

ABBAS EFFENDI  
HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

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# LIFE AND TEACHINGS

OF

## ABBAS EFFENDI

A STUDY OF THE RELIGION OF THE BABIS, OR BEHA'IS  
FOUNDED BY THE PERSIAN BAB AND BY HIS SUC-  
CESSORS, BEHA ULLAH AND ABBAS EFFENDI

BY

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of the New York Bar

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

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"The New History of Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad  
the Bab," etc.

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To

THE COUNTESS M. A. DE S. CANAVARRO

TO WHOM I SHALL ALWAYS FEEL A DEEP OBLIGATION FOR HAVING DIRECTED MY ATTENTION TO THE REAL CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BEHA'I MOVEMENT, AND TO THE ASSISTANCE OF WHOSE CLEAR INSIGHT SUCH SUCCESS AS I MAY HAVE HAD IN REACHING A CORRECT APPRECIATION AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE TEACHINGS OF ABBAS EFFENDI IS VERY LARGELY DUE, THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED



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## INTRODUCTION

NOT by my own seeking, but only at the request of my old friend, Mr. G. H. Putnam, the publisher of this book, and, as Mr. Putnam informs me, by the wish of the author, Mr. Myron Phelps, whose acquaintance I had the pleasure of making in the early part of this year in Cairo, do I write these introductory words to a work which I have read with equal pleasure and satisfaction, and which I regard as a faithful and trustworthy exposition of the views of 'Abbás Effendi, "the Master of 'Akká," and his followers. So faithfully, indeed, does it represent their standpoint that, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Phelps was not sufficiently conversant with Persian or Arabic to enable him to communicate directly with him whose life and teaching he here describes, but was dependent on the offices of interpreters, the whole book is to me full of familiar echoes of the voices to which I so eagerly listened when I visited 'Akká thirteen years ago, in the days when

Behá'u'lláh himself still dwelt amongst mankind.

To the study of the Bábí religion I was irresistibly attracted, even before I undertook my journey to Persia in 1887-88, by the vivid and masterly narrative of its birth and baptism of blood contained in the Comte de Gobineau's *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*—a narrative which no one interested in the Bábí (or, if the term be preferred, Behá'í) faith, or indeed in the history of religion in general, should on any account omit to read with careful attention. My enthusiasm was still further increased by what I saw of the Bábís in Persia, and by my subsequent visits to Behá'u'lláh at 'Akká and to his rival, Subh-i-Ezel, at Famagusta in Cyprus. It was under the influence of this enthusiasm that I penned the Introduction (several times cited by Mr. Phelps in the following pages) to my translation of the *Traveller's Narrative*, a book which has been much more eagerly and widely read in America than in this country, where, at the time of its publication, the very name of the Bábís, now grown familiar even to readers of the daily press, was hardly known to the general public. This enthusiasm, condoned, if not shared, by many kindly



critics and reviewers, exposed me to a somewhat savage attack in the *Oxford Magazine*, an attack concluding with the assertion that my Introduction displayed "a personal attitude almost inconceivable in a rational European, and a style unpardonable in a University teacher."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The review in question appeared in the *Oxford Magazine* of May 25, 1892, p. 394. Amongst many other egregious observations, the reviewer, "speaking candidly as a layman," considers that "the history of a recent sect which has affected the least important part of the Moslem world (nor that part very deeply) and is founded on a personal claim which will not bear investigation for a moment" is "quite unworthy of the learning and labour which" (he was kind enough to say) "the author has brought to bear upon it"; while, in the closing sentence, he "records his belief that the prominence given to the 'Báb' in this book is an absurd violation of historical perspective; and the translation of the *Traveller's Narrative* a waste of the powers and opportunities of a Persian scholar."

I am well aware that it is generally considered undignified and improper for an author to take any notice of his critics, or even to admit that their strictures have caused him more than a momentary vexation; and towards the more irresponsible reviewers of journals which do not profess to represent the opinions of a cultivated circle such indifference is undoubtedly the correct attitude. But the *Oxford Magazine*—at any rate outside Oxford—is supposed to be a serious exponent of the ideas and judgments of that University; and one has the right to expect that a work treating of an Oriental religious movement shall not be judged by one who, however great an authority he may be on classical archæology, knows so little even of Islám that he can speak of the originator of the Wahhábí movement as "Wahháb" (and even this he incorrectly writes, "Waháb"); a blunder comparable to that of the Turkish journalist who, desirous of making display of his proficiency in French, employed the remarkable word "*topjet*" (hardly recognised as standing for "*numéro d'objet*") in the sense of "catalogue number"; or

Increasing age and experience, (more's the pity!) are apt enough, even without the assistance of the *Oxford Magazine*, to modify our enthusiasms; but in this case at least time has so far vindicated my judgment against that of my Oxford reviewer that he could scarcely now maintain, as he formerly asserted, that the Bábí religion "had affected the least important part of the Moslem world, and that not deeply." Every one who is in the slightest degree conversant with the actual state of things in Persia now recognises that the number and influence of the Bábís in that country is immensely greater than it was fifteen years ago, and the conviction which I heard continually expressed this year in Bábí circles at Cairo, that in the course of a very short time their religion would reign paramount in their own country, and break down once and for all the power of the Shí'ite Muhammadan *mujtahids* and *mullás*, is seriously discussed as a possibility by European diplomatists and consular officers.

But without doubt the most remarkable tri-  
of the English bard who talks of "Abdul the Damned." The veriest tyro in Arabic would know that only God could be spoken of as al-Wahháb, "the All-Giver," and that 'Abd (servant) must stand before it to make it a possible name for a man—'Abdu'l-Wahháb, "the Servant of the All-Giver."

umph of the Behá'í religion (for the older Bábí doctrine out of which this has grown, now preserved in its primitive form only amongst the followers of Subh-i-Ezel, has been little studied or appreciated across the Atlantic) is the marvellous success achieved in recent years by its missionaries in the United States of America, where, as I understand, the number of believers may now be counted by thousands, not confined to one State or city, but represented in almost all the more important towns. Once again in the world's history has the East vindicated her claim to teach religion to the West, and to hold in the Spiritual World that pre-eminence which the Western nations hold in the Material.

I have often heard wonder expressed by Christian ministers at the extraordinary success of Bábí missionaries, as contrasted with the almost complete failure of their own. "How is it," they say, "that the Christian Doctrine, the highest and noblest which the world has ever known, though supported by all the resources of Western civilisation, can only count its converts in Muhammadan lands by twos and threes, while Bábíism can reckon them by thousands?" The answer, to my mind, is plain as the sun at midday. Western

Christianity, save in the rarest cases, is more Western than Christian, more racial than religious; and, by dallying with doctrines plainly incompatible with the obvious meaning of its Founder's words, such as the theories of "racial supremacy," "imperial destiny," "survival of the fittest," and the like, grows steadily more rather than less material. Did Christ belong to a "dominant race," or even to a European or "white" race? Nay, the "dominant race" was represented by Pontius Pilate, the governor, who was compelled to abandon his personal leanings towards clemency under constraint of "political necessities" arising out of Rome's "imperial destiny." Did Christ wish to encourage the racial pride of the Jews when He told them that God was "able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham"? or did He seek to emphasise the strength of blood-relationship when He declared that "whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother"? Who offered Him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," and how was that offer received? Was it the proud in spirit to whom He promised the kingdom of heaven? or those who said unto Him: "Lord, Lord," and prophe-

sied in His name? Or, to pass to the teachings of His apostles, did Paul declare that there was a wide difference between the Jew and the Greek? Was it he who proclaimed that "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet"? Or did he assert with the Darwinians that "God hath chosen the mighty things of the world to confound the things which are weak"?

I am not here arguing that the Christian religion is true, but merely that it is in manifest conflict with several other theories of life which practically regulate the conduct of all States and most individuals in the Western world, a world which, on the whole, judges of all things, including religions, mainly by material, or, to use the more popular term, "practical" standards. Mr. Phelps goes, perhaps, rather too far when he says (p. 252 *infra*) that "God and religion are but names and shadows to the Western world," and I would even hesitate to assert that anything equal to the rare and beautiful types of Christian character occasionally met with can be produced by any other religion or philosophy; but that ideas about the Unseen Spiritual World count for much more, and material standards and qualities for much less, in Asia than in the West,

is to me quite certain. Even Muhammadanism, though in theory more exclusive than Christianity (since it is almost inextricably associated with a recognition of the superiority of the Arabian race and language over all other peoples and tongues) is in practice much less so. To give one instance only; the Asiatic, no less than the European or American, looks down on the African negro as vastly inferior to himself, and has the same aversion towards his physical attributes; yet the negro Muhammadan enjoys a far better social position amongst his co-religionists in the East than does his Christian kinsman in the West. He is not even debarred from intermarriage with his fellow-believers of the superior race, much less from sitting at meat with them or mixing in their society; whilst many even of the most excellent and earnest Christian missionaries—not to speak of laymen—whom Europe and America send to Asia and Africa would be far less shocked at the idea of receiving on terms of intimacy in their house or at their table a white-skinned atheist than a dark-skinned believer. The dark-skinned races to whom the Christian missionaries go are not fools, and have no object in practising that curious self-deception wherewith so many ex-

cellent and well-meaning European and American Christians blind themselves to the obvious fact that they attach much more importance to race than religion ; they clearly see the inconsistency of those who, while professing to believe that the God they worship incarnated Himself in the form of an Asiatic man,—for this is what it comes to,—do nevertheless habitually and almost instinctively express, both in speech and action, contempt for the “ native ” of Asia. Yet surely some sentiment surrounds, even to the least imaginative, the tenement, were it the humblest, which has been inhabited by one we love.

There is, of course, another factor in the success of the Bábí propagandist, as compared with the Christian missionary, in the conversion of Muhammadans to his faith : namely, that the former admits, while the latter rejects, the divine inspiration of the Qur’án and the prophetic function of Muhammad. The Christian missionary must begin by attacking, explicitly or by implication, both these beliefs ; too often forgetting that if (as happens but rarely) he succeeds in destroying them, he destroys with them that recognition of former prophetic dispensations (including the Jewish and the Christian) which Muhammad

and the Qur'án proclaim, and converts his Muslim antagonist not to Christianity but to Scepticism or Atheism. What indeed could be more illogical on the part of Christian missionaries to Muhammadan lands than to devote much time and labour to the composition of controversial works which endeavour to prove, in one and the same breath, *first*, that the Qur'án is a lying imposture, and, *secondly*, that it bears witness to the truth of Christ's mission, as though any value attached to the testimony of one proved a liar! The Bábí (or Behá'í) propagandist, on the other hand, admits that Muhammad was the Prophet of God and that the Qur'án is the Word of God, denies nothing but their finality, and does not discredit his own witness when he draws from that source arguments to prove his faith.

To the Western observer, however, it is the complete sincerity of the Bábís, their fearless disregard of death and torture undergone for the sake of their religion, their certain conviction as to the truth of their faith, their generally admirable conduct towards mankind, and especially towards their fellow-believers, which constitute their strongest claim on his attention. Their doctrine, as even Mr. Phelps ad-



mits (p. 144 *infra*), is at most a new synthesis of old ideas; ideas with which the Eastern mind has for centuries been familiar, and which have ere now, as I think, been more clearly and logically systematised by older schools of thought, though perhaps without a certain tincture of modern Western notions (or more correctly, perhaps, of modern Western terminology) which is perceptible in these pages. At every turn we are face to face with some familiar echo of a past more or less remote: now of the Manichæans (as on p. 85), now of the Isma'ílí propagandists (as on p. 154), now of the early Súfís (as on p. 233). Here we are reminded of a line of Sa'di (p. 132), there, of Jalálu'd-Dín Rúmí (pp. 135 and 226), there, of Farídu'd-Dín 'Attár (pp. 174 and 180), there, of Shams-i-Tabríz (pp. 224 and 255), there, of Háfiz (p. 227). Nothing more strongly testifies to the fidelity of Mr. Phelps's presentation of his subject than the clearness of these echoes from a literature with which, to the best of my knowledge, he is unacquainted. Throughout his book the voice is Persian, though the words are English.

So far I am at one with the author as to the weakening hold of the Christian idea on the Western nations, the increasing materialism

of their ethical, social, and political standards, and the need of some fresh spiritual impulse amongst them. Such impulse, Mr. Phelps is disposed to think, if I understand him aright, may be supplied by the teachings of Behá'u'lláh and his son and spiritual successor, 'Abbás Effendi. Here, I confess, so far, at least, as the West is concerned, I am much more doubtful. The system in question appears to me to contain enough of the mysterious and the transcendental to make its intellectual acceptance at least as difficult as the theology of most Christian churches to the European sceptic; and not enough assurance of personal immortality to satisfy such Western minds as are repelled by the barren and jejune ethical systems of agnostics, positivists, and humanitarians, who would give us rules to regulate a life which they have rendered meaningless. Mr. Phelps emphasises the high ethical standard inculcated by Behá'u'lláh and 'Abbás Effendi on their followers, and admires, as all who have associated on terms of intimacy with the Bábís (or Behá'ís) must admire, the strong influence which this standard actually exerts on their conduct. Here again I am entirely with him, for, though I do not admit that the Behá'í or any other religion

can supply a rule of life higher than that which Christ has given us, I freely allow that the average Bábí or Behá'í is very much more consistent than the average Christian. But in making such comparison it must be remembered that the Behá'í religion enjoys two great advantages, so far as this point of view is concerned, over Christianity, Muhammadanism, or any other of the older world-religions: namely, its freedom from those lukewarm adherents who are born, or gravitate from mere indifference, into whatever established faith dominates their environment, and its freedom from the power, and hence from the temptation, to persecute. Almost every Bábí or Behá'í is in earnest because still, little more than half a century after the Báb's martyrdom, the number of those born into this faith is less than the number of those who have voluntarily and deliberately adopted it; while the great majority of Jews, Christians, and Muhammadans are what they are simply by reason of the circumstances of their birth. And though Mr. Phelps (pp. xxxvii and 154-155) insists strongly on the tolerance of the new faith as at present formulated (for the early Bábís were frankly intolerant, especially towards their Shí'ite persecutors, as most abundantly appears from the Persian

*Bayán*, written by the Báb, and from the history composed by Hájjí Mírzá Jání, his contemporary disciple), I cannot wholly share his confidence as to how the Behá'ís would treat either the Shí'ite Muhammadans, the Súfís, or the Ezelís (against all of whom they have, for different reasons, a special grudge) if they should one day, as is within the range of possibility, become paramount in Persia. Towards other religions, especially Christianity, they would, I believe, be more tolerant than are the Muhammadans, not because they are at all more disposed than the latter to be converted by them, but because they regard them as affording material more apt for their own endeavours to proselytise. But though, in the event of their succeeding in making their religion dominant in Persia, they might, as I think, prove scarcely more tolerant than the present *mujtahids* and *mullás*, especially in the particular cases above indicated, they would, I am convinced, prove infinitely more progressive, and Persia as a country might not improbably gain enormously both in wealth and power by the change.

There are many other points raised by Mr. Phelps's interesting pages on which I should like to touch, but which the limits assigned

to me compel me to leave unnoticed. He has done more than collect, arrange, and interpret the philosophical and ethical ideas of the Behá'í Bábís; he has in many cases educed from their leaders, by his own patient enquiries, doctrines now probably for the first time formulated by them in writing. Three observations made amongst the Bábís in Persia caused me great surprise, being quite contrary to my preconceptions, though perhaps natural enough in the light of the comparative history of religions. The *first* was the generally prevailing uncertainty as to the authorship of many of their own religious books, especially those of the earlier period (from the Manifestation of the Báb in 1844 till the Manifestation of Behá'u'lláh about 1863), or, in other words, the complete absence of a Canon of Scripture. The *second* was the varying and unfixed character of their doctrine on many points (such as the Immortality of the Soul) which we should deem of capital importance. The *third* was their readiness to ignore or suppress facts, writings, or views (undoubtedly historical) which they regarded as useless or hurtful to their present aims. The only essentials in Behá'í eyes are the love of Behá'u'lláh and his accredited successor, the belief in their Divine

character, and the eager desire to hearken to the reading of their words, contained in countless epistles or "tablets" (*alwáh*), which are for the most part rhapsodies interspersed with ethical maxims, most rarely touching on questions of Metaphysics, Ontology, or Eschatology. This (which had also, as I found, struck Mr. Phelps, who, like myself, was chiefly anxious to learn how the new religion dealt with the subjects last mentioned) is, I fancy, part of a deliberate purpose on the part of Behá'u'lláh and 'Abbás Effendi to discourage that essentially Persian passion for speculative Metaphysics which threatened, especially during the two or three years succeeding the Báb's martyrdom (1850-1853), to destroy all order and discipline in the young church by suffering each member to become a law unto himself, and by producing as many "Manifestations" as there were Bábís.

In the study of a religion we may, according to our standpoint, look chiefly either at the Process by which it was formed or the Result at which it arrives, and these two points of view differ as widely as Embryology differs from Ethics. Mr. Phelps has written chiefly from the latter point of view, while I have perhaps inclined to the former. Some time ago I had

the pleasure of meeting an English diplomatist freshly returned from Persia, who had held repeated and intimate conversations with many of the Persian Bábís, and who possessed an insight into the Persian mind which I have hardly seen equalled in my experience, save, perhaps, by that displayed by the late Comte de Gobineau in his *Religions et Philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale*, to which I have already had occasion to refer in this Introduction. Three of his remarks, especially, have remained in my memory, and since they bear on matters discussed in this Introduction, I may perhaps be permitted to conclude with them, since to me they have afforded much food for reflection.

Speaking first of my own writings about the Bábís, especially my translation of the *New History*, he observed that several of his Bábí friends greatly disliked my attempts to trace the evolution of Bábí doctrine from that of the Shí'a sect of Muhammadans, through that of the Shaykhí school (in which the Báb and many of his earliest disciples were educated), to the forms which it successively assumed in the hands of the Báb and his followers. "They regard you," he concluded, "as one who, having before his eyes a beautiful flower, is not

content to enjoy its beauty and fragrance, but must needs grub at its roots to ascertain from what foul manure it derived its sustenance. As for the History of Hájjí Mírzá Jání, which you regard as of such incomparable interest on account of the light which it throws on various conflicting tendencies and rash deeds and doctrines which agitated the young Bábí church, I do not doubt, from what they said, that they would, if possible, compass the destruction of the one surviving copy of the book, to which, unfortunately as they consider, you obtained access."

Speaking next of my visits to Subh-i-Ezel, and my endeavours fairly to state and fully to discuss his version of the schism which first rent asunder the Bábí church (since Behá'u'lláh's death again divided by another schism, to which Mr. Phelps briefly alludes on pp. 80-82 *infra*), he remarked: "The question here was not a mere question of historical rights or documentary evidence, but the much greater question as to whether Bábíism was to become an independent world-religion, or remain a mere sect of Islám. In the struggle between Subh-i-Ezel and Behá'u'lláh we see a repetition of the similar conflict which took place in the early Christian Church between Peter and



Paul. The former was in closer personal relations with Christ than the latter; but it is owing to the victory of the latter that Christianity is now the religion of the civilised West, instead of being an obscure sect of Judaism."

Lastly, replying to an expression of wonder on my part that, with no fixed or prominent idea of personal immortality, or of rewards in a future life, the Bábís should, with hardly a single exception, meet the martyr's death, when occasion arose, not merely with equanimity, but with exultation, he said: "Is it possible for you to wonder at this? If so, you must surely have lost touch with the Persian mind, and have forgotten what is meant in its language of metaphor by 'the Loved One,' 'the Wine,' 'the Cup-bearer,' and 'Intoxication.'" And even as he spoke a dimness cleared, as it were, from my mental vision, nurtured latterly too much on dead Persian books and too little on the words of living Persian men, and I seemed to see (and to understand in the seeing) Sulaymán Khán, one of the Bábí martyrs of 1852, as, pierced with deep wounds, in each of which burned a lighted wick, he hastened, as a bridegroom to his bride, to the place of execution, singing with exultation :

*“Yak dast jám-i-báda, wa yak dast zulf-i-Yár—  
Raqsí chunín miyána-i-maydánam árzúst!”*

“Grasping in one hand the Wine-cup, clinging to my  
Darling’s hair,  
Gaily dancing, thus would I confront the scaffold in  
the square.”

E. G. BROWNE.

CAMBRIDGE, Sept. 27, 1903.

## INTRODUCTORY

TO the student of the development of human thought, there is probably not in the world to-day another place so interesting as the small city of Akka in northern Palestine ; for there may be investigated, still in its youth and under the fostering care of one of its founders, a religious faith which gives promise of becoming, at no very distant time, one of the recognised great religions of the world. Whatever we may think of the pretensions which it makes to divine origin, whatever our opinion as to the validity of the system of morals and social ethics which it advocates, or of the truth or error of the psychological and philosophical views which it advances, we can hardly doubt that we are here in the presence of a great force, destined to have a far-reaching influence upon the thought and lives of men.

Fascinating indeed are those mysterious and mighty movements which, now and again, with a certain rhythmic sequence and regularity,

have from the earliest days swept over the earth, revivifying spiritual life, changing individual habits and social customs, and, during many succeeding centuries, moulding the lives of vast masses of mankind. A Confucius, a Zoroaster, a Buddha, a Christ, a Mahomet, is born as other men, lives the ordinary span of human life, and dies as others, but by his brief presence the face of the world is changed. What is the character, what are the daily lives, of those remarkable beings who have such unlimited influence over their fellow-men as the founders of religions? How do such men act, how do they speak, what do they teach? What is the apparent nature of the bond which unites to them and to each other the men about them who play the important parts in these history-making epochs?

There are no questions of greater human interest than these. If we have here before us, subject to our inspection, inviting our investigations, and ready to reply to our questions, one who, there is reason to believe, may even possibly be such a man—if, moreover, this man advances a philosophy new to us, which assumes to illumine the ever-baffling mystery of existence and is not without persuasive force, it would be passing strange if we

should let go by the opportunity afforded by his presence of studying his life and character and weighing carefully his words.

It is considerations of this sort which, as it seems to me, now invite our attention to Akka. The interest which centres in this city arises from the fact that here have lived for upwards of thirty-four years the leaders of the religion of Babism, or Beha'ism, natives of Persia, who are suffering exile and imprisonment because of their religious innovations. This movement was inaugurated in Persia in 1844 by one Ali Mohammed, a youth of twenty-five years, who in that year announced himself to be the "Bab" (Gate), a term familiar to Moslems, and by which is understood an avenue for the transmission to men of messages from a super-human source. As expressed by one of his followers, Ali Mohammed meant by this term "that he was the channel of grace from some great Person still behind the veil of glory, who was the possessor of countless and boundless perfections, by whose will he moved and to the bond of whose love he clung."

The mission which Ali Mohammed asserted for himself was the inauguration of a new Divine Dispensation which should be for mankind a revelation of the Divine Will and

should result in reforming the beliefs and lives of mankind ; in which dispensation he was but the forerunner preparing the way for one greater than he, who would be the direct Manifestation of God—who would, when he came, fully reveal the Divine message, and to whom all that he (the Bab) said was to be regarded as subject and subordinate.

Ali Mohammed supported his claims by passages from the scriptures, and by the traditions of the Moslem Church, which he interpreted as forecasting the appearance of a Divine Messenger at the very time when he himself had announced his mission, but chiefly by the eloquent and elaborate disquisitions which ever flowed from his lips, seemingly inexhaustible in volume and fertility of reasoning. Whether because of the validity of his appeal to scripture and tradition, the cogency of his reasoning, the force of his eloquence, or because of his spiritual power, all of which resources his followers unite in ascribing to him in a high degree, Ali Mohammed found many to accept him. Zealous missionaries went out from him through all Persia, and his following rapidly became considerable. The Moslem priesthood, apprehensive for their influence, united to repress by force the rising tide of the

new faith. An era of bloody and relentless persecution followed, which has not, perhaps, been paralleled in history. Singly, and by hundreds, the Babis were hunted down and slaughtered. One's heart thrills with emotion, one's conception of the noble possibilities of human nature expands as one reads of the splendid and unflinching heroism of the Babis in the cause of their faith. Such was their love and loyalty to their leader that during the whole of the terrible time of persecution hardly a single instance of recantation in order to escape death occurred, though the opportunity was generally offered. Their spirit of absolute and self-forgetting devotion and love is well exemplified in the manner in which Mirza Kurban Ali, one of seven executed together in Teheran in September, 1850, met his death. When he was brought to the foot of the execution pole, the headsman raised his sword and smote him from behind. The blow only wounded the old man's neck, and cast his turban upon the ground. He raised his head and exclaimed: "Oh, happy that intoxicated lover who, at the foot of his Beloved, knoweth not whether it be his head or his turban which he casteth." <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*A Traveller's Narrative*, by Professor E. G. Browne, p. 214.

The number of martyrdoms which have taken place in Persia has been estimated at ten thousand.<sup>1</sup> Most of these occurred during the early history of the faith, but they have continued with diminishing frequency, even down to the present time.

In 1850 the Bab himself was executed at Tabriz. It had been expected that his death would check the spread of the religion, but this expectation was not realised. The Babis continued to increase in numbers; the persecutions became more intense. In 1852 a number of the leaders of the faith fled from Teheran to Baghdad, in the domains of the Sultan of Turkey. They remained here eleven years, were then transported by the Turkish Government to Adrianople, and five years later to Akka.

In this band of exiles was one Mirza Haseyn Ali, belonging to a Persian family of distinction and great wealth, about thirty-five years of age at the time of the flight from Teheran. He had long been regarded by the Babis as a leader, and venerated for his wisdom and character. The Bab had conferred upon him the title of "Beha Ullah" (Glory of God).

<sup>1</sup> This estimate is conservative. Many place the number at from twenty to thirty thousand, and some even higher.



Soon after reaching Baghdad, Beha Ullah withdrew from his family and spent two years alone in the mountains. He then returned to Baghdad and engaged in teaching and expounding Babist doctrines. When the transfer of the exiles from Baghdad was ordered, Beha Ullah made to five of his closest followers the declaration that he himself was the Manifestation of God who had been foretold by the Bab. This declaration was not publicly proclaimed until some four or five years later, from Adrianople. It was then accepted with substantial unanimity by the Babis, who have since that time generally styled themselves and been styled by others, "Beha'is." Beha Ullah occupied his remaining years almost entirely with writing, and has left many voluminous works, none of which, with the exception of some disconnected passages, have been translated into a European language. He died at Akka in 1892, and was succeeded, at his own designation, by his son, Abbas Effendi, who has since continued to be the leader of the faith. He is styled "Our Master" and "Our Lord" by the Beha'is (by which they mean that he is a man who has reached the understanding and knowledge of God, and, being illumined by His wisdom, is fitted to teach and lead), and is regarded by

them with a veneration and affection second only, if indeed second, to that which they bestow upon the memory of Beha Ullah. He is classed by them with the Bab and Beha Ullah as the third and last of the Divine Messengers by whom the present Dispensation is introduced.

Meanwhile the faith has shown undiminished vitality in Persia, where the number of its adherents is now estimated at several millions,<sup>1</sup> and it is said to be steadily increasing. Missionaries have also gone out to various parts of the world, and the religion has already taken root in many countries.

While spending the summer of 1902 in London, it happened that through friends I heard much of Beha'ism, which has adherents in England, as well as a much larger number in the United States. Having for many years given much attention to the study of philosophic and religious thought, the subject interested me. I took occasion to read up the history of the movement, and learned what I could of the

<sup>1</sup> A traveller in Persia, recently writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, refers to the Beha'is as comprising something like half of the population of that country. This is no doubt an overestimate. But, on the other hand, published statistics must be taken as erring the other way, since great numbers of Beha'is do not declare themselves publicly, on account of the hostility to which they would be exposed.

tenets of the religion. As to the former, I found that, chiefly owing to the careful and extended researches of Professor Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University, the results of whose work, so far as published, are contained in two volumes of translations, with copious notes, entitled respectively *A Traveller's Narrative* and *The New History*, and in two papers contributed to the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for 1889, a full record of the movement was easily accessible. To these sources I am chiefly indebted for the historical outline which I have given above.

It appeared, however, more difficult to ascertain what were the teachings peculiar to the faith. I found much bearing upon the claims of the founders of the religion to divine inspiration in the way of arguments drawn from the prophecies of the Mohammedan and other scriptures and traditions, and an elaborate code of social ethics; but nothing of importance further than this. It seemed to me singular that a religion having the vitality and power of assimilation shown by the history of Beha'ism should have no philosophical or psychological basis for its moral precepts, and I felt a strong desire to ascertain by personal investigation whether such a basis did not exist. I accord-

ingly made inquiries as to whether my presence for this purpose would be acceptable at the headquarters of the faith, and after some correspondence, in which my wishes were furthered by friends who were known in Akka, I received an invitation to come there. This I accordingly did, and spent in that city the month of December, 1902. This month was one of the most memorable in my life ; for not only was I able to gain a satisfactory general view of this religion, but I made the acquaintance of Abbas Effendi, who is easily the most remarkable man whom it has ever been my fortune to meet.

