian. They will devote their time to his service. Abdul Baha makes it plain that the election of these *Nine* must be carried either unanimously or by a majority *from among the company of the Hands of the Cause of God.*

3. *Their sanction is required for the appointment of a successor to the Guardian.*

Abdul Baha places on the shoulders of these *Nine* a delicate and most important responsibility in *giving their assent to the choice of the one whom the guardian hath chosen as his successor.* This assent, however, must be given in such wise that the assenting and dissenting voices may not be distinguishable (secret ballot).

It is evident, therefore, that succession to the guardianship is actually dependent on the existence of these *Nine*; and further, that the wisdom and discrimination of this body will be drawn upon to insure the stability of the movement for the future.

4. *Hands of the Cause under direction of the Guardian.*

The entire company of the Hands of the Cause is under the direction of the Guardian, and is expected to execute his orders. In other words, the Guardian is similar to the Supreme Commander of an army, while the Hands of the Cause are his generals. Abdul Baha puts it graphically when he writes: *All must be under his shadow and obey his command.*

Now, as the functioning of a Commander-in-Chief depends entirely on the number and quality of his generals, one therefore wonders why Shoghi Effendi has not, to this date, taken advantage of the inestimable asset entailed in the *Hands of the Cause*, as provided in the Will of Abdul Baha. Twenty years have elapsed since the passing away of the Master, and the *Hands of the Cause* are still non-existent. It is difficult to surmise why the question of these appointments has not been taken up. Some

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have said that Shoghi Effendi considers that he has at his disposal no souls great enough for the position; yet it seems that this cannot be the case, for many persons distinguished for character, ability and devotion have come to the front during these latter years. Be that as it may, it remains very noticeable that this important provision in the Will is still unfulfilled.

5. *Mission of the Hands of the Cause*

Abdul Baha points out the definite services that should be rendered by the *Hands of the Cause*.

(a) To diffuse the sweet fragrances of the Cause of God.

(b) To guide the inhabitants of the world to the Cause of God.

Abdul Baha makes it plain that the performance of these two services is binding upon each one of them and must not be disregarded even for a moment. This, according to his words, is an *absolute command*; and it is evident that, as the outcome of their work in these two particular directions, Abdul Baha expects some most radical and startling revolutionary changes to take place in the social, economic, political and religious affairs of mankind. Reading a little further we see what these are:

(a) The existent world will be changed into the Paradise of Abha.

(b) The surface of the earth will be transformed into heaven.

(c) Contention and conflict now raging amongst peoples, kindreds, nations and governments will disappear.

(d) Men everywhere, through mutual cooperation, will be knitted into one people and one race, and will look upon one another as members of one family, and this earth as One Home.

A cursory reading of the above four items gives us a faint idea of the expectations of Abdul Baha regarding the initiative and activities of the Hands of the Cause. He hoped that through their labors, the spectres of war, ignorance, prejudice and misery would be banished from the face of the earth, and that the era of peace, prosperity, knowledge and toleration would dawn. Thus, he confers upon them a mission of superlative importance, in which, according to his instructions, they shall receive constant support from the Guardian, who *must continually urge them to strive and endeavor to the utmost of their ability*.

6. *Attitude of the Hands of the Cause toward the Guardian.*

In one of the passages of the Will, Abdul Baha plainly requires of the Hands of the Cause of God that they, along with the members of the House of Justice, the Aghsan and the Afnan, *show their obedience, sub-*

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missiveness and subordination, unto the guardian of the Cause of God, so turn unto him and be lowly before him.

Now, there are many earnest students of the Will who feel that this is a stringent injunction; but, for my part, I think that, in a case like this, one should not insist on literalism. Knowing the Master as I do, I cannot believe that he intended to deprive these noble groups of their self-reliance and dignity; he did not mean to abase or humiliate them. It must have been far from his wish that any one would insist, or that the Guardian himself would actually demand, blind and cringing *obedience, submissiveness and subordination.*

However, it is rather difficult to make forecast regarding the extent to which the non-appointed Hands of the Cause, together with the non-existent members of a future House of Justice, would be liable for carrying out this injunction to the letter. Unquestionably if, and when, these two important bodies come into being, some adjustments would be made, so that the intention of Abdul Baha should be understood and practiced; the Guardian receiving honor and consideration due to his station, and the Hands of the Cause and the members of the House of Justice offering him love and service without feeling the loss of their dignity and self-respect.

7. The attributes of the Hands of the Cause.

The Hands of the Cause of God are required to characterize themselves with three fundamental ethical qualities which are:

- (a) Sanctity.
- (b) Detachment from earthly things.
- (c) Fear of God as shown in conduct, manners, deeds and words.

Through the expression of these attributes, it is believed they will become worthy to win God's good-pleasure in the service of their fellow-men.

8. Obligations and duties of the Hands of the Cause.

Judging from the list of duties to be undertaken by the Hands of the Cause, Abdul Baha looked upon them as a band of great Bahai teachers, reformers, educators, scientists and philosophers.

These duties and obligations are:

- (a) Diffusion of the divine Fragrances.
- (b) Edification of the souls.
- (c) Promotion of learning.

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(d) Improvement of character.

(e) Teaching of the Cause in cooperation with the Afnan and the friends.

9. *Disobedience on the part of the Hands of the Cause.*

A statement is made by Abdul Baha to the effect that *should any within or without the company of the Hands of the Cause of God disobey and seek division, the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon him.* Abdul Baha does not specify the branch of authority toward which this disobedience might be shown, nor along what lines division might be sought; but it is interesting to note that no person and no agency is called upon to punish such disobedience, or attempted division, for he simply states that *the wrath of God and His vengeance will be upon them.* Now, inasmuch as Abdul Baha leaves their punishment to the Supreme Power, we can rely on the certainty that God is more merciful than are His creatures, and that He will pour upon such persons the waters of His forgiveness. At this point, it is interesting to note that no provision is made for the expulsion of any of the Hands of the Cause, even under the above-mentioned circumstances.

10. *Disciplinary power of the Hands of the Cause.*

Abdul Baha assigns to the Hands of the Cause a disciplinary power and authority, which will enable them, *if they find any one opposing or protesting against the Guardian, to cast him out from the congregation of Baha.* Here again we have the provision for a rule to be exercised by a group which has not come into existence and, as we cannot guess under what conditions and through what legal or ethical procedure this rule may be put into practice, it is futile to speculate about it at this early stage of the history of the Bahai Cause.

Let us not forget that we live in a world of change and that it serves no useful purpose to argue about things which have not happened and which, in all probability, will not happen. The company of the Hands of the Cause of God is not formed, and when formed, if it is to resemble, even remotely, the Hands of the Cause of God in the dispensation of Abdul Baha (especially those whom I met in the East), it would be a company of individuals, instinct with understanding of, and compassion for the shortcomings and sorrows of humanity; abounding in patience and tenderness for all forms of life, and hallowed with an abiding faith in their Maker and His creation. These men and women would be heralds of Freedom, messengers of Light, angels of Mercy; and their cry would be:

Pave the way!

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Open the way!

Prepare the way—so that the King of Glory may walk therein!

The Hands of the Cause, even as the disciples of the Prophets, would stand as the flowers of chivalry in the world!

CHAPTER VIII
THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE
AS CONCEIVED BY BAHÁ-O-LLAH

J u s t i c e

Since the dawn-days of history, leaders of humanity in various parts of the world have striven to erect the standard of justice in the tribe, the race, the nation. Now and then, their efforts were crowned with temporary success, which, however, was but too soon swept away by rising storms of tyranny. The struggle has been continuous and uninterrupted; while the ideal of justice, upsurging in the hearts of prophets, statesmen and plain individuals, has ever marched forward on a pathway strewn with the sacrifices of its champions.

Justice has alike been abused and used.

In the name of justice, emperors have proclaimed their decrees!

In the name of justice, martyrs have hung on the cross!

In the name of justice, armies have marched and countries have been devastated!

In the name of justice, kingdoms have flourished!

In the name of justice, scholars have burned the mid-night oil and saints have languished in jail!

When depicted, justice is usually represented as a gooddness holding a sword in one hand and scales in the other. Her eyes are apt to be blind-folded in token of her impartiality—all bringing to mind the words of Shakespeare: *This even-handed justice.*

Justice Upheld by the Ancients

What is justice? Justice is the principle of rectitude and fair dealing among men. It is spiritual and practical integrity. Throughout history, it has been considered as one of the cardinal virtues. Justice, according to Plato, was to be obtained through social harmony and beneficent activities. Aristotle, likewise, held that justice was to be found in the practice of virtue toward others. The epochs which antedated these sages, and those which came after them, have all produced their own witnesses to justice speaking of her in practically the same manner. Thus, it can be stated that in the eyes of the wise men of the nations, justice is conformity with divine

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law; it is a merging of truth and reason; it is fairness and impartiality; it is the rendering to everyone of his due.

In establishing their empires, the Babylonians and Assyrians attached importance to everything that contributed toward making sacred the person of the king; consequently, they arbitrarily endowed him with the attributes of uprightness, integrity, love for his people and fair and benign conduct toward them. Thus, did these ancient empire-builders deify their rulers, not only by right of inheritance but on account of characteristics which made them like unto the gods. Two of their maxims were: *Hate evil and love righteousness. Protect justice.*

Justice Upheld by the Prophets

In Buddhism, the word righteousness, as descriptive of conduct, coincides with morality, while the term justice is generally used with a religious implication. The conception of righteousness is *a law of the universe, a divine standard* to which all beings should conform; at the same time in the organic universe, the consequences of actions, which we call justice, retribution, compensation, are as truly and inevitably a part of the eternal, natural or cosmic order, as is the flow of a river or the process of the seasons. Therefore, Buddhism teaches that good actions, done according to the moral principle, are as much a form of righteousness as when done according to the will of God.

To the Hebrew Prophets and Rabbis, the principle of justice shone like a star in the firmament of the human consciousness. The word *righteousness* with all its connotations occurs more than 500 times in the Old Testament and, in the estimation of Talmudic scholars, *One righteous man can ensure the existence of the world.* Righteousness is symbolized as a high peak, toward which the Jews must patiently and painfully climb during the space of life. It is an infinite task, an endless striving. With each achievement, there comes the need of a higher achievement; and the summit reached, only reveals further summits to be attained and surmounted.

In the House of Israel, the word righteousness is primarily interpreted in terms of social usage. The righteous man is he who adheres to the moral obligations of his people. Judges, *able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain* (*Exodus, Chapter 18, Verse 21*) were appointed to determine which were the rightful customs and to apply these to changing conditions.

In Psalms (*Psalms, Chapter 89, Verse 14*) we read:—

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Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne; mercy and truth go before thy face.