As I had suspected was the case, I found that Beha'ism possesses a system of philosophy and psychology. This system is logical, and to many minds will seem persuasive. It harmonises in every respect with the discoveries and conclusions of modern science, and makes a strong appeal to intelligent and reasoning thought. More even may be said than this ; for the conceptions of Beha'ism with regard to cosmogenesis, man and his relation to the universe, bear an analogy which is very striking to the views discussed by the most advanced thinkers of the present day, arguing from scientific premises.

On its ethical side, it has as high moral stan-

dards as any of the other great religions ; while the social regulations which it advocates are certainly more enlightened than those which have generally been put forward in the name of religion.

Another characteristic of Beha'ism, as refreshing and attractive as it is striking to the mind accustomed to the dogmatic narrowness of the modern Christian Church, is its marvellous spirit of liberality. It recognises every other religion as equally divine in origin with itself. It professes only to renew the message formerly given by the Divine Messengers who founded those religions, and which has been more or less forgotten by men. If revelations have differed it has only been in degree, determined in the several cases by the differing capacities of men in different stages of human development to receive them. No man is asked to desert his own faith ; but only to look back to its fountainhead and discern, through the mists and accumulations of time, the true spirit of its founders.

Further, I found that this faith does not expend itself in beautiful and unfruitful theories, but has a vital and effective power to mould life towards the very highest ideal of human character,—which in the Western world

is generally agreed, no doubt, to be that of Jesus of Nazareth,—as exemplified by the life of its chief representative and the salient characteristics of those of his followers with whom I became acquainted.

That there was in the world a religion having this character, and embodied in an actual, living, and strenuous movement, which, although new, has already shown great vitality, power of aggression, assimilation, and growth, was to me a revelation. I saw at once that there was in this mere spectacle, which I had had the fortune to see and understand, the potentiality of immense good to other nations of the world by impelling a recognition of the real strength and greatness of the spirit of true religion, under whatever external form it may appear, and stimulating a return to the purity and simplicity which have characterised all religions in their youth. Almost throughout the world to-day religion is stagnant and faith is dead; but here is a demonstration that it is capable of revival. Such a spectacle as the ideal, Christlike life of Abbas Effendi has in it an immense probative and stimulating power.

As a result of reflections of this kind came the impulse to prepare this book, in order to

make a permanent record, available to others, of the things which I have observed and learned. I shall first collect my observations and the information I have received from members of his family and others who were eye-witnesses of, or connected with, the occurrences referred to, bearing upon the life and character of Abbas Effendi. This I regard as perhaps the most important part of my present undertaking: since nothing could so well serve to make plain the intended application of the doctrines taught, or could be so effective an incentive to aspiration and effort, as the example of this life. This portion of the book will include a narrative by his sister, Behiah Khanum, of the life of Abbas Effendi and the fortunes of the family of his father, Beha Ullah, from the time when they left Teheran in 1852. As the restrictions of Mohammedan social custom, which the Beha'is in Akka carefully observe for the sake of peace and harmony, prevented me from meeting this lady personally, this narrative was given by her in instalments to Madam M. A. de S. Canavarro, who was in Akka at the same time that I was, and by her repeated to me. Each instalment was written down within a few hours after it was received from Behiah Khanum.

I shall also say something as to the type of character which this faith tends to attract and develop, as indicated by that of those who compose the little band of Beha'is which share the exile of Abbas Effendi in Akka.

I shall next give an outline of the philosophy and psychology upon which the ethical injunctions of the religion rest. To ascertain the views of Abbas Effendi upon these matters (as to which, as indeed all others, I was assured that his teachings are identical in every respect with those of Beha Ullah) was the most serious portion of my task ; such is the great difficulty of grasping the abstract ideas of those whose modes of thought are so different from ours, especially when expressed in a language so unlike our own as the Persian. Had it not been for my familiarity with Oriental philosophic thought, I should have been quite unable to accomplish it. On this branch of the subject the teachings were not, for the most part, given to me in set discourses accompanied by a word-for-word interpretation which could be set down in sequence, as was the case with most of the other matter which I received from Abbas Effendi, owing to the difficulty of transferring these abstruse ideas into English by the aid of the interpreters



available. They were chiefly imparted in informal conversations and as replies to questions, which have been collected and systematised.

Next I shall proceed to a synopsis of the teachings of Beha'ism as to the conduct of life, or its conception of true religion as that term is ordinarily used ; and in order to give a complete view of the subject, I shall add the leading features of the elaborate code of social ethics enjoined by the leaders of the faith.

It will, of course, be understood that I do not for a moment conceive that I have arrived at a full understanding of the tenets of the religion and the philosophy underlying it in all their scope and detail. The time which I have thus far given to the investigation is far too short for that ; nor, until the more important of the voluminous writings of Beha Ullah, and those of Abbas Effendi, which are also considerable, shall have been accurately rendered into a European language, can we hope to have an exact and systematic analysis of it. But although it is, of course, possible that I may have been misled in some minor matters by faulty interpreting, I have checked and counterchecked my understanding of the statements made to me with such care that

I am satisfied that in its essential points the presentation which I shall give of the salient features of the philosophy and tenets is substantially correct.

Nothing is quite so necessary to a just view of Beha'ism as a thorough comprehension of its attitude towards other religions. I have therefore thought it advisable to add a chapter dealing with this matter, which, in defining the relations which the faith conceives to exist between itself and the external world, necessarily touches upon its most intimate conceptions of its own essential nature. For a correct understanding of the entire subject this is the most important chapter in the book; and I would advise that it be read both before those dealing with philosophy and ethics, and also in the order in which it stands.

Finally, I shall assemble a number of the discourses which I heard from Abbas Effendi during my stay in Akka, and which were, with the exceptions hereafter noted, taken down from the interpreter consecutively and substantially as they appear here; and to these I shall add one or two other discourses of Abbas Effendi, and a few passages from the writings of Beha Ullah, translations of which have been given to me by friends.

I have already said that the narrative of Abbas Effendi's sister was given to me by Madam Canavarro; further, we have worked together over all parts of the book. It might more properly have been published over our joint names; but since she does not wish this, I am obliged to content myself with stating the facts. Without her clear insight and invaluable aid it would never have reached its present form.

I am aware that it has many deficiencies, and it is possible that I have fallen into some errors. Such defects as exist I hope to supply or correct in a future edition; and I shall feel much indebted to my readers if they will call my attention to any which they may discover, addressing me in care of my publishers.

M. H. P.

CAIRO, March 8, 1903.



LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF  
ABBAS EFFENDI



# LIFE AND TEACHINGS OF ABBAS EFFENDI

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## CHAPTER I

### THE MASTER OF AKKA

**S**MALL as this world is, boast as we may of our means of communication, how little we really know of other lands; how slowly the actual thoughts, hopes, and aspirations of other peoples, the deep and real things of their lives, reach us, if they indeed ever reach us at all! We of the so-called "Christian" lands think, perhaps, that if Christ were to appear again upon the earth the good news would burden the telegraph, that His words and daily life would be marshalled forth under double headlines for our convenient perusal at breakfast or on the rapid-transit trains, giving us the interesting information without interrupting our important occupations. Ah no!

We but deceive ourselves. The Man of Nazareth might pursue His holy life on the banks of the Jordan and the shores of Gennesaret for a generation of men, but the faintest rumour of Him would not reach our ministers or our stockbrokers, our churches, or our exchanges.

Imagine that we are in the ancient house of the still more ancient city of Akka, which was for a month my home. The room in which we are faces the opposite wall of a narrow paved street, which an active man might clear at a single bound. Above is the bright sun of Palestine; to the right a glimpse of the old sea-wall and the blue Mediterranean. As we sit we hear a singular sound rising from the pavement, thirty feet below—faint at first, and increasing. It is like the murmur of human voices. We open the window and look down. We see a crowd of human beings with patched and tattered garments. Let us descend to the street and see who these are.

It is a noteworthy gathering. Many of these men are blind; many more are pale, emaciated, or aged. Some are on crutches; some are so feeble that they can barely walk. Most of the women are closely veiled, but enough are uncovered to cause us well to be-



lieve that, if the veils were lifted, more pain and misery would be seen. Some of them carry babes with pinched and sallow faces. There are perhaps a hundred in this gathering, and besides, many children. They are of all the races one meets in these streets—Syrians, Arabs, Ethiopians, and many others.

These people are ranged against the walls or seated on the ground, apparently in an attitude of expectation ;—for what do they wait? Let us wait with them.

We have not to wait long. A door opens and a man comes out. He is of middle stature, strongly built. He wears flowing light-coloured robes. On his head is a light buff fez with a white cloth wound about it. He is perhaps sixty years of age. His long grey hair rests on his shoulders. His forehead is broad, full, and high, his nose slightly aquiline, his moustaches and beard, the latter full though not heavy, nearly white. His eyes are grey and blue, large, and both soft and penetrating. His bearing is simple, but there is grace, dignity, and even majesty about his movements. He passes through the crowd, and as he goes utters words of salutation. We do not understand them, but we see the benignity and the kindness of his counte-

nance. He stations himself at a narrow angle of the street and motions to the people to come towards him. They crowd up a little too insistently. He pushes them gently back and lets them pass him one by one. As they come they hold their hands extended. In each open palm he places some small coins. He knows them all. He caresses them with his hand on the face, on the shoulders, on the head. Some he stops and questions. An aged negro who hobbles up, he greets with some kindly inquiry; the old man's broad face breaks into a sunny smile, his white teeth glistening against his ebony skin as he replies. He stops a woman with a babe and fondly strokes the child. As they pass, some kiss his hand. To all he says, "*Marhabbah, marhabbah*"—"Well done, well done!"

So they all pass him. The children have been crowding around him with extended hands, but to them he has not given. However, at the end, as he turns to go, he throws a handful of coppers over his shoulder, for which they scramble.

During this time this friend of the poor has not been unattended. Several men wearing red fezes, and with earnest and kindly faces, followed him from the house, stood near him

and aided in regulating the crowd, and now, with reverent manner and at a respectful distance, follow him away. When they address him they call him "Master."

This scene you may see almost any day of the year in the streets of Akka. There are other scenes like it, which come only at the beginning of the winter season. In the cold weather which is approaching, the poor will suffer, for, as in all cities, they are thinly clad. Some day at this season, if you are advised of the place and time, you may see the poor of Akka gathered at one of the shops where clothes are sold, receiving cloaks from the Master. Upon many, especially the most infirm or crippled, he himself places the garment, adjusts it with his own hands, and strokes it approvingly, as if to say, "There! Now you will do well." There are five or six hundred poor in Akka, to all of whom he gives a warm garment each year.

On feast days he visits the poor at their homes. He chats with them, inquires into their health and comfort, mentions by name those who are absent, and leaves gifts for all.

Nor is it the beggars only that he remembers. Those respectable poor who cannot beg, but must suffer in silence—those whose daily

labor will not support their families—to these he sends bread secretly. His left hand knoweth not what his right hand doeth.

All the people know him and love him—the rich and the poor, the young and the old—even the babe leaping in its mother's arms. If he hears of any one sick in the city—Moslem or Christian, or of any other sect, it matters not—he is each day at their bedside, or sends a trusty messenger. If a physician is needed, and the patient poor, he brings or sends one, and also the necessary medicine. If he finds a leaking roof or a broken window menacing health, he summons a workman, and waits himself to see the breach repaired. If any one is in trouble,—if a son or a brother is thrown into prison, or he is threatened at law, or falls into any difficulty too heavy for him,—it is to the Master that he straightway makes appeal for counsel or for aid. Indeed, for counsel all come to him, rich as well as poor. He is the kind father of all the people.

This man who gives so freely must be rich, you think? No, far otherwise. Once his family was the wealthiest in all Persia. But this friend of the lowly, like the Galilean, has been oppressed by the great. *For fifty years he and his family have been exiles and prisoners.*

Their property has been confiscated and wasted, and but little has been left to him. Now that he has not much he must spend little for himself that he may give more to the poor. His garments are usually of cotton, and the cheapest that can be bought. Often his friends in Persia—for this man is indeed rich in friends, thousands and tens of thousands who would eagerly lay down their lives at his word—send him costly garments. These he wears once, out of respect for the sender; then he gives them away. A few months ago this happened. The wife of the Master was about to depart on a journey. Fearing that her husband would give away his cloak and so be left without one for himself, she left a second cloak with her daughter, charging her not to inform her father of it. Not long after her departure, the Master, suspecting, it would seem, what had been done, said to his daughter, “Have I another cloak?” The daughter could not deny it, but told her father of her mother’s charge. The Master replied, “How could I be happy having two cloaks, knowing that there are those that have none?” Nor would he be content until he had given the second cloak away.

He does not permit his family to have lux-

uries. He himself eats but once a day, and then bread, olives, and cheese suffice him.

His room is small and bare, with only a matting on the stone floor. His habit is to sleep upon this floor. Not long ago a friend, thinking that this must be hard for a man of advancing years, presented him with a bed fitted with springs and mattress. So these stand in his room also, but are rarely used. "For how," he says, "can I bear to sleep in luxury when so many of the poor have not even shelter?" So he lies upon the floor and covers himself only with his cloak.

For more than thirty-four years this man has been a prisoner at Akka. But his jailors have become his friends. The Governor of the city, the Commander of the Army Corps, respect and honour him as though he were their brother. No man's opinion or recommendation has greater weight with them. He is the beloved of all the city, high and low. And how could it be otherwise? For to this man it is the law, as it was to Jesus of Nazareth, to do good to those who injure him. Have we yet heard of any one in lands which boast the name of Christ who lived that life?

Hear how he treats his enemies. One instance of many I have heard will suffice.

When the Master came to Akka there lived there a certain man from Afghanistan, an austere and rigid Mussulman. To him the Master was a heretic. He felt and nourished a great enmity towards the Master, and roused up others against him. When opportunity offered in gatherings of the people, as in the Mosque, he denounced him with bitter words.

“This man,” he said to all, “is an impostor. Why do you speak to him? Why do you have dealings with him?” And when he passed the Master on the street he was careful to hold his robe before his face that his sight might not be defiled.

Thus did this Afghan. The Master, however, did thus: The Afghan was poor and lived in a mosque; he was frequently in need of food and clothing. The Master sent him both. These he accepted, but without thanks. He fell sick. The Master took him a physician, food, medicine, money. These, also, he accepted; but as he held out one hand that the physician might take his pulse, with the other he held his cloak before his face that he might not look upon the Master. *For twenty-four years* the Master continued his kindnesses and the Afghan persisted in his enmity. Then at last one day the Afghan

came to the Master's door, and fell down, penitent and weeping, at his feet.

"Forgive me, sir!" he cried. "For twenty-four years I have done evil to you, for twenty-four years you have done good to me. Now I know that I have been in the wrong."

The Master bade him rise, and they became friends.

This Master is as simple as his soul is great. He claims nothing for himself—neither comfort, nor honour, nor repose. Three or four hours of sleep suffice him; all the remainder of his time and all his strength are given to the succour of those who suffer, in spirit or in body. "I am," he says, "the servant of God."

Such is Abbas Effendi, the Master of Akka.



## CHAPTER II

### THE STORY OF HIS LIFE

#### TEHERAN AND BAGHDAD

IN introducing Abbas Effendi to the reader I have thus far presented phases of his character which are unusual and first strike the attention. But these qualities are only the efflorescence of a strong, symmetrical, and well-balanced nature, which should be regarded from all sides. In the various relations of life when circumstances demand it he can be resolute, stern, and unyielding, as well as tender and compassionate. In his large family he is the firm and careful head, no less than the kind father and affectionate husband. Among men he is a strong and virile man, with a vigorous and clear intellect, a sound judgment, and substantial common sense. Among his people he is the executive, the administrator, and organiser of affairs.

Professor Browne, who visited Akka in 1890, thus graphically describes him as he saw him

at that time (*A Traveller's Narrative*, Introduction, page 36) :

“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 pleasant features,—such was my first impression of Abbas Effendi, “the Master,” as he *par excellence* is called by the Babis. Subsequent conversation with him only served to heighten the respect with which his appearance had at first inspired me. One more eloquent of speech, more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books of the Jews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans, could, I should think, scarcely be found even among 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 no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt.”

But the best estimate of the character of Abbas Effendi is to be gathered from the events of his life, to a brief narration of which I will now proceed. The story is told by Behiah Khanum, his sister, as follows :

“My brother, Abbas Effendi, now our

Lord, was born at Teheran in the spring of 1844, at midnight following the day upon which, in the evening, the Bab made his declaration. I was born three years later. He was therefore eight and I five, when in August, 1852, the attempt was made upon the life of the Shah of Persia by a young Babi, who through ungoverned enthusiasm had lost his mental balance. The events following this attempt are vividly impressed upon my mind. My mother, Abbas Effendi, myself, and my younger brother, then a babe, were at the time in Teheran. My father was temporarily in the country.

“The attempted assassination caused great uproar and excitement throughout the city. All Babis were searched for, and, when found, arrested. A mob sacked our house, stripping it of its furnishings. My mother fled with us to the home of a sister of her father, whose husband was an official of the government ; but, seeing the alarm which her presence caused, she was unwilling to bring her relatives into danger, and returned to her own home.

“There we gathered together some furniture which had been left by the mob, and lived in one room, destitute of all but the barest necessities.

“ My father, as my mother learned from a servant who was with him when he was arrested, was not long after brought to the city in chains and placed, with many other Babis, in a dungeon below ground. They were chained together in squads by heavy chains passing about their necks. He expected to be executed first, as a leader, but he was instead reserved for the more horrible suffering of witnessing the successive torture and death of his companions separately. Each day one or more were selected for this fate, and the others reminded that their turn might come to-morrow.

“ Meanwhile, we heard each day the cries of the mob as a new victim was tortured or executed, not knowing but that it might be my father. My mother went daily to the house of her aunt for news of him and generally spent the entire day there, hoping that each hour would bring some tidings. These were long and weary days for my mother, young as she was and unaccustomed to sorrow.

“ At first, on going to her aunt's, my mother would take me with her ; but one day, returning unusually late, we found Abbas Effendi surrounded by a band of boys who had undertaken to personally molest him. He was standing in their midst as straight as an arrow

—a little fellow, the youngest and smallest of the group—firmly but quietly *commanding* them not to lay their hands upon him, which, strange to say, they seemed unable to do. After that, my mother thought it unsafe to leave him at home, knowing his fearless disposition, and that when he went into the street, as he usually did to watch for her coming, eagerly expectant of news from his father for whom, even at that early age, he had a passionate attachment, he would be beset and tormented by the boys. So she took him with her, leaving me at home with my younger brother. I spent the long days in constant terror, cowering in the dark and afraid to unlock the door lest men should rush in and kill us.

“Meanwhile my mother was without money. She would have been reduced to extremities but for the fact that the buttons of our garments were of gold. These she used for buying food and for bribing the jailors to take food to my father.

“Four months passed in this fearful agony of suspense and terror. Meanwhile the Government had investigated my father’s case and had become convinced that he had had no connection with the attack upon the Shah. This

might not have been sufficient to effect his release at that time, on account of the popular fury against all Babis, but he was so ill that it was thought he would die, and his illness was made a pretext for his liberation and he was released under surveillance. Two weeks later, in company with a number of other families of believers, we set out for Baghdad with a military escort. It was bitterly cold, and the route lay over mountains. The journey lasted a month. My father was very ill. The chains had left his neck galled, raw, and much swollen. My mother, who was pregnant, was unaccustomed to hardships, and was worried and harassed over our recent trials and the uncertainty of our fate. Another thing which grieved her was her separation from my younger brother whom, being very delicate, she had felt obliged to leave behind in Teheran as unfit to endure the hardships of this journey. We were all insufficiently clothed, and suffered keenly from exposure. My brother in particular was very thinly clad. Riding upon a horse, his feet, ankles, hands, and wrists were much exposed to the cold, which was so severe that they became frost-bitten and swollen and caused him great pain. The effects of this experience he feels to this day on being chilled or taking a cold.

“We arrived in Baghdad in a state of great misery, and also of almost utter destitution. The only means that we had brought from Teheran consisted of a few personal effects that my mother had collected before our departure, which had been so hurried that she had had no time in which to make suitable preparation. Even these were nearly exhausted by the time we reached our destination, having been bartered on the journey for necessaries.

“More misery now stared us in the face. My father was still very ill, my mother and other women in delicate health, small children needed care, while our means were insufficient to procure even the usual necessities of life. My mother’s health demanded that we should have servants, but we were unable to hire them. There were, indeed, those among the believers who would willingly have acted as such for us, and who actually did so, to some extent, but we could not permit them to do what we would not do ourselves—especially my mother, who was habitually very thoughtful and considerate, and who always preferred to work for herself and others rather than be a source of trouble to any one.

“I was, of course, too young to be of any real help; and as it was, there was no one in

our household capable of doing much but my poor mother, who was unaccustomed to labour of any kind. In trying to wash our clothes her hands, which were fine and delicate, became blistered and were torn till they bled.

“In short, our sufferings—at least those of our own family—were indescribable. However, we struggled through this period as bravely as we could, until, after a time, occasional remittances came to us from Teheran, the proceeds of personal effects—jewels, cloth of gold, and other valuable articles which were a part of my mother’s dowry—which had been left there to be sold. This money ameliorated our condition to a considerable extent.

“As soon as the Blessed Perfection<sup>1</sup> became somewhat better, he began again to teach. Gathering the believers about him he encouraged, exhorted, and taught them until peace and happiness again reigned in the hearts of his devoted followers, and our little band of refugees found joy in his holy presence. But this happiness was of but brief duration. Not long after, my uncle, Subh i Ezel, my father’s half-brother, arrived in Baghdad, and then there began to be disharmony and misunderstandings among the be-

<sup>1</sup> This is the appellation usually given Beha Ullah by Beha’is.



lievers. At the time of the trouble in Teheran, Subh i Ezel had escaped and remained for some time in concealment. Then he followed us, travelling in the disguise of a dervish.

“I do not wish to be understood as asserting definitely that Subh i Ezel was the cause of the discord to which I have referred; but it began at about the time of his joining us, and I myself have concluded that it was attributable to him.

“At length this state of affairs became very distasteful to my father, he being by nature a man of peace. Strife of any kind seemed to hurt him; more, however, because of the unhappiness which it brought upon others than because of the discomfort which it caused him. It was his habit, for the sake of peace and to quell strife, to take all blame upon himself where possible, and to seek to pacify those in contention by his love.

“After we had been in Baghdad about one year, he announced that he could endure it no longer, and that he would go away.

“Accordingly, taking a change of clothes, but no money, and against the entreaties of all the family, he set out. He was prevailed upon to take a servant, but sent him back the next day.

“ I have stated that my brother was deeply attached to his father ; this attachment seemed to strengthen with his growth. After our father’s departure he fell into great despondency. He would go away by himself, and, when sought for, be found weeping, often falling into such paroxysms of grief that no one could console him. His chief occupation at this time was copying and committing to memory the tablets<sup>1</sup> of the Bab. The childhood and youth of my brother was, in fact, in all respects unusual. He did not care for play or for amusement like other children. He would not go to school, nor would he apply himself to study. Horseback riding was the only diversion of which he was fond ; in that he became proficient, being reputed to be a very skilful horseman.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The letters and shorter writings of the Bab, Beha Ullah, and Abbas Effendi are called “ tablets ” by the Beha’is.

<sup>2</sup> In reply to a question by Madame Canavarro, as to what he was most fond of as a child, Abbas Effendi said : “ I cared more for hearing the tablets of the Bab recited than anything else. I used to commit them to memory and repeat them. This was the greatest pleasure I knew in my childhood—my play and amusement. I was not fond of study, nor did I care for books.”

Being asked whether as a young man he did not seek amusement, like others of his age, he replied : “ At Baghdad I rode on horseback ; and at one time I had an idea that I would like to hunt. So on a certain occasion I joined a party of hunters and went with them to the chase. But when I saw them killing birds and animals, I

“After my father’s departure many months passed; he did not return, nor had we any word from him or about him. We were all in great sorrow, and made constant inquiries, hoping to hear some rumour which would enable us to trace him.

“There was an old physician at Baghdad who had been called upon to attend the family, and who had become our friend. He sympathised much with us, and undertook on his own account to make inquiries for my father. He at length thought that he had traced him to a certain locality, quite distant from Baghdad, in the mountains; and thereafter was accustomed to ask all persons whom he met from that region for such a man. These inquiries were long without definite result, but at length a certain traveller to whom he had described my father, said that he had heard of a man answering to that description, evidently of high rank, but calling himself a dervish, living in caves in the mount-

thought that this could not be right. Then it occurred to me that better than hunting for animals, to kill them, was hunting for the souls of men to bring them to God. I then resolved that I would be a hunter of this sort. This was my first and last experience in the chase.

“This is all I want to tell you of myself. I am only a seeker of the souls of men, to guide them to God.”

ains. He was, he said, reputed to be so wise and wonderful in his speech on religious things that when people heard him they would follow him ; whereupon, wishing to be alone, he would change his residence to a cave in some other locality. Further he related this incident : A boy attending a village school had been flogged and sent out for failure in his writing. While he was weeping outside the schoolroom, this holy man came by and asked the cause of his grief. When the lad had explained his trouble the Dervish said : ‘Do not grieve. I will set you another copy, and teach you to write well.’ He then took the boy’s slate and wrote some words in very beautiful characters. The boy was delighted ; and showing his slate in pride at now having a better master than he had had in the school, the people were astonished, Dervishes being commonly illiterate. They then began to follow the Dervish ; who, wishing to meditate and pray in solitude, left that place for another.

“When we heard these things, we were convinced that this Dervish was in truth our beloved one. But having no means to send him any word, or to hear further of him, we were very sad.

“There was then in Baghdad an earnest

Babi, formerly a pupil of Kurratu l'Aeyn (a woman famous for her beauty and learning, who was one of the disciples of the Bab, and a martyr). This man said to us that as he had no ties and did not care for his life, he desired no greater happiness than to be allowed to seek for him whom all loved so much, and that he would not return without him.

“He was, however, very poor, not being able even to provide an ass for the journey; and he was besides not very strong, and therefore not able to go on foot. We had no money for the purpose, nor anything of value by the sale of which money could be procured, with the exception of a single rug, upon which we all slept. This we sold and with the proceeds bought an ass for this friend, who thereupon set out upon the search.

“Time passed; we heard nothing, and fell into the deepest dejection and despair. Finally, four months having elapsed since our friend had departed, a message was one day received from him saying that he would bring my father home on the next day. The other members of the family could not credit the truth of this news, but it seemed to electrify my brother. He minutely questioned and examined the messenger, and became much

excited. He quite believed that his father would return, but no one else did.

During the night following the next day, however, my father walked into the house. We hardly knew him ; his beard and hair were long and matted—he really was a Dervish in appearance. The meeting between my brother and his father was the most touching and pathetic sight I have ever seen. Abbas Effendi threw himself on the floor before him and kissed and embraced his feet, weeping and crying, ‘Why did you leave us, why did you leave us?’ while the great uncouth Dervish wept over his boy. The scene carried a weight not to be expressed in words.

“The absence of my father had covered a little more than two years. After his return the fame which he had acquired in the mountains reached Baghdad, and not only Babis but many others came to hear his teachings ; and many, also, merely out of curiosity to see him. As he wished for retirement these curiosity seekers were a great trouble and annoyance to him. This aroused my brother and he declared that he would protect his father from such intrusions. Accordingly he prepared two placards, one for the door of his own room, which read, ‘Those who come for information

may apply within; those who come only because of curiosity had better stay away'; the other for the door of his father's room, of which the purport was, 'Let those who are searching for God come, and come, and come.' Then he announced that he himself would first see those who came. If he found that they were genuine truth-seekers he admitted them to his father's presence; otherwise he did not permit them to see him.

"So time passed. My father taught many, and his followers became numerous. Many of them were the fierce and untutored Arabs of Irak. All evinced an intense devotion to him. He was visited also by many Babis from Persia.

"During these years Abbas Effendi was accustomed to frequent the mosques and argue with the doctors and learned men. They were astonished at his knowledge and acumen, and he came to be known as the youthful sage. They would ask him, 'Who is your teacher—where do you learn the things which you say?' His reply was that his father had taught him. Although he had never been a day in school, he was as proficient in all that was taught as well-educated young men, which was the cause of much remark among those who knew him.

“ In appearance my brother was at this time a remarkably fine-looking youth. He was noted as one of the handsomest young men in Baghdad.”



## CHAPTER III

### THE STORY OF HIS LIFE (*Continued*)

#### CONSTANTINOPLE AND ADRIANOPLE

“THE Governor of Baghdad at this time was a relative of my father, but his enemy on account of differences in religious opinion and family misunderstandings. This man, rendered uncomfortable by the sight of my father’s increasing fame and influence, exerted himself to effect his removal from Baghdad. He caused representations to be made to the Shah of Persia that, whereas Beha Ullah had been driven out of Persia because of the harm threatened by his presence to the Mohammedan religion in that country, now he was injuring the religion even more in Baghdad, and still exerting his evil influence in Persia; and that therefore he ought to be removed to a place at a greater distance from that country, and one where he could do less harm.

“These representations and suggestions he

sent repeatedly to the Court of Persia, until at length the Shah was moved to use his influence with the Sultan of Turkey to have the Babis transferred from Baghdad to Constantinople. An order to this effect was at length made by the Sultan.

“When this news came to us, from which we inferred that my father would again be made a prisoner, we were thrown into consternation, fearing another separation. He was summoned before the magistrates. My brother imperiously declared that he would go in his stead; but this our father overruled, and went himself. Great numbers of his followers had assembled about our house, and these witnessed his departure with many demonstrations of grief, feeling that it was possible that he might not return.

“The magistrates expressed great sorrow to my father; they said that they respected and loved him, that they had not instigated the order, but that they were powerless to suspend or modify it, and must proceed with its execution. My father remained in conference with them nearly all day, but could do nothing to avert the catastrophe. When he returned, he told us that we must prepare to set out for Constantinople in two weeks.

“This report was like a death-knell to his followers, who were still gathered about the house. Many of them were Arabs ; their fierce natures rebelled and they gave way to violent remonstrances. They implored the Blessed Perfection not to desert them. ‘You are our shepherd,’ they said ; ‘without you we must die.’

“The next day they so overran the house that we could not prepare for the journey. Then the Blessed Perfection proposed to go with Abbas Effendi to the garden of one of our friends and live there in a tent till the time of departure, that the family might be able to proceed with the packing. This remark was repeated and misunderstood, and the rumour circulated among the believers that the Blessed Perfection was to be taken away alone. Then they came pouring in by hundreds, so wild with grief that they could not be pacified ; and when my father started to leave the house with my brother they threw themselves upon the ground before him. One man who had an only child, which had come to him late in his life, stripped the clothes from the child’s body and placing it at my father’s feet cried, ‘Naked I give you my child, my precious child, to do with as you will ; only promise not to leave us in distress. Without you we cannot live.’

“Then, as the only way in which to soothe his followers, the Blessed Perfection took all his family to the garden, leaving to friends the preparation of his household goods for the journey. Here we pitched tents and lived in them for two weeks. The tents made, as it were, a little village, that of my father, which he occupied alone, in the centre.

“Four days before the caravan was to set out, the Blessed Perfection called Abbas Effendi into his tent and told him that he himself was the one whose coming had been promised by the Bab—the Chosen of God, the Centre of the Covenant. A little later, and before leaving the garden, he selected from among his disciples four others, to whom he made the same declaration. He further said to these five that for the present he enjoined upon them secrecy as to this communication, as the time had not come for a public declaration; but that there were reasons which caused him to deem it necessary to make it at that time to a few whom he could trust. These reasons he did not state; but they are to my mind suggested by the subsequent events which I shall narrate farther on, and which I think he at that time anticipated, and in view of which he felt that he needed special protection.

“ Many of the Blessed Perfection’s followers decided to abandon Baghdad also, and accompany him in his wanderings. When the caravan started, our company numbered about seventy-five persons. All the young men, and others who could ride, were mounted on horses. The women and the Blessed Perfection were furnished waggons. We were accompanied by a military escort. This journey took place in 1863, about eleven years after our arrival in Baghdad.

“ From the time when the declaration was made to him at Baghdad Abbas Effendi seemed to constitute himself the special attendant, servant, and body-guard of his father. He guarded him day and night on this journey, riding by his waggon and watching near his tent. He thus had little sleep, and, being young, became extremely weary. His horse was Arab and very fine, and so wild and spirited that no other man could mount him, but under my brother’s hand as gentle and docile as a lamb. In order to get a little rest, he adopted the plan of riding swiftly a considerable distance ahead of the caravan, when, dismounting and causing his horse to lie down, he would throw himself on the ground and place his head on his horse’s neck. So he would sleep until the

cavalcade came up, when his horse would awake him by a kick and he would remount.

“The march to Constantinople occupied four months. Much of the weather was inclement and during many whole days we were without proper food. In our company were many small children, upon whom and the women the journey was very hard. On one occasion during a long and cold march, my brother having obtained some bread, rice, and milk, my father made up with his own hands a sort of pudding by boiling these together with a little sugar, which was then distributed to all. The preparation of this food was a reminiscence of my father’s two-years’ sojourn in the mountains, where he was dependent on what might be given him, and this dish—which he sometimes made for himself—was the only warm food he had.

“Such times as these were moments of pleasure; but there was always present a feeling of apprehension—as though a sword were hanging over our heads.

“Arrived in Constantinople we found ourselves prisoners. We were put into a small house, the men below and the women above. My father and his family were given two rooms. The weather was very cold and damp, and we

had no fires or proper clothing. Because of the crowding the atmosphere was foul. We petitioned for better quarters, and were given another house, which was to some extent an improvement.

“While we were here the Blessed Perfection was advised by persons of prominence who came to see him to appeal to the Sultan, state his case, and demand justice, in accordance with the Turkish custom. To these suggestions he replied that he was a man whose only concern was the spiritual welfare of men ; that he had never interfered in any way with worldly affairs, nor should he ever do so, even in his own behalf ; that the Sultan had commanded his presence in Constantinople, and for that reason alone he had come ; that in like manner he should in the future comply with the wishes of the Sultan ; that he saw no reason why he, a spiritual man, should initiate the trouble, argument, and commotion incident to an appeal ; and that if the Government wished to investigate the truth of the matter, it would itself institute an inquiry.

“I have heard that these words were repeated to the Sultan and did not please him, perhaps because a different construction had been put upon them by the narrator than the

meaning which the Blessed Perfection intended to convey. However that may be, it being a matter about which I cannot speak with certainty, my father was not called upon to appear at any inquiry. An order was, however, made, about two months after our arrival in Constantinople, directing our transfer to Adrianople, a town in eastern European Turkey of notoriously bad climate, to which criminals were often sent.

“Before we set out a threat was made of separating us—of sending the Blessed Perfection to one place, his family to another, and his followers elsewhere. This overwhelmed us with apprehension, which hung over us and tormented us during the whole of the journey and long after. The dread of this or of the execution of my father was the greatest of our trials—a horrible fear of unknown danger always menacing us. Such threats were frequently repeated after this time also. Had it not been for them we could have borne our sufferings with greater resignation; but these kept us always in a heart-sickening suspense.

“The journey to Adrianople, although occupying but nine days, was the most terrible experience of travel we had thus far had. It was the beginning of winter, and very cold;



heavy snow fell most of the time ; and destitute as we were of proper clothing or food, it was a miracle that we survived it. We arrived at Adrianople all sick — even the young and strong. My brother again had his feet frozen on this journey.

“ Our family, numbering eleven persons, was lodged in a house of three rooms just outside the city of Adrianople. It was like a prison ; without comforts and surrounded by a guard of soldiers. Our only food was the prison fare allowed us, which was unsuitable for the children and the sick.

“ That winter was a period of intense suffering, due to cold, hunger, and, above all, to the torments of vermin, with which the house was swarming. These made even the days horrible, and the nights still more so. When they were so intolerable that it was impossible to sleep, my brother would light a lamp (which somewhat intimidated the vermin) and by singing and laughing seek to restore the spirits of the family.

“ In the spring, on the appeal of the Blessed Perfection to the Governor, we were removed to somewhat more comfortable quarters within the city. Our family was given the second story of a house, of which some of the believers occupied the ground floor.

“We remained for five years in Adrianople. The Blessed Perfection resumed his teaching and gathered about him a large following. We were very poor and always in great privation, but had become so inured to suffering that we should have lived in tolerable contentment had it not been for two things—the feeling of dread and sense of unknown danger of which I have before spoken, and another matter to which I will presently more particularly refer.

“During this period, as, in fact, had been the case for a number of years, Abbas Effendi was the chief dependence and comfort of the entire family. He had from childhood a remarkably self-sacrificing nature, habitually yielding his own wishes and giving up whatever he had to his brothers and sisters, keeping nothing for himself. He was always gentle; never became angry, and never retaliated. The life we were living afforded constantly recurring occasions for the exhibition of these qualities of his character; and his unceasing efforts did a great deal to make its conditions endurable for the other members of the family.

“For the poor also he had ever been very tender-hearted, and, destitute as we were, he always contrived to find something to give to

others who were in greater want. This almsgiving proclivity of my brother was a great trial to our mother, for in our straitened circumstances she found it very difficult with the means at her disposal to provide for her own family only those things which were actually necessary.

“The matter to which I have just referred as interfering with our contentment was a very terrible experience brought upon us by Subh i Ezel, to whose machinations our subsequent sufferings were chiefly due, and which were the immediate cause of our being sent some years later from Adrianople to Akka. To this very serious affair I will now proceed.

“Subh i Ezel continued to be one of our company after we came to Baghdad in 1853. With his family he now occupied in Adrianople a house separate from ours though near it. The relations between the two families, which for a time while we were in Baghdad had been strained, had become again harmonious. The food of Subh i Ezel’s family was usually prepared in our house, under my supervision, and sent to Subh i Ezel’s house. The reason for this was that his wives were not properly attentive to their household affairs and prepared his food so badly that it was not suitable for

him to eat. We saw this, and, in order to enable him to live comfortably, offered to cook his food and send it to him.

“There was a bath in our house, but none in Subh i Ezel’s, and he was accustomed to use our bath. The same servant prepared the bath and acted as bath attendant for both my father and Subh i Ezel.

“Up to this time the declaration which the Blessed Perfection had made to five of his disciples in Baghdad had not been formally communicated to Subh i Ezel, or, indeed, to any one else, and we do not know that he was aware of it: though his conduct suggests that he suspected it, and that this suspicion furnished the incentive which prompted him in doing what I am about to relate. As you no doubt know, Subh i Ezel claimed to have been appointed by the Bab as his successor, and therefore to be, after the Bab’s death, the head of the Babi Church.

“The events which I am about to relate occurred about one year after he had moved into the city from the quarters which he had at first occupied in Adrianople. One day while in the bath Subh i Ezel remarked to the servant (who was a believer) that the Blessed Perfection had enemies and that in the bath

he was much exposed, and asked whether it would not be easy for an attendant who was not faithful to the Blessed Perfection to make away with him while shaving him. The servant replied that this was certainly the case. Subh i Ezel then asked him whether, if God should lay upon him the command to do this, he would obey it. The servant understood this question, coming from Subh i Ezel, to be a suggestion of such a command, and was so terrified by it that he rushed screaming from the room. He first met Abbas Effendi and repeated to him Subh i Ezel's words. My brother endeavoured to quiet him, and commanded his silence. This the servant refused unless he was taken at once to the Blessed Perfection. Abbas Effendi accordingly accompanied him to my father, who listened to his story and then enjoined absolute silence upon him.

“This occurrence was ignored by my father and brother, and our relations with Subh i Ezel continued to be cordial. The Blessed Perfection was indeed several times warned to beware of Subh i Ezel, by persons who claimed to have overheard conversations between him and his intimates, but no attention was paid to these warnings.

“Some time afterwards, to celebrate a family festival day, Subh i Ezel invited us all to his house. At this time, also, my father was warned not to take food there, but replied that he must treat Subh i Ezel with kindness and could not refuse it.

“This entertainment was looked upon as cementing the family reconciliation, and it is usual on such occasions among Persians for the heads of the two family factions which have been alienated to eat from the same plate. So, now, rice for both my father and Subh i Ezel was served to them on one plate. This rice, as well as all the other food used for the meal, had been prepared in Subh i Ezel’s house, contrary to the usual custom. Now my father and Subh i Ezel had these well-known peculiarities of taste—that the former was very fond of onions, while the latter could not endure them. The portion of rice intended for my father was accordingly flavoured with onions, while that intended for Subh i Ezel was differently prepared. The servant bringing in the plate placed it, at the direction of Subh i Ezel, with the side upon which was the rice flavoured with onions toward the Blessed Perfection. While he did so Subh i Ezel smilingly remarked, ‘Here is

rice cooked as you like it!’ My father ate some of the rice prepared for him, but fortunately not very much, as for some reason it did not please him. He preferred the rice prepared for Subh i Ezel, and ate of it, and also of the dishes which the others at the table were eating.

“Soon after eating the rice my father became ill and went home. About midnight he was seized with severe vomiting and passing of blood from the bowels. A physician was summoned, and declared that he had been poisoned.

“My father was desperately ill for twenty-two days; during all this time he took no food. On the eighteenth day the physician said that he could not live. The death sentence terribly moved Abbas Effendi. He placed his head on the pillow beside his father’s in the utmost agony of grief. He implored him to live for the sake of the world, for his family, and for him. My father was too feeble to speak, and could only place his hand on my brother’s head. The physician was deeply moved by the sight. He had learned to love Abbas Effendi,—as did every one who came in contact with him,—and declared he would give his life to save the father

for the boy. Thrice he repeated, 'I will give my life—I will give my life—I will give my life,' walking as he spoke several times around the bed. At length, utterly despairing of the case, he left. The next morning he sent word that he was ill, and advised that another physician be summoned. Nine days later he died. We then recalled his singular words.

"Meanwhile we did not summon another physician for my father, feeling that the case was hopeless ; but to our surprise his condition soon showed marked improvement, and on the third day he asked for food, which gave us much hope. From this time he grew stronger continuously, but very slowly,<sup>1</sup> and at length recovered.

<sup>1</sup> Partisans of Subh i Ezel have endeavoured to anticipate and break the force of these revelations by publishing the following story, cited by Professor Browne in a note, *A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 359. They allege that Beha Ullah "caused poison to be placed in one side of a dish of food which was to be set before himself and Subh i Ezel, giving instructions that the poisoned side should be turned towards his brother. As it happened, however, the food had been flavoured with onions, and Subh i Ezel, disliking this flavour, refused to partake of the dish. Beha Ullah, fancying that his brother suspected his design, ate some of the food from his side of the dish ; but the poison having diffused itself to some extent through the whole mass, he was presently attacked with vomiting and other symptoms of poisoning." This transparent fabrication assumes an impossible ignorance on the part of Beha Ullah of the fact that onions were disliked by his brother, as well as the improbable



“After the recovery of my father from this illness, Abbas Effendi strongly urged him to declare himself to Subh i Ezel. My father, however, persisted in replying that so long as Subh i Ezel did not effect other harm than he was able to do to him personally, that is, so long as he did not injure the Cause, he would not assert himself against him.

“Subh i Ezel made no further attempts upon the life of the Blessed Perfection, but he began to endeavour to arouse dissensions among the believers, making various false

hypothesis that Beha Ullah would knowingly have partaken of food in which poison had been placed.

In the following pages of his book Professor Browne mentions a number of other charges made against Beha Ullah by the Ezelis, equally incredible, at least so it seems to me, to any one familiar with the character and teachings of the Beha'is. I do not think that it would be time well employed to advert to these charges in detail. Allegations so flatly in contradiction to the spirit, lives, and teachings of Beha Ullah and his successor, will quickly enough fade away and be forgotten if left to themselves. But I must protest most energetically against Professor Browne's suggestion (pp. 371 *et seq.*) that any traits of Oriental character shared by the leaders of Beha'ism could be assumed as possibly closing their eyes to the iniquity of such proceedings in support of their cause. Of course one cannot dogmatise on impressions of character, but I wish to place on record the fact that my own acquaintance with the Beha'is and the spirit which animates them makes it inconceivable to me that such utter perversion of moral sense, however possible it may generally be to the Oriental type of character, about which I here express no opinion, could under any circumstances characterise their policy as a body, or the policy of their leaders.

accusations against the Blessed Perfection. At this time, of course, the Babis in general did not know that my father had said that he was the Divine Manifestation, but he was regarded by most of them as their leader, and very much beloved. Subh i Ezel was looked upon as leader, however, by some of the Babis.

“Thus matters went, becoming worse and worse, until it was plainly evident that the Cause was suffering. Then the Blessed Perfection summoned Abbas Effendi and said to him that the time had come for a public declaration. ‘Not for myself would I do it,’ he said, ‘but because the welfare of the Cause demands it.’ He then wrote a tablet, longer than any he had before written and of great power,—it has been said that men trembled as they read it,—addressed to the Babis generally, and setting forth his declaration.

“This tablet he directed to be read to every Babi, but first of all to Subh i Ezel. He assigned to one of his followers the duty of taking it to Subh i Ezel, reading it to him, and returning with Subh i Ezel’s reply. When Subh i Ezel had heard the tablet, he did not attempt to refute it; on the contrary he accepted it, and said that it was true. But he went on to maintain that he himself was co-

equal with the Blessed Perfection, affirming that he had had a vision on the previous night in which he had received this assurance.

“When this statement of Subh i Ezel was reported to the Blessed Perfection, the latter directed that every Babi should be informed of it at the time when he heard his own tablet read. This was done, and much uncertainty resulted among the believers. They generally applied to the Blessed Perfection for advice, which, however, he declined to give. At length he told them that he would seclude himself from them for four months, and that during this time they must decide the question for themselves.

“This he did. None of the believers other than his own family had access to him, or communication with him, for four months. At the end of that period all the Babis in Adrianople, with the exception of Subh i Ezel and five or six others, came to the Blessed Perfection and declared that they accepted him as the Divine Manifestation, whose coming the Bab had foretold. The Babis of Persia, Syria, Egypt, and other countries, also, in due time accepted the Blessed Perfection with substantial unanimity.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Subh i Ezel had, indeed, a few adherents; but his following has been so inconsiderable, and so utterly without the vitality and power

“Subh i Ezel now took up another line of action. He opened a correspondence with prominent persons in the Turkish government and the Moslem Church, in which he alleged that the Blessed Perfection was stirring up strife and seeking to destroy the Moslem faith by showing a contempt for the Koran, neglecting the fast of Ramadan, permitting the women of his followers to go unveiled, condemning polygamy, and the like. These allegations, although wholly unfounded, since the Blessed Perfection, equally with our Master at the present time, required of his followers the most careful observance of, and respect for, the social customs of the people among whom they lived, were persisted in by Subh i Ezel, until he had made the impression which he desired. The Turkish government, annoyed and irritated, finding our people, between whom, as can be well understood, it was unable to discriminate, vexatious and troublesome, wearied of the whole matter, and determined to scatter us; a course which under the circumstances was a quite natural and intelligible out-

of assimilation so characteristic equally of the earliest and latest stages of this movement, that the defection has not impaired in any ascertainable degree its solidarity, and is to be regarded, in considering the present status of the faith, as a quite negligible quantity.

come of Subh i Ezel's actions. An order was therefore issued decreeing that the Babis in Adrianople should be separated and banished; that Subh i Ezel should be sent to one place, the Blessed Perfection to another, his family to another, and the followers to still others; and that all should be kept in ignorance of their own and the others' destinations.

“During the period of his residence at Adrianople, Abbas Effendi had endeared himself to every one, high and low, those of the faith and others alike. He taught much and even at that time was commonly called the ‘Master.’ The Governor himself had become a friend of the Master's and delighted to listen to his religious discourses. It was the habit of the Governor frequently to have the Master at the palace, and when my brother could not go to the Governor he sometimes came to my brother.

“When the Governor received the order of banishment from Adrianople he was so affected by it that, not having the heart to execute it himself, he put it into the hands of his subordinates for execution, wrote a letter to Abbas Effendi, and left the city. In this letter he said :

“ ‘ This trouble has come upon you through

members of your own family. It is Subh i Ezel who has caused the Sultan to take these steps. I am powerless to aid you, and my love for you is so great that I must go away. I cannot see this dreadful thing happen.'

"This trouble broke with the suddenness of a tornado upon us. We were sitting quietly together at home when we heard a bugle-call. My brother looked out and saw a cordon of soldiers about the house presenting arms. Our first thought was that the life of the Blessed Perfection or of Abbas Effendi was threatened. The latter endeavoured to quiet our alarm, and went out to inquire the cause of this demonstration. He was given the Governor's letter. The family consulted and Abbas Effendi then told the officer in command that we would die rather than be separated, and asked at least for respite. The reply was, 'No; you must go to-day, Beha Ullah and his family to different places, and neither can know the destination of the other.' Abbas Effendi demanded permission to go to the Governor's palace and appeal to his representative. This was at first refused but finally granted, and he set out between two guards.

"My brother pleaded so eloquently with

the officials that they consented to telegraph to Constantinople asking that the order be changed so that our family might remain together. A reply was received refusing the change. My brother persisted, and had such influence with the officials that they seemed unable to put the measure into execution, permitting him to send despatch after despatch for a week.

“These were days of horror. The members of our family neither ate nor slept. No cooking was done in the house. When my brother left in the morning with the guards we feared that we might never see him again, and watched hour after hour for his return.

“At length a telegram was received granting the concession that my father should be permitted to take with him his immediate family, but directing that his followers should be separated from him, without knowledge of his destination. A servant who had accompanied my brother overheard a part of this despatch read and misunderstood it. Without waiting to inquire whether he had heard aright, he returned to us with the report that the first order was not to be rescinded; that the Blessed Perfection was to be separated from his family and his followers. After telling us this he ran out

and spread the news among the believers who were gathered near our house. They were as though stunned, paralysed. One of them, an old and faithful follower, seized a knife, and exclaiming, 'If I must be separated from my Lord, I will go now and join my God,' cut his throat. Fortunately this man's knife was partially arrested by a bystander so that his jugular vein was not severed; with the aid of a physician his life was ultimately saved.

"The attempted suicide caused a great noise and disturbance, which attracted our attention. My mother and I went out to inquire into the cause of the commotion. We came near, and saw a man lying on the ground with blood streaming from him. The soldiers surrounding the group prevented us from approaching closely enough to determine with certainty who it was, but the first thought which came to us was that my poor brother, on hearing that the order was to be carried out, had, in his despair, killed himself. We could hear the gulping utterances of the man — 'You have separated me from my Lord, — I prefer to die.' Though unable to distinguish the voice, we still thought it was my brother. We remained in this agonising suspense for some time, until we suddenly heard my brother's voice rising



high above the din, and speaking with tremendous force.

“On hearing him, two things amazed us. First, he seemed to be wrought up to the highest pitch of anger and indignation. Never before had we heard him speak an angry word. We had known him sometimes impatient and peremptory, but never angry. And then, his great excitement had apparently given him command of the Turkish language, which no one had ever heard him speak before. He was, in Turkish, and in the most impassioned and vehement manner, protesting against, and denouncing, the treatment of the officers and demanding the presence of the Governor, who in the meantime had returned to the city. The officers seemed cowed by his vehemence, and the Governor was sent for. He came, and seeing the situation said, ‘It is impossible, we cannot separate these people.’

“The Governor returned to his palace and telegraphed to Constantinople. The next day he received a reply granting permission to the followers of the Blessed Perfection to accompany him. We were told to prepare for immediate departure, but were not told to what place we were to be sent. When we set out there were seventy-seven in all in our band.

We journeyed six days, and arrived at Gallipoli, which is on the sea.

“On our arrival at this town we were met with the information that the Governor had a telegraphic order from the Sultan’s government directing our separation ; that my father with one servant was to go to one place, my brother with one servant to another, the family to Constantinople, the other followers to various places. This sudden and unexplained withdrawal of the hard-won concession we had so recently obtained exhausted our patience. We unhesitatingly declared that we would not be separated, and a repetition, in substance, of the events of the last days in Adrianople followed. My brother went to the Governor and told him that we would not submit to separation. ‘Do this,’ said he,—‘take us out on a steamer and drown us in the ocean. You can thus end at once our sufferings and your perplexities. But we refuse to be separated.’

“We remained in Gallipoli for a week, in the same horrible suspense which we had experienced at Adrianople. Finally my brother, by his eloquence in argument and power of will, succeeded in gaining for the second time from the Constantinople government the concession that we should remain together.

“At Gallipoli the German, Russian, and English Consuls called upon the Blessed Perfection and offered to intercede in his behalf with the Turkish government, assuring him that they could procure, for him and his family, permission to go to one of the countries of Western Europe, where they would have no further trouble. My father replied that he did not wish to oppose the will of the Sultan, nor would he consent to abandon his followers; that his only interests were in spiritual things and his only desire to preach a religion, and that therefore he had nothing to fear.

“The order from Constantinople directed that we should embark together upon a government vessel, and no time was lost in putting it into execution. In the hurry, distress, and uncertainty of the moment, we neglected to provide food for the voyage, but to one old servant, on his way to the ship, the thought occurred that he had not seen any provisions prepared, and he bought a box of bread. This, with the ship's prisoners' rations, which were almost inedible, was the only food we had for five days, when we reached Alexandria. Here the rumour that we were to be separated was renewed; and all were so terrified by it that no one was willing to leave the ship to buy

provisions lest he be prevented from returning. We were able to procure only some grapes and mineral water.

“The little bread we had was now spoiled ; and, what with hunger, fright, and grief, we were almost bereft of reason. On one of our company, indeed, these conditions had so preyed as to unbalance his mind, and he threw himself from the ship as we were leaving the harbour of Alexandria. The ships’ officers were, however, fortunately able to bring her to in time to reach this man before he sank, and he was brought on board and revived.”

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STORY OF HIS LIFE (*Continued*)

#### AKKA

“AFTER a voyage of about two days we were landed at Haifa, in Syria. All were sick, from hunger or eating improper food. I myself was a healthy woman up to the time of taking this voyage; since then I have never been well.

“We remained one day in the prison at Haifa, the men in chains, and were then taken in small boats to Akka (a distance of ten miles). The water was very rough, and nearly all became seasick.

“Akka, as we afterwards learned, was a prison to which the worst criminals were commonly sent from all parts of the Turkish Empire. It was reported to have a deadly climate. There was a saying that if a bird flew over Akka it would fall and die.

“At that time there was no landing for the city: it was necessary to wade ashore from the

boats. The Governor ordered that the women be carried on the backs of the men. My brother was not willing that this should be done, and protested against it. He was one of the first to land, and procured a chair, in which, with the help of one of the believers, he carried the women ashore. The Blessed Perfection was not allowed to leave his boat until all his family had landed. When he had come ashore, the family were counted and taken to the army barracks, in which we were to be imprisoned. From the terrible sufferings and privations of the journey we were nearly all sick; worst of all, perhaps, the Blessed Perfection and myself.

“Arrived at the barracks, it was proposed to put the Blessed Perfection and his family on the second floor, and he was sent up; but I fainted from exhaustion and was unable to ascend the stairs. [Here the narrator paused a moment, visibly trembling, and then continued.] Of my own experience perhaps this is the most awful. The horrible sufferings of the voyage had reduced me almost to the point of death. Upon that came the seasickness. When we landed in Akka all the people of the town came crowding about us, talking loudly in Arabic, which I understood. Some

said that we were to be put in the dungeons and chained ; others that we were to be thrown into the sea. The most horrible jests and jeers were hurled at us as we were marched through the streets to this dreadful prison.

“Imagine, if you can, the overpowering impression made by all this upon the mind of a young girl, such as I was then. Can you wonder that I am serious, and that my life is different from those of my countrywomen? But this is digressing.

“When we had entered the barracks the massive door was closed upon us and the great iron bolts thrown home. I cannot find words to describe the filth and stench of that vile place. We were nearly up to our ankles in mud in the room into which we were led. The damp, close air and the excretions of the soldiers combined to produce horrible odours. Then, being unable to bear more, I fainted. As I fainted, those about me caught me before I fell ; but because of the mud and filth there was no place upon which I could be laid. On one side of the room was a man weaving a mat for the soldiers. One of our friends took this mat and I was placed upon it. Then they begged for water, but they could not get it. The soldiers would permit no one to go out.

There was a pool of water on the dirt floor, in which the mat-maker had been moistening his rushes. Some of this water was dipped up and strained and put to my lips. I swallowed a little and revived; but the water was so foul that my stomach rejected it, and I fainted again. Then a little of this water was thrown into my face; and at length I revived sufficiently to go up-stairs.

“In the meantime my brother had slipped out and gone down to assist in the landing of the remainder of our company, whom we had left in the boats. When the soldiers discovered that he had disappeared, they at once notified the Governor, who had search made for him and found him helping the others ashore. The followers were all brought to the barracks together and lodged on the ground floor. Among them were the women and children, almost dying with hunger and parched with thirst. My brother begged to be permitted to go out for food and water. The soldiers replied: ‘You cannot put a foot outside of this room. If you do, we will kill you. Our orders are not to let you leave the barracks under any pretext.’ Then he asked permission to send out a servant guarded by soldiers. This was refused.



“The above was related to us by my brother, when he at length returned to our family quarters, in reply to our inquiries as to the occasion of his absence. He had been away for hours, and our hearts had been filled with anxiety for his safety.

“Then came another time of heart-sickening suffering. The mothers who had babes at breast had no milk for them, for lack of food and drink, so the babes could not be pacified or quieted. The larger children were screaming for food and water, and could not sleep or be soothed. The women were fainting.