Isaiah's keynote of holiness is justice blended with mercy. This prophet's ideal for Zion is that of a *City of Righteousness* where kings and princes exalt justice as the lodestar of government, where people dwell together in mutual helpfulness and security. He delivers to us the message of Jehovah:—

Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment and do justice: for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed. (*Isaiah, Chapter 56, Verse 1*)

Jeremiah, invoking God (*Jeremiah, Chapter 50, Verse 7*) calls Him *the habitation of Justice*. With his prophetic eye, he looks into the future, saying:—

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. (*Jeremiah, Chapter 23, Verse 5*)

Ezekiel presents a well-rounded description of a *just man*: The righteous man, who doeth justice and righteousness has not merely kept himself free from idolatry and uncleanness, but

hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment . . . hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man. (*Ezekiel, Chapter 18, Verses 5-9*)

Among the later prophets, Amos, who lived B. C. 787, raises a noble and inspiring call to justice: Jehovah has no desire for sacrifice. To Him, the very presence of these gifts are but multiplied transgression. Away then with the din of songs and the strumming of the viol,

but let judgment (*mishpat*) run down as waters, and righteousness (*s'dakah*) as a mighty stream. (*Amos, Chapter 5, Verse 24*)

In this great statement of principle, Amos has advanced far beyond earlier conceptions of morality. To him, righteousness is no mere body of customs, still less a legal status of fallible authority; it is the living essence of social ethics, alike embracing honesty in business, fair weights and balances, standard wages and prices, and impartial justice in the law courts.

Micah holds before us the same pure standard of justice and proclaims a threefold rule for a righteous life:—

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To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. (*Micah*, Chapter 6, Verse 8)

Continuing the tradition established by the Prophets, Christ widened and deepened the significance of justice and righteousness; although the latter words occurs but very few times in the New Testament—actually seven times in St. Matthew and twice in St. John.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. (*Matthew*, Chapter 5, Verse 6)

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (*Matthew*, Chapter 5, Verse 10)

For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (*Matthew*, Chapter 5, Verse 20)

But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (*Matthew*, Chapter 6, Verse 33)

According to the above verses, righteousness applies to conduct; yet Christ made it clear that, in practicing right conduct, his followers were to take a wider range than did the scribes and Pharisees whose attitude was based merely upon the letter of the law.

Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Christ refers to righteousness as to a familiar subject. He concedes that his hearers are versed in the ritualistic and ecclesiastical implications of the term, and then he goes on to explain that the righteousness to be hereafter practiced, must far exceed the righteousness of the Jew. Obedience to the Law, almsgiving, prayer, fasting, all were obligatory; yet, these practices were to be based upon a more comprehensive understanding of the Law, and animated by a new and different spirit. Especially they were to be devoid of the ostentation which marred the comportment of the Pharisees. In other words: *True righteousness* is the right conduct of the heart, induced by the right knowledge of the Law.

The Christian Church presents the idea of righteousness or justice in two ways, mainly. First, as a quality of God's *nature* and *action*. Second, as the *character* which God requires of man. Therefore, the aim of a Christian consists in developing the *character* of justice required by God, thus attaining the chief end of life,—being made blessed to all eternity in the full enjoyment of God.

In the Religion of Islam, righteousness or justice comprise loftiness of character, fidelity to one's pledge, sincerity towards self and others. We find many references to this attribute in the Koran, for Mohammad taught his disciples to incorporate it in their dealings with their fellowmen.

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Be steadfast in justice. (*The Koran*, Chapter IV)

Give weight and measure with justice. (*The Koran*, Chapter VI)

O ye who believe! Fulfill your compacts! Stand fast to God as witnesses to justice, and let not ill-will towards people make you sin by not acting with equity. Act with equity, that is nearer to piety. (*The Koran*, Chapter V)

Verily, those who devour the property of orphans unjustly, only devour into their bellies, fire; and they shall broil in flame. (*The Koran*, Chapter IV)

A tradition attributed to Mohammad states:—

Give the laborer his wages before his perspiration becomes dry.

Ali ibn Abu Talib, son-in-law of the prophet says:—

Divine fortification protects the country of a just king.

This attribute of justice is greatly accentuated among the followers of Islam. According to one Persian Mohammadan scholar, Nasir-Ed-Din Tusi, righteousness becomes merged with justice, which in turn is divided between the idea of the *tempering* of feelings and passions so as to preserve the golden mean between two extremes, and that of social justice which is the end of political philosophy. History, anecdotes and proverbs, as well as the written testimony of foreign travellers in Arabia, furnish much information on the subject of righteousness.

For instance: an Arab carries respect for hospitality to the point of superstition. His most irreconcilable enemy, on touching the cord of his tent or the hem of his wife's dress, find shelter, security, protection and justice. All the virtues, even the tenderness of chivalry, unknown in Europe until much later, were manifest in the customs of this people from time immemorial.

Here are two Arabic proverbs which, although uttered centuries ago, have not lost their freshness:—

The unjust man gives nothing to anyone without getting double in return.

If you say yes about something, do it; for the word yes constitutes a debt which is obligatory on well-born souls.

It is evident therefore that, from time immemorial, the pursuit of justice has been the major occupation of man. It is also clear that, from age to age, the conception of justice has changed; yet never the spirit of justice, which is the securing of more stable ethical and political relations among the people, together with the elimination of manifest tyrannies and oppressions as practiced by the races and the religions. Whether in China

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or India, Persia or Arabia, Greece or Rome, Egypt or Palestine, whether on this continent or on that, the pursuit of justice has ever been consistent and unabated.

Prophets and reformers, philosophers and poets, seers and saints, scientists and economists, politicians and statesmen, reactionaries and revolutionaries, all, according to their own peculiar vision, have portrayed before the eyes of their followers a picture of justice; while leaders and individuals have pretended to work, or have actually worked for the abolition of social and economic inequalities, the eradication of ignorance and poverty, the establishment of democratic rights, the delegalization of class, the elimination of national and international wars, the encouragement and development of a scientific outlook upon life and the maintenance of peace through Law amongst the various component parts of the human race.

Justice Upheld by Baha-O-Llah

During the last century, Baha-O-Llah lifted high such a banner of universal justice, calling upon all men to gather around it and carry it into the highways and by-ways of the world. At the time, both the government and religion of Iran had forgotten the practice of even an elemental principle of justice; consequently, these institutions pooled their political and clerical forces to bring down this banner and trample it under their feet. The state officials were corrupt, the clergy no less so; and oppression and tyranny were rampant. An absolute monarch, who held in his hand the law of life and death, sat on the throne of Cyrus and Darius, selling the government of the Provinces to the highest bidder. A wicked and brutal bureaucracy ruled the kingdom; illiteracy and ignorance kept the inhabitants deaf, dumb and blind; the peasants were taxed beyond their endurance; petty rulers and degenerate princes drew on the national assets until nothing was left but want, misery and despair. Shepherdless, the people dared not formulate their grievances, much less protest against the system which was parent to their sufferings.

Baha-O-Llah, having seen these things with his eyes, arose to champion the cause of the oppressed and the downtrodden in Persia; then, himself, falling a victim to the autocratic regime of his own land, he, before the face of his jailers, identified himself with the cause of the People in all lands, and hurled the weight of his divine knowledge and perception against the ramparts of entrenched conservatism and tyranny.

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In the course of his long life, Baha-O-Llah enunciated certain abstract ideals applying to justice, which the student will find embedded in his writings like nuggets of gold. We shall here confine ourselves to the quoting of five passages in order to point the direction in which he wished humanity to wend its way:—

O Son of Spirit!

Justice is loved above all. Neglect it not, if thou desirest Me. By it, thou wilt be strengthened to perceive things with thine own eyes and not by the eyes of men, to know them by thine own knowledge and not by the knowledge of any in the world. Meditate on this—how thou oughtest to be. Justice is of My Bounty to thee and of My Providence over thee; therefore, keep it ever before thy sight. (*Hidden Words*, page 4)

The light of men is Justice; quench it not with the contrary winds of oppression and tyranny. The purpose of Justice is the appearance of unity among people. In this exalted Word, the sea of God's wisdom is moving: all the books of the world are not sufficient to contain its interpretation.

If the world is adorned with this mantle, the sun of the saying—"On that day God will satisfy them all with His abundance,"—will appear and shine from the horizon of the heaven of the world. Know ye the station of this Utterance, for it is from the loftiest fruits of the Tree of the Supreme Pen. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 52)

O Son of Man!

If thou lookest toward Mercy, regard not that which benefits thee, and hold to that which will benefit the servants. If thou lookest toward Justice, choose thou for others what thou chooseth for thyself. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 49)

After enumerating a series of spiritual rules for the conduct of a truly Bahai life, he says:—

The source of all these utterances is justice. It is the freedom of man from superstition and imitation, that he may discern the Manifestations of God with the eye of oneness, and consider all affairs with keen vision. (*Bahai Scriptures*, page 159)

O Son of Spirit!

Know, verily, that he who exhorts men to equity and himself does injustice, is not of Me, even though he bear my Name. (*Hidden Words*, page 11).

Thus did Baha-O-Llah, out of his own bitter experience and illumined intuition, formulate certain *abstract ideals* of justice, which ideals he later embodied in a *concrete plan* for the establishment of THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE.

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Abdul Baha, in his Will and Testament, gives much space to the workings of the future House of Justice. Consequently, this chapter is devoted to an exposition of this mighty institution as conceived by the Founder of the Bahai Cause.

What is the House of Justice?

The House of Justice is a vision which rose in the glowing consciousness of Baha-O-Llah; it is the child of brain and spirit which, some day growing into strong manhood, shall defend and safeguard the rights of man; it is an impregnable bulwark against all tyrants and oppressors; it is the stronghold of democracy and freedom, and an asylum for the inarticulate and the dispossessed. It is the exemplification of the hopes and dreams of all the Prophets and the pattern for a Universal Republic.

According to Baha-O-Llah's teachings, the House of Justice, to function in each country, is to consist of a body of men elected by the people. It is to be a political and democratic institution, similar unto the Congress of the United States. The Universal House of Justice, composed of representatives of humanity at large, will deal with the world's problems and legislate for the welfare of all. Baha-O-Llah takes for granted the early establishment of the *National Houses of Justice*; for whenever he speaks of the duties and responsibilities of the House of Justice, it is understood that he is referring to the Universal House of Justice which is to be none other than a World Parliament.

The members of the House of Justice are lawmakers and legislators intent on the affairs of the world. They are not to take unto themselves religious jurisdiction over the peoples; for Baha-O-Llah clearly specifies that: *Acts of worship must be observed according as they are revealed in the Book. (Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, page 90).*

The members must not be bound to any precedents and traditions of the past, but must be given the widest latitude and freedom, so that, completely unencumbered, they may legislate according to the exigencies of the time and the requirement of the occasion. In other words, their conscience and the *interests of the people (Bahai Scriptures, page 151)* must be their sole guides. In regard to this particular point Baha-O-Llah says:—

The trainer of the world is Justice, for it consists of two pillars: Reward and Retribution. These two pillars are two fountains for the life of the people of the world. Inasmuch as for each time and day a particular decree and order is expedient, affairs are therefore entrusted to the ministers of the House of Justice, so that they may execute that which they deem advisable at the time. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, pages 89, 90*).

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Again, in a broad and all-inclusive statement, Baha-O-Llah asserts that *the affairs of the people are placed in charge of the men (i. e., members) of the House of Justice (Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, page 89)*. By *affairs*, he of course means *everything* that touches the physical, social, educational, political and economic life of the people of the earth. No assignment could be more vast and comprehensive; therefore, in order to leave no doubt in anybody's mind as to what he actually means by *the interests of the people*, Baha-O-Llah specifies:—

We exhort the men of the House of Justice, and command them to guard and protect the servants, maid-servants and children. They must, under all circumstances, have regard for the interests of the servants. (*Bahai Scriptures, pages 150-151*)

Thus, the interests of the people and of the children are placed in the hands of the members of the House of Justice. It is an imposing and far-reaching obligation.

Universal Education

The protection of children brings into the picture the problem of education, and on this point Baha-O-Llah is most emphatic. *Every child*, whether boy or girl, must be given the very best instruction available at the time. The House of Justice is made directly responsible for the moral, intellectual and practical education of the children. No excuse is acceptable in this regard. The levying of a special educational tax is decreed, so that even the poorest may receive proper instruction. This educational tax must in time become an integral part of the workings of every community, and efficient methods should be devised for its collection and distribution. The bare suggestion as written by Baha-O-Llah, which needs scientific amplifications by proper tax experts, is as follows:—

Men and women must place a part of what they earn by trade, agriculture or other business, in charge of a trustworthy person, to be spent in the education and instruction of the children. That deposit must be invested in the education of the children, under the advice of the Trustees (or members) of the House of Justice. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, page 29*)

To Baha-O-Llah the protection of children was a matter of international concern. It is the bounden duty of the members of the House of Justice to work for the elimination of Child Labor and Child Exploitation in all countries; to provide ways and means for the refinement of the children's sentiments, so that when reaching manhood, they may consecrate their best qualities to the service of humanity; and to establish agen-

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cies for the creation of the spirit of fellowship and harmony amongst the young people of the world. So supreme, so imperative is the question of education in the eyes of Baha-O-Llah, that he says:—

He who educates his son, or any other's children, it is as though he hath educated one of My children. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 129).

Baha-O-Llah a Pragmatist

In the matter of education, Baha-O-Llah is a pragmatist. He does not favor the study of theology and *such sciences as begin in mere words, and end in mere words*, but wishes the children to receive such instruction as will fit them for the battle of life. He speaks very enthusiastically of *Sciences, Crafts and Arts*, but insists that he is referring to *those sciences which may profit the people of the earth*.

To pursue this interesting subject and prove that Baha-O-Llah is the champion of practical education, let us examine the following conclusive passage:—

To study sciences and arts of all descriptions is allowable; but such sciences as are profitable, which lead and conduce to the elevation of mankind . . . It is made incumbent on every one of you to engage in some one occupation, such as arts, trades and the like. We have made this—your occupation—identical with the worship of God . . . Waste not your time in idleness and indolence, and occupy yourselves with that which will profit yourselves and others besides yourself . . . The most despised of men before God is he who sits and begs. Cling unto the rope of means, relying upon God, the Causer of Causes. Every soul who occupies himself in an art or trade—this will be accounted an act of worship before God. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, pages 88-89)

Again, Baha-O-Llah insists:—

The Supreme Pen enjoins upon all to instruct and educate the children . . . It is decreed that every father must educate his sons and daughters in learning and in writing and also in that which hath been ordained in the Tablet. He who neglects that which hath been commanded (in this matter), if he is rich, it is incumbent on the trustees (of the House of Justice) to recover from him the amount required for the education of the children; otherwise, (i e., if the parent is not capable) the matter shall devolve on the House of Justice. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, pages 128-129).

Thus, the members of the House of Justice are the trustees of the people and must take full responsibility for the all-around instruction of the children, irrespective of race, nationality and religion, for:—

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Knowledge is like unto wings for the being (of man), and is as a ladder for ascending. To acquire knowledge is incumbent on all . . . Indeed the real treasury of man is his knowledge. Knowledge is the means of honor, prosperity, joy, gladness, happiness and exultation. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, pages 76-77*)

The House of Justice an Asylum for the Poor and the Needy

Today, all the Parliaments and Congresses of the nations represent, to a greater or lesser extent, the entrenched interests of privileged classes or groups. The major part of the legislation which is written on the statute books is in favor of the many, or the few, who are bracketed at the top. This, from the viewpoint of a social technician, is the weakness of our modern democracy—that candidates, once elected to office, forget the interest of their electors, and become representatives that *do not represent*. To Baha-O-Llah, this was nothing but a betrayal of trust; therefore his ideal for the House of Justice was quite contrary to the above standard of parliamentary practice prevalent in the western world. With courage born of divine knowledge, he proclaims:—

Verily, we have made it (the House of Justice) an asylum for the poor and needy. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, page 129*)

International Language

Baha-O-Llah demands of the members of the House of Justice the solution of the language problem amongst the peoples of the world. He tells us that, through international communication, all regions will be illuminated; for when we come to understand our neighbors, we shall not look upon them, nor be looked upon, as foreigners and enemies. In order to achieve this much-desired object, *the people should be familiar with each other's writing and language, therefore:*

The trustees of the House of Justice must select one tongue out of the present languages, or a new language, and likewise select one among the various writings and teach them to the children in the schools of the world, so that the whole world may thereby be considered as one native land. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah, pages 127-128*).

Blue Print for the House of Justice

As an architect, Baha-O-Llah has drawn the blue print for the Universal House of Justice—the Parliament of Man. For thousands of years, our forefathers have been dreaming of it and now, with our own eyes, we see its foreshadowing on the horizon. The externalization of this

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majestic establishment depends entirely upon the understanding and devotion to be contributed by this generation and those that shall presently succeed us. Therefore, realizing the fact that a share in this mighty enterprise is allowed to each and every one of us, let us pause for a moment and reevaluate the plan of construction as laid out by Baha-O-Llah.

(1) The House of Justice is a constitutional body, the members of which are elected by universal suffrage. It is an international Congress, the chief duty of which is the service and elevation of mankind.

(2) The House of Justice is a secular assembly, and not an ecclesiastical tribunal. Although conceived by a religious authority, it is not to legislate on religious matters nor interfere with the religious practices of the people. Its lawmaking powers concern the affairs of men, *here* and *now*, not there and hereafter.

(3) The House of Justice is the People's Parliament; its members are the people's representatives. Therefore, protection of the people's *rights* is the dominant issue. No problem is excluded from the range of deliberation and discussion. To the House of Justice belongs the privilege and responsibility of creating a New World Order, based on the comity of nations.

(4) The House of Justice is the Asylum of the poor and the needy.

(5) The House of Justice is the promoter of Universal Education and the patron of the sciences and arts. It is the guardian of the children. Nowhere, has Baha-O-Llah been more specific and insistent than on this point. He places in the hands of the members of the House of Justice the vast responsibility of reshaping educational methods and of establishing an educational system throughout the world. Here Baha-O-Llah rises in majesty as the Universal Educator, for he has ordered the harnessing of all the forces of our enlightened age for the conquest of illiteracy, the abolition of ignorance and the dispelling of mental darkness.

(6) The House of Justice is the promoter of international communication. Freedom of travel and freedom of commerce are indispensable; but these forward steps will be of limited benefit, if the exchange of our ideas continues to be dependent upon the medium of interpreters. Therefore, Baha-O-Llah enjoins upon the House of Justice the early adoption of a current language or the creation of a new one to serve as an international auxiliary language to be used in conjunction with the various native languages. This is to be the World Language; through it, the earth will become One Home and the people the members of One Family.

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(7) The House of Justice is the working counterpart of the palace of Universal Peace. The members must bring together the leaders of the nations, and through mutual consultation, enlivened with a sense of high responsibility toward every section of society, lay the foundations of permanent security and harmony. This is its chief work; unquestionably, its crowning glory. This was the mission of Baha-O-Llah. He said:—

The members of the House of Justice must promote the Most Great Peace in order that the world may be freed from onerous expenditures. This matter is obligatory and indispensable; for warfare and conflict are the foundation of trouble and distress. (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 28-29)

The City of Righteousness

Baha-O-Llah, through divine vision, has set up a model for the mansion of human felicity, and has provided for its construction, material, both abstract and concrete. His call has been broadcast, lo, these eighty years, and now, at any time, at any moment, we may see the assemblage of the laborers and the laying of the cornerstone.

It was probably with this thought in his mind that he wrote:—

The bride of wonderful significances, who was concealed behind the veils of words, hath appeared through Divine Providence and Heavenly Bounties, like unto the radiance of the Beauty of the Beloved. I testify, O friends, that the Bounty has become complete, the Evidence is accomplished, the Argument manifested, and the Reason affirmed. Now what will your endeavors show forth from the degrees of devotion? Thus are the favors perfected unto ye and unto all who are in the Heavens and earth? (*Hidden Words*, pages 56-57)

Micah was one of the few prophets who beheld the House of Justice with the eye of the spirit. He bequeathed his vision to the generations that came after him; and mankind has cherished it—as a vision. And now, in this day, the *abstract reality* perceived by the Prophet of Israel is on the eve of becoming a concrete fact as provided for by Baha-O-Llah.

Micah said:

But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.

And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord . . . and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths . . . And he shall judge among many people,

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and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nations shall not lift up a sword against nations, neither shall they learn war any more.

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it.

For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.

(*Michah*, Chapter 4, Verses 1-5)

This is the *City of Righteousness* predicted by Isaiah in earlier years!
This is the House of Justice planned by Baha-O-Llah in this day!

CHAPTER IX

THE HOUSE OF JUSTICE

AS PLANNED BY ABDUL BAHA

Justice in Individual Life and Public Affairs

The Book of Aqdas (i. e., the Most Holy Book) revealed by Baha-O-Llah, contains the fundamental religious laws of the Bahai Movement. It is a treasury of spiritual rules and a pattern to be adhered to in conducting the individual Bahai life. Meanwhile, legislation on all social and political conditions is left to the House of Justice. In this reference, Abdul Baha states in his Will and Testament:—

Unto the Most Holy Book (the Book of Aqdas) every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice.

Elsewhere he says:—

The laws of Baha-O-Llah are the unchangeable organic laws of the Universal House of Justice. They are the very foundation upon which the structure of additional legislation is built.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

And then, this illuminating passage:—

All the civic affairs and the legislation of material laws for the increasing needs of the enlightened humanity belong to the House of Justice.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

Abdul Baha, like his father, was a great lover of Justice; therefore, before entering upon an analysis of the Will, it would be well to sum up, through his own words, his conception of this virtue:—

Friends of God! Set forth the example of Justice! Justice is a universal quality. From the highest to the lowest, justice should be sacred; from the sovereign to the merchant, the minister of state to the artisan, all must be just. Be just, respect the rights of each man, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." A workman who commits an injustice is as much to blame as a tyrant. Each one of us can choose between justice and injustice. I hope that you will be just in your relations with others, that you will never harm your fellows, that you will respect the rights of all men, above all, consider the rights of others before your own.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

Abdul Baha states in the Will that God has ordained the Universal House of Justice as the *source of all good*. This bears out Baha-O-Llah's

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assertion that the members of the House of Justice *are the trustees of God among His servants and the day-springs of command in His countries.* (*Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 89). Through these two statements we get a glimpse of the imposing edifice that shall be the House of Justice and the high calling of its members.