“Under these conditions, my brother spent the first part of the night in passing about among the distressed people, trying to pacify them, and in appealing to the soldiers not to be so heartless as to allow women and children to suffer so. About midnight he succeeded in getting a message to the Governor. We were then sent a little water and some cooked rice; but the latter was so full of grit and smelled so badly that only the strongest stomach could retain it. The water the children drank; but the rice only the strongest could eat. Later on, some of our people in unpacking their goods found some pieces of the bread which had been brought from Gallipoli, and a

little sugar. With these a dish was prepared for the Blessed Perfection, who was very ill. When it was taken to him, he said: 'I command you to take this to the children.' So it was given to them, and they were somewhat quieted.

"The next morning conditions were no better; there was neither water nor food that could be eaten. My brother sent message after message to the Governor, appealing in behalf of the women and children. At length he sent us water and some prisoners' bread; but the latter was worse even than the rice—appearing and tasting as though earth had been mixed with the flour. My brother also succeeded in getting permission to send out a servant, guarded by four soldiers, to buy food. But before this permission was given, the Governor commanded the presence of my brother and told him that neither he nor any of our people—not even a child—was to leave the prison under any circumstances whatever, and that unless this was promised the servant would not be permitted to go out. Under the circumstances my brother was obliged to give this promise.

"The servant selected was told that if he spoke to a man or woman except in bargain-

ing for supplies, he would be spitted on the swords of the soldiers.

“The servant procured some provisions; yet even thus we were still badly off for food, for we were all so poor that we could buy but little. So the Blessed Perfection requested that the prison allowance for our support should be commuted for money. The Governor consented, and gave to my father the amount allowed our family, and to my brother the amount allowed to the others. Then my father gave his own share and that of our family to my brother for the people, the whole being insufficient, for them, saying: ‘I will eat bread.’ Thereafter, when the supply of provisions was insufficient and he learned of it, he would take only bread and water.

“When we were first brought to the barracks we had no knowledge as to the manner of life to which we were to be consigned. We feared that the Blessed Perfection, my brother, and perhaps others would be placed in dungeons and chained. The only information about it which we could obtain was that our sentence would be read on Friday—our arrival being early in the week. This uncertainty was an additional horror. When the sentence was read to us, we learned that it stated that we

were political prisoners, nihilists, murderers, and thieves ; that wherever we went, we corrupted the morals of the people ; that we had leagued to overthrow the Ottoman Empire ; that we could be given no leniency, and that the orders to keep us under bolt and bar must not be broken. It was because of this evil reputation, which had doubtless been given to the government by those who had reasons for desiring our destruction, and not from any want of humanity on the part of our jailors, who later became very kind and friendly to us, that we were subjected to such stern treatment and were given no more latitude or aid.

“The season was summer (1868) and the temperature very high. All our people were huddled together on the damp earth floor of the barracks ; with little water to drink, and that very bad, with no water with which to bathe, and scarcely enough for washing their faces. Typhoid fever and dysentery broke out among them. Every one in our company fell sick excepting my brother, my mother, an aunt, and two others of the believers. We were not allowed a physician ; we could not procure medicine. My brother had in his baggage some quinine and bismuth. With these two drugs and his nursing, he brought us all through with

the exception of four, who died. These were two months of such awful horror as words cannot picture. Imagine it, if you can. Some seventy men, women, and children packed together, hot summer weather, no proper food, bad water, the most offensive odours from purging and excretions, and a general attack of the terrible diseases of dysentery and typhoid.

“There was no one with strength to be of any general service but my brother. He washed the patients, fed them, nursed them, watched with them. He took no rest. When at length he had brought the rest of us—the four who died excepted—through the crisis and we were out of danger, he was utterly exhausted and fell sick himself, as did also my mother and the three others who had theretofore been well. The others soon recovered, but Abbas Effendi was taken with dysentery, and long remained in a dangerous condition. By his heroic exertions he had won the regard of one of the officers, and when this man saw my brother in this state he went to the Governor and pleaded that Abbas Effendi might have a physician. This was permitted, and under the care of the physician my brother recovered.

“For long after our departure from Adrianople none of the friends and followers of the

Blessed Perfection in Persia knew our whereabouts. We were not permitted to send any letters. Great efforts were made to find us, and our friends finally traced us to Akka ; but this whole city was then practically a prison from which strangers were carefully excluded, and they found it impossible to get into communication with us, or even to pass the city gate.

“There was a Persian follower of the Bab who some time before, having failed in his business at home, had emigrated to Akka. He had not dared to disclose his faith, and no one suspected it. The servant who marketed for us happened one day, as he went about the bazaar to come to this man’s shop ; and though he was not allowed to speak with him, he seems to have known intuitively that he was a friend. So thereafter he made most of his purchases of provisions at his shop. Some of the Persian believers who had come to Akka, but who had been unable to enter the city, effected communication with this man and arranged with him to send a note to the Blessed Perfection. This the shopkeeper accomplished by concealing the note among some vegetables and giving them to the servant with such a look that the latter understood and afterwards searched for

it. The note begged the Blessed Perfection to send out some word ; but this seemed to be beyond our power.

“The physician who visited my brother, on seeing our condition, had so much sympathy with our distress, and became so fond of Abbas Effendi, that he asked him if there was not something which he could do for us. My brother begged him to take a message to the believers who were waiting to hear from the Blessed Perfection. He undertook to do so, and carried a tablet away in the lining of his hat. For two years this physician conveyed tablets and messages to and fro for us in this way.

“After this first message had been transmitted from the Blessed Perfection, many believers came here from Persia and remained in the neighbourhood with the hope of effecting some communication with him, or at least of getting a glimpse of him. They would go to some prominent point where they could be seen from his window. Some of us, seeing them, would call my brother’s attention to them, whereupon he would inform the Blessed Perfection and follow him to the window and wave his handkerchief.

“We were imprisoned in the barracks, without any substantial change in our manner of

life, for two years. During this time none of us left the prison—not even my brother or any of the children. The Blessed Perfection passed his time in his room, writing tablets, or rather dictating them to my younger brother, who was a rapid penman. Abbas Effendi would copy them and send them out by the physician.

“It was usual to carry on this work during the evening. One evening towards the end of the second year, my younger brother came, as was his habit, to write for his father. But as he was not very well, and as some others of the family were also ill, the Blessed Perfection told him to go and come later. So he went up to the flat roof of the barracks, where we were accustomed to walk, and which was our only recourse for fresh air and exercise. He was walking up and down, repeating tablets and gazing at the sky, when he stumbled, lost his balance, and fell through the opening to which the ladder from below led up. The room into which he fell had a lofty ceiling; it was the living-room of the family. No one was in the room at the time, but, hearing his cries, some of the family rushed in and found him lying in a heap on the floor with the blood pouring from his mouth. The Blessed Perfec-



tion, hearing the commotion, opened the door of his room and looked out. When he saw his son he turned back and re-entered his room, saying : 'Mahdy has gone !'

"We took him up and laid him on his mat. He was perfectly conscious. Later the Blessed Perfection came and remained with him. The physician was sent for ; he said that there was no hope.

"My brother lived for about thirty hours. When he was about to pass away the Blessed Perfection said to him : 'What do you desire? Do you wish to live, or do you prefer to die? Tell me what you most wish for.' My brother replied : 'I don't care to live. I have but one wish. I want the believers to be admitted to see their Lord. If you will promise me this, it is all I ask.' The Blessed Perfection told him that it would be as he desired.

"So, after much patient suffering, my brother's gentle spirit took its flight. As we could not leave the barracks, we could not bury our dead ; nor had we the consolation of feeling that we could provide for him through others the grateful final tribute of a proper and fitting burial, as we had no means wherewith even to purchase a coffin. After some consideration and consultation among ourselves,

finding that we had nothing to dispose of, and at a loss how to proceed, we told our Lord<sup>1</sup> of the sad situation. He replied that there was a rug in his room which we could sell. At first we demurred, for in taking his rug we took the only comfort he had ; but he insisted and we sold it. A coffin was then procured, and the remains of my deceased brother placed in it. It was carried out by our jailors, and we did not even know whither it was taken.

“The death of this youngest and favourite child—of a very gentle and sweet disposition—nearly broke his mother’s heart. We feared for her reason. When the Blessed Perfection was told of the condition of his wife, he went to her and said : ‘Your son has been taken by God that His people might be freed. His life was the ransom, and you should rejoice that you had a son so dear to give to the cause of God.’ When our mother heard these words she seemed to rally,—knelt, and kissed the Blessed Perfection’s hands, and thanked him for what he had said. After that she did not shed a tear.

“I should perhaps here say a word about our relations, in the family, to the Blessed Perfection. After his declaration we all re-

<sup>1</sup> Beha Ullah.

garded him as one far above us, and tacitly gave him a corresponding position in our demeanour towards him. He was never called upon to consider, or take part in, any worldly matters. We felt no claim upon him because of family relationship—no more than that of his other followers. When we had but two rooms for all, one was set apart for him. The best of everything was always given to him he would take it and then return it to us and do without. He slept upon the floor because his people had no beds, although he would have been furnished one had he wished it.

“Some time after the death of his son, the Blessed Perfection (who, as I have said, usually never attended to affairs, these being all left to my brother) expressed a wish to have an interview with the Governor. Meanwhile my brother’s dying prayer, that the believers might be permitted to visit their Lord, having been overheard by a soldier who was present at the time and by him repeated to the officer in charge, had come to the ears of the Governor. Very possibly it had touched him and now influenced him to accede to the Blessed Perfection’s request for an interview; at all events the request was granted, and the Blessed Perfection met the Governor in council with

his officers. He then addressed them on the subject of his separation from his followers and of their great sorrow and distress occasioned by it, reminding them of his deceased son's dying petition, and speaking with such eloquence and power that the Governor was moved to grant his appeal.

“We were, in consequence, removed from the barracks and given a comfortable house with three rooms and a court. Our people, and also our family, were permitted to go at large in the city, and whoever wished could visit us; but my father was required to remain within the house.”

Just here I wish to interrupt the narrative in order to call attention to what seems to me a very remarkable fact. Notwithstanding this interminable catalogue of the extreme and almost incredible sufferings and privations which this heroic band of men and women have endured—more terrible than many martyrdoms—there is not a trace of resentment or bitterness to be observed amongst them. One would suppose that they were the most fortunate of the people among whom they live, as, indeed, they do certainly consider themselves, in that they have always been permitted to live near their beloved Lord, beside which

they count their sufferings as nothing. They well know that those having their own motives for maligning them have persistently misled the Sultan's advisers as to their real character and purposes; and that their implacable enemies have been, not the authorities of the state, but those allied to them both by nationality and close ties of family relationship. Except as these have interfered and caused prejudice and trouble, they consider their treatment by the government humane and even kind. Moreover, they recognise the fact that the deplorable attack upon the life of the Shah of Persia, while in no sense their fault, has been inevitably their misfortune, rationally explaining much of the suspicion and harsh treatment to which they have been subjected.

When all is fairly considered, it must be acknowledged that the Sultan is fair and liberal in the treatment of religious opinions, provided that these opinions are not used as a shield for hostile political purposes and intrigues. Men of many various faiths dwell together in peace, harmony, and contentment in all parts of his dominions.

We should beware, moreover, of hasty criticism, remembering how difficult it is for a sovereign to penetrate to the truth of such

matters, easily obscured by the perversions of hostile interests which have his ear; and we may hope that the patient resignation and good lives of Abbas Effendi and his little band of followers at Akka may at length convince his Majesty that, as is, indeed, the fact, he has not in his dominions more loyal subjects or more useful citizens.

## CHAPTER V

### THE STORY OF HIS LIFE (*Concluded*)

#### AKKA

“**A**MONG those who went with us from Adrianople to Akka were three men who were followers of Subh i Ezel, and also one of Subh i Ezel’s wives who, having quarrelled with him, asked permission to accompany us. During the two years of close confinement these four lived peaceably with the followers of the Blessed Perfection, the woman in his family. As soon as our company was released from the barracks, they began to make mischief. They slandered the believers to the people of Akka, saying that we would make trouble at the first opportunity, and other things of like nature. The men were relatives of the woman, and she asked permission to live with them. So they took up quarters together in another part of the town from that in which we lived.

“After this their hostility became more

aggressive and open. They declared that they were imprisoned by mistake, being enemies of the Blessed Perfection ; threatened to kill the Blessed Perfection and my brother, if there should be an opportunity ; and carried on various intrigues against them, as the forging of letters purporting to come from the Blessed Perfection and saying evil things of the Sultan and the Governor, which they took to the officials. At length they were so successful in inviting trouble that a threat came from Constantinople of again transporting and separating us.

“Two of the believers thought that they would settle the matter themselves, without taking counsel with the Blessed Perfection or my brother. They reasoned that if they should take such counsel, they would be forbidden to execute their plans, and, having been forbidden, they could not disobey. ‘We will,’ they said, ‘do a wicked deed ; but we will stop the evil doings of these people even if we are cursed for it. We will save our Lord though at the risk of our own souls.’ They persuaded another of the believers to join them and the three proceeded to the house of the Ezelis. Their intention was to demand of them a promise to stop their mischief, under threat of



death; but they did not have the opportunity to get so far as that. Having called the Ezelis out they asked them whether they intended to kill the Blessed Perfection and the Master; whereupon the Ezelis attacked them fiercely with clubs and sticks. A general fight followed in which two Ezelis and one Beha'i were killed.

“In consequence of this affair (which occurred very soon after our release from the barracks) my brother was arrested and put in chains in the dungeon, on the assertion by the surviving Ezeli and the woman with him that he and the Blessed Perfection had instigated the trouble. Then followed another period of misery. The Blessed Perfection was brought before the court and gave testimony in behalf of himself and my brother. Abbas Effendi was speedily released from prison, but remained under suspicion, and the matter was not determined for many months, during which we lived in terrible suspense and anxiety. But at length the Court was satisfied that the charges were baseless, and they were withdrawn.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor Browne (*A Traveller's Narrative*, p. 370) quotes Laurence Oliphant as saying that Beha Ullah, on being brought before the court on this occasion, and being asked who and what he was, replied: “I will begin by telling you who I am not. I am not a

“The Blessed Perfection then excommunicated the two Beha’is who were in the fight and survived it: they never again had speech

camel-driver,”—an allusion to the prophet Mohammed,—“nor am I the son of a carpenter,”—an allusion to Christ. “This is as much as I can tell you to-day. If you will now let me retire, I will tell you to-morrow who I am.” “Upon this promise,” continues Mr. Oliphant, “he was let go; but the morrow never came. With an enormous bribe he had in the interval purchased an exemption from all further attendance at court.”

I called Abbas Effendi’s attention to this statement, and asked him if there was any truth in it. “There is none whatever,” he replied. “You can yourself see that Beha Ullah could not have made those remarks. This being a Turkish government, the officials are all Mohammedans. There are also a very large number of Christians here. All Mohammedans and Christians would have understood the allusions; and such remarks being disrespectful to Mohammed and Christ, and the Blessed Perfection being a prisoner accused of endeavouring to subvert religious faith, they would have cut him in pieces—he could never have left the court-room.

“What the Blessed Perfection actually said in his own behalf was in substance this:

“‘I am innocent of any knowledge of this matter. How could I, who teach love and pity for every creature—who have given my life and that of my family to demonstrate that this is true religion—instigate this thing?

“‘You are trying to fasten upon me a guilt of which I am innocent; but I am ready to die. If you wish to execute me, I will sign any paper which you may prepare consenting to my execution; but I declare to you that I am innocent of this accusation.’

“The trial of these men lasted six months; during all this time the effort was being made to fasten the guilt upon the Blessed Perfection. Moreover, this trial was before a judge and jury. Is it likely that under these circumstances he could have bribed both a judge and a jury, who were, besides, to begin with, not too well disposed towards him? The effort would have been futile had he attempted it. He did not, nor would he have done so under any circumstances.”

with him. He soon after began a series of tablets on the sin of murder; declaring that no one, whosoever he might be, who would take the life of his brother, could be a Beha'i.

“The woman and the surviving Ezelite were sent to Constantinople.

“These, so far as I have ever heard, were the only Ezelis who have been killed by Beha'is.

“After our liberation from the barracks and the termination of this affair, my brother was able to mingle freely with the people of Akka, and he at once began to establish friendly relations with them. As illustrating the manner in which he gradually won their good-will, an incident occurs to me which I will relate. The believers needed fuel, but the people would not sell it to them. They regarded us as heretics and thought there was merit for them in harshness and unkindness towards us. Abbas Effendi obtained permission to send out of the city for charcoal, and a camel-load was brought back. The driver was stopped by a Christian merchant. ‘This is better charcoal than I can get,’ he said, and without more ceremony took it for himself—nor would he return the money paid for it.

“This was reported to my brother. He

went to the merchant's shop and stood in the door. He was not noticed. Then he entered and sat down by the door. The merchant continuing to transact his business with those who came and paying him no attention, he waited in silence for three hours. At length, when the others had left and no more came, the merchant said to him: 'Are you one of those prisoners here?' Abbas Effendi assenting, he continued: 'What have you done that you are imprisoned?'

" 'Since you ask me,' replied Abbas Effendi, 'I will tell you. We have done nothing. We are persecuted as Christ was persecuted.'

" 'What do you know of Christ?' said the merchant.

" My brother replied in such a manner that the merchant perceived that he was not ignorant of Christ and the Christian Bible. He then began to question him about the Bible and was interested in his replies, as my brother gave him explanations which he had never before heard.

" Next he invited my brother to a seat beside him and continued the conversation for two hours. At its conclusion he seemed much pleased, and said: 'The coal is gone,—I cannot return you that, but here is the money.'

He then escorted my brother to the door and down into the street, treating him with the greatest respect. Since that time he and Abbas Effendi have been fast friends, and the two families also.

“Yet the prejudices and animosities of the people against us were so deep-rooted that much time and patience have been required to remove them. You have already been told, I think, of the Afghan who persisted in his enmity for twenty-four years, but was finally softened by my brother’s kindnesses. So it has been with many. But in time his love for others has won all hearts. People have commonly said of him: ‘What does he do to his enemies that he makes them his friends?’

“The Governor, the magistrates, the officers of the army, first learned to respect him, and then to love him. Nearly every one in the city loves him,—Moslem and Christian, rich and poor.

“Yet perhaps there is one exception—I know of no other—of which I will now speak.

“The Blessed Perfection indicated in many ways that Abbas Effendi was to be his successor. Many years before his death he declared this in his *Book of Laws*. He has

referred to Abbas Effendi as 'The Centre of my Covenant,' 'The Greatest Branch,' 'The Branch from the Ancient Root,' 'The Mystery of the Greatest God.' He conferred upon him the designation of 'His Highness the Master,' and usually so addressed him and spoke of him; and he required all his family to treat him with marked deference. He also left a testament in which he reiterated his will in this respect.

"Nevertheless, after the death of the Blessed Perfection, Abbas Effendi's assumption of this position was resented by our half-brother, Mirza Mohammed Ali. For a time he endeavoured to stir up dissensions among the Beha'is. Failing in this, he sought to injure my brother personally. At this time, as had been the case for more than twenty years, my brother was permitted to go at his pleasure beyond the walls of Akka, and had the freedom of the surrounding country. I then myself resided in Haifa, and he as well as the other members of his family were in the habit of going there frequently, a change which was of much benefit to their health, since Akka is a small, crowded, and, in some seasons, unhealthy city. Mohammed Ali proceeded to make false charges of various sorts

against Abbas Effendi to the Turkish government. One of these was this :

“The Blessed Perfection before his death gave Abbas Effendi the charge to build, on a site which he had selected on the side of Mt. Carmel above Haifa, a building which should be the permanent resting-place of the remains of the Bab, himself, and my brother, and also contain a hall for meeting and worship. This building was in process of erection at the time I speak of—it is not yet completed—and Mohammed Ali represented to the authorities that it was intended as a fort, in which Abbas Effendi and his followers intended to intrench themselves, defy the Government, and endeavour to gain possession of this part of Syria.

“Other equally baseless charges were fabricated and reiterated until the Government, as on previous occasions, became weary of the annoyance and issued a firman decreeing that the original order, by which the Blessed Perfection and his family were confined within the walls of Akka, should be again put in force.

“This was about two years ago. Since that time my brother has been assured that on his application in behalf of himself alone, his strict confinement would be again remitted. He

refuses, however, to make this application.<sup>1</sup> This is because he is much more grieved by his brother's alienation from himself than by his own loss of freedom. He regards harbouring hatred against another as the greatest evil which can befall a man, and he is determined to rescue his brother from this, if possible, at whatever cost to himself. He knows that his own liberation would cause Mohammed Ali's hatred to increase, and probably render a reconciliation impossible; but he hopes that, if the situation remains as it is, he may in time be able to soften his brother's heart and regain his love.<sup>2</sup>

“ My father's imprisonment in his house con-

<sup>1</sup> Further, in the fall of 1902, a number of American friends of Abbas Effendi formed the plan of visiting the Court of the Shah of Persia and securing his co-operation in an application to the Sultan of Turkey for the release of Abbas Effendi. They came to Europe for this purpose, and from Paris telegraphed to Abbas Effendi asking his assent to the project. He replied, requesting that the undertaking should be abandoned.

<sup>2</sup> As this book is about to go to press, I am informed of an event which has caused great rejoicing in the Beha'i world. Besides Mohammed Ali, Abbas Effendi has another half brother (full brother to the former), by name Badi Ullah. Badi Ullah has always maintained friendly relations with Abbas Effendi and his family, but has sided with Mohammed Ali in his protest against recognising Abbas Effendi as the head of the church. He has now repented of his apostasy, and in a lengthy manifesto, a copy of which I have seen, announces his adherence to Abbas Effendi as the true “ Centre of the Covenant.”



tinued for nine years after our release from the barracks. His followers from abroad now had free access to him, and our life was in most respects comparatively comfortable. After this time the Governor gave the Blessed Perfection the freedom of the city, and of the country in the vicinity of Akka. His friends now urged him to reside in the country, believing that his health would be benefited by the change. He at first refused, but at length yielded to persuasion and transferred his residence to a house without the city.<sup>1</sup> Here he

<sup>1</sup> Professor Browne visited Beha Ullah here in 1890, and his graphic description of his first interview with him is so effective and interesting that I will quote it. "I was conducted," he says, "through passages and rooms at which I had scarcely time to glance to a spacious hall, paved, so far as I remember (for my mind was occupied with other thoughts), with a mosaic of marble. Before a curtain suspended from the wall of this great antechamber my conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes. Then, with a quick movement of the hand, he withdrew, and, as I passed, replaced the curtain; and I found myself in a large apartment, along the upper end of which ran a low divan, while on the side opposite to the door were placed two or three chairs. Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *taj* by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines

passed a quiet and peaceful life until his death at the age of seventy-five, in the year 1892. His chief occupation, as it had been at all times since his return from his sojourn of two years alone in the mountains near Baghdad, was the writing of sacred books and tablets.

“Abbas Effendi continued to live in Akka.

on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

“A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: ‘Praise be to God that thou hast attained! . . . Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. . . . We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. . . . That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that the diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the “Most Great Peace” shall come. . . . Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? . . . Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. . . . These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. . . . Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind. . . .’

“Such, so far as I can remember them, were the words which, with many others, I heard from Beha. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion.”

He frequently visited the Blessed Perfection, and generally came out on foot. The walk was long, and in summer the sun very oppressive. It was his habit, if overcome with heat or fatigue, to lie down on the ground, rest his head on a stone, and sleep. The Blessed Perfection remonstrated with him about this, saying that he should use a horse. My brother replied, 'How can I come to my Lord riding? I must show that I am the humblest of all the people. When Christ went out he walked, and slept in the fields. Who am I, that in visiting my Lord I should go as greater than Christ?'

"In his early life my brother was much disinclined to marry. It is a Persian custom, when two cousins, a boy and a girl, are born about the same time, to promise them in marriage to each other in their infancy. My brother was promised in this way to a cousin, and while we lived in Baghdad we thought that the time had come for the marriage. He, however, thought differently; and when our mother desired to send for the girl, he positively refused to permit it to be done. 'Why should I marry?' he asked; 'are there not enough to suffer now, that we should propose to bring others to share our lot?'

“After our release from the two-years’ confinement in the barracks here, my mother and myself were both very desirous that my brother should marry, and we began to look about for a girl whom we would approve. Our choice finally fell upon the daughter of a believer living in Syria, who was said to be very beautiful and amiable, and in every way a suitable match. Without consulting my brother, since we wished to place him in a position where he could not refuse our oft-repeated appeals to give us a daughter and a sister, I invited her to visit us. The invitation was accepted, and she set out with her brother. After a hard and wearisome journey, they reached Haifa and were taken to the house of one of my uncles there.

“We commenced quietly to make preparations for the marriage, without making known to my brother the arrival of the girl. However, many of the believers knew of it and of our intentions, and were so delighted that ‘their Master’ (as they always called him) was to take a wife, thus giving them the hope that he might have a son to succeed him in fostering the faith until it should become established, that their pleasure shone in their faces. My brother saw that there was something unusual

afoot, and the thought occurred to him, since the subject had been so much urged upon him, 'Now perhaps they are getting me a wife.' So he hastened home to us and demanded with considerable energy, 'What is this—what are all the people smiling about? Is it possible that you are again planning to get me a wife? If you are, you may as well give it up, for I will not marry.' We tried to plead and reason with him, but he would not hear us. Finally we said, 'What, then, is to be done? She is at Haifa—she has come with her brother—what can we do?' Then he hesitated, looked serious, and finally said: 'Well, if you have brought her here, she belongs to me, and I will give her in marriage to some one who will be better suited to make her happy than I.'

"She remained at Haifa for some time, until at length my brother brought about her marriage to a husband of his own selection. The marriage has resulted satisfactorily to all parties.

"The Bab, during his life, had a certain follower who was specially devoted to him. On one occasion he visited this man in his home. His host said to him that his visit filled him with the greatest happiness of his life; but that

he had one sorrow of which he wished to speak. He had been married ten years, and was childless. He begged the Bab to pray for a child for him, and this the Bab promised.

“ Nine months later a daughter was born to this follower. When this daughter grew up she was very sweet and very amiable. She had been promised in her infancy to a cousin ; and her cousin, in due time, was very desirous for the marriage. Having been permitted to see her, from that day on he seemed to think of nothing but the time when she should be his wife. He urged on the marriage, provided the house, and made all the usual preparations. On the day set, the bride was brought to the bridegroom’s house, which, according to Persian custom, completed the civil marriage. Then, to every one’s amazement and consternation, the bridegroom refused to see the bride. To the demands of the relatives as to why he had changed his mind within an hour his only reply was, ‘ I do not know. I cannot explain and have nothing to tell. All I know is that I cannot see her.’

“ Six months later the young man died.

“ The girl remained in her husband’s house until his death ; but she never saw him after entering it.

“She felt much humiliated, and resolved that she would never again marry. She and her family were very earnest believers; and after this occurrence she begged her father and mother to send her to be a servant in the household of the Blessed Perfection. Because of her disappointment her parents did not wish to refuse her; and her mother wrote for permission to visit the family of the Blessed Perfection with her daughter. Permission was granted and they came to Haifa. The Blessed Perfection asked my brother to bring them; but, not finding it convenient to go himself, he gave the commission to some one else to execute. Mother and daughter came to our house, and, having seen the Blessed Perfection, asked to see the Master. At that moment my brother entered and conversed briefly with the ladies, seeming, however, unusually interested for him.

“The ladies returned to Haifa and remained there, coming back and forth occasionally to visit us. My mother and I, seeing that my brother was noticing the young woman, hoped that he might marry her; but, remembering our experience, we did not dare to suggest it. About six months later the Blessed Perfection called my brother to his room and asked him

if he would not take this young woman for his wife. My brother consented.

“ In deciding to marry, my brother undoubtedly sacrificed his own preference for a single life to the wishes of the rest of the family, and especially of the Blessed Perfection. The latter had suggested to him that, as his example would influence all believers, it would be well if it illustrated the best and highest condition of life for men, which was the married state. Yet, in coming to this decision, I think that our Master was much influenced by the warm regard and affection which he undoubtedly felt for the woman whom he was asked to marry.

“ Then there was much rejoicing. All the believers looked forward to the marriage with delight. But time went on and yet it was not concluded. The real reason, which we did not care to mention publicly, was that we had no suitable room to give my brother in the house, and were not willing to lose him from our home, where his presence was so essential to our happiness.

“ Finally, I went to the wife of our landlord and told her of our perplexity. She consulted her husband, and he, a good-natured man, said that he could remove the difficulty. He owned the adjoining house ; and he cut a door to con-



nect the courts of the two houses, and gave us a room, completely furnished, in the other house.

“The way was thus made plain for the marriage, and it was duly solemnised soon after.

“The occasion of the wedding had one peculiar feature so characteristic of my brother that I will mention it. Our marriage service is very simple, consisting of the reading of a tablet and the exchange of promises by the contracting parties. It is usually followed by feasting and the entertainment of friends until late at night.