If the House of Justice is the *source of all good*, it is evident that its members must do everything in their power so as to measure up to the level indicated for them by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha. The people cannot quench their thirst with cool and salubrious waters if the fountain-head is impure. Consequently, the well-being of the electors and the fulfillment of their expectations and hopes is dependent upon the character and deportment of those whom they have chosen to represent them.

The *source of all good!* Education, knowledge, enlightenment, science, art, prosperity, progress, freedom, democracy, nay civilization itself, are *goods* in a real tangible way; and Abdul Baha tells us that these *goods* are to be derived from the Universal House of Justice. On another occasion he said:—

When the Universal House of Justice is organized, the members will do their utmost for the realization of greater cordiality and comity amongst the nations.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

Election of Members

In studying the writings of Baha-O-Llah which apply to the House of Justice, we receive the impression that this body is to be elected by universal suffrage. On the other hand, while Abdul Baha in his Will re-emphasizes the point that the members of the House of Justice are *to be universally elected*, he specifies that they *must be elected by universal suffrage, that is by the believers*. Again, he writes:—

By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary election in Western countries such as those of England.

From the above passage, we may draw the conclusion that Abdul Baha expected the rapid spread of the Bahai Cause in various countries to the extent that the Bahais themselves would be enabled to elect members either to a National or a Universal House of Justice. It is true that while he was alive and active in teaching, there were many evidences that the Cause was gaining acceptance on the part of an increasing throng of men

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and women; but the momentum of the movement halted after his departure from life. Consequently, if the House of Justice is to be established in a future that is not too far distant, it would seem that such a body cannot be formed out of the Bahai membership, which is in the extreme minority in practically every country, for this would be tantamount to the organization of a state within the state or a government within the government.

This point of election by universal suffrage among the Bahais, is an extremely important one, for it seems to imply a very fundamental difference between the plan of Baha-O-Llah and that of Abdul Baha. A great deal of thought will probably be expended on this issue in times to come, for on it depends the direction of the whole movement.

Two Electoral Systems

In another passage of the Will, we receive a different impression of the subject. Abdul Baha says:—

By this House is meant the Universal House of Justice, that is, in all countries, a secondary House of Justice must be instituted, and these secondary Houses of Justice must elect the members of the Universal one.

This latter idea is repeated in the *Bahai Scriptures*, page 425:—

At first, National Houses of Justice will be established in every country, and they will elect in turn members to the Universal House of Justice.

Comparing these two statements: the one on universal suffrage or universal Bahai suffrage, the other on the election of the members of the Universal House by the secondary Houses, one may conclude that Abdul Baha has contradicted himself; for the first method is by *direct universal suffrage*, while the second is by *indirect* election. At the same time, the difference may be interpreted as a leeway allowed for choice, when the time comes. Thus, Abdul Baha presents us with two electoral systems; either one of which will be acceptable. Incidentally, both of them are according to precedent in the United States, for in the early part of American history, Senators were nominated by the Legislature of each State, while at present, they are *elected* by the population of each State.

Regarding the subject of direct suffrage, as applying to the National Houses of Justice, Abdul Baha says:—

The election of temporary members of the Assemblies of the Kingdom should depend upon the choice and satisfaction of the public, for members elected by the people are pledged to carry out their will and to follow out their instructions. Consequently, they are

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careful to administer impartial justice, and to live according to true religion, so that they may establish a good reputation and keep their dignity in the eyes of the people.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, pages 424-425

Functions and Duties of the House of Justice

Abdul Baha provides a number of general rules for the conducting of the Universal House of Justice. The following seven points are found in his Will:—

1. All legislative matters pertaining to the welfare of humanity must be referred to this body. This body enjoys the right to enact all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit Text of the Book of Aqdas.

2. The members of the Universal House of Justice should gather in a certain place and deliberate upon all problems that have caused difference; on questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book.

As regards the places for the convening of such a general body, it will be decided by the members.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

3. Whatever legislation the members of the Universal House of Justice decide upon has the same effect as the Text itself (The Book of Aqdas).

4. Difficult problems facing humanity are brought before the House of Justice for discussion and solution.

5. The laws and ordinances approved and passed by the House of Justice, either unanimously or by majority, are truths and in accord with the purpose of God Himself.

6. Inasmuch as the House of Justice has power to enact laws bearing upon daily transactions that are not expressly recorded in the Book (of Aqdas), it has also power to repeal the same. To illustrate: the House of Justice enacts a certain law and enforces it; then, at a later period, circumstances having profoundly changed, another House of Justice will have power to alter that law in accordance with the exigencies of the time. This it can do, because that law forms no part of the divine explicit text of Aqdas.

7. The function of the House of Justice is to enact laws and let its executive branch enforce them. The legislative body must reinforce the executive; the executive must aid and assist the legislative; so that through the close union and harmony of these two forces, the foundation of fairness

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and justice may be balanced and firm, to the end that all the regions of the world may become even as Paradise itself.

Legislative and Executive Power

Seeing that point seven deals with one of the most fundamental principles of the republican or democratic form of government, we will examine another passage from the writings of Abdul Baha which strengthens this statement in the Will. He says:—

Two things are most urgently necessary to the political realm.

The Legislative Power.

The Executive Power.

The Centre of the Executive Power is the government, and the Legislative Power lies in the hands of thoughtful and wise men . . . The Universal House of Justice has only legislative function; the executive power belongs to the Administrative department of government . . . Again I repeat, the House of Justice, whether National or Universal, has only legislative power, and not executive power. For example, in Europe and America the Parliament or Congress enacts laws, while the government executes these laws. The House of Justice cannot fulfill two functions at the same time—legislative and executive.

—*Bahá'í Scriptures*, pages 424-425

It will here be observed that no reference has been made to religious power; in other words, to a *religious tribunal*. This aspect of authority is not included in the functioning of the House of Justice.

Judiciary Power

Likewise in Abdul Baha's plan of the House of Justice, I have not seen, either in the Will or in his Tablets or speeches, reference to the third branch of democratic government—the Judiciary, such as the Supreme Court of the United States. It may very well be that the Master has left the formation of this important branch in the hands of the members of the Universal House of Justice, for as I have already shown, he clearly states in the Will that this body enjoys the right to enact all ordinances and regulations that are not to be found in the explicit text of the Book of Aqdas, and that whatever the members decide upon has the same implication as the Text itself.

In the Will, is stated:—

Should differences arise, they shall be amicably and conclusively settled by the Supreme Tribunal, that shall include members from all the governments and peoples of the world.

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Inasmuch as Abdul Baha uses here the appellation *Supreme Tribunal*, rather than the customary term *Universal House of Justice*, we get the impression of a *Supreme Court* within the House of Justice, namely the *World Court* much discussed in recent years. In another passage from his writings, he states:—

This, the House of Justice, will be not only a body for the legislation of laws, according to the spirit and requirement of the time, but a board of arbitration for the settlement of all disputes arising between peoples.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 425

Thus, Abdul Baha has provided a method for the settlement of all disputes arising between peoples. The House of Justice can perform this service, either directly, or through the creation of a *Supreme Tribunal* or *World Court*. The members will have ample power at their disposal to institute such agencies so that the business of the times may be dispatched with speed and equity.

Qualifications of the Members

We already have learned much concerning the characteristics of the members of the House of Justice, as required by Baha-O-Llah; now, we are shown what is expected of them according to the Will of Abdul Baha. They must be:—

1. Manifestations of the fear of God.
2. Day-springs of knowledge and understanding.
3. Steadfast in God's faith.
4. Well-wishers of all mankind.

In a passage from his teachings given during his lifetime, Abdul Baha gives us a more concrete view of the subject, amplifying the above qualifications and adding to them a number of definite pre-requisites:—

Thus, it is of the utmost importance to establish an assembly of learned men who, being proficient in the different sciences, and capable of dealing with all the present and future requirements, will settle the questions in accordance with forbearance and firmness.

Firstly: The elected members must be religious persons, God-fearing, high-minded and followers of the law.

Secondly: They should have an accurate knowledge of the divine commandments, of the most important fundamental matters and of the rules of the loosing and binding of domestic and foreign relations; they should possess a knowledge of the sciences and arts necessary to civilization, and finally be contented with the income derived from their personal property.

—*Bahai Scriptures*, page 424

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Immunities of the Members

In order that the members of the Universal House of Justice may, while in office, continue in the discharge of their duties without undue interference from the people, Abdul Baha, in his Will, sets them above criticism and reproach.

1. Members are under the care and protection of Baha-O-Llah, as well as under the shelter and unerring guidance of God.

2. They are freed from all error.

3. Whoso deviates from laws enacted by the House of Justice is verily one of those who loves discord, has shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant.

This high station thus conferred should not, in my opinion, be too literally interpreted, for the members will still be human beings, and it is impossible to conceive of human beings beyond error. Indeed, in another passage of the Will, Abdul Baha has provided for the expulsion of members of the House of Justice should any of them prove to be unworthy. Therefore, it is evident that these extraordinary immunities simply mean that we, as electors, should exercise towards our representatives fidelity and full cooperation; that we honor them while in office, place our trust and confidence in them, and pray unceasingly that God may inspire and guide them in the maintenance of their high responsibility and the execution of their mighty task.

Relation between the House of Justice and the Guardian

Abdul Baha lays down in his Will a number of provisions which link the Universal House of Justice with the institution of the guardianship. Inasmuch as these provisions are, strictly speaking, in the blue-print state, no one can predict with scientific, or even spiritual accuracy as to the working out of them in the world of actuality.

As I have stated in the chapter on the institution of the Hands of the Cause, the formation and organization of the House of Justice, like the functioning of the Hands of the Cause, is still in a more or less distant future, and all that I or anybody else can do, at this early stage of the Movement, is to correctly tabulate the provisions and let time interpret their implications. I also have explained my own reaction to most of these provisions in the chapter on the institution of guardianship.

Let us now enumerate the provisions:—

1. The Guardian as well as the Universal House of Justice are both under the care and protection of Baha-O-Llah.

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2. Whatever they decide is of God. Whosoever fails to obey the Guardian or the House of Justice, has not obeyed God; who rebels against him or against them, rebels against God; whosoever contends with them, contends with God.

3. The Guardian is designated as the head and distinguished member for life of the Universal House of Justice. Should he be absent from the deliberations of the House, he must be represented by someone appointed by him.

4. Should any of the members commit a sin, injurious to the common weal, the Guardian has, at his own discretion, the right to expel that member, whereupon the place must be filled according to the elective process.

5. It is incumbent upon the members of the House of Justice . . . to show their obedience unto the Guardian, to turn unto him and be lowly before him.