“Our Master had made, personally and with great care, all the preparations for receiving and entertaining the guests. The ceremony was performed by the Blessed Perfection about two P.M. My brother then quietly withdrew without speaking to any one, and did not return until after the guests had dispersed.

“It was not from want of consideration for the solemnity of the occasion or for his bride that he did this, for the tender affection which he has always shown for her disproves this; or for his guests, for his minute attention to the arrangements for their pleasure disproves this also. But it was his habit to spend this part of the day and the evening in visiting the poor

and sick and explaining the Koran, he being frequently thus occupied until a late hour. He never permitted his own affairs to interfere with the discharge of these duties, and was unwilling to neglect them even on this occasion.

“My brother’s marriage has proved exceedingly happy and harmonious. Several months ago my sister took two of her daughters to Beyrout on account of their health, and this has been her first separation from her husband for any length of time. Since a short time after her departure a question repeated by my brother the first thing every morning to his daughter, who is his constant attendant, is, ‘Ruha, when do you think your mother will come back?’

“Eight children have been born to them, of whom four are living. Their family now consists of two unmarried daughters, two married daughters with their families, and myself.

“Many influences, and those of the very strongest character, have been brought to induce my brother to take a second wife—a practice which the Blessed Perfection did not in terms forbid, but advised against. The believers have urged it strongly for several reasons. Very many of them wish to take a

second wife themselves, but feel constrained from doing so by the Master's example. In Persia, except among believers, polygamy is a universal custom, and the restriction to one wife, which all believers feel and respect, seems very severe. Then there is a general wish that the Master might have a son to succeed him. Other arguments have been advanced; and the pressure brought to bear upon him has been, and still is, very great—greater than you can easily imagine.

“The general advice of the Blessed Perfection against a second marriage would in itself have had the effect with my brother of a command and have settled the question; but as regards him it was withdrawn by our Lord before his death. He said to Abbas Effendi that he rather wished to lead the believers gradually to monogamy than to force them to adopt it, which they felt bound to do by reason of the Master's example; that therefore, and since it was much desired by all that the Master should have a son, he withdrew even the advice in his case, and desired him to consider himself free to follow his own desires and inclination.

“To this the Master replied that his own wishes and feelings were against a second

marriage, though, if the Blessed Perfection should command it, he would obey. This, however, the Blessed Perfection never did.

“To all other appeals his reply has always been a firm refusal. He thinks that if it had been God’s will that he should leave a son, the two who had been born to him would not have been taken away. He believes that the best and highest condition of life for a man is marriage to one wife, and that it is his duty to set that example to the world.”

## CHAPTER VI

### CHARACTERISTICS AND INCIDENTS

I SHALL now collect some of my own observations with regard to Abbas Effendi, and a number of incidents of his life related to me by others, which throw light upon and illustrate his character, but which I am not able to make a part of any consecutive narrative. I am aware that in doing this I am disregarding literary symmetry ; but as my only object in preparing this book is to give those who read it as much information as possible about him and his teachings, I do not wish to omit any material which may contribute to this end.

The characteristic of Abbas Effendi, regarded as a religious leader, which is at once the most striking, the most attractive, and the most impressive, is his generous and tolerant liberality. It is disappointing to find that narrowness and intolerance have already shown themselves in the teachings of some of his followers—a perversion and degradation of true religion which

is seen to be an almost inevitable tendency of human nature in all ages of the world, and which most religions have suffered in the hands of their adherents. The chief glory of Beha'ism is that its true spirit, as exemplified in its Great Apostle, is utterly free from it.

I shall state at length his attitude in this respect in a subsequent chapter, here merely mentioning two incidents illustrating it, which were related to me in Akka.

One was that of a gentleman who wrote to Abbas Effendi to this effect: That he recognised him as a man of great spiritual force, and one who, in urging upon men the observance of the Law of Love, was doing much in the service of humanity; that he desired to work with him and for him; but that also he (Abbas Effendi) had said some things with which he did not agree, and that he himself had some spiritual light, which he did not wish to surrender.

Abbas Effendi replied that he welcomed him as a co-worker; that he asked him to give up nothing; that he approved of his continuing to adhere to any religious faith with which he might be associated, and that the one thing necessary was to love God above all things and seek Him.

The other case was that of a lady who was visiting Abbas Effendi in Akka. She had accepted him as her religious teacher, and desired to assist in spreading his teachings. When about to return to her home, she told him that her associations were all in the orthodox Christian Church, and that her friends would be repelled by the idea of a new religion. He advised her to return as a Christian, to remain in the Christian Church, and to teach what she had learned as the true teaching of Christ.

Abbas Effendi has another characteristic as a religious leader which seems to me to be, especially at this time, remarkably refreshing and reassuring,—he makes no claim to being a “healer” or to the performance of “miracles.” Whether or not he possesses such powers I would not undertake to say; but he certainly regards physical health as of too little importance in comparison with spiritual welfare to merit primary attention. The only real sickness which he recognises is sickness of the soul. The one and exclusive object which he has in view is the spiritual elevation of humanity—an all-sufficient end in itself, which does not require for its justification any physical gain.

Yet, in point of fact, he says there is a physical gain in attaining spiritual health; for the normal effect of this is to promote recovery from bodily disease; and still more, in those cases where the latter is not removed by spiritual regeneration, the spirit which has experienced this change *does not feel* physical pain, and looks upon the sufferings of its body with the same indifference with which the ordinary man regards suffering in the body of another. The body is, therefore, sometimes restored, and pain is overcome by spiritual force; but these occurrences are properly regarded as unimportant incidents in the attainment of spiritual well-being.

Further, Abbas Effendi is very careful not to countenance any interpretation of his acts by his followers which could lead to the imputation to him of miraculous powers. The assertion of such powers for himself or for his predecessors would, he says, stand in the way of other messengers, who will come, in the future as in the past, when the world requires them. If men's minds are fixed on miracles, which prove nothing except themselves, they will be less open to the reception of truth, or be closed entirely to the Divine Message.

He says, also, that if miracles are ascribed



to the founders of a religion and become engrafted upon it, they will inevitably be simulated by priesthoods and other pretenders to Divine authority to mislead, delude, and defraud the ignorant masses of mankind, as illustrated by the greater part of the past history of Christianity, and by the hundreds of quacks and impostors who at the present day practise their shameful impositions upon the people in the name of Christ.

So, too, Abbas Effendi discourages everything tending to centre attention upon himself or to exalt his personality into an object of devotion or worship. He has had numerous applications for his photograph, but always declines to have it taken. His reply to these requests is: "I do not wish to have men think of my personality or my form. The personality changes, the form passes away: there is nothing permanent about them. All this must die — must pass out of the recollection of men. But deeds and words never die. These are my sign: it is these only which I wish to leave to the believers and to the world."

His only claim or description of himself is, "Servant of God," or "Servant of Beha Ullah," or "Servant of the servants of Beha Ullah."

Beha Ullah bestowed many titles upon him

(see page 80), but as to these he says that they were all given by favour, and that they mean but one thing — “Servant.”

As might be expected from this lack of self-assertion, Abbas Effendi's life is spent in quiet and unassuming work. His general order for the day is prayers and tea at sunrise, and dictating letters or “Tablets,” receiving visitors, and giving alms to the poor until dinner in the middle of the day. After this meal he takes a half-hour's siesta, spends the afternoon in making visits to the sick and others whom he has occasion to see about the city, and the evening in talking to the believers or in expounding, to any who wish to hear him, the Koran, on which, even among Moslems, he is reputed to be one of the highest authorities, learned men of that faith frequently coming from great distances to consult him with regard to its interpretation.

He then returns to his house and works until about one o'clock over his correspondence. This is enormous, and would more than occupy his entire time, did he read and reply to all his letters personally. As he finds it impossible to do this, but is nevertheless determined that they shall all receive careful and impartial attention, he has recourse to the assistance of his daughter Ruha, upon whose in-

telligence and conscientious devotion to the task he can rely. During the day she reads and makes digests of letters received, which she submits to him at night.

In his attention to these various duties he is absolutely unremitting. The month which I passed in Akka was the Mohammedan fast of Ramedan, which, as all other Mohammedan observances, was scrupulously kept by Abbas Effendi and his followers, for the sake of peace and to avoid the imputation of social innovation. This fast requires abstinence from food between sunrise and sunset. The effect of this privation upon him, in addition to that of his assiduous activity, was very marked, and towards the end of the fast he frequently appeared to be in a state of great exhaustion.

I have adverted to his frugal and abstemious habits in matters relating to his personal comfort. Several incidents further illustrating this trait were told to me. On one occasion he was going to Haifa, and asked for a seat in the stage. "Your Excellency," said the driver, "surely wishes a private carriage." "No," replied Abbas Effendi. The driver thought this parsimony in a man of his position. At Haifa, while he was still in the

stage, a fisherwoman came to him in great distress, saying that all day she had caught nothing, and must go home to a hungry family. He gave her five francs, and turning to the stage-driver said: "You now see the reason why I would not take a private carriage. Why should I ride in luxury when so many are starving?"

The Master's habit of wearing cheap clothes troubles his family. I was told of a conspiracy a few months before to impose a cloak of better quality upon him without his knowledge. His wife procured the necessary money from her brother, who is in the habit of acting as banker for the family, and furnished a tailor with the required cloth, who proceeded to make the garment. They knew very well that the Master would not wear expensive clothes if he knew it, but, counting upon his inattention to such matters, hoped that he would not notice the quality.

But unfortunately the tailor bungled the cloak. It did not fit, had to be returned several times; and in the goings to and fro which ensued, its cost came to Abbas Effendi's knowledge. Thereupon he sent for his brother-in-law and said to him: "You must sell that cloak and charge me with whatever loss there

may be upon it : such an amount of money will buy four cloaks, one of which is good enough for me ; the others can be given away."

His daughter Ruha relates that when her sister was recently married she had no trousseau, and for the ceremony merely donned a clean dress. People asked her father why he had not given his daughter bridal garments. He replied, " My daughter is warmly clad and has all that she needs for her comfort. The poor have not. What my daughter does not need I will give to the poor rather than to her."

Early during my stay in Akka the following curious incident was related to me. The Master happened to have a fine cloak of Persian wool which had been given to him, when a poor man applied to him for a garment. He sent for this cloak and gave it to the applicant. The man took it and demurred, saying that it was only of cotton. " No," said Abbas Effendi, " It is of wool ;" and to prove it he lighted a match and burnt a little of the nap. The man still grumbled that it was not good. Abbas Effendi reproved him for criticising a gift and appeared not a little vexed at his ungrateful conduct. But he

terminated the interview in this extraordinary fashion — by directing an attendant to give the man a *mejidi* (a coin worth about four francs). “If any one vexes him,” continued my interlocutor, “he always gives him a present.”

I was at a loss to understand this singular procedure at the time; but an incident which occurred later during my stay threw light upon it. One day the Master was distributing coats to poor men, in accordance with his custom, to which I have referred above (p. 5). In this distribution he carefully selected the donees, judging from his personal knowledge in each case whether the charity was merited, and making a record of those to whom coats were given. On this occasion there was one man who was very insistent in his demand for a coat, but whose application Abbas Effendi for some reason did not approve. The man continued to persist, and the Master to refuse, finally repulsing the beggar with a good deal of acerbity. After some time, however, what did he do but bring this same man into the large court where the coats were hung upon a line, and give him the choice of the lot! The man tried on three, and, finding one which suited him, took it away.

Madam Canavarro saw the incident and afterwards asked Abbas Effendi to explain it. He smiled and said: "Did you notice that?"—and then, calling her attention to the backs of his hands, which had been somewhat scratched and torn in managing the crowd, he continued: "My body is still under the law. You see how these people may injure it. It is necessary that I should control them—that I should put them down. But, having put them down, I must show them that I did not do it in unkindness. And so, too, if I find it necessary to display some temper, I must take care that my actions show my motive, in order that my example may not be misunderstood."

The Master has, as may be inferred from what I have already said, a very tender, sensitive, and sympathetic nature. To his appreciation of the suffering and discontent which it causes among women I chiefly attribute his dislike to the institution of polygamy, remarkable in one who has been all his life surrounded by those who practise it. This is shown not only by his persistent refusal to adopt it for himself, notwithstanding the very powerful influences (see above, p. 92) which have urged him to do so, but by the reticence

which he habitually maintains when the subject is introduced. It is evidently a matter upon which, because of his surroundings, he does not wish to express himself with freedom.

Many things suggestive of his sympathy and tender-heartedness were told to me. I have referred to his habit of eating very simply and but once a day. This is not his invariable custom, since, when he has guests, he entertains them generously, in fact exquisitely, and eats with them. His family say, however, that he always prefers a simple repast; and if it happens that he has just come from visiting the poor, elaborately prepared food is especially distasteful to him.

Busy as he is, it would much relieve him to delegate distributing alms to some of his followers. This, in fact, he sometimes does, but rarely, for this reason. On these occasions the poor frequently resort to artifices, as by going away after receiving money and returning to secure double or triple alms. These artifices are likely to be met, by any one except himself, with impatience or harshness, and this the Master does not like. To the poor and ignorant above all, he says, we should always be kind.

Once he was entertaining a wealthy lady



who had her maid with her. The latter stood behind her mistress' chair at dinner. Abbas Effendi was uneasy. At length he called for a chair, placed it beside him, and asked the maid to be seated. Then he addressed his conversation to her, telling her, among other things, to be content; that those who served were often more loved by God than those whom they served.

I was told of the case of a consumptive who had been almost deserted by his friends, as frequently happens in Akka, Syrians having a superstitious fear of the disease. The mother and sisters of this young man hardly entered his room. His food was brought in by a servant, and he was left to reach it and otherwise to care for himself as best he could.

The house in which he lived was near that occupied by the Master, and the ladies of the latter's family saw this sad sight from their windows. No woman, of course, could offer assistance under the circumstances; but the Master heard of it from them, and thereafter went daily to the sick man, took him delicacies, read and discoursed to him, and was alone with him when he died.

In his dealings with men and in the relief of suffering, differences of religious opinion have

no weight with the Master. Men of all faiths are absolutely the same to him. He commonly associates a Moslem and a Christian with him in regulating his charities. I usually noticed one or both of these faiths represented among those who were assisting him in the distribution of alms or clothing. The ideal of human life which he strives, first of all, to promote, is fraternal co-operation among all men.

During the fast of Ramedan considerable discomfort is caused among the poorer Mohammedans by the fact that, when exhausted by the long fast of the day (from sunrise to sunset), they have not the means to provide a sufficiently substantial meal to restore their strength. It was the Master's habit, while I was in Akka, to provide every second day a supper at sunset for many such persons.

A year or two ago a wealthy American lady, a friend of Abbas Effendi, spent some months in Haifa. On going away she asked permission to make him the donation of a sum of money, for his own use or for that of the Cause. He replied that he could not himself accept a gift from her; but that if she wished to do something for him, she should educate the two little girls of a Christian schoolmaster in Haifa, who had recently lost

his wife, was very poor, and in much trouble. She accordingly sent these children to a school in Beyrout.

There are in Akka about ninety Beha'is of whom I think I have met all the men. The restrictions imposed by Mohammedan social customs, which, as I have said, the Beha'is here observe for the sake of peace and harmony, prevented me from meeting the women. These Beha'is are all Persians, living in Akka in voluntary exile in order to be near their "Master." The fact that, also for the sake of peace, they are not permitted by him to make propaganda within the dominions of the Sultan explains, no doubt, the absence of other nationalities among them. The attractions of their native country do not weigh as a straw against the privilege of living near Abbas Effendi; and nothing except his wish, which is absolute law to his followers, could induce them to leave him. This touching and eloquent tribute to the character of Abbas Effendi is only an expression of the fundamental characteristic of all Beha'is whom I have known — that is, the absolute devotion of themselves, their possessions, and their lives to the cause of their faith and its representative. I am told that it is the dearest

wish of the millions of Beha'is in Persia to make the pilgrimage to Akka, and that, if such a thing were possible, they would migrate there *en masse* for permanent residence. But at present even pilgrimage is, except in rare instances, forbidden by Abbas Effendi. In the earlier years of Beha Ullah's imprisonment there, when access to him, or even entrance into the city, was impossible for Beha'is from Persia, the pilgrimage was frequently made for the mere purpose of seeing him at the window of his room in the prison, from a point without the walls of Akka.

I have never known a community which seemed to enjoy such a general distribution of the sterling qualities and virtues of character. They are industrious and self-controlled; in appearance they are cleanly and thrifty. Their faces are all sincere, honest, kindly, intelligent, and generally strong. Their school is attended by about twenty bright-looking boys (girls are excluded by Mohammedan custom), who are, among other things, industriously studying the English language, and have made considerable progress in acquiring it.

In their intercourse with each other, and, so far as I have had the opportunity to observe, with others, the Beha'is continually overflow

with kindness and good-will. They seem like a single family whose members bear the liveliest affection for one another. I can even easily credit the statement made to me that when the persecutions were at their height in Persia, it happened more than once that a Beha'i, having been arrested by mistake in place of another who had been denounced, permitted the error to go undiscovered, and suffered execution rather than endanger his fellow-believer.

To a Beha'i there is no recommendation of character and trustworthiness equal to that of being a Beha'i. This confidence in the character of Beha'is extends also, as I have learned from conversation with other citizens of Akka, to those who are not of their faith. I am told that they are frequently chosen as fiduciaries and trustees by Moslems and Christians.

One observes among them a feeling of fellowship and complete equality as men, regardless of the distinctions of wealth and poverty or high and low degree. I saw this feeling expressed many times; as when, during the exposition of the doctrines by some teacher in my room, the boy who served my meals would enter without remark and respectfully take a seat before him.

There is also among them an atmosphere of intense religious conviction and spiritual life,—yet quite without apparent emotion or excitement,—which forcibly impresses one who is accustomed to the torpidity prevailing in Western lands in regard to those things. Professor Browne remarks (*A Traveller's Narrative*, introduction, p. xxxix.):

“The spirit which pervades the Babis (Beha'is) is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. . . . Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will: but should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion they are not likely to forget.

Nothing could be more true. In the presence of a number of them, aglow, as they all are, with the fire of love, conviction, and determination, one feels—however he may believe, he feels—that scepticism about the reality of spiritual existence is a trifle absurd, and that things unseen must be as certain as things seen.

If we analyse this peculiar spirit of the Beha'is; if we seek to penetrate that which marks them off from other men, the conclusion to which we are brought is that its essence is expressed in the one word *Love*. These men are Lovers; lovers of God, of

their Master and Teacher, of each other, and of all mankind. This is the name which they are fondest of applying to themselves, and it is that which most intimately indicates their distinctive characteristics. Their love goes out in all these directions with the fervour of the lover's passion, but a passion free from all gross elements. It is this which has sustained them in their sufferings and martyrdoms, and now inspires their eager devotion to their cause. To some this fact will have an immense possible significance; for they will remember that seers have said that there is a Divine Love of which the ordinary human passion is but the darkened and corrupted shadow, and which, searching, strenuous, and pure, it is sometimes given to men to feel.

## CHAPTER VII

### PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY

THE Beha'i conception of the Supreme Being is not a personality, but an Essence, an all-pervading Force or Power, frequently referred to as Love, or Truth, or Life. "God," says Abbas Effendi, "is pure essence, and cannot be said to be anywhere or in any place. God is infinite, and, as terms are finite, the nature of God cannot be expressed in terms. But as man must form and express a conception of God in some way, he calls God 'Love' or 'Truth' because these are the highest things he knows. Life is eternal; so man, to express God's infinity, says that God is 'Life.' But these things in themselves are not God. God is the Source of all things that are made, and all things that are, are mirrors reflecting His Glory."

The universe exists for the purpose of individualising the Infinite Absolute and Eternal Essence; that is, for the purpose of creating in that Essence centres of consciousness and



intelligence which shall know themselves and know It or God.<sup>1</sup> The instrument of this creation is the material universe, and the process is evolution. Spirit is an emanation from God; but it is simple, undifferentiated, unorganised. Spirit must be developed or evolved by a vast course of evolution in contact with matter, by means of the experiences thereby gained, until the emotional, mental, and reasoning faculties and powers are developed in it. Self-consciousness follows from the association of spirit evolving these powers with individual human forms. These centres of emotion, intelligence, reason, and self-consciousness are capable, in due course, of union with, or transfer to, the pure Absolute Essence, whereby the ultimate end of the evolutionary process is attained.

The process of evolution proceeds by the development of combinations of material elements constituting organic and inorganic forms. Spirit is the force which brings about these combinations. As it evolves, it develops and pushes forward the evolution of the forms which it permeates, impelling the ascent from lower to higher forms. These combinations,

<sup>1</sup> "I was a hidden treasure. I desired to be known. Therefore I created the world, in order to be known."—*Koran*.

forms, or bodies, being but aggregates of elements, are subject to the law of continual change which inheres in all material things. Their duration can be but temporary, and their end is the scattering of the elements of which they are composed. That the forms may continue, they must be at intervals renewed. Further, evolution requires readjustment of form as development proceeds. Hence, from both the nature of matter and the requirements of evolution, arises the necessity of death, or the dissolution of the physical form; or rather, we should say, perhaps, that matter has been created with the qualities needed by the evolutionary process for which it exists. Renovation follows dissolution, and thus the forms are preserved.

There are four degrees of spirit concerned with evolutionary growth, as spirit manifests itself in the various forms of nature—the mineral, the vegetable, the animal, and the human spirit—and each of these degrees is a development or evolution of those which have preceded it in the ascending scale. The mineral spirit contains the latent principle of life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Compare the recent remarkable discoveries of Professor I. C. Bose demonstrating the existence of the essential characteristics of life in metals.—*The Response of Matter*, London, Longmans, Green & Co.

It causes the cohesive and adhesive forces existing between atoms, molecules, and substances. The chemical and physical laws which scientific analysis discloses are the manifestations of spiritual force, or the modes of existence impressed by spirit upon matter. Spirit forces the matter of the mineral kingdom to undergo various changes of condition and mutations of form under the guidance of these laws, until, as a result of the experiences involved in these changes and mutations, spirit reaches that degree of evolution which can be attained in this kingdom of nature. Co-ordinately with this evolution of spirit the evolution of matter proceeds ; it acquires plasticity and adaptability, and becomes fit to take its place in the kingdom of nature next above, as the substance from which vegetable forms may be organised.

The completion of this process closes a cycle or period. The mineral spirit, that is, the one World-Spirit of the mineral kingdom, now passes away from the mineral and proceeds to the vegetable kingdom. During the cycle just passed, co-ordinately with the development of the conditions and forms of the mineral kingdom, the evolving spirit has produced also the primary forms of the vegetable

kingdom, and these it permeates and impels upwards. The spirit which informs the vegetable kingdom, though the same in essence as that which first permeated the mineral kingdom, differs in its mode of manifestation. Not only has it evolved new qualities and capacities; but, since the conditions of the vegetable kingdom are freer and more mobile than those of the mineral kingdom and matter is more plastic than before, it has scope to display more of its inherent energy. It may be likened, in its manifestation, to a gale of wind developed from a breeze.

The matter of the vegetable kingdom, when it has reached the degree of development proper to that kingdom, has in combination two sets of qualities or natures: that peculiar to the mineral kingdom, and that peculiar to the vegetable kingdom, whereas matter in the mineral kingdom possessed only the mineral nature. In the acquisition of this new set of qualities consists the growth or evolution of matter in the vegetable kingdom. It is thus prepared to serve as the substance of animal bodies.

Spirit passes from the vegetable to the animal kingdom, and from the animal to the human kingdom, in a manner similar to that in

which it passed from the mineral to the vegetable kingdom, just described. It still continues to be, as when it first appeared in the mineral kingdom, a single, undivided force; and it is the same in essence as before, though with evolved capacities and powers, and increased manifestation of energy as the scope for the display of its activities enlarges.

The matter of the animal kingdom has in combination three sets of qualities or natures — those peculiar to the mineral and vegetable kingdoms and its own; while the matter of which man's body is composed has acquired a fourth, peculiar to itself. It has now reached a very high degree of plasticity and adaptability.

Thus spirit and matter evolve in union with each other through the four kingdoms of nature, during each stage adding the growth and development attained in that stage to the growth and development attained in prior stages. When the physical form of man has been perfected, spirit has accomplished one part of its purpose — or the purpose for which it was sent — that is, the creation of a physical form suited to serve as the vehicle for the manifestation of spirit in the higher stages of its evolution yet to come. Man's physical

form is the highest type of form — nature's final product and the goal of her evolution.<sup>1</sup>

Although the evolution of types of form now ceases in the material world, spirit continues to evolve, through its association with the human body and the life experiences thus gained, until the emotional, mental, and reasoning faculties and powers of man are fully developed in it. This spiritual evolution has its expression in the material world in the development of the human brain, the solar plexus, and other nervous ganglia, which are coincidentally perfected as they are required to serve as vehicles for the evolving spirit manifesting itself as the intellect and emotional nature. During this stage of its evolution, as in the stages which preceded it, spirit is a single World-Force, not a congeries of entities.

<sup>1</sup> To illustrate the remarkable analogy between these conceptions and some phases of modern thought, I will here quote a passage from the *London Contemporary Review*, of March, 1902. The writer, Mr. Wake Cook, in developing his thesis of an "Increasing Purpose" manifested in the natural order and evolution of the world, says :

" This idea of life, conditioned, restricted, or focussed by matter in its various modes, rests on a larger conception. Instead of formulating the idea of Matter and Motion, or Matter and Force, a larger term — Cosmic Life — as carrying all below it, is substituted for motion or energy, and substance for matter, the latter being the lowest form of substance. This life, which may be conceived under any of its sectional aspects such as Force, or as Intelligence, builds

Self-consciousness results, as has been said, from the individualisation impressed upon spirit evolved to the emotional, thinking, and reasoning stage, by its association with individual human bodies. Therefore, except as will be hereafter explained, the self-consciousness of man does not survive the dissolution of his body. As mind, and consequently human character, develops, the thoughts, volitions, and characteristics of each human being go to enrich the common fund of the one World-Spirit of man, and constitute in it potentialities which will be again brought into manifestation in other human beings. Further, the thoughts and characteristics of the individual are not scattered and dissipated so as to lose the coherence of individual character, but tend to reappear in conjunction with each

up the machinery of its expression, its organism, in the highest form permitted by the plastic condition of matter ; and the One Life, or Spiritual Force, will express itself in the highest manner possible to the nature of the machine or organism. As Force it may undergo endless transmutations, but no loss, and in every case it will produce different results according to the different structures through which it works. A rush of wind, as a tornado, may work devastation ; yet a like rush of air directed through a furnace blast is a most useful servant of man ; or, if sent through the more complicated mechanism of an organ, it may discourse sweet music, wakening the soul to worship ; or through the more delicate mechanism of the human voice it may stir the nations through the statesman, may stir the whole world of the emotions through the orator, the poet, and the

other, thus giving rise to a succession of similar and developing characters.

The human intellect, when subject to material conditions, cannot fully grasp or express the methods and operations of spirit, and therefore this process can only be suggested to the mind by words which do not describe, but offer an intellectual substitute for the reality. Suppose that a man rises from his bed during the night, lights a lamp, writes a letter, extinguishes the lamp, and returns to his couch and sleeps. The consciousness and active intelligence have departed, but the letter remains. In some such way the thoughts and characteristics of a man remain after his death in the spiritual world, without self-consciousness, and subject to such spiritual forces that they are impelled to seek, when opportunity offers, expression in association with each other

singer; a laugh, a cry, a groan, a lover's sigh, are all expressions of the one force acting through different conditions. In like manner, the Cosmic or Divine Life manifests itself through matter in accordance with its plastic conditions, and its manifestations will correspond with the organisms which the state of matter permits it to form. To the less organised forms of matter, the Divine Life is simply an active force, and the Divine Love simply gravitation, or attraction, which holds every atom of this vast universe in loving embrace. As matter undergoes the necessary changes to fit it for higher organisation, life moulds it to its most simple forms, and as it becomes more plastic the forms become more and more complex until we reach conscious life, and ultimately man. Thus 'Force' is



in another human individual, who in consequence displays a character similar to that possessed by the individual who has passed away. But as spirit cannot manifest itself without a body, this character cannot again appear until a physical type suitable for its manifestation recurs. Physical types, however, constantly recur, under the operation of heredity and other natural laws, and thus similar characters continually reappear among men. There is, however, no re-embodiment, or continuance of self-consciousness, from the one life to the other. The spirit which illumines each human form, the flame of each human lamp, is the one and indivisible World-Spirit of man which illumines all other human forms. It is the Spirit of God, in essence the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

But man has, either potentially or in fact, differentiated by the conditions of matter; merely attraction and motion in the clod, it becomes life in the plant, manifesting beauty. In other conditions it becomes animal life, moved marvellously by instinct, elaborating rudimentally and in detail those organs or faculties which, when developed, are synthesised in man. Animals preying upon each other keep matter in the organic mill, so to speak, refining and preparing it for its highest function in man, in whom the Divine Life becomes dimly conscious of itself. Starting with the idea of Force, its character changes with the changing conditions, attraction and repulsion are translated into love and hate, instinct is transmuted into reason, intellect, and the higher intuitions."

another principle by which he is distinguished from all beings below him. This is a Divine radiation, and comes to man directly from God. It is described by Abbas Effendi as a ray of His love, sent by Him to every human being at its conception. It is the real human soul. When united with the human consciousness it becomes an individuality, knowing itself and God.