Points of Difference in the Plans

In comparing the two platforms for the Universal House of Justice as outlined by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha in his Will, we are at first struck by the fundamental identity of the plans. In each, the House of Justice is an established democratic governmental body of men, representing in its collective capacity the interests of the electors. From what we read, it has been made quite plain that the House of Justice was not intended to be or to become a religious tribunal; that is, the members should legislate solely along lines of civic, material and political advancement for mankind.

However, in the plan of Abdul Baha, the student finds a number of additional laws, which, although they do not change the fundamental concept of the House of Justice, bring other considerations into the picture.

Take for example the linking of the House of Justice with the institution of guardianship. Here we discover that, before the House of Justice has come into being, the successive presidents of this institutions have already been designated, and this, not for a generation or two, but for all future generations; that these presidents are to be life-members, succeeding by reason of heredity, and that the people are to be lowly before them. Further, that the presidents have the power to expel the members at their own discretion.

Here, no one should blame the honest student if he finds himself in a state of bewilderment. He tries to argue it out, and his argument runs something like this:—

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One of the essential rules of Democracy is that a group, be it large or small, official or non-official, elects its own president. One may concede the point, that a living group may accept a permanent president; but to imagine unborn generations being provided with a chain of hereditary presidents, is disquieting to say the least. Again, why should the presidents have power to expel any of the members? It would appear that this could be more democratically done by the members themselves, if it had been ascertained that a certain one of their colleagues was unfit for his high position.

Truly, the honest student finds these requirements most puzzling and difficult to square with the fundamentally democratic platform of the House of Justice as outlined by Bahz-O-Llah.

Is this the Answer?

In earnestly investigating these issues with mind and conscience, even as Bahais are commanded to investigate all things, I can arrive at no plausible answer, except it be that the plan of Abdul Baha was a draft made on broad lines to be carried out with the elasticity required by the times. I explain some of the knotty points as follows:—

Should the Bahai Cause be actually operated along universal lines, as was intended by the Founders, it is logical that it should spread to all parts and inspire the leaders in every department of practical thought and action. Abdul Baha said that a man who lives his life according to the teachings of Baha-O-Llah is already a Bahai; he did not say that a man who writes his name on the dotted line, prepared by the Bahai organization, is a Bahai. According to this concept, the plans of Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha in regard to the election of the members of the House of Justice by *universal suffrage*, or by *universal suffrage, that is by the believers*, merge into one.

Again: according to Abdul Baha, the members of the House of Justice *are under the unerring guidance of God*, and themselves are freed from error; while the Guardian (to whom he ascribes a yet higher station) is simply *under the unerring guidance of God*—even as we all are, for the word unerring, applies in this instance to God, not to the Guardian. Then, how can a member of the House of Justice who is *freed from error* be considered unfit and expelled by the Guardian, concerning whom no such claim has been made?

This cannot be explained; therefore, I believe that Abdul Baha was giving an ideal picture of the Members, showing what they should be; and,

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by the same token, in exalting the Guardian, he was depicting the type of guardian that he so much desired and hoped for.

Meanwhile, much depends upon the *first* Guardian of the Cause. Should he use his position to act as a servant of humanity, even as the Master did, striving ever to maintain the democracy in the Bahai movement that is its fundamental principle, then it is conceivable that the coming generations will turn to his descendants; will cherish that line; love and honor the representative of Abdul Baha, and thus fulfill the spirit of his requirements.

Is the Bahai Administration the House of Justice in Embryo?

It is here necessary to make reference to the fact that the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada makes claim that the Bahai Administration is the Universal House of Justice in embryo—the seed from which the future World Government will spring. Now, to my mind, there are no grounds upon which to base such a claim; for, the Bahai Administration with its Constitution and By-laws is a purely American product and cannot be traced to any source other than American.

Actually, the House of Justice, as envisioned by Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, is the high chamber of universal statecraft, where the chosen representatives of the people will deliberate on world problems and legislate in the interests of humanity.

Now, where are these statesmen to be found? In what school will they have acquired training in the science of political philosophy, the technique of diplomacy and the art of government? Can it be that the Bahai Administration is the college where the elements of civic, national and international statesmanship will have been mastered? Is this institution the university that will turn out men provided with *an accurate knowledge . . . of the rules of the loosing and binding of domestic and foreign relations?* It would seem not, for Shoghi Effendi has, by most drastic rulings, set his followers apart from the politics of village, city, state and nation; has debarred them from affiliation with movements, *whether avowedly political in nature or, while non political in name, advocating social changes that presume partisan political action*, and forbidden them to make *critical statements about any particular Government or national policy*. Consequently, it would be impossible for the Bahais, forced as they are to keep aloof, in word and deed, from all problems applying to social improvement, to develop themselves to the point where they can become authorities on the national and international affairs of men. It would be impossible for them, deprived as they are of practical mental exercise, of the tutelage of ex-

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perience and of the dignity involved in taking risks, to arise to the surface of the tortured world-pattern and be acclaimed as leaders by an admiring and grateful public. No, the child is father to the man, and in the root is *the fibre of the tree*; consequently, in searching for the members of the future House of Justice, we shall be forced to look elsewhere than on the campus of the Bahai Administration.

Baha-O-Llah said:—

Oh people . . . be intent on the betterment of the world and the *training of nations*!

And the Master said:—

To be a Bahai simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood.

Of such shall be the membership of the House of Justice, according to the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha!

CHAPTER X

FREEDOM THROUGH EVOLUTION

The Dual Mission

Although the Bahai Cause is essentially a religious movement, its Founders have incorporated in their teachings a number of fundamental doctrines for the maintenance and direction of a just, liberal and democratic government. These principles are briefly referred to by the Master in his Will and Testament, but his injunctions cannot be understood or properly evaluated, unless the student include in the circle of investigation other instructions on the same subject written by Abdul Baha, as well as those written by Baha-O-Llah himself. Therefore, before addressing ourselves to this subject, let us make a brief historical review of conditions in the Orient.

The rulers of Iran and those of the Ottoman Empire, countries, respectively, where the Bahai Cause had its birth and to which its leaders were banished, claimed not only autocratic privileges, but those of divine right. The Shah was addressed as the *Shadow of Allah upon the earth* and the Sultan was no less a personage than the Khaliph, representative of the Prophet to whom the faithful were called upon to offer their homage and obedience. This exalted station, royal and religious, enshrouded both sovereigns with the aura of absolutism, placing in their custody all the public and private affairs of their subjects.

Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha were spiritual teachers in a direct sense, and social Reformers in an indirect one; so that, while, on the one hand, their mission was to purify the religion of Islam from its dogmas and fanaticism, it, on the other hand, aimed at democratizing the governments of Iran and Turkey. In short, the intention of these two Reformers, both ultimate and immediate, was to wrest religious and civil control from the grasp of these autocratic monarchs and to entrust it to the safe keeping of the people.

Evolution Versus Revolution

The tactics used by these Persian Reformers were totally different from those resorted to by others who had preceded them. From the very beginning, they had resolved that, come what might, they would gain their objective through *evolution* rather than by *revolution*. They were,

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indeed, inspired students of history, the reading of which had made them keenly aware of the fact that the powerhouse of ideas is mightier than is the powerhouse of arsenals, for in the former the results are permanent.

Admitting that the evolutionary process is slower, still it entails no destruction, no bloodshed and no disorganization. Through it, the old is sloughed off little by little while the new takes hold, in like manner, imperceptibly. With their clear vision, Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha saw that the story of man, as it has grown from age to age, has been the unfolding of a single plan—unity, and the development of a single principle—human solidarity; and they have warned us not to let the spangles and tinsel of revolution bedazzle our eyes, but to work and watch with calm prophetic insight as the great world spins forever down the ringing grooves of change.

It is evident that, throughout the ages, modern modes have ever been adopted and become dominant in human affairs. By the slower method of evolution, the intellectual has been enabled to rule the physical, and now, the hour is not distant when the moral law shall control both. In this manner, strength of body is subordinate to strength of mind, while the influence of spirit, continuously on the alert, waits to come into its own. Meanwhile, having accepted the fact that all things can be renovated through orderly alteration, we come to realize something of the nature of the universe, which loves nothing so much as to methodically change the contours of the old images, handed down to us by our ancestors, into shapes of new images deposited in our minds by the Creator Himself. Thus, the Bahai Cause has dedicated itself to the propagation of this evolutionary philosophy. It has worked and will continue to work for social, political and economic changes through the quiet yet irresistible process of evolution.

The torture and trials of its early years have made long their furrows in Bahai history. Into these furrows, the imperishable seed of the evolutionary philosophy of Baha-O-Llah has fallen. The heedless world has trodden on it; tears and blood have watered it, and the patient sun has warmed and cheered it to its ripening.

Not uselessly did the Bab declare his mission and offer up his life; not uselessly did thousands of men, women and children accept martyrdom; not uselessly did Baha-O-Llah repair to perpetual exile; not uselessly did Abdul Baha, in his old age, travel throughout Europe and America heralding the Message of the New Day; not uselessly did brave pioneers toil up successive hills of tribulation!

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These struggles have contributed to this evolutionary philosophy—the securing of social change without bloodshed. It is my conviction that this philosophy will not languish but that, as time goes on, it will exact of the people and of the leaders of humanity, themselves, greater and greater allegiance.

The object of the Founders of the Cause was to obtain full religious and civil liberties, not only for their own followers but for all the inhabitants of those sections of the Orient in which they lived. Later, as the movement gained momentum, the plan was to include the people of the whole world.

They had categorically rejected the revolutionary school of thought, for they were convinced that the gaining of these measures by violence would be but a temporary victory. Consequently, Baha-O-Llah fashioned many passwords for the enforcement of his evolutionary system of non-violence. Some of them are the following:—

**The sword of wisdom is warmer than summer, and sharper than steel.
It is better that you be killed than that you kill one another.
We have taken from you the law of murder.**

Provisional Concessions

Now, in fostering the evolutionary philosophy of change and, at the same time, in an effort to protect their followers from complete annihilation by the unreasoning forces of despotism, both Baha-O-Llah and Abdul Baha, in their capacity of spiritual legislators, made certain *temporary concessions* to the dread monarchs of Iran and Turkey; but it is quite apparent that these provisional concessions were not part of the permanent Bahai teachings and that they were intended to be set aside as soon as the cause that had produced them was removed.

Having taken a stand against individual and collective murder, which was and still is the method of social change by revolution, the provisional concessions were made with the full consciousness that they would not be applied over a long period, but would be withdrawn as soon as conditions allowed.

In studying the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha, I find two passages that illustrate in a striking manner the question under discussion. They are provisional concessions to the sovereigns of Turkey and Iran.

O ye beloved of the Lord! It is incumbent upon you to be submissive to all Monarchs that are just and show your fidelity to every righteous King. Serve ye the Sovereigns of the world with utmost truthfulness and loyalty. Show obedience unto them and be their well-

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wishers. Without their leave and permission do not meddle with political affairs, for disloyalty to the just Sovereign is disloyalty to God Himself . . .

We must obey and be the well-wishers of the governments of the land, regard disloyalty unto a just King as disloyalty to God Himself and wishing evil to the government a transgression of the Cause of God.