This soul lights the reflecting and reasoning mind of man and gives it the semblance of itself, the real soul.

Of the existence of this soul the masses of mankind are not consciously aware. But it is the source of the impulses leading to the noble, generous, and unselfish actions which illumine the pages of the life of man. Almost all men have a more or less clear sense of many things which do not follow from, or are opposed to, the ordinary experiences of human life; as of immortality, which could never have been derived from experience; an instinctive belief that life has a purpose, which again is opposed to experience; an instinctive sense of the reality and worth of the souls of other men, which neither the senses nor the intellect can possibly give. Such intuitions are due to the inspiration of the soul.

The world and all its myriads of forms exist only for the purpose of producing by evolutionary growth centres of consciousness, intelligence, and emotion which may reach up to, and unite with, this ray from God and soul of man. Toward this consummation evolution is surely carrying the whole human race. A large portion of mankind has not reached the stage of development where this union is possible; but there are vast numbers of men who might attain it by the exercise of their own powers,—for man while in this world has a far-reaching control over his own destiny,—but do not seek it, do not turn their faces toward God. The masses of mankind are wrapt in ignorance and selfishness, and pass the few years of their mortal lives engrossed in the gratification of their personal desires and ambitions, in the egotistic trifles and vanities of earthly existence. For these there is no hereafter, except as their thoughts and deeds continue by their influence and effects to modify the general course of the life of humanity as a whole. They are like the leaves of the tree which fall in myriads and only avail to enrich the soil, and to which the fruit which reaches perfect maturity bears but a small proportion in number; like the

multitudes of germs of every species which never come to germination, nature having created and scattered them in infinite profusion in order that a few might find suitable conditions for growth; or like the vast numbers of relatively imperfect forms sacrificed at every step in evolution in order that a few more perfect ones may be selected by survival to carry on the evolutionary process.

It is to show to man these truths — to turn him from his path of ignorance and heedlessness, and to induce him to exert his own efforts in unison with the Divine purpose for his own supreme good, that God from time to time sends the Divine Messengers and Teachers who have established the great religions of the earth. These Divine Messengers differ from other men only in the perfection of their development. They are able to reflect God perfectly. All men, all things, indeed, reflect God to some extent; but these are like clear and polished mirrors which give a perfect image. A Messenger comes whenever, through the lapse of time and the forgetfulness of men, the voice of his predecessor becomes obscured; and the extent to which the truth is declared by each depends upon the capacity of the age to receive it. Such Messengers

were Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Christ, Mahomet, and the founders of the Beha'i faith. The revelation of the last is fuller than any which has preceded it, men being now better fitted than before to understand the truth. Their special mission is to establish the unity of religions, and to spread peace and harmony among men.

It follows from what has been said that the human consciousness must effect its union with the soul, if at all, during the term of earthly life, since of itself it has no existence beyond that term. If the nature is sufficiently developed, having behind it the necessary hereditary force and endowed with an unconquerable fire of aspiration, union with the soul may be attained during the strength and vigour of manhood. This is the ideal consummation of a human life; but there are also many other possibilities, determined by the various degrees of human development. Thus, for example, where a man is heavily fettered by earthly desires and attachments, the union may not be possible during vigorous life, and yet may occur at that moment just preceding death when the senses have ceased to function, but consciousness remains, wholly freed from sense-bondage. This case is not infre-

quent ; but when it takes place the event is not at all to be understood as following from a "death-bed repentance." It has nothing whatever of that character, but is an inevitable sequence of past conditions, independent of the volition of the moment, and representing the absolute net result of the character and life.

Again, this union has various degrees of perfection, dependent also upon the conditions determined by character, life, and aspiration. When it is imperfect, the human consciousness, overshadowed by the soul, and now keenly aware of its imperfections, passes into other states of existence, where its further opportunities for reaching perfection do not depend upon individual effort,—cannot be demanded and seized as of right, as in this world,—but are dispensations of divine favour.

When the union is complete, there results an individuality possessed of Divine Wisdom and the all-pervading powers of Spirit, knowing itself and also knowing that it is a part of the Infinite, Absolute, Eternal Essence. Time exists for it no more, nor can it be said to be in any place, though it is still within the realm of space and form. Contemplating the

Divine Source of which it feels itself to be a part, it passes on to higher conditions of existence and continues its growth.

In its ultimate perfection, it passes beyond time, space, place, and form. It is then man and God in one, the reflection *and* the One.

## CHAPTER VIII

### ETHICS AND CONDUCT

**I**F man's nature and his relations to God are as outlined in the preceding chapter, what is true religion? That is, what is the path for man to follow which will most perfectly conduce to the fulfilment of the Divine purpose and to man's highest good? It is not difficult to deduce an answer to this question from the philosophy which we have been considering. In reality, a man does not stand for himself alone, but for the whole human race. The life of all men is a single Divine emanation. They should therefore hold to each other the closest relation of sympathy, love, and brotherhood. This must be the way the matter looks when seen from the Divine standpoint — from the standpoint of the Divine rays which are the souls of men. Any other attitude on the part of the human consciousness must cause dis-harmony between man and God; must, in fact, constitute an insuperable barrier to man's Divine possibilities.



As we know ourselves, egotism and selfishness are the very core of our personal natures. Each imagines that he stands apart, separate and distinct from his fellows and all else. His motives and actions all have reference to his own centre of consciousness ; with regard to it and for its benefit all his efforts are exerted. This leads, in human intercourse, to greed, ambition, vanity, pride, and all the other forms of self-assertion. But according to the philosophy which we are considering, this idea of separateness is false, and places man in a position of hopeless hostility to the fundamental principle of all existence. Each man is bound up with his fellows. Their welfare should be his concern no less than his own. This identity goes to the very root and essence of man's nature. Its realisation must, then, be the most important, if not the one essential, step in his higher development. Charity, kindness, love, and compassion for all beings must be the first of the virtues.

The religion of the Beha'is is in entire accord with their philosophy. The first duty of man, they say, is love to God and his fellows. This is true religion. *Khodah* and *Mohabbet*, God and Love, are the words always in their mouths. Love is the very essence of the

nature of God. By love alone can man approach God; and love for God is no other than love for man. The service of man is its highest expression. Love, kindness, unselfishness, compassion, are the direct path to the soul and to God.

“Love for men,” says Abbas Effendi, “is love for God. To serve men is to serve God. My sign is this—that I serve the people, that I clothe the people.”

By “men” and “people” are meant all men and all people, no less than those of one’s own land or faith. “There is no reward for kindness to one’s own,” said Beha Ullah, “but for kindness to all there is a reward.”

Mirza Assad Ullah, a venerable teacher who has lived for twenty years in Akka, said to me :

“He [Beha Ullah] turned to every people, to all mankind, saying, ‘Ye are the leaves of one tree, the fruit of one tree. Be ye kind to one another.’ This is the first of the precepts he has left us. All the teachers of old desired to say this, but men were not able to hear it. Now they can understand it.

“When God opened this heavenly school, His first lesson was that of love. To-day in that school the chief teacher is our blessed

Master. He sees the Moslem, the Christian, and the Beha'i, all with one eye—He is equally kind to all. He educates us to be like Him. We have been in this school for nearly sixty years, but we have not yet finished the first lesson that we may go on to the second."

It follows from this law of love and brotherhood that evil should not be met with evil, but with good ; that is, there should be no resentment or retaliation—the injury is to be forgiven and forgotten. Commenting upon this subject, Abbas Effendi says :

"The reference of the words of the Old Testament 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' is double : it refers, first, to the balance which is preserved by human law, that there may be a check to evil-doing ; and, second, to the inevitable retribution which will fall upon each individual during his life, or upon the race after his death, for his evil acts. But Christ, when he advised that, if a man be struck upon one cheek, he turn the other, was advancing a rule of conduct which should govern the every-day relations between individuals. His words are not to be taken literally, but as enjoining that there should be no resentment or retaliation for injuries received. By retaliating in kind, you will act as evilly as

the wrong-doer. You should conquer hatred by love. If you meet with kindness him who injures you, you may overcome his stubborn spirit. The love of God will then come to him, and he will become a changed man.

“As an illustration of what I mean by the spirit of non-retaliation, I may mention the instance of a believer in Russia who was attacked without provocation and almost killed. The criminal was tried and condemned to death. The believer, animated by this spirit, begged the Governor to mitigate the sentence, and obtained its reduction to several years of banishment.”

In conformity with this general principle of conduct, strife and dis-harmony of every sort are to be avoided. “No Divine Messenger,” says Abbas Effendi, “ever encouraged strife, or suggested that the sword be used in promulgating his teachings. When followers of Christ or Mahomet have resorted to this means of spreading their faith, imagining that they were justified by the words of their Master, they have mistaken the symbols of his teaching for its reality and have done that which he had, in fact, forbidden. This misinterpretation was due to their own ignorance and degradation. All the great Teachers are

from God, and teach the same thing ; the differences in the results which have followed from their teachings have been due to the varieties of character—the degrees of ignorance or knowledge, of materiality or spirituality—of mankind.

“ The capacities of men differ. If you pour water into two vessels, a large and a small one, though both may be filled one will contain more water than the other. So of men—one may have more truth than another ; but the one who has less, may still have truth. Of what avail is contention as to what is truth ? In the contention God is lost. Intellectual refinements are of no avail without the godly life.

“ Once there was a contention between two eminent believers in Persia. One of these declared that the Blessed Perfection was God and that there was no other. The other contended that the Blessed Perfection was but the reflection of God.

“ The contention grew into a quarrel, and dissension was threatened in the Church. The Blessed Perfection summoned both of these men to appear before him.

“ To the one he said, ‘ You say that I am God and that there is no other. You are right.’

“To the other he said, ‘You say that I am but the reflection of God. You are right.’

“Then to both he said, ‘You are both right.<sup>1</sup> But to contend will destroy you both. Go home and be friends.’

“And so they did. They became good friends, returned to Persia, and each continued to teach as he thought. This was the only dissension which has ever occurred among the believers.

“The essence of the nature of God is love. His favour cannot be won by hatred or strife. He is never angry. He curses nothing. It has been said otherwise; but such teaching is the teaching of heathenism—of the teachers of the time—not that of the Messengers of God. When you see men doing evil things, you should not be angry with them—you should pity them; for their evil deeds are due to their ignorance, and for them they must suffer.”

A second cardinal principle of life which Beha'ism enjoins is a habit of detachment from material things. That is to say, while a man should make a reasonable and proper use

<sup>1</sup> By this Beha Ullah is explained to have meant that he was in himself both the reflection and the One (see p. 129)—the apotheosis of man; in one aspect divine, in the other human.

of the things which minister to his comfort and pleasure, he should not be dependent upon them, or become attached to them, or allow his course of action to be diverted by seeking the gratification of desire or passion. This also is a necessary deduction from the philosophy, for obviously he cannot hope to reach union with the Divine while his energies are absorbed in the search for temporal pleasure, or his attention centred upon material things.

The influence of man's lower nature, tending to engross his energies in satisfying its desires and ambitions, is the only "devil" which Beha'ism knows. Commenting upon the passage in the New Testament where Jesus is said to have been taken to a high mountain by Satan and shown all the kingdoms of the earth, Abbas Effendi said:

"This narrative cannot be literally true, as the earth is round and not to be surveyed from any mountain. The meaning is this: Man has two natures — a higher nature, which is Divine, and a lower nature, which is human. The higher nature is the inspiration of God within us; the lower nature is the slave of sensuous pleasure, desire, attachment, and ignorance. The struggle which Jesus experi-

enced was that between the higher and the lower selves. In this struggle Jesus perceived that the things of the senses and the world are impermanent and futile. He conquered his lower nature, and his higher self—that which was of God—became ascendant. Then it was that he said, ‘Get thee behind me, Satan.’”

“The servants of God,” said Beha Ullah, “cannot reach the shore of the ocean of the knowledge of God unless they fully cut themselves free from all that is created, in heaven or earth. Purify your souls, O men of the earth, in order that ye may attain to the position for which ye are predestined of God—in order that ye may enter the tents which God has pitched for you in the sky of Heavenly Expression.”

Heaven and hell are not places, but conditions of mind and heart. “Good thoughts, good resolves, and good deeds bring men nearer to God, and that is heaven. Hell is the state of mind in which there are evil thoughts and purposes, yielding to the desires of the senses, clinging to material things. In that state man is separated from God, and in his ignorance he suffers. Salvation— heaven— is the conscious realisation of God in this



life, which is gained by love, kindness, and good deeds."

Beha'ism has an elaborate code of social ethics, found chiefly in Beha Ullah's *Book of Laws*, but amplified by other writings and oral teachings.

Marriage of one husband to one wife is recommended as the best condition of life for man. Asceticism is condemned.

That the exact position of the religion with reference to marriage may be understood, some explanation is necessary. The *Book of Laws* permits a second marriage. Beha Ullah himself had two wives; but since his second marriage occurred early in his life and under peculiar circumstances, the exact nature of which I do not know, this fact is not regarded as sanctioning the practice for others. Moreover, both he and Abbas Effendi advise against it. They say that if a man has two wives, it is his duty to treat both exactly alike, which it is impossible for him to do. Further, men should so regulate their lives that all about them may be happy and contented; but two wives of one husband cannot be so.

These facts, and the example of Abbas Effendi, establish monogamy as an essential feature of Beha'ism. That the Beha'is

themselves everywhere so regard it, is shown by their practice.

Consent of both parties and parents is required for marriage.

Divorce is permitted on the demand of either party after a preliminary separation of one year. The reason assigned for this freedom of divorce is that a life useful and profitable to one's self and others requires contentment ; but this is impossible where two persons, who find themselves uncongenial, are obliged to continue to live together.

The education of children, boys and girls alike, is strictly enjoined. If it is neglected by the parents, it should be given by the community at the expense of the father. The children of the very poor should be educated by the community. The teacher who educates a child acquires a claim upon any inheritance he may receive.

There are no priests connected with the religion.

The administration of institutions of charity, hospitals, and the like, and the care of the moral and spiritual welfare of the community, are to be placed in the hands of commissions selected by the people. Funds required for such uses are to be provided by an inheritance tax.

Begging is forbidden. Every able-bodied man must work; and if work cannot be found, it will be provided by the community. "The most hateful of mankind before God is he who sits and begs; take hold of the rope of means, relying on God, the Causer of causes."<sup>1</sup>

Gambling, slavery, the use of opium, and the use of intoxicating liquors are forbidden.

The above social regulations were given to me at Akka. I will add a few excerpts from Professor Browne's digest of the *Book of Laws*.<sup>2</sup>

Arson, murder, theft, adultery, slander, and backbiting are prohibited, and appropriate penalties provided.

Cleanliness is insisted upon.

Austerities and self-mortification are forbidden, and their uselessness exposed.

Legal impurity is abolished, and the people of all religions are to be regarded as pure and not to be avoided.

Kindness and courtesy are enjoined on all believers.

No one is to approve for another that which he would dislike for himself.

<sup>1</sup> Translation by Professor Browne.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1889*, p. 972.

Enemies are to be forgiven ; evil is not to be met with evil.

Beasts of burden are not to be ill-treated or overloaded.

The book closes with a recommendation that mankind shall select one language and one character from those that exist, and adopt them as a means of communication. " This," says Beha Ullah, " is the means of union, if ye knew it, and the greatest source of concord and civilisation, did ye recognise it. Teach this common language to the children in all schools, that the whole world may become one land and one home."

## CHAPTER IX

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS: ESSENTIAL NATURE OF BEHA'ISM

THE relations which Beha'ism asserts for itself with other religions and its attitude towards them is a subject which might suitably, it may be thought, have had an earlier introduction. I have deferred discussing it at length, in order that, for its better understanding, we might have before us while considering it a general view of Beha'i doctrines, for it is a subject of the very first importance to a just estimate of the character and probable influence of the movement, and if we fail to fully grasp it, we shall surely fail to appreciate or understand Beha'ism.

It is claimed for Beha'ism that it is a religion of this age and stage of evolution; that it teaches love, tolerance, and charity, according to the modern idea of the true meaning of these words. "Love and good-will to man" is the key-note of Abbas Effendi's teachings.

He looks forward to the time when the whole world shall feel a single bond of brotherly religious fellowship. As he sees religious truth, there is no room for contention or arbitrary doctrines. "Where there is contention," he says, "there cannot be the highest conception of truth. We must have sympathy for all beings, and to have real sympathy means to feel with others in their higher aims and ideals."

The body of doctrine which Beha'ism teaches is not put forward in any sense or particular as new, but as a unification and synthesis of what is best and highest in all other religions. "Every one receiving these instructions," says Abbas Effendi, "will think, 'How like my own religion!' This is because they are so broad that they include all truths; and all religions are built upon the same foundation. All intolerance must go. To-day is the time of the spirit of Truth, and that spirit is one of charity and sympathy for all the beliefs of the people of the world.

"The spirit has passed away from the bodies of the old religions. All the teachings of the great Manifestations are sublime, their lives stand out as brilliant stars; but time changes all things, and while the forms of their doc-

trines remain, the spirit has fled. These bodies are dead or dying; but the same spirit is reborn in a new body — that is, the Body of the Law contained in the utterances of Beha Ullah. As the teachers of old, he came not to destroy, but to renew; and all that is true in all religions will stand, for truth cannot die. By the New Dispensation new spirit is infused into these teachings and they will be understood by men; and when they are understood there will no longer be room for contention.

“The reality of words is spiritual, and this reality remains the same, though the formal expression is in many different words of as many languages. This spiritual reality behind the word is a matter of deep significance. Through the spirit of a word, if you are not heedless, I will plant a seed in your heart, which will grow into a great tree.

“After a word has been spoken it may be forgotten: but the spirit with which it was uttered remains, for good or evil. This spirit is the real word, and if one discerns it when the word is spoken, he will perceive the relations between the various corresponding words of the several languages; and from this relationship between words he will discern that there is also relationship between the

racés or peoples who respectively use the languages. The same thing, indeed, is indicated in the forms of words, in the community of roots shared by different tongues ; as we have the words 'brother,' 'daughter,' 'better,' in Persian as in English. These are proofs of the relationship — of the brotherhood — existing between the widely separated peoples of the world.

“ But men are careless ; they do not regard abstract relations, but seek always for the concrete. If a word spoken is not in form like that which they use, they think it different. With names and descriptive terms it is the same. So the various religions dispute and wrangle over what they call differences, when there are no differences if one considers only the spirit of the words.

“ Christ told his followers to receive his words in the spirit — not in the letter ; and so have all Manifestations.”

In one respect only, a difference is asserted between the present and other dispensations — in that it is higher in degree, because of the relatively advanced general condition of the world when it appeared.

The Beha'i view is this : The march of evolution is constantly upward ; but at any



given time it is in different stages and proceeding on different lines in different parts of the world. Some races are even retrograding at times. The crest of the wave of progress is now at one point, now at another, vibrating to and fro among the races of the earth. Periods or cycles of progress carry forward for a time this race—for a time that.

If we examine the history of the world in its religious and philosophical aspects, defining and comparing the successive great cycles of racial development, we find that each is marked by the appearance of the founder of a new religion and philosophy.

To continue in the words of Abbas Effendi : “Each Manifestation was alike great in himself, each spoke with the same authority, each alike breathed the spirit of God. The same fundamental truth underlies the doctrines of each. The differences between them were not in themselves, but in the evolutionary stages of the peoples whom they taught. When Christ appeared, the people among whom he came were in a low state of intelligence—there was little or no discussion of abstruse questions among them. Buddha, though earlier, came to a part of the world

where civilisation was much more advanced, which was ripe in philosophical and metaphysical speculations. Mahomet found wild tribes and hordes of uncivilised barbarians.

“On the one hand, each of these great teachers had to meet a problem peculiar to himself—that of guiding and satisfying his contemporaries and associates; and, on the other, the condition of the world’s advancement in general—the state of communication between different parts of the world—was such that the teachings of each were confined to the people of that region to which they came and for whom they were especially adapted.

“The progress of the world during the past fifteen hundred years has greatly modified the conditions which prevailed when these teachers were on earth. Man has learned to control the forces of nature and to harness them in his service. All the nations of the world are in constant, easy, and rapid communication: closely united by the telegraph, the telephone, steam and electric locomotion. A World-Teacher appearing now, after so long a lapse of time since the last, and under the changed world-conditions which now prevail, might be expected to be greater than his pre-

decessors ; and such he is. He is a World-Teacher in a broader sense than they. His teachings cannot be limited to any nation or race. His problem is to guide and instruct the whole world as it is to-day ; his teachings must meet every condition of the world."

I understand that, metaphysically, the Beha'i conception of Beha Ullah as compared with other World-Teachers is something like this : There is the Divine Essence, and there is the Spirit of that Essence. In all other Manifestations God sent His Holy Spirit, or Breath, to breathe upon the peoples of the world. This Breath has been called "Krishna," by the Indians, "Logos" by the Greeks, "Holy Ghost" by the Christians. It is the Word of St. John, which "in the beginning was with God."

That is, when the Spirit was manifested in the prophets of old, they represented as much of the Divine nature as it was possible for the people of those periods to assimilate.

Now the world has advanced. It was necessary for the Essence Itself of God to become manifest, and this It did through the person of Beha Ullah. This is not saying that Beha Ullah was not a man like other men ; for all Manifestations are men like other men ; but he was also, and as a man, the

crowning glory of a period, in whom the perfect Divine Image was reflected.

Now that Beha Ullah, the man, is no more, the drop has become the ocean. That which was manifested is withdrawn to God, the pure Essence—to that which is both the Spirit and its Source.

“All religions,” says Abbas Effendi, “are written symbolically. This is the only way in which Truth can be written to withstand time and its changes. Languages change, the meaning of words is lost; for these are but the expressions of periods. Symbols never change, since they are the expressions of man’s spirit. The realities encased in them are handed down as long as the symbols are preserved. These realities the spirit reawakens.

“Beha Ullah was no exception in this respect to all other Divine Manifestations. He used symbols and metaphors, and if we would understand him, we must interpret these. But this is the day of enlightenment, and therefore his symbols will be read with the highest conception of truth, and his teachings will throw light upon those of all the former Manifestations.

“At the time of Christ, or at least among those who heard him, there was, as I have

said, little or no discussion of difficult questions—men were not accustomed to abstract thinking; therefore the symbols and metaphors of his teachings were not interpreted by them—they were literally accepted as the letter of the Law. It is not meant that the greatest truths were not contained in Christ's teaching, but that his teachings were to a great extent misunderstood and the truths lost. Those who were the fathers of the Christian religion gave to the world his literal speech, without explaining the meaning which it was intended to convey.

“The time has now come when men are keenly receptive of spiritual things, and the symbols, metaphors, and allegories (which are merely the casings of truth) can be unveiled, and their true meaning understood.

“It is to uncover and expose that which lies hidden in time and in the religions of the past, to infuse a new spirit into the peoples of the earth, that the New Dispensation has appeared in the world of men.”

This is the broad platform from which Beha'ism appeals to the world. As is necessarily the case, if consistent with its principles the teachings of Abbas Effendi are in no way arbitrary. He is persuasive rather than

argumentative. Arrogance and dogmatism are not, in his opinion, proper or useful means to be employed in making known truth to men. His teachings are rational; and there is not in them the suggestion of anything inconsistent with love, kindness, and charity.

If a man is sincere and tries to live in accordance with his belief, although he may be unable to see the greatness of God, and still clings to an arbitrary doctrine, Abbas Effendi has for him no censure, but rather love and sympathy in his heart and in his speech. "God," he says, "is to every human being as great as the individual mental capacity permits one to see Him. So, also, is the Manifestation who represents Him in this world of beings. Each individual perceives with the faculties peculiar to his own evolution. The Manifestation appeared not for a few, but for all. To the simple, as to the great, he is the same: but some see him in one light, some in another, according to their capacities to perceive."

"Where real religion is felt it is often the heart which speaks rather than the head, and if we want to extend our sympathy to such as these, we must look into their hearts to find their needs, and treat their beliefs with charity.

With others, whose intellects have awakened, but whose hearts have not, we must address the mind. Where neither the heart nor the head is yet aroused, we must appeal to the emotions ; for we must extend help to all."

As I have said before, he does not ask that a man give up his own religion, but only that he live according to its spirit. His exhortation to men is, not to become Beha'is, but to put into practice the principles in which they themselves believe. This is true religion: not bearing an emblem or holding to a name.

He desires to meet and deal with the philosophical and psychological questioning of the age ; but it is right ethics which he regards as the most important part of his teaching, for this reaches the masses and through them spreads as a wave over the earth. He aims to call men to a realisation of the fact that they are not living according to the moral and ethical instructions of their various faiths. And why is this? Because long familiarity has resulted in carelessness. Religions have become mere forms ; the spirit has left them.

I have already mentioned an instance cited to me in which Abbas Effendi advised a Christian who sought his teaching, and desired to work with him and for him, to do so under

the name of Christ. A similar instance came under my own observation. Madame Canavaro had expressed to him her desire to assist in spreading the teachings of Beha'ism among the Buddhists, and then spoke of the difficulties before her in introducing them as a new religion.

“Teach them,” he replied, “as the truths contained in their own religion; and after you have instructed them and gladdened their hearts, you may tell them of the Messenger, and remind them of the promise of Buddha that another teacher should come, teaching the same truths.”

When she further remarked that she was so imbued with the spirit of Buddhism that it was a part of her very life, he said: “It is your sufferings and your faith in God which have brought you to the true spiritual insight, and no change or alteration can take place in you. What you call yourself is of no consequence.”

I have been thus insistent in explaining at length, and so specifically that no room for doubt may be left as to my meaning, the attitude of Beha'ism towards other religions, because, as I have said, it is my opinion that this is the most significant and important fact



connected with the movement, and that, unless it be fully grasped and always borne in mind, the religion itself cannot be understood or appreciated for what it is. And I am the more careful because I know that Abbas Efendi and his predecessors have been misunderstood by some others in regard to this matter, and that the accuracy of what I say may be challenged by those who rely upon certain of the published teachings of the adherents of the faith.

Notwithstanding the lapse of centuries, human nature remains much the same; the votaries of new religions in all ages have made like mistakes. Carried away by zeal for their cause, seeking in every way to magnify the "glad tidings" which they cherish as their life-breath, they come to have eyes for nothing else, and are likely to speedily fall, quite unconsciously it may be to themselves, into intolerance and dogmatism, though thereby they contradict the fundamental principles laid down by those whom they follow.

When I first met the wonderful man whom his followers call "Master," I was deeply impressed with the breadth and liberality of his views, and ventured to call his attention to statements of another tenor, which I had

seen. He deprecated them unreservedly, and continued :

“ They see from their own standpoint. But these people are pure in heart and simple in spirit ; therefore, though not intellectually advanced, they are capable of grasping their portion of truth, for truth is for all. They give it out according to their understanding.”

I, too, know the pure and gentle spirit of the Beha'is, — of them all so far as I have met them,—and it is with a feeling of warm personal regard for them, one and all, and only out of an ardent respect for the faith which they hold dearer than themselves, that I call attention to these errors ; and I do so because they place that faith in a false light which will, and ought to, repel rather than attract, and tends to lead men back into the old pitfalls incident to reading the scriptures of the World-Enlighteners according to the letter instead of according to the spirit.

In a book expounding Beha'ism and entitled *Sacred Mysteries*, recently published in America, it is said, at page 100 :

“ Whosoever is, in this day, firm in the Covenant and Testament of God, and turns unto Abdul-Baha [Abbas Effendi] in compliance with the decisive command of the Blessed

Perfection, he is of the people of the Kingdom. . . . On the other hand, whosoever violates the Covenant of the Blessed Perfection, and turns away from Abdul-Baha, the Centre of the Covenant, he is at every instant declining, one of the companions of the left hand, and one of the letters of the hell fire."

Again, on page 87, I find this :

"Whosoever is really firm in his love for Abdul-Baha, and arises to serve the Cause of the Blessed Perfection, is of the Kingdom. . . . But he who is not firm in the Covenant of God is of the hell, the doors of the Kingdom are closed unto him," etc.

Now the author of this book was writing in a language (Persian) in which ideas are expressed in a manner very different from that to which we are accustomed, and the accurate rendering of which into English seems to be exceedingly difficult: and one who knows, as I do, his sweet and gentle disposition is forced to suspect that he has been misrepresented by his translator. But the passages must be taken as they will be understood by those to whom they are addressed; and to be thus told that he who does not believe according to the writer's standard is doomed "as one of the letters of the hell fire," drops us abruptly back into

the repulsive atmosphere of orthodox Christianity, which, in exploring Beha'ism, we have fondly hoped to leave far behind.