Let us now, to the best of our ability, analyze these quotations in the light of the above-made explanations.

These two passages are taken from Part One of the Will and Testament, and were written about the time when the Committee of Investigation, instigated by the enemies, had arrived in Acca from Constantinople (1906-07). The details of the fantastic charges which were brought against Abdul Baha have been described in an earlier chapter. In these passages, the Master seeks to prove that he, as a spiritual teacher, is not a revolutionist; he is not sowing the seeds of sedition nor fomenting insurrection against the established order. That is not his job. He is a man of peace, not a preacher of hate and violence. He preferred to follow the Christ, who said: *Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things which are God's*. He left it to his followers to judge as to the things that belonged to the Caesars of his day. So he advises them to be submissive and obey the government, and to keep aloof from reactionary politics and revolutionary plots. In this way, and in this way alone, can they safeguard the young Movement, the mission of which is to effect the identical revolution, although by means of another method—the non-violent one.

The Stressing of an Adjective

In calling upon his followers to show fidelity to the kings, Abdul Baha, four times out of five in the short passages under discussion, couples the word Sovereign or King with the adjectives *just* and *righteous*. This is not mere literary accident, for the Master was adept at this type of *suggestive* writings. Like a sign language, the meaning was transferred rather than explained; it was there to be caught by those who were good at catching.

Be submissive to all monarchs that are *just*.

Show fidelity to every *righteous* King.

Disloyalty to the *just* Sovereign is disloyalty to God.

Regard disloyalty unto a *just* King as disloyalty to God.

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Abdul Baha's reference to the fact that disloyalty to a *just* sovereign is disloyalty to God carried with it reference to the old dogma of the divine right of kings which was claimed by the Shahs of Iran and the Sultans of Turkey. This is a gesture of apparent concession to those autocratic rulers; while, at the same time the adjective *just* is stressed. Here again, freedom to determine as to who is just and who is unjust is left to the intelligence of the individual.

One allusion to this subject, out of the five, omits the adjective. It simply reads:—

Serve ye the sovereigns of the world with the utmost truthfulness and loyalty.

The omission in this case of the adjective *just* or *righteous* certainly implies no change of attitude on the part of the Master. The Bahais had been given a yardstick whereby to measure the degree of justice displayed by a ruler, and it is clear that Abdul Baha's injunctions as a whole means that his followers must use their common sense in distinguishing between the just and the unjust. At the same time, in regard to the latter, no violence is to be considered; the change of affairs must come through the evolutionary process of non-violent revolution.

Baha-O-Llah, himself, held a just king in high regard. Of such a king, he said:—

A king whom the pride of authority and independence does not withhold from being just, and whom benefits, opulence, glory, hosts and legions do not deprive of the splendors of the Orb of Equity—such a king shall possess a lofty station and an exalted rank in the Supreme Concourse; it is incumbent on all to assist and love such a blessed being. Blessed is the ruler who controls the reins of the ego, and overcomes his wrath; who prefers justice to oppression and equity to tyranny!

—Baha-O-Llah, *Tablets of Baha-O-Llah*, page 50

Previous to the Turkish and Iranian revolutions, Abdul Baha during many years had given similar advice to his followers in the East, regarding adherence to a just sovereign, and in these Tablets also, with very rare exceptions, the instructions apply to a *just* or *righteous* king. Now, no king, no matter how tyrannical, actually looks upon himself as unjust; therefore when, on occasions, these Tablets were brought to the attention of the Shah or the Sultan, these personages received the impression that Abdul Baha was exacting of his followers complete loyalty to themselves, and this appearance induced them to show a less cruel attitude toward the

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Bahais, and was the means of giving them a breathing spell and the opportunity of developing their own evolutionary work. Abdul Baha counted on the significance of the verse in the Koran:—

They plot and God plots, but God is the best plotter.

Consequently in 1908, shortly after the Committee of Investigation sent by the Sultan had caused Abdul Baha to appear before it, and before this Committee had returned to the Sublime Port to submit its findings, the monarchs of Iran and Turkey fell from their thrones before the irresistible onrush of democratic ideals, and the two great dynasties of the East vanished into thin air. Nothing was left of them but shoddy memories. Unhonored and unsung, they entered into the past; while the rejoicing populace emerged into a future which promised a definitely larger measure of civil and religious liberties. In this manner, the all powerful Sultan Abdul Hamid was cast into prison; and simultaneously, Abdul Baha, the life-long captive, walked out a free man. So, by the year 1910, Iran and Turkey, freed from the octopus hold of these despotic regimes, became respectively a Constitutional Monarchy and a Republic; the Shah of these latter years having held his rank, not as the *Shadow of Allah*, but by merit of his attainments as soldier and statesman; and the ruler of Turkey having maintained his position, not as *Khaliph and representative of the Prophet*, but simply as a progressive president.

An Unthinkable Interpretation

The above is my understanding of the Master's instructions regarding loyalty toward rulers. To interpret these Tablets and the injunctions given in the Will in any other light would mean that he who had come to teach freedom and justice had also commanded his followers to obey wholly and be submissive to any kind of potentate, oriental or otherwise, just or unjust; and, to attribute such a purpose to Abdul Baha would be to misunderstand and undervalue his divine character. Why am I so confident of this? Because I have read his Teachings and studied them; and because as his secretary, I served him for eight years. In the light of this knowledge, I cannot, even for one second, imagine Abdul Baha in the role of an upholder of despotism. To serve and obey a *just* government, yes, by all means; but not *any* government. As awakened men, as teachers and students of the Writings of Baha-O-Llah, the Bahais had a perfect criterion whereby to measure justice and righteousness; and having tested the words and actions of their rulers, and having observed the result, they were given freedom to go about their *Father's business* according to the light that was in them.

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Personally speaking, I happen to prefer a government, the laws of which are made by representatives for whom I have cast my vote; and I am ready to give loyalty to such a government. At the same time, should I be living under a system wherein laws had been framed without consultation with myself or my representatives, I would yet be willing to render loyalty, provided, and always provided, that the laws of this system were righteous and just.

I believe Abdul Baha would have agreed with George Washington when he said:—

The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

From time immemorial, the vast continent of Asia has been crossed by an interminable Caravan of Shahs and Sultans, Emperors and Potentates, Sardars and Vizirs, Rajahs and Maharajahs, Sahibs and Kahns, Pashas and Beys, Muftis and Motosarrefs, Sherifs and Emirs, Mandarins and warlords—a brood of tyrannical monsters; of arrogant and bloodthirsty despots; of weak and imbecile misfits. They, with their statesmen, officers and courtiers, like armies of hungry locusts have eaten away the substance of the East, leaving nothing behind but misery and desolation.

Iran and Turkey fell within this category of afflicted nations. These kingdoms came into being through dynastic wars, and eked out their years as sad playgrounds on which the malevolent passions of their rulers were spent. The inhabitants, like dumb cattle, were ignored and crushed under the heels of succeeding conquerors. No one had any thoughts concerning *the rights of the people*. It is true that once in a long while, a solitary king turned out to be a benevolent ruler, but the rare exception did not break the chain of tyranny.

The mission of Baha-O-Llah was to purify the atmosphere of the Orient of these epidemic pestilences and black plagues; to disinfect the countryside of these murderous germs, and to free the fair soil of these royal carbuncles and imperial abscesses. He had his own method toward this end, even as had Abdul Baha. Consequently, when Abdul Baha advises that his eastern followers should *not meddle with political affairs* without the *leave and permission* of their government, it is obvious that this injunction simply is one more transitory concession made to those oriental monarchies. He was conscious of the fact that if, during those years of storm and stress, of revolution and palace intrigue, the Bahais took up politics as a profession, they could never maintain their honesty,

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for the entire political system of Iran and Turkey, being shot through and through with vice and corruption, were rotten from top to bottom. Whoever fell into these cesspools could not escape defilement.

The Master's object was to safeguard the Cause during the years of its infancy by taking steps to protect the remaining small groups of Bahais who had escaped the recurrent massacres; and he wished this attitude of aloofness to continue even after the substitution of monarchies by revolutionary governments. In this way he chartered the map of their lives with infinite care and precision, in the hope that the Bahais would live to disseminate the seeds of the evolutionary philosophy which Baha-O-Llah had planted in their hearts and which he had nurtured with such vigilant care.

A Catastrophic Blow

Now, the sentence in the Will: *Do not meddle with political affairs* and the more or less similar injunctions in the old Tablets written by Abdul Baha to Eastern Bahais have given Shoghi Effendi and the leaders of the Bahai Administration in the United States and Canada an utterly erroneous impression. Not having realized the aim of the Master, their interpretation is that this is an absolute command, an unchanging and eternal law, to be accepted by the believers in every part of the world, under every condition and circumstance. Therefore, the Bahais must take no part in the non-violent evolutionary process made possible by the democratic system; and this, for all time to come.

Shoghi Effendi in his writings, and the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahais of the United States and Canada in their official publications constantly refer to the non-political character of the Bahai Cause. Thus, the temporary concession of Abdul Baha—non-interference in political affairs—to the defunct autocratic rulers of Iran and Turkey, has most unfortunately become the cardinal, axiomatic dogma of a movement that had for its allied aims the religious, social, economic and political renovation of our civilization.

This, to my mind, is a most tragic misinterpretation of the teachings of Abdul Baha. It has already struck a catastrophic blow at the body of the Cause; while no one among the followers of the Bahai Administration is wise enough to perceive the mortal injury that has been inflicted upon the movement or courageous enough to strive to repair the fatal damage.

CHAPTER XI.

P R A Y E R

At the Dictation of Spirit

A striking feature of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha is the series of prayers which constitutes a large part of this document, covering nearly five pages of the total, which is seventeen. These prayers are not contained in a section by themselves, but appear here and there, some being only a few lines, others fairly long, while one of them takes up nearly two pages.

The average reader would find this style rather disconcerting, but not so the student who is familiar with Bahai literature. Abdul Baha did not shape his writings into any accepted form; he simply wrote and spoke at the dictation of his spirit. As an example: he would begin a letter in Persian, and his ideas would flow upon the paper to the satisfaction of the reader until, without any warning whatsoever, the language suddenly became Arabic. This unexpected transition is often surprising even to those who are familiar with both languages, but to a Persian who knows no Arabic, the situation is baffling to say the least. Naturally, these difficulties do not have to be faced by the reader of the English translations, although he also has to adapt himself to sudden changes, as far as subject matter goes. Likewise, Abdul Baha, in answering the letter of an inquirer, starts in a personal vein; presently he comments on history and philosophy, drifts into an exposition on ethics and religion and then, coming to a full stop as far as the correspondent is concerned, he opens up a conversation with the Creator of the Universe. As a result, the mind of the reader may be left balancing in mid-air, or else, if he has a truly universal consciousness, he may feel, as Abdul Baha felt, that God is ever present at all times and at all places and that this semblance of transition is not transition at all, but rather a holding to the central theme which dominates all others. Thus, in the Will of Abdul Baha, prayers and supplications appear repeatedly, fitted in among historical, legislative and biographical passages.

Conversation with God

To Abdul Baha, there was nothing in the world of existence sweeter than prayer. Prayer was the voice of faith in the realm of spiritual reality, in which he lived, moved and had his being. His life was one long, ardent

prayer that opened the gates of heaven; and he taught his followers how to pray in the same manner, explaining that prayer was *conversation* with God—just a turning to, a confiding in that divine Power which is not distant from us but instead, is closer than our jugular vein.

This world leapt from darkness into light in answer to aspiration sprung from the heart of the chaos; and, since that time, all the elements of nature converse with God in the language of prayer. In summer, the trees pray for rain; the garden, for the cool breezes; and the night, for the golden dawn. Thus prayer, being the vital breath of creation, is man's native atmosphere—his pass-word to the realm of inner realization.

Man must live in a state of prayer, so Abdul Baha reminded us, for prayer creates mindfulness and imparts a celestial consciousness. The habit of prayer confers gentleness to the glance, the voice, the smile; and this does not necessarily come through the formulated word: it is better to have a heart without words, than words without a heart.

The heart must be sensitized to the rhythm of prayer. It must not be as an organ from which prepared cadences sound out; but rather as the organist who expresses what he feels and longs for. Then, we hear the answer—the echo which, in reality, is the original sound to which our own prayer was the echo.

Prayer is the polish of the spirit—a bringing of the component parts of which we are made into lustre and brilliancy.

Abdul Baha's Prayers

The Master's days began and ended with prayer; he thought, moved and spoke in the spirit of prayer, and his body, mind and soul were moulded in the attitude of worship at the threshold of the Creator.

Throughout a lifetime, prayer had been a refuge from the storm of trials and tribulations that had enveloped him from all sides. In prison, he had raised an altar to prayer; while, in him, prayer had dwelt as in a shrine. It was a doorway from captivity into freedom—a doorway without a door.

During the cyclonic years when he was writing the major part of his Will, the prayers which he has left to us proceeded from a heart crushed with sorrow and desolation. He prayed for the chalice of martyrdom for himself, and invoked divine guidance for his followers, so that they might remain steadfast in faith, be delivered from temptations and resigned to the will of God. Following are five short prayers from his Will and Testament:—

Abdul Baha speaks to God of the compassion shown him by his enemies:—

By Thy Glory, O my God. Even amongst my enemies, some have lamented my troubles and my distress, and of the envious ones a number have shed tears because of my cares, my exile and my afflictions. They did this because they found naught in me but affection and care and witnessed naught but kindness and mercy. As they saw me swept into the flood of tribulation and adversity and exposed even as a target to the arrows of fate, their hearts were moved with compassion, tears came to their eyes and they testified declaring:—"The Lord is our witness; naught have we seen from him but faithfulness, generosity and extreme compassion."

Abdul Baha prays for the loved ones

O Lord, my God! Assist Thy loved ones to be firm in Thy faith, to walk in Thy ways, to be steadfast in Thy Cause. Give them Thy Grace to withstand the onslaught of self and passion, to follow the light of Divine Guidance.

Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Self-Subsisting, the Bestower, the Compassionate, the All-Mighty, the All-Bountiful.

Prayer for martyrdom

O God, my God! Thou seest this wronged servant of Thine, held fast in the talons of ferocious lions, of ravenous wolves, of blood-thirsty beasts. Graciously assist me through my love for Thee, that I may drink deep of the chalice that brimmeth over with faithfulness to Thee and is filled with Thy bountiful Grace; so that, fallen upon the dust, I may sink prostrate and senseless whilst my vesture is dyed crimson with my blood.

This is my wish, my heart's desire, my hope, my pride, my glory. Grant, O Lord, my God and my Refuge, that in my last hour, my end may, even as musk shed its fragrance of glory! Is there a bounty greater than this? Nay, by Thy Glory! . . . Thou art in truth the Mighty, the Powerful, the Gracious, the Strong.

The wide world can no longer contain Abdul Baha

Lord! My cup of woe runneth over, and from all sides blows are fiercely raging upon me. The darts of affliction have compassed me round and the arrows of distress have rained upon me. Thus tribulation overwhelmed me and my strength, because of the onslaught of the foemen became weakness within me, while I stood alone and forsaken in the midst of my woes.

Lord! Have mercy upon me, lift me unto Thyself and make me to drink from the Chalice of Martyrdom, for the wide world with all its vastness can no longer contain me.

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Thou art, verily, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful.

Abdul Baha prays for protection and strength for the servants

O God my God! Shield Thy trusted servants from the evils of self and passion, protect them with the watchful Eye of Thy loving kindness from all rancor, hate and envy, shelter them in the impregnable stronghold of Thy Cause and, safe from the darts of doubtfulness, make them the manifestations of Thy glorious Signs, illumine their faces with the effulgent rays shed from the Dayspring of Thy Divine Unity, gladden their hearts with the verses revealed from Thy Holy Kingdom, strengthen their loins by Thy all-awaying power that cometh from Thy Realm of Glory.

Thou art the All-Bountiful, the Protector, the All-Mighty, the Gracious!

In the Silence of the Night

Abdul Baha proved through his victories over insurmountable difficulties that "more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of." He looked upon prayer as a key by means of which the doors of the Kingdom of God are unlocked, or as a ladder on which man's aspirations ascend to heaven. Often at night he could not sleep, for the anxieties of this world weighed heavily on his mind. Then, as he has related to me: *I toss wearily in my bed, and in the darkness of the night I get up and pray—converse with God . . .* and he continued,

How sweet, how delicious, how satisfying, how spiritual is prayer in the middle of the night! While all the eyes are closed, the eyes of the worshipper are wide open. While all the ears are stopped, the ears of the suppliant are attuned to the subtle music of God. While the majority of the people are fast asleep, the adorer of the Ideal Beloved is wakeful. All around him there is a rare and delicate silence, deep, airy, ethereal silence, calm, magical and subtle—and there is the worshipper, communing with nature and the Author of nature.

—*The Divine Art of Living*, page 58

"Teach us to Pray"

One of his disciples asked of the Christ: "teach us to pray," and then he taught them the Lord's prayer which has been repeated by men, women and children throughout the centuries. With this thought in my mind, I one day put a similar question to Abdul Baha and, without a moment's hesitation he turned his face to me saying: When you pray, speak thus:—

PRAYER

**"O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit.
Purify my heart.
Illumine my powers.
I lay all my affairs in Thy Hand.
Thou art my Guide and my Refuge.
I will not be sorrowful and grieved any more.
I will be a happy and joyful being.
O God! I will not worry any more.
I will not let trouble harass me any longer.
I will not dwell on the unplesant things of life.
O God! Thou art kinder to me than myself.
I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord!**

The Fountain of Life

From the fulness of his heart, as from a copious fountain, Abdul Baha poured forth a torrent of prayers, some of which, remaining with us, are shaping the course of our lives and will continue to do so. These prayers are words and music, or the refrain of a sigh; they are a pathway, trodden by him, upon which we are at liberty to walk. At the same time, Abdul Baha taught that the individual needs no formula: each man's approach is through his own feelings and words. These are more acceptable to the divine Listener than any others.

In the depths of our hearts also is hidden the fountain of life, which if drawn upon through prayer will yield its waters liberally. For example: when a pump is often used, a stream pours out at first stroke; but if it has become rusty, the waters cannot rush up at your call and you must make great effort in order to obtain results. It is so with prayer. If we are instant with prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desire and words are always attendant to put us in touch with the Divine Powers.

Some have in part understood Abdul Baha, because it has been their privilege to live with him, converse with him, travel with him, laugh and weep with him, rejoice and suffer with him and, above everything else, pray with him. And now that he is no longer visible to the material sight, we all have the yet *greater* privilege of communing with his spirit, of walking through the paradise of his revelations, of inhaling the life-giving breezes of his ideals, of soaring in the sunlit atmosphere of his radiant presence and of praying with him in the world of Reality, according to the laws of that mystical relationship which unites God with man, and man with God.

CHAPTER XII.

A CALL TO TEACHING

The Plan

A most notable feature of the Will and Testament of Abdul Baha is insistence on the widespread promotion of the universal and constructive principles of the Bahai Cause. This is the basis for a system of education in world citizenry, and of spiritual and intellectual training in the ideals of a New Social Order. To Abdul Baha, this and this alone was the mission worth working for.

The mystical idea in the teachings of all the Prophets is none other than union amongst all peoples and races; and to this mystical idea, Baha-O-Llah has added a *concrete plan*. It had dawned in his mind while incarcerated in the prison of Teheran; and he had transmitted it to his followers who, comprehending only a fraction of it, had yet held to it and been willing to die for it. Later Abdul Baha, living in hourly consciousness of this idea, implemented and explained the plan, and, through his talks and writings, made it available to the advance-guard of thinkers, near and far.

Now, in order to popularize this plan and to place it before every man, woman and child on the five continents, Abdul Baha, in his Will, calls for an army of teachers. The Afnan, the Hands of the Cause and all the Bahais must shoulder the task. There is to be no exception to the rule for, only through a spontaneous, voluntary and concerted effort can the fortifications of ignorance and prejudice be stormed and the standard of world-patriotism and human loyalty raised above the battle flags of the nations. Hence his command: Teach the Cause of God, spread the Word of God, promulgate the ideals of peace, love and fellowship amongst the inhabitants of the globe; and he says:—

Teaching the Cause is of the utmost importance, for it is the head corner-stone of the foundation itself.

What an imposing declaration! Without a foundation we cannot have a permanent building, and the head corner-stone of the foundation is teaching. Consequently, the pre-requisite of Bahai faith, and the acid test of a loyal believer is mastery over the technique of imparting the Bahai Message.

This is no child's task, no Sunday school forum. The Bahai must lift his eyes above the confines of his community and address the nations themselves:—

A CALL TO TEACHING

In these days, the most important of all things is the guidance of the nations and peoples of the world.

The Example

Abdul Baha points out the fact that, through his life and writings, the precedents for a system of teaching have been set up. All that we have to do is to follow his example, to try his method. He writes:—

This wronged servant has spent his days and nights in promoting the Cause and urging the peoples to service. He rested not a moment, till the fame of the Cause of God was noised abroad in the world and the Celestial strains from the Abha Kingdom roused the East and the West. The beloved of God must also follow the same example.

This is the secret of faithfulness, this is the requirement of servitude to the Threshold of Baha!

This is the requirement at the Threshold of Baha! Verbal professions are of the past. The Master asks for action, for the rousing of East and West; he demands no less than the practical and spiritual emancipation of mankind.

There is a price to pay. He tells us of it in the pages of the Will, and we never can forget his words:—

Of all the gifts of God, the greatest is the gift of Teaching. It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our first obligation. Of such a gift, how can we deprive ourselves? Nay, our lives, our goods, our comforts, our rest, we offer them all as a sacrifice for the Abha Beauty and teach the Cause of God.