The author refers (p. 101) to two Tablets by Beha Ullah which he seems to think authorise the words which I have quoted. One of these Tablets I have been unable to find; but an English rendering of the other is given in the twelfth chapter of this book. Its spirit is as remote from the sentiments which we are considering as is every thing else which I have seen or heard proceeding directly from Beha Ullah or Abbas Effendi.

When Abbas Effendi was specifically asked as to the fate of those millions of human beings who would never hear of Beha Ullah—whether they were, for that reason, to be regarded as hopelessly lost—he replied: “No. The birth of our Lord was for all; those who shall know of Him and those who shall not. The Spirit is the same everywhere. Under whatsoever name men address Him, He will respond to their call.”

Asked, further, about the heathen—those devoutly and sincerely kneeling before stone images—he answered: “They too will be heard, and God will protect them.”

His followers should hold these words of

their Master before them as a guiding star in their teaching.

In writing upon a religion, and in interpreting religious writings, one must ever bear in mind its fundamental principles. There is always a basis from which he must not deviate, any more than the builder of a house may depart in the erection of his walls from the foundation which he has laid. Words and terms must be used and interpreted according to the body of the teaching. If the love, tolerance, and charity which are the basic principles of Beha'ism are ever held as the touchstone of the truth of what is said with regard to it, such errors as these will never be made or accepted.

Beha'ism cares not for names and forms. It looks upon itself only as a divine and therefore impersonal instrument for helping on the universal evolutionary process. It urges as the first, and really the only important, thing, the building and perfection of character; to hold to a name is nothing — to live aright is everything.

“Every deed of life,” says Abbas Effendi, “is a thought expressing itself in action; it is the actual mirror of the man within. The act sets up a force which is the spirit of the

deed. Successive acts done in furtherance of a purpose produce an accumulating spiritual force which never dies.

“Therefore we must be active — we must be up and doing. Our deeds build up our characters, and the building of our characters is our task. Life in this world is for this purpose. We are, while here, more or less arbiters of our own destiny ; but in the worlds to come we cannot progress except by grace of the Divine Will. Therefore let us attend to the building of character as the one thing essential.

“If heredity has not given us the qualities of character necessary for our high moral and spiritual advancement, we must labour to build up a new structure within ourselves which will be adequate to that aim. Each man must look to himself and within himself to find his errors and weaknesses.

“When we find weak points in our character we must begin to tear down ; and also we must not neglect to build up good qualities in place of the evil ones which we discard. It is a law of our nature that to remove a characteristic permanently another must be developed in its stead.

“Self-discipline is the first aim of one who

desires to live a true life. But as to this do not misunderstand me; I do not mean the discipline, widely practised in old times and even by many at the present day, which consists in mortifying the flesh and deadening the emotions. Enjoy pleasant things, look with pleasure upon beautiful things, but without clinging to them, without longing to possess them, without holding them dearer than God. The flesh, the senses, the emotions, are the instruments by which we attain to the understanding of truth. But they must be kept as instruments, and not allowed to become our masters, as they are likely to do if we fail to keep guard over them.

“Sense indulgence is evil because it keeps the soul away from God. Unless it is held in check progress towards God is quite out of the question. You cannot serve two masters. And it is difficult to deal with, because sensations remain as abstractions in the mind, and, though so subtle that they can scarcely be recognised, exert an effective influence towards their own repetition.

“Yet while making earnest efforts to subjugate the senses man is liable to err; his nature is very complex, and to find the true path requires wisdom. If he attacks them by

indiscriminate repression, as by asceticism, worse evils will be encountered ; for the effort may produce serious physical or mental disorders, perhaps insanity or death ; or it may result in merely diverting the uneradicated evil tendency into some other channel where it may be even more injurious to the character ; and it will in any case tend to foster selfishness, which is worse than sensuality.

“ Therefore the attractions of the senses must be met, not by running away from them, but directly, by a man’s will and the power which is within himself to resist evil when temptation arises. Thus only can desire be eradicated from the nature of man.

“ Selfishness must also be rooted out, not only in its gross, but in its exceedingly subtle forms. A man may be selfish even to an extreme and be quite ignorant of it.

Not until a man has wholly freed himself from lust and selfishness will he be able to distinguish between what is good in him and what is not. Lust and selfishness lead men ignorantly to evil acts, and evil acts in turn increase lust, selfishness, and ignorance.

“ To learn one’s own nature is better than to seek for the unknown and the unknowable.

“ There is need for great wisdom in building



up one's character. One must have tolerance and know how to apply it ; charity, and know how to bestow it ; love, and know how to love all things.

“ Only to be always speaking of love is not sufficient. We must love in our hearts. Nor can love and hate exist together, for love and hate are opposites. If a man declaims that he loves every one, while his actions contradict his words, his assertions have no worth.

“ Do not mortify the flesh. Care for the body as the vehicle of the soul and the spirit within ; but at the same time do not pamper it.

“ Cultivate your finer nature through your senses and your emotions, taking care meanwhile that they do not become your masters.

“ Look always to God for aid, not to frail human nature. Call on the Beha<sup>1</sup> for strength to guide you. That spirit is now the renovating influence upon this earth.

“ Be calm, be joyous, and not only when the sky is clear, but when the clouds gather as well. To be calm and brave under difficulties is a proof of spiritual force.

“ But let no man, because he has gained

<sup>1</sup> The spirit of Beha Ullah, now become one with the Divine Essence.

outward control over himself, imagine that he has accomplished the highest cultivation of his character. There must be inner calmness, based on a sense of security in God's protection, and a desire to do good for the sake of good. One should find pleasure in the doing of good deeds; he should not do them with an eye to the reward which they are to bring.

“When he has reached this point, a man may be said indeed to have conquered himself.”

## CHAPTER X

### DISCOURSES

#### THE STANDARDS OF TRUTH

**M**AN has four standards to which he refers in the ascertainment of truth — the report of the senses, the verdict of reason, tradition or testimony, and inspiration. The ancient philosophers generally regarded reason as the highest of these ; for the best means by which to reach an understanding of the essence of things, they said, is the mind. But the philosophers of the present day place their chief reliance upon the senses. Whatever these declare to be the truth of the matter, that they accept as final. Followers of the various religions believe that the declarations of their Holy Writs are the ultimate verities. Mystics and spiritualists find final truth only in the revelations of inspiration.

Men are generally agreed that there are only these four standards for the determina-

tion of truth ; and yet the inadequacy of each of them is quite clear.

First, as to the report of the senses, now generally accepted as the most reliable of the four. Of the five senses, sight ranks as the highest. It is most certain that the faculty of sight is liable to error — that it may mislead — and that therefore it is not a perfect standard. For example, the eye is deceived by the mirage, seeing it as water. It mistakes the image in the mirror for the real object. The great and brilliant stars are seen by it as points. The pulsating light of the sun appears to it to be without motion. A point of light moving rapidly is to it a continuous line. On a moving ship the shore seems to it to move. The eye ascribes the motion of the earth to the sun, and to it all the stars seem to circle about this globe.

It is therefore clear that sight is not a certain standard.

Though by the ancient philosophers the reasoning mind was regarded as the highest authority, these philosophers do not agree. Some declare that the universe had a beginning, others that it had no beginning. Their various opinions are so numerous that one cannot count them. But if the verdict of

man's reason was a norm of final and absolute verity, the philosophers of the world would agree.

The third standard of truth to which men have recourse is the testimony of others, as found, for example, in tradition and sacred books. But testimony can only be considered by the mind; and if the mind itself is not a trustworthy instrument, how can the evidence which it offers us from these sources be so? Great error may result from the misinterpretation of a single word or expression of the sacred books.

The inspiration of God is a revelation to the heart: but temptations of the devil are also addressed to the heart. If to the hearts of men is revealed a command,—“Do ye thus and thus,”—how are we to know whether this is a revelation from God, or a temptation from Satan?

Our conclusion must, therefore, be that none of these standards for the determination of truth is worthy of implicit confidence; and man has no other means for reaching a true understanding.

Yet if the conclusion declared by all four of these standards be the same, it is worthy of confidence. Then we may be assured that

the common report is correct. Otherwise we cannot be sure.

The rule, then, which we should adopt in our investigations, is this: In determining every question we should refer it to these four standards, and a conclusion which is supported by the verdict of all we should accept; any other we should regard as uncertain.

Yet there is another standard which is the peculiar possession of the Chosen of God. This standard is the breathings of the Holy Spirit. By that power assurance is produced, man becomes certain, and the consciousness is satisfied.

## NATURE OF GOD AND THE UNIVERSE<sup>1</sup>

God is Love and Peace. God is Truth. God is Omniscience. God is without beginning and without end. God is uncreated and uncreating, yet the Source, the Causeless Cause. God is pure Essence, and cannot be said to be anywhere or in any place.

God is infinite, and as terms are finite the nature of God cannot be expressed in terms; but as man desires to express God in some way, he calls God "Love" and "Truth," because these are the highest things he knows. Life is eternal; so man, in order to express God's infinity, calls God "Life." But these things in themselves are not God. God is the Source of all, and all things that are, are mirrors reflecting His Glory.

But, while God does not create, the first principle of God, Love, is the creative principle. Love is an outpour from God, and is

<sup>1</sup> This exposition, and that in Chapter XI. on "Reincarnation," were compiled from a number of discourses and conversations, and submitted to Abbas Effendi and approved by him.

pure spirit. It is one aspect of the Logos, the Holy Spirit. It is the immediate cause of the laws which govern nature, the endless verities of nature which science has uncovered. In short, it is Divine Law and a Manifestation of God. This Manifestation of God is active, creative, spiritual. It reflects the positive aspect of God.

There is another Manifestation of God which is characterised by passivity, quiescence, inactivity. In itself it is without creative power. It reflects the negative aspect of God. This manifestation is matter.

Matter, reflecting the negative aspect of God, is self-existent, eternal, and fills all space. Spirit, flowing out from God, permeates all matter. This spirit, Love, reflecting the positive and active aspect of God, impresses its nature upon the atoms and elements. By its power they are attracted to each other under certain ordered relations, and thus, uniting and continuing to unite, give birth to worlds and systems of worlds. The same laws working under developed conditions bring into existence living beings. Spirit is the life of the form, and the form is shaped by the spirit. The evolution of life and form proceeds hand in hand. The powers of spirit



are evolved by the experiences of the form, and the plasticity of the matter of the form is developed by the activity of the spirit. Working up through the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, sense-perception is reached in the animal, and the perfection of form is attained in man.

The forms or bodies of component parts, infinite in variety, which in the course of evolution spirit builds as the vehicles of its expression, are, because of the instability of matter, subject to dissolution. As they disappear, others are built following the same patterns, carrying on the characteristics of each.

Sense-perception gives rise to desire, desire to will, will to action, and action again to sense-perception. This chain ever repeats itself, and so the powers of thought, memory, reason, and the emotional capacities are evolved in spirit. These powers and capacities of spirit, expressed in individual human beings, constitute human characters.

Through these successive evolutionary steps spirit develops characters having many Divine attributes. The positive, creative aspect of God is reflected in them. Individuality is derived from expression in individual form. Self-consciousness accompanies individualised

character, and the being thus endowed has the potentiality of rising to the knowledge of God.

Characters inspired by the universal human spirit continue in lines of specific developing types, as did species in the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

Similar types recur again and again, but without a continuing individual life from one human being to another. This recurrence may be likened to that of the seasons. Spring, summer, autumn, and winter return in succession, each season the counterpart of the like season in the previous year—the same yet not the same. So flowers and fruits come this year from like seed or from the same bush or tree as those of last year, each in the line of succession of its kind, the same in essence, but differing in substance.

In the latter case the power which causes the seed to rot in the ground and a new growth to spring from it, or the bush or tree to put forth again leaves and fruit, is the power of the Spirit, the active aspect of God as Life.

So in the case of man. Life is eternal, but the individual human consciousness is not inherently so. It can only gain immortality by

uniting with the pure Divine Essence. This union man may reach by a pure life and love for God and his fellows.

When in the course of evolution the stage of thought and reason has been reached, the human mind acts as a mirror reflecting the glory of God.

The face of nature is illumined, the grass, the stones, the hills, and valleys shine; but they shine not of themselves, but because they reflect the rays of the sun. It is the sun which shines. In the same way, our minds reflect God. Those who live thinking good thoughts, doing good deeds, and with love in their hearts — the minds of these become ever clearer, reflecting more and more perfectly the love of God, while the minds of those who live in ignorance and desire are clouded and obscured and give forth His light but meagrely.

A stone reflects but slightly the rays of the sun; but if a mirror be held up, though it be small, the whole of the sun will be reflected in it, because the mirror is clear and bright. Just so is it with the minds of men and the Sun of Reality. The great Masters and Teachers so purified their minds by the love of God and of men that they became like polished mirrors, reflecting faithfully the Glory of God.

## PERSISTENCE OF NATURAL QUALITIES

We come now to the subject of transformation in the nature of matter ; and we wish to show you that that which is temporal is essentially different from that which is eternal, and that neither can change its nature for that of the other.

As an example of matter we may take the metal, iron. Its nature is such that when heated it may become hot, red, and fluid. But though it continue a thousand years in the fire, its nature will not be changed into that of fire ; its nature as iron will still remain. It will indeed receive certain qualities from the fire ; but whatever the extent to which it acquires these qualities, its mineral nature will endure and cannot be changed. It continues to be a mineral. The simple elements always retain their nature as simple elements.

So, if iron be alloyed with some other metal, it will display qualities which it did not have before ; but on the dissolution of the alloy it will return to its original state and display the ordinary qualities of the metal.

Again, substances of the mineral kingdom may become constituents of vegetable forms ; but they do not thereby lose their mineral nature. They become, not a growing power,

but part of a growing form. These substances may in like manner come to animal bodies, but, as before, without leaving behind their peculiar nature as minerals, although they take on certain qualities from the animal. And, finally, they may go to make up bodies and receive the impress of the character of man—may reflect the perfections of human nature; still they do not lose their identity as minerals.

A light shines forth from a crystal globe. For a thousand years it may radiate through the crystal, and still the crystal will remain crystal and the light light. The crystal serves only to make manifest the beauty of the light.

Thus it may be known that the nature of things remains always the same — that inherent qualities can never be lost. The body of man always remains dust of the earth, returning on its dissolution to the elements from which it was compounded.

Therefore it will ever be the function of the visible world to reflect the perfections of God. This, then, is the purpose of the succession of forms; and as the perfections of God are infinite, the succession of forms must be infinite also.

## DIVINE AND EARTHLY NATURE

The ancient philosophers of Greece, Persia, and Egypt believed that God manifested in material things His final and supreme Reality. This supreme reality has been likened to the water of the sea, and material things to its waves. In this simile the water is considered to have two different modes of manifestation. In their form the waves are temporary, changing. In their substance they are eternal, unchanging.

Again, the single Reality has been likened to unity, material things being the manifestations of that Reality as numbers are the manifestations of unity. As one plus one equals two, one plus one plus one equals three, and thus from one all numbers come, so all things are made up from the one Reality.

This view of the universe is wrong. Why? Because the One is perfect, while all material things are imperfect. If this philosophy were true, there would be nothing except the temporal and changing. Light would be as darkness, life as death, wisdom as ignorance, sight as blindness, since all that exists in the material world is imperfect.

The Reality of God is the world of perfection. The Reality of God is as a light which

shines upon all things ; all are illumined by it.

The rays of the sun cause objects to appear. Light is not substance ; it is that by virtue of which substances may be seen—it causes substances to appear. In the same way the illumination of God causes the essential reality of substance to become perceptible. Spirit is not the material of the body—it gives the body life.

God gives life ; He is not the reality of substance. Spirit is not matter.

## SPIRIT

The word "spirit" has several different significations, or rather there are several degrees of spirit.

Spirit<sup>1</sup> in the vegetable world is the life of plants — the power by virtue of which they grow.

Spirit in animals confers the capacity of sensation upon physical bodies compounded of associated elements. By virtue of it animals see, hear, feel, and have other sensations.

Spirit in man is the perceiving soul, able to understand the realities of things and predominating over all things else.

The spirit of faith endows man with the capacity to love God and to know God. If the spirit of man, his perceiving soul, be confirmed by the spirit of faith so that it loves and knows God, and if it be guided by the guidance of God, and if the divine attributes

<sup>1</sup> The spirit in minerals, omitted in this enumeration, was frequently referred to by Abbas Effendi as a latent life-principle, furnishing the bond of union which builds up simple elements into inorganic forms.



be manifested in it, then there is a living soul which attains to eternal life. Otherwise it may be considered to be dead.

That is why Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead." One who is born of the flesh is flesh; one who is born of the spirit is spirit. Those men who have not been delivered from the darkness of the human estate and who have not been illumined by the effulgence of God, although they are human in form, are in reality but animals. Though they are living as regards the body, as regards the spirit they are dead.

The lamp which is extinguished and gives forth no light may be considered to be dead. When it has been relighted it is again alive. The spirit of faith is as the radiance of the lamp: and therefore those whose souls have not been led to the shadow of the wings of God are as though dead.

The spirit of faith is like the ether regarded as the vehicle of light. Etheric matter is found everywhere; but only where it is in undulation does light appear. The appearance of light is not caused by motions to and fro of the ether — by its goings or its comings — but by undulations in the ether everywhere present. Thus at night we have etheric

matter, but without undulations, and therefore darkness prevails; but by the power of the sun it is caused to undulate, and light appears.

The atmosphere is always present; when it is disturbed sound is heard; but this is not because the atmosphere, having gone away, has come again.

As touching the Spirit of God — which we call the Holy Spirit — this is eternal. It is the pure favour of God. It is the Divine virtues — the attributes of Divinity. It influences the essence of all things. It is that which infuses life into the soul. It is the teacher of minds. It is the creative power. It gives eternal life. It is the educator of men. It is the centre of the graces of the Merciful God. It is the pure effulgence which dissipates the darkness of the world of men.

Human nature is like iron, of which the characteristics in its normal state are to be black, to be cold, and to be solid. The grace of the Holy Spirit is like fire which glows upon the iron and changes its blackness to redness, its coldness to heat, its solidity to fluidity. The iron has received the rays of the fire; its characteristics have been changed by the heat of the fire. In the same way, the spirit of man, which is his perceiving soul,

when it shall receive the rays of the Holy Spirit will become endowed with the attributes of the Holy Spirit. His imperfect qualities will be changed to perfect ones. He will reflect the attributes of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise he is esteemed to be dead — even below the animal. In the Koran it is said: “They are like animals — even lower than they.”

## THE PERCEIVING SOUL

You have asked me for an explanation about soul. Man possesses a gift by which he is distinguished from all other creatures — a spiritual principle which is bodiless, pure, simple, or uncompounded, which is superior to place and time. Animals have sensations; they have the five physical senses and perceive those things which affect the senses. Man also, like animals, having the five senses, perceives the things which affect them; but, further, he possesses a spiritual power, in its nature original and essential, which encompasses the reality of all things and by which he perceives things which do not affect the senses.

Things which affect the senses are those which are physical, which have bodily form and shape. But the spiritual power of man perceives essential realities — realities which are unseen, without bodily form and shape. Animals perceive outward, objective things; they cannot perceive things which are hidden,

subjective. Man, by means of his perception of the essential nature of things known to the senses, can find a way to understand things unknown to them.

In short, man has a power which encompasses and perceives things both seen and unseen, by which he is distinguished from the animals ; which enables him to perceive things which are purely intellectual realities.

The intellectual realities are those which are immaterial, as love, wisdom, spirit, character, knowledge, the divine powers ; these are the intellectual realities, these are the hidden communications, these are the divine virtues, these are the human perfections, these are the mysteries of nature.

All these are realities which pertain to the realm of the mind ; and there are also the insensible qualities of sensible things, as the roundness of the earth, which man is able to infer from that which his senses perceive.

The capacity for understanding these things animals do not possess ; it is for man only.

The power which perceives in the realm of mind, which penetrates to the essence of all things, is the intellectual power, the perceiving soul. All the arts, sciences, industries, and inventions were once in the invisible

world—were hidden mysteries; but the intellectual power of man has revealed them—has brought them forth from the invisible to the visible world. The art of writing is an example. This was once a hidden mystery. No one had known it. But the intellectual power of man brought it forth, making known the possibility of such an art.

Another example of things brought forth from the invisible world is astronomical science, once unknown to men. The sky was thought to be a tent. The earth was supposed to be flat, and the sun to move over it. But now man's intellectual power has revealed these hidden mysteries.

Therefore it is to be understood that in man there is a revealing power which encompasses the realities of all things, which is fitted for perceiving and understanding hidden mysteries. By means of it, from known or visible things he draws conclusions as to things which are unknown or invisible. By this power he is distinguished from the animal. This is the perceiving soul, or the spirit of man. It has different states or conditions, and about these I hope to speak to-morrow.

## STATES OF THE PERCEIVING SOUL

The first state of the perceiving soul is that in which it is engrossed in the gratification of desire. In this state its nature is like that of animals : animal lusts predominate in it. Like the animal, it is unable to distinguish good from evil. Being overwhelmed by desires, it cannot discriminate between what is lawful and what is unlawful. It gives rein to desire, to the attractions of lust.

In this state it knows neither God nor the innocence of human nature (by which I mean human nature in its purity, untainted by desire and passion). It is far from the truth of all things.

This is the soul which has not been trained. Though outwardly — though from their speech — men in this state might be supposed to have the power of distinguishing good from evil, in reality they have no discrimination. Such are men in general, who have not been under the care of the Divine Teachers, and who have not known the pure impulses of

man (unperverted by desire and passion). After a man has come under the care of the Teachers, after he has perceived and understood the nature of man in its purity, then, having gained discrimination, he learns what virtue is. Such a man realises his faults. He takes himself to task because of his unworthy and evil qualities. He is ever contrite—repentant for his evil deeds. He longs for goodness and virtue.

This is the second state or condition of the perceiving soul; it is the first stage of the progress of the soul to God. This repentance, this longing for the virtues of God, is the means whereby are acquired the inner sight of enlightenment. The man comes to know the qualities of truth and the qualities of untruth. His capacity to feel and to perceive increases; by the gift of God he gains insight and receives inspiration. These are the means of his development and progress—the means whereby his nature is changed and purified—the means whereby he is trained and educated to understand. Then he comprehends the mysteries of God; without instruction from any, he penetrates the real Divine mysteries; without a teacher he receives understanding and learns the realities of all things.



When he has reached this stage he receives assurances and confirmations ; he attains steadfastness and constancy. His faith becomes unalterable, firmly established as a mountain. If the seas of superstition roll their waves over him, they move him no more than would a drop of water. If all tests and temptations assault him in unison, they have no influence upon him. He is so sure, so firm, so joyful, so steeped in faith, so intent upon the kingdom of God, so strong in his spiritual life, that he sings and dances under the sword of the foe. Though all the men of the world were gathered together, wishing to move him from his faith, they could not. Why? Because he receives light from the Source of all Gifts.

When he has attained to this estate, he is satisfied ; he is content in God into whatsoever conditions he may be thrown. This is for him the state of contentment in God. He feels himself drawn into the ocean of grace.

At that time, also, God is content with him. The host of the Supreme Concourse is content with him. The angels of heaven (of course, when I say "angels," I mean holy human souls) are content with him. He himself will be one of the angels, whether in or out of the body.

In this estate he becomes a centre for receiving the power of the Holy Spirit. In this estate his spirit bears to the Holy Spirit the relation which, before, his body bore to his spirit. He becomes like a polished mirror. When he speaks, he gives forth the rays of the Sun of Reality. All the light which is reflected from this mirror is the light of the Holy Spirit.

Therefore was it that Jesus counselled his disciples to speak and teach without fear, since the Holy Spirit would come to them and put words into their mouths. When you have need to speak turn your hearts to God, and His Spirit will give you words. The Blessed Perfection has spoken to like effect: "The heart is My room; cleanse it, make it ready, that I may come and dwell in it. Thy spirit is My desire; purify it, that I may visit it."

We hope, if it please God, that through the grace and instruction of the Blessed Perfection, and through the radiance of his testimonies, all of you may attain to this estate; for this is the estate of perfection, this is the estate of eternal life.

## THE HOLY SPIRIT

The world of existence has two estates : the one is the Unconditioned, the Absolute, the Divine ; the other is that of submission to God. The one is the estate of God, the other of created beings.

That is to say, when we speak of God or Truth, we mean that which is endowed with the highest perfection, and when we speak of the created world, we mean that which is subject to utter imperfection. The one is eternal, the other temporal. The one is rich, the other poor. The one is powerful, the other impotent. The one is all-knowing, the other plunged in ignorance. The one is wholly impure, the other swayed by desire.

But the eternal flows out to, envelops, and permeates all things which are impermanent. God, or Truth which is the reality of God, gives life to mankind.

The earth in its own inherent condition is dark, while the sun is bright ; but the sun shines upon the earth, and the earth is bright by reason of the shining of the sun.

So God has given His light to created beings. God is a perfection which flows out to, envelops, and permeates the world; and mankind should reflect the perfection of God as the earth reflects the rays of the sun.

The grace which is between the Creator and the created is Love. The intermediary of that grace of God is the Holy Spirit. If there were no love, there would be no communication between God and created beings. Were there no light, there would be no communication between the sun and the earth.

The rays of the sun shine forth from the mirror when it is exposed to the sun, although the mirror of itself is dark. The light which we see in the mirror is but the effect of the power and grace of the sun. In the same way, the visible world is altogether imperfect; all the virtues and all the perfections which appear in this world are the reflections of the perfections of God.

The efforts of all the Divine Teachers have been directed to the end of so educating mankind that the souls of men shall attain the capacity to reflect in their essence the rays sent forth from God—that the light of the Sun of Reality should shine in the mirror of the heart, giving forth radiance.

The intermediary of these graces and benefits is the Holy Spirit.

Although the beings of the visible world have voluntary activity, and effects follow their activities,—that is to say, although all conditioned beings have powers and faculties, for every power has its corresponding faculty,—yet these powers are exercised by them under the law of nature. Conditioned beings are like mirrors, which have shape and form, and of which the faculty is to reflect light. In other words, the power of every conditioned being is according to its character, because it is under the law of nature.

But the Holy Spirit is other than these ; its power is beyond the control of nature, not under the law of nature. It is Eternal Life, Infinite Light, and Unconditioned Power. It transforms darkness into light. It transforms the hater into the lover. It transforms imperfection into perfection. It transforms poverty into wealth. It transforms ignorance into knowledge. It transforms weakness into strength. It transforms blindness into seeing. It transforms deafness into hearing. It transforms dulness into speech. From it the soul destitute of spirit, and therefore dead, receives everlasting life.

This is why Jesus said that though men have eyes, they see not ; though they have ears, they hear not ; though they have tongues, they speak not ; and that he brought healing to them. By this he meant that although they have material ears they have not the power of spiritual hearing ; although they have material eyes they have not the power of spiritual sight — they perceive not the kingdom of God, and that the extraordinary power of the Holy Spirit is the means of putting these spiritual faculties into operation.

I hope that the perfumed fragrance of the Holy Spirit will breathe upon you all.

## CHAPTER XI

### DISCOURSES (*Continued*)

#### PARABLE OF THE SEED

A SEED comes into the world of existence. It is planted, and it sprouts and grows. The plant puts out branches, leaves, and flowers, and bears fruit. The seed has disappeared, and has appeared again in all these forms. After all this it returns as seed; that is, seeds appear like the seed which was sown.

Now in fact no one of these new seeds is the same seed which was sown; but the qualities and essence of that seed have reappeared in these seeds.

The essence of that seed has been manifested.

This seed may be likened to the perfect soul; the souls of men in general are as the leaves and the flowers.

## REINCARNATION <sup>1</sup>

There is reincarnation of matter, and there is reincarnation of spirit. Reincarnation of matter is the process whereby matter is developed or evolved through its service as the substance of series of developing material forms. Reincarnation of spirit is the process whereby spirit develops or evolves through its association with these forms.

The visible universe is the expression of a vast system of evolution which proceeds by the combination of elements into forms both organic and inorganic, and the development of these forms. These forms or bodies are mutable and perishable because mutability inheres in the nature of matter. That the form may continue, renovation follows dissolution; thus the form is preserved.

On the dissolution of the form, the elements of which it was composed go back to their homogeneous state. They return or are reincarnated, though not necessarily in associa-

<sup>1</sup> See note p. 169.



tion with each other, to build up other forms or bodies.

The evolution of spirit proceeds co-ordinately with the evolution of matter. Spirit appears as the soul of material things, and is the force which impels the ascent from lower to higher forms; as spirit itself evolves, it causes the development of the forms which it inspires.

First, it appears in the inorganic world as the latent principle of life in minerals. It evolves, as a universal principle, by virtue of the experiences gained from the mutations of that world. It causes the mineral to undergo during vast periods of time certain states and changes of state in accordance with modes and processes which the research of learned men discloses as physical and chemical laws. Thus it reaches the degree of evolution proper to itself in that kingdom, and it at the same time brings the matter of the kingdom to a certain stage of development.