What are the *gifts of God*? Intellectual and heart qualities are a few among the many that He bestows; and Abdul Baha wants us to use whatever gifts have been accorded us in order to acquire the art of teaching, which is the greatest gift of all. In this effort, we must sacrifice everything—goods, comfort, life itself—and go forth as servants of the Most High, detached from all save Him.

The Two Teachings

Teach the Cause! Now, what exactly are we to teach? Which are the basic principles that Abdul Baha wishes his followers to spread abroad? Can these be found in his Will; and if found, are they specific enough? Further, can they be used as outlines for a new educational system? Will they spiritualize our society and humanize our religions? Will they free us from the limitations and restrictions of antiquated systems of thought and bankrupt ideologies? Will they equip us with new moral weapons and

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ethical imperatives through which we may resurrect a decadent and collapsing civilization?

The Teachings of Abdul Baha are contained in his addresses and writings. We know that, but at present we are studying the Will alone. Therefore, let us examine the teachings as given in this document.

First Teaching:—Consort with all the peoples, kindreds and religions of the world with the utmost truthfulness, uprightness, faithfulness, kindness, good-will and friendliness. If this attitude becomes an integral part of ourselves, remarkable results will follow:—

- (a) The world of being will be filled with the holy ecstasy of the Grace of Baha.
- (b) Ignorance, enmity, hate and rancor will disappear from the face of the earth.
- (c) The darkness of estrangement that has kept men and races apart will give way to the light of unity.

Second Teaching:—If the nations of the world are unfaithful to you, show your fidelity to them.

If they keep aloof from you, attract them to yourselves.

If they are unjust toward you, deal justly with them.

Should they manifest enmity, display friendliness.

Should they poison your lives, sweeten their souls.

Should they inflict wounds upon you, become ye salves for their own injuries.

Then, having presented the ideal comportment of a Bahai teacher, Abdul Baha asserts:—

Such are the attributes of the sincere!

Such are the qualities of the faithful!

Through his words, Abdul Baha unfurls the banner of Christ at the head of his Bahai army, for this second teaching actually is the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said:—

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy.

But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only,

A CALL TO TEACHING

what do ye more *than others?* do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

—*St. Matthew, Chapter 5, verses 43-48.*

In these two Revelations, the one, nearly two thousand years ago, the other of our times, the same law is presented; the same language is spoken. These universal principles inspired the early Christians to give up their lives in the arenas of the Roman Empire, and the early Bahais to accept like martyrdom in the public squares of the cities of Iran. They are the fabric of a divine consciousness, and the basis of a super-civilization.

This was the objective of Christ!

This was the intention of Abdul Baha!

No Restrictions and No Limitations

Continuing his message of non-violence and love for all of mankind without exception whatsoever, Abdul Baha conducts us to the very depths of universal wisdom and to the heights of the Paradise of Abha. His words are as a necklace of priceless pearls, as a bouquet of imperishable flowers. To my mind, this passage is the most glorious section of his Will.

Let us then hearken to him:—

O ye beloved of the Lord! In this sacred Dispensation, conflict and contention are in no wise permitted. Every aggressor deprives himself of God's grace.

It is incumbent upon every one to show the utmost love, rectitude of conduct, straight-forwardness and sincere kindness unto all the peoples and kindreds of the world, be they friends or strangers.

So intense must be the spirit of love and loving kindness, that the stranger may find himself a friend, the enemy a true brother, no difference whatsoever existing between them. For universality is of God and all limitations earthly.

Thus man must strive that his reality may manifest virtues and perfections, the light whereof may shine upon every one. The light of the sun shineth upon all the world and the merciful showers of Divine Providence fall upon all peoples. The vivifying breeze reviveth every living creature and all beings endued with life obtain their share and portion at His heavenly board.

In like manner, the affections and loving kindness of the servants of the One True God must be bountifully and universally extended to all mankind.

Regarding this, restrictions and limitations are in no wise permitted.

In sublimity of thought, in breadth of view, in depth of meaning, in ethical and moral grandeur nothing to my mind can approach the above

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passage. *Universality is of God and all limitations earthly.* This conception and this alone is the water of life that washes away all sins. Be universal, as God is universal. Embrace humanity, as God embraces humanity. Emerge from a world of restrictions and taboos. Spread your wings and soar through the blue stretches of God's illimitable universe. Tap the inner resources of your souls and avail yourselves of the matchless graces of the Almighty. The sun of Truth shines without restrictions. The breezes of the Merciful are wafted upon all the creatures. The heavenly banquet is spread, and the children of men are invited to partake of the food and drink, prepared by the Great Host. No *Finis* will ever be penned to the Book of His Revelation, and the green pastures of His Kingdom will never be protected by placards bearing the words *No Admittance* and *No Trespassing*. The Supreme Concourse has passed no exclusion act and is totally unconcerned with parliamentary procedure, conservative policies, gag rules and filibustering.

Thus Abdul Bahá, the spiritual super-genius of our times, has raised the lamp of the universality of God before the eyes of all men, and no individual, however highly placed, and no leader, however keen and subtle, and no administration however firmly established can erase this bright page from his Will or from the consciousness of his followers.

They desire to put out the light of God with their mouths, but God will not have it but that we should perfect His light.

—*The Koran, Ch. IX.*

Abdul Bahá calls upon the Baháís to arise with irrepressible enthusiasm and direct to the four corners of the earth the rays of God's Sun of Universality. In his own words, he repeats the message of the Prophet of Islam, spoken nearly thirteen centuries ago:—

God is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is as a niche in which is a lamp, and the lamp is a glass. The glass is as though it were a glittering star; it is lit from a blessed tree, an olive neither of the East nor of the West, the oil of which would well nigh give light though no fire touched it—light upon light! God guides to his light whom He pleases.

—*The Koran, Ch. XXIV.*

Therefore, our duty is not to *protect* the Light; our responsibility is not to *shade* it. The Light has no need of our protection, nor of our contrivances. It is there for one purpose—to shine, to guide, to spread; and our mission is to see it, to recognize it, to diffuse it. May it be that we will live up to our mission!

A CALL TO TEACHING

The Journey to the Mid-most Heart of the World

Abdul Baha, in looking toward the time when he would no longer be with us on this material plane, has charted the course his followers should take toward the realm of immortality. He has outlined a program of action which is matchless in its simplicity and unique in its practicability, and has called upon everyone who is willing to consecrate his time to the promotion of the Cause of God and to the service of man to take part in the plan. This section of the Will should be memorized and hourly recalled. It is the legacy of every Bahai on his journey of exploration to the *mid-most* heart of the world:—

When the hour cometh that this wronged and broken-winged bird will have taken its flight unto the Celestial Concourse, when it will have hastened to the Realm of the Unseen and its mortal frame will have been either lost or hidden neath the dust, it is incumbent upon the Afnan that are steadfast in the Covenant of God, and have branched from the Tree of Holiness; the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God (the glory of the Lord rest upon them), and all the friends and loved ones, one and all to bestir themselves and arise with heart and soul in one accord, to diffuse the sweet savours of God, to teach His Cause and to promote His Faith. It behooveth them not to rest for a moment, neither to seek repose. They must disperse themselves in every land, pass by every clime and travel throughout all regions. Bestirred, without rest and steadfast to the end they must raise in every land the triumphal cry: "O Thou the Glory of Glories!" (ya Baha'!-Abha), must achieve renown in the world wherever they go, must burn brightly even as a candle in every meeting and must kindle the flame of Divine love in every assembly; that the light of truth may rise resplendent in the mid-most heart of the world, that throughout the East and throughout the West a vast concourse may gather under the shadow of the Word of God, that the sweet savours of holiness may be diffused, that faces may shine radiantly, hearts be filled with the Divine spirit and souls be made heavenly.

As a manual of conduct, to take with us on our wanderings, we have these words:—

According to the direct and sacred command of God we are forbidden to utter slander, are exhorted to rectitude of conduct, straightforwardness and harmony with all the kindreds and peoples of the world.

A Specific Call and a General Call

Throughout his life, Abdul Baha called upon all the Bahais to teach the Cause. In his Will, he does the same thing; yet, this document is dis-

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tinguished by the mention by name of two groups. To these two specific groups, the Master addresses himself with particular emphasis: *the Afnan and the Hands of the Cause must arise to promote the Faith.*

Now, regarding the first specified group: the Afnan that are steadfast in the Covenant of God.

These are of the family of the Bab; some of them are to be found in Persia, while those best known to the American Bahais are the descendents of Baha-O-Llah, namely: the children and grandchildren of Baha-O-Llah's daughter, Furighyyeh Khanum and her husband Aga Sayyed Ali Afnan; the children and grandchildren of Abdul Baha's daughter, Ziayyeh Khanum and her husband Mirza Hadi Afnan, and the children and grandchildren of Abdul Baha's daughter, Toubah Khanum and her husband Mirza Mohsen Afnan.

Here we have a strange situation, for the family of Furighyyeh Khanum and that of Toubah Khanum have lately, by an act of the Guardian, been branded as enemies of the Cause. Remaining, is the family of Ziayyeh Khanum, of which Shoghi Effendi is the eldest; but Shoghi Effendi and his brothers, Hussain Effendi and Riaz Effendi have never figured as teachers in the sense envisaged by Abdul Baha and practiced by him. That is, they have never gone forth and brought knowledge of the Cause to those who were unacquainted with it. Likewise the two sisters of the Guardian are not in a position to serve in this line; the elder being wife of Nayyar Effendi Afnan, son of Furighyyeh Khanum who is classed as an enemy; while the name of the younger is included in the recent list of expulsions.

Thus, the first group specified by Abdul Baha in his Will, is, literally, shot to pieces.

The second specified group is the Hands of the Cause; and again we are faced by unexpected conditions, for this group, actually, is non-existent. It will be remembered that Abdul Baha made it incumbent upon the Guardian to appoint the Hands of the Cause; but this requirement of the Will has not yet been fulfilled. It is therefore apparent that the Master's intentions in the realm of teaching have met with a severe setback; the two groups specified by him to raise the banner of the Cause without delay failing to figure in the picture at this late date, more than twenty years after his departure from this earth.

As a result of this situation, we have to fall back on his general call, addressed to all the friends and loved ones: that they should arise and bestir themselves, become even as balls of fire and guide the nations to the vantage point wherefrom Baha-O-Llah viewed the complicated conditions

P R A Y E R

of the earth. There is no time to lose, for history has speeded up and the pattern of a new civilization is already taking shape in the minds of men and governments. Will the Bahais play a leading part in the great change that is manifesting itself? Will they play any part at all? This must be the first concern of all those who love and revere Abdul Baha, for he imposed it upon them as a *first obligation*. In the Will, he reminds and commands us:—

The disciples of Christ forgot themselves and all earthly things, forsook all their cares and belongings, purged themselves of self and passion and with absolute detachment scattered far and wide and engaged in calling the peoples of the world to the Divine Guidance, till at last they made the world another world, illumined the surface of the earth and even to their last hour proved self-sacrificing in the pathway of that Beloved One of God. Finally, in various lands they suffered glorious martyrdom.

Let them that are men of action follow in their footsteps!

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