Matter is now fitted to serve as the substance of vegetable forms, and spirit is prepared to act as the architect of these forms, which it proceeds to build. Thus the world of plants is brought into existence, and moves on to its perfection.

In like manner the same evolving spirit expresses itself successively in the animal and human kingdoms, having at hand in each stage, from which to fashion the forms of that stage, matter developed by its previous evolutionary experiences.

Thus spirit and matter evolve together. The evolution of spirit consists in the acquirement of capacities and powers. The evolution of matter consists in the acquirement of qualities, as plasticity and adaptability, fitting it to serve as the substance of forms or bodies higher in the scale of life.

In each ascending stage spirit manifests more of its energy, as permitted by the acquired qualities of the matter with which it has to deal.

The passage of matter in this evolutionary process from lower to higher forms, or bodies, is what I mean by the reincarnation of spirit.

When the body of man is perfected, physical evolution comes to an end, since nature does not seek to build a higher form than that of man. But the evolution of spirit continues until reason, the mental powers, and the emotional capacities are evolved in it. These are not developed by entities which pass from body

to body, but by the universal or World-Spirit of man. The results of each individual life-experience go to the general enrichment of humanity. As a hundred lamps may be lit from a single flame, so the one World-Spirit illumines the minds of countless men. Without this spirit, man's body, like the lamp, is lifeless matter.

Thus it may be said that the spirit which now informs the human race is the same spirit which informed mankind or other evolving beings a hundred, a thousand, or a million years ago. To that extent, only, the theories of the so-called reincarnationists are valid.

The conditioned world and its beings possess like attributes and qualities in the present as in the past. Therefore they may be said to be the same. When we say that the seasons, as spring or winter, have returned, we mean that the season characterised by certain qualities or incidents, as cold or rain or new growth of vegetation, has returned. The association of qualities we call character also recurs, and when a character with which we are familiar as possessed by some individual of the past reappears in another individual of the present, we are apt to say that the former has returned. This does not mean that an entity having those

characteristics has reappeared, but that the World-Spirit of man has again displayed that character or association of qualities.

We see a man of to-day powerful, a great general, whose deeds are like Hannibal's. This man may be called Napoleon, but we may say that Hannibal has returned. In saying this we do not think of Hannibal's wraith or entity, but of the character, similar to his, here manifested as Napoleon.

Those who believe in a reincarnating entity support their theory by claiming that it is necessary to the equalisation and balance of justice. They say that if a man is evil, he will be born again in this world to suffer for his misdeeds. When they see a good man suffering, they say that he is suffering in judgment for sins committed in a previous life.

This line of reasoning is the basis upon which they have built their theory. Now this reasoning is bad, and, if thought out to the end, it cannot stand. Were it valid, the sufferings of all great beings are to be attributed to their evil deeds in a previous life. One must conclude from it that Jesus, who endured as great tribulation as could be heaped upon a man, suffered because of his sins. What great reformer, prophet, or sage has not suffered?

Were their sufferings a retribution for their sins? God forbid.

This reasoning also requires us to conclude that Hannibal and Napoleon were the most admirable of men, since their victories and successes must have resulted from previous good deeds.

The principle itself is wrong.

## THE WORLDS OF DARKNESS AND LIGHT

This world is a world of darkness, affliction, and work. It is like the womb ; one must bear in patience its troubles and its pains. The world of the womb is not a world of pleasure : as long as one is in it, he must submit to its narrowness, darkness, and gloom. If while there he were to be told of a better world, he would not believe in it. It is hard for him to leave that world for this ; but when he comes forth he learns that that was a perdition, and this a world of light. Then he understands that that was narrow, this spacious ; that there he had but bad odours, while here he enjoys the perfumes of gardens ; that there he was in darkness, while now he sees ; that there no sounds came to his ears, while now he hears ; that there was torpor, here speech ; there death, here life.

For mankind this world is like the womb. It is full of hardships, tribulations, calamities. An ignorant man may think it beautiful ; but when he leaves it for spiritual realms he will

understand it as it is — will learn that this is a world of darkness, while the world of God is illumined.

This is a world of blindness, deafness, nothingness ; the other world is a world of seeing, hearing, reality. This is a world of death, that of life. Man knows nothing in this world; the spiritual world is a world of revelation.

Men in their present condition are ignorant of that world, and therefore they wish to remain here. Their utmost desire is to live here always — like a bird in a cage. But the bird which has known the flower garden will not wish to be confined in the cage. If he finds himself there, his desire will be to escape from it that he may return to the garden. So when a man is delivered, he will not wish to return. He will never desire to descend — to be exiled from the godly world and come back to this dark world.

Is there any child who, after being born into the world, desires to return to the womb? Is there any man who, having been freed from prison, desires to be again imprisoned? Is there any bird which, after it has escaped from the cage, will desire to return to it? Not unless it is lame — has broken a wing and cannot fly — will it prefer the cage to the

heavens; neither will a man, unless he be imperfect or undeveloped, be attached to material things.

Therefore our pains in this world, our work and our care, must be endured; and among mine is this — that I have so much to do which must be done that I have little time to speak to you. I hope to meet you all in heaven, where there will be less to disturb and hinder.



## THE WORLDS OF GOD

Those who lack wisdom think that the worlds of God are limited to the material universe. They deny that there are spiritual realms. These glad tidings have not reached their ears. The fragrance of the other worlds has not come to their nostrils.

We may liken the condition of men in this world to that of the child while it is still in the womb. It has known no other world than that of the womb; it cannot picture to itself a wider or a better world. Should some one say to it, "There is an external world having a pure atmosphere, spacious areas, and pleasant seas, flowing rivers, gardens, orchards, and palaces, lofty skies, and shining stars, all very beautiful and delightful,—why dost thou remain in this gloomy and malodorous world, thy food the blood of the womb? Leave this world and come to the other," the child, unable to conceive these things, would perhaps reply: "There can be no better world than this; I can imagine none pleasanter, more

spacious or more attractive, nor food more acceptable than that which I have. This is the only world.”

But when from his limited world the child comes to the world of men, it sees indeed that this world is as a paradise to that—that this world was not to be imagined in the world of the womb.

The child in the womb may be imperfect—it may lack eyes, or ears, or limbs; yet it does not realise its blindness, its deafness, or its other imperfections. Neither its perfections nor its imperfections can be appreciated there. But when it comes to the world of men, its perfections and imperfections both become apparent. If blind, it is known as blind; if deaf, it is known as deaf; and so of its other imperfections. If born with sight, with hearing, and with the other blessings of perfected development, the perfection of these organs and faculties is realised.

Those who have blessings know their blessings—those who have imperfections know their imperfections, when they come from the world of the womb to the world of men; before, they knew them not.

Just in the same way, while in this material world those who know God do not realise the

blessings which He has conferred upon them ; nor do those who know Him not realise the deficiencies of their state, when they leave the world of men for the spiritual realms, the gifts which God has bestowed upon them will be revealed to those who attain to Him ; while the imperfections of those who walk in darkness, whose sight is veiled from God and who are bound down by attachment, will become plain to them also.

Man while in the womb had eyes and ears, but that limited condition afforded no opportunity for the exercise of these organs. But when he came forth into the outer world, a world of space and freedom, the faculties which he possessed could be exercised, and the blessings which God had bestowed upon him became apparent.

So, too, if while in the womb he lacked these faculties, he knew it not ; but when he has come forth he feels the need of them, and then first realises his defects.

If the material world were the only realm of existence, life would be fruitless, the universe a failure. The infinity of beings would have lived in vain. For of all beings man is the highest ; and from its beginning to its end, man's life is pain. Now he is sick, now he is

plunged into sorrow, now his friend is stricken, now one of his dear ones dies, now he suffers loss, now his house is destroyed, now his ship is wrecked, now he is reduced to poverty, now he has a quarrel, now he sees some one suffer.

This world is a world of suffering. Were there no other, suffering would be the only outcome — the only fruit of existence. Were this the case, there could be nothing more senseless than the universe.

Just as the fruition of the conditions of the womb is in the world of men, so the fruition of this world is in the spiritual realms.

## THE PERCEPTION OF TRUTH

There are two states of existence — the temporal and the eternal—the conditioned and the unconditioned—the estate of impotence and of primeval power. We may compare them to utter poverty and abundant wealth. The eternal state has all the perfections, the temporal, all the imperfections. The eternal state has no change, no transformations; the temporal has no permanency. It is not possible that the temporal should be a constant state, because transformation and change inhere essentially in its nature.

Helping grace is from that state which is eternal. This grace flows continuously to the temporal. If it should fail, that which is temporal would perish. Therefore the grace of the perfections of God flows forth continuously to the beings of the visible world.

In its ultimate reality the nature of man has two conditions. One condition is spiritual, the other, material. It has a divine condition and a satanic condition, an angelic condition

and a demoniac condition, a condition of radiance ruled by mind and a condition of darkness ruled by desire. If either of these conditions predominate, its opposite will disappear. If the divine condition predominate, the satanic will disappear. If the angelic condition predominate, the demoniac will disappear. If the illumined condition predominate, that which is dark will disappear. Therefore God sends Divine Messengers and reveals holy doctrines and causes divine teachings to be spread abroad, that the spirit of man may be educated, to the end that by Divine inspiration the grace of God may be made to appear in the essential nature of man. This grace, which is the Divine perfection, appears without interruption in the temporal world. Although the influx of grace is continuous, yet in order that it may be efficient there must be a capacity to receive it. The sun may shine for a thousand years upon a stone, but the beauty of the sun cannot be perfectly reflected by the stone unless the stone be refined, cleansed, and changed into a mirror. Then the beauty of the sun, with its form, its rays, and its heat, will be manifested and declared by the mirror.

A blind man is confounded, but a man with eyes sees clearly. A man with eyes decides

because of that which he has himself seen, not contenting himself with what is seen by others. We may see clearly the perfections of God and the radiance of His illumination. To behold this suffices us; we need not the traditions of men.

Thus the Jews had traditions about Jesus, and the Christians exalt him much. But we should look to the personality of Jesus as we ourselves see it. If we find that the perfections of God, the graces and inspirations of God, appear in him and in his teachings,—that these are clearly shown forth,—this should suffice us. Now we perceive that Jesus was a world-educator; therefore we acknowledge his greatness.

And then as to Mahomet. We do not consider diverse traditions, either for him or against him. We consider what has been shown forth by him. Thus we perceive that the Koran is full of knowledge and wisdom. In the Arabian deserts, where the lamp of enlightenment was thoroughly extinguished, a man appeared. He educated the Arabian nation, then in the last degree of savagery, and he improved it in all its conditions until in five hundred years it became superior to other nations. It is clear that such a man was a world-educator.

Our conclusion is confirmed by the wisdom of the Koran. In it Mahomet even treats some mathematical questions which in his time had not been correctly solved by civilised nations. He who had been a simple, unlearned man contradicted the mathematicians of his time. But after the researches of a thousand years it transpires that what he said was right, and that what the ancient men of learning had declared was wrong.

From these things it may be known that this man was great. We have seen in this case with our own eyes, have perceived with our own minds. Traditions and superstitions have not served us.

We are the lovers of light. When we see the light we worship it, however lowly the source from which it comes ; whether its source be Israelite, or Arabic, or Persian, or Indian matters not to us. We love not the lamp, but the light. It is for the light that we search.



## HOW THE EYES OF MAN ARE VEILED

The Sun of Reality, by which we mean the Perfections of God, appears, like the physical sun, to change its position in the spiritual heavens relatively to us.

As the physical sun has its path of movement during the course of the year, so the Sun of Reality appears to us to move; yet it is ever a fixed centre, radiating always a constant spiritual force. The movements of the sun relatively to us are apparent only, for it is the earth which moves; and because of the movement of the earth and the inclination of its axis, the four seasons come in succession. The sun seems to give its light from different regions of the heavens. In the spring it seems to shine from the equator, in the summer from the northern heavens, in the fall, again, from the equator, in the winter from the southern heavens; yet in fact the sun is always in the same central position relatively to us, ever giving the same light, and only appearing to move from one position to another.

One who has inner sight is a lover of the

Sun in whatsoever region of the heavens He may appear. Then is one a lover of the Sun — when he possesses inner sight. He is a believer in the Sun in whatsoever region He may appear. If He shine from the equator, he will turn his face there ; if He appear in the north, he will turn towards Him ; if He appear in the south, there will he turn. For he is a lover of the Sun, in whatsoever region He may appear.

But men are lovers of the places of appearance, not of the Sun. When the Sun appears to move from point to point, they hold to the point from which He has departed. Then they are veiled from the Sun Himself.

For the Sun of Reality there was a rising out of the point of Moses. But when the Sun of Reality had moved to the point of Jesus, those who were holding to the point, instead of holding to the Sun, did not turn their faces to the point of Jesus. Therefore they were veiled. As the Sun of Reality moved on to the point of Mahomet, again were men veiled ; for they were worshippers of names, not of the reality ; lovers of the word “Moses,” not of its meaning ; lovers of the word “Jesus,” not of its significance. The true lover of the Sun turns his face towards

the Sun at each point of His appearance, whether He has shone from the point of Moses, or of Jesus, or of Mahomet, for it is the *Sun* which he loves.

The shining of the Sun of which we are now speaking is the shining of the Perfection of God. As that Sun seems to change His position, one must himself move. Instead of keeping his eye fixed upon the mirrors, one should worship the Sun Himself, from whatsoever mirror He shines. But human nature is not so; all men are lovers of the *mirrors*. If the light of the Sun leaves one mirror and goes to another, they are left in darkness. Just as when one looks in a mirror near which there is a light he sees all the objects within range of the mirror, but if the light be extinguished, he sees nothing.

Then, further, there are certain signs and allegories recorded in the Scriptures relative to the coming of the Messiah. These signs are written in symbols. Their meaning is not that of the literal signification of the words, yet this was the meaning accepted by the Israelites. They did not know the symbols. As these signs did not appear according to their external meaning the Israelites said: "This is not the promised Messiah." Thus, one of

these prophecies declared that the Christ would appear sitting on the throne of David; others that his rod would be of iron, that he would conquer the East and the West, that he would vindicate the law of the Old Testament. It was prophesied that during his reign love and tenderness would so increase that even the animals would be influenced—that the wolf and the sheep would drink from the same fountain; that the serpent and the mouse would make their home in the same cave; that the partridge and the bird of prey would share the same nest, that the lion and gazelle would lie in the same meadow. But as these signs, in their external meaning, did not come to pass, and as men did not understand the hidden meaning, their sight was veiled. Christ was in reality a king; but his reign was not that of a Nimrod or a Cyrus. His was a Divine Reign. His rule penetrated to the world of the heart. The earthly reign may pass away in a handful of dust; but the Divine Reign is such that after nineteen hundred years it still remains. It is not yet ended. This is the real reign. But those helpless ones did not comprehend. They looked for a Messiah who should wield the sovereignty of a Pharaoh. Therefore their sight was veiled; and so it is with others.

## THE PROOF OF A DIVINE TEACHER

Before opening this discourse, the Master asked after the health of those present, and then proceeded :

When I speak of health, I refer to spiritual health. The health of the body is impermanent. However carefully one seeks to preserve it, he will inevitably some time become ill—his body broken. But spiritual health passeth not away; it is attained when the spirit of man is delivered from the conditions of this darkened world, and becomes enveloped and permeated by divine qualities. As man's physical form has been developed through various stages and degrees — that is, by evolution from the mineral to the vegetable, from that to the animal, and from that to the human kingdom ; as the bodily estate of man has been reached by passing through these several stages, until at length a stage has been attained higher than the others, in which it is endowed with all the physical excellences, so his spiritual nature advances through successive stages of development until it reaches the Highest Kingdom

and the most Glorious Horizon. For one who has attained to this state, material darkness and earthly defects are changed into heavenly illumination and divine perfections.

All the Messengers of God have been sent for the one purpose of educating the souls of men so that they may progress from their undeveloped condition to the attainment of that state where it is known and understood that "Blessed is the One who is the Best Creator." This is the mystery of the Messengers—the original divine proof. In the case of one claiming to be a Manifestation of God, one must consider whether this education and this gift proceed from him. If it be so, there is no doubt but that he is a true teacher. This is the test of his genuineness; he must be an educator of men.

A teacher should first of all be a virtuous and learned man; and if from his school or college trained and perfected disciples come forth, this is the proof that he is a Master, a true and divine teacher. The truth is distinguished under all circumstances from all else; one cannot be mistaken. The proof of the sun is his light, of a flower garden its perfumed fragrance, of a sea its waves and its brilliant pearls.

What characterises the sun? That it sends forth rays of light and heat which cause living things in the world to grow and evolve. As this is the characteristic quality of the physical sun, so that of the Sun of Reality is to teach and educate human souls; through the warmth of the love of God and the glory of God to appear to the souls of men.

## THE HEAVENLY WISDOM

All things have qualities which are created with them — which are innate in them. The brilliance of the stars, the beauty of the trees, the brightness of the ocean, the fragrance of the flowers, — all these qualities are innate in the objects to which they pertain. Man, also, has innate qualities; but there is in addition a perfection, not innate, which may be acquired by him. Therefore man needs a teacher; for, in order that he may acquire this perfection, some one must aid him in bringing it forth. The gaining of Wisdom requires a teacher.

The Divine Messengers are the perfect teachers — teachers for the whole world; all that pertains to the universal order is from God. This earth is a school in which mankind are the pupils. The Divine Messengers

are God's teachers. Happy he who is a pupil in this school! From the teachers of God he may gain Heavenly Wisdom. Heavenly Wisdom is that lesson which is eternal. Earthly wisdom is as the water of pools, gathered from this side and from that, while Heavenly Wisdom is as rain. Earthly wisdom is as the light of a lamp, while Heavenly Wisdom is as the ever-shining radiance of the stars. If the Heavenly Wisdom should pass away from this world, all human beings would perish.

That is to say, the life of man is to know God, to know the mysteries of His Wisdom. For this all the Divine Messengers became manifest—to teach the Heavenly Wisdom. This Heavenly Wisdom is eternal peace, universal reconciliation, and unending rest for man.

Then do all ye who are the friends of God teach this Wisdom—teach it to all mankind, that it may be the means of illumining the world of men. To-day this is the blessing, this is the heavenly gift, this is the appearance of God.

We must serve this august purpose and light this lamp; that all the people of the world may smell the perfume of this sweet odour; that the brightness of Wisdom and



the Spirit of God may change this earth into a paradise, may make of this gloomy prison a radiant garden of the most Glorious One.

## THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

Man's happiness has its source in the heart, not in the body. When his heart is glad, a man is happy, though in prison. When his heart is sad, he can not be happy, though in a paradise. A lighted lamp is still alight, though it be in a cellar or a cave.

Therefore was the imprisonment of the faithful their path to God, a heaven for them. That which was real in them was as the gold which becomes purer the longer it remains in the fire; or like good soil, which becomes more fruitful the more it is ploughed. For them this world was as a school wherein, as the pupils are diligent, so they learn.

God has given to birds and beasts their instincts. These are innate in them—are directly from God. But the wisdom of man is of two kinds—that which is innate in him, and that which he must acquire for himself.

To birds and beasts God has given all those things which it is necessary for them to have. But he has created man without giving him

these things; he must acquire them by his own efforts.

In like manner man's Higher Wisdom is not born with him. He must work for it, and the greater his exertions, the more he will gain. Unless he make great, earnest effort, he cannot attain to the Perfect Wisdom.

If a child be free to follow his inclinations, he does not exert himself to study; unless he be placed under discipline he will not gain an education, nor can he become a learned man. If he is not given the training of a school, he will grow up in ignorance and folly.

God has blessed His beloved with hardships and sufferings, that by means of them they may gain Divine Wisdom. He has cut them off from the world, has permitted them to find no earthly rest or happiness, that they may seek for spiritual assurances. These sufferings He has given as tests that the faithful may be confirmed in constancy, and the faithless driven away.

## CHAPTER XII

### DISCOURSES (*Continued*)

#### HEAVEN AND HELL

GOD has created all things wisely and with a purpose. For everything He has ordered a heaven and a hell; its heaven is its place of high degree—of fulness, maturity, and perfection; its hell is its place of low degree—of meagreness, immaturity, imperfection.

If a tree receive the careful attention of a gardener, it reaches luxuriance and brings forth good fruit. This is the place of high degree, the paradise, of that tree. But if the tree be neglected and fail of its leaves and fruit, it falls into a condition of low degree, which is its hell.

All things of the world have similar conditions. By the grace of God a perfection of good qualities is natural for every existing thing. In the attainment of that perfection is

its high estate or paradise ; in the failing to attain thereto, or in its loss after it has been attained, is its low estate, or condition of hell.

The function of a lamp is to give forth light. If it be well trimmed and lighted, it is in the condition of its highest good ; but if its vase be broken and its oil spilt, if its light be extinguished, then it is in its condition of evil.

Thus it is that for everything there is a heaven and a hell.

Of all things in the world, man is the highest. Compare him with the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal. The vegetable is distinguished from the mineral and is higher than it, because, as well as form and substance, it has the power of growth. The animal has form and substance, as the mineral, and the power of growth, as the vegetable ; but, besides these, it has the capacity for sensation, and by this it is distinguished from the mineral and the vegetable.

But man, while possessing all the qualities and capacities of these three kingdoms, has besides them a perceiving power by which he may penetrate to the reality of all things. From this we see that man is higher than all things else : for him are perfections both material and spiritual.

Therefore man needs a teacher by whom his spiritual powers may be developed—that his lamp may be lighted. For this is the coming of the Messengers of God: that man may be educated, that his latent perfections may be brought forth and made manifest, that his spiritual and heavenly estate may be realised.

The Divine Messengers are like gardeners. They are sent that the trees of mankind may be trained and refreshed until they reach their perfect growth, and that, when this is attained, they may bring forth their perfect fruit. If mankind come under the training of these real teachers and be directed to true understanding and knowledge, all will be manifested and made known.

#### THE TWO SORTS OF HAPPINESS

Happiness is of two kinds: physical, possessed by animals and men, and spiritual, which is known only by those men who have attained to holiness. Physical pleasure is something casual and temporary only—is due to an adventitious and transient condition of the nerves. But spiritual joy is of God and is unending.

The ignorant and the wise man both enjoy;

but the enjoyment of the ignorant man is dependent upon eating and drinking, or upon external conditions ; while that of the wise man is drawn from the unfolding of the secrets of the universe — from the revelation of the mysteries of the Kingdom. The former passes away, but the latter is undying and eternal.

The joy of the prophets of God endures unto this day, and so also that of those saints and holy men who have been perfected under the care and training of those Divine Teachers.

The material kingdom is of time ; affliction and calamity attend it. It is the womb of pain. But the spiritual kingdom is unpassing, it has no end, it is beyond danger and fear, it is exalted day by day, its sun is shining ever more, the voice of its grandeur arises higher and higher. All that belongs to this visible world is corruptible, mortal ; all that belongs to the divine world is incorruptible, eternal.

This is why holy, perfect men seek to find the other world. They are attracted by the beauty of God, they have drunk of the cup of God. The cup of the material world is followed by pain, but the Divine cup, the cup of the Love of God, has an everlasting intoxication, and pain follows it not. Happy are those who are intoxicated with this intoxication!

May it please God that those who are faithful may receive this cup of joy — a joy which does not fade, and after which there is no sorrow, a life after which there is no birth, a light after which there is no darkness, a grandeur after which there is no littleness.

LOVE<sup>1</sup>

Have thou full assurance that love is the mystery of the appearance of God ; that love is the divine aspect of God ; that love is spiritual grace ; that love is the light of the Kingdom ; that love is the breath of the Holy Spirit in the spirit of man. Love is the cause of the manifestation of truth in the material world. Love is the essential bond of union which exists between God and all things in their ultimate reality. Love is the source of the greatest happiness of the material and the spiritual worlds. Love is the light by which man is guided in the midst of darkness. Love is the communication between truth and man in the realm of consciousness. Love is the means of growth for all who are enlightened.

Love is the highest law in this great universe of God. Love is the law of order

<sup>1</sup> Part of a Tablet written to a believer by Abbas Effendi.

betwixt simple essences, whereby they are apportioned and united into compound substances in this world of matter. Love is the essential and magnetic power that organises the planets and the stars which shine in infinite space. Love supplies the impulse to that intense and unceasing meditation which reveals the hidden mysteries of the universe.

Love is the highest honour for all the nations of men. To that people in whom God causes love to appear the Supreme Concourse, the angels of heaven, and the hosts of the kingdom of The Glorious One make salutation. When the hearts of a people are void of this Divine power—of the love of God—they will descend to the lowest estate of mortals, they will wander in the desert of error, they will fall into the slough of despair and there is no deliverance for them. They become like worms which delight in grovelling in the earth.

O friends of God! be ye manifestations of the love of God and lamps of guidance in all the horizons, shining by the light of love and harmony.

How beautiful is the shining of this shining!



## LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

I wish that I could be with you always, but my time is not my own. Yet my heart is with you. The important thing is to be with each other in union of the heart. Why? Because the communications of the heart are not limited by place or time. The things which are subject to place and time will end; that which is free from place and time is eternal and established. By the grace of God I hope that you will be with me always.

This love is good. It will purify and illumine the world. As when swiftly moving bodies collide there is a radiation of heat, so when hearts come together light will be spread abroad. Such friendship is good—as the love of the spring wind to the flowers, as the love of the falling rain to the meadows. Such love is good, is good. Such, I hope, will be our love.

The wind when it comes to a garden of flowers gathers the perfume and spreads it abroad. You also must, like the wind, gather the perfume of the garden of God and spread it throughout the world. The people of the world are very ignorant. They are wholly occupied with the enjoyments of the world. They have quite forgotten God. They are

like the worm : all their growth and increase is under the ground. The more they increase (in the things of the world), the lower they go (farther from God). They have no wings to fly through the air, to ascend upwards to heaven.

Whether or not men will reach the higher place, under the wings of God, depends upon the efforts which they put forth.

Birds satisfy themselves with some few grains of food, and then on the branches of the trees, with many different songs, give praise and thanks to Almighty God. I pray God that you may be as the birds ; that spiritual attraction may draw all your hearts together, and that while you are on the earth your flight may be towards the heavens ; that while you are in the finite world, your seeking and your striving may be for the godly world. This is the path.

#### LOVE AND CONCORD

To-day we will occupy ourselves with the glad tidings of God.

It is for us to consider how we may educate men that the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness may disappear and that the radiance of the kingdom may encompass the world ;

that the nations of men may be delivered from selfish ambition and strife, and be revived by the fragrance of God ; that animosity and hatred may be dispersed and wholly disappear, while the attracting power of the love of God so completely unites the hearts of men that all hearts beat as a single heart ; that the arteries of all mankind may pulsate with the love of God ; that contention and war may utterly pass away, while peace and reconciliation lift their standard in the midst of the earth and men become enamoured of one another ; that the joys of spirituality may prevail over material pleasures ; that East and West may delight in one another as lovers, and North and South embrace each other in closest affection ; that the visible world may be the mirror of the world of the kingdom ; that the image of the Supreme Concourse may be reflected in all gatherings of men ; that the earth may be changed into the paradise of the Glorious One, and the Divine Jerusalem embrace the terrestrial globe.

## TALK TO CHILDREN

The Beha'is in Akka have a boys' school. Every Friday the pupils are brought by their

teacher to the Master's house, to submit to his inspection exercises which they have prepared in Persian and English penmanship and in translation from Persian into English. I was present on one of these occasions. There were eighteen boys, ranging in age from about six to eighteen years, with intelligent faces and quiet and respectful demeanour, ranged against the wall of the large court. The Master passed down the line inspecting the papers which they held in their hands. Then, pacing up and down before them, and taking as his text this verse written by one of them, "The son of Lot associated with evil persons, whereby his succession to the prophethood was lost," he talked to them somewhat as follows :

Ponder upon this and understand what it means. One who associates with evil companions loses his reputation and his good name ; from being good he becomes bad, from being virtuous he becomes impure, from being holy he becomes depraved. Do not take example from the vicious, do not permit yourselves to be corrupted by the evil-minded. Whenever you who are believers meet with one another, your conversation should not be about worldly things ; you should advise each

other how to live noble lives, and seek good examples in one another. You should speak about spiritual and godly things, in order that your souls may be revived and your minds be made pure. You should think much of your lessons and your writing, which will fit you to be useful men. You should not think of things which will separate you from God.

You are the children of the *new* time. Your thoughts should always be as to how you may become wise and good. You should seek sagacity and prudence, and to make progress in the right path.

## THE POOR

The poor of this world suffer : we should care for them.

The poor are nearer the kingdom of heaven than the rich. The hope of the rich is in their wealth, but the trust of the poor is in God. If one make a poor man happy, it is better than countless services to a rich man. Kindness to a poor man is better than service to thousands of rich men. If we work for a rich man or serve him, it does not give him great happiness ; but if we are kind to a poor man, his heart will be glad. If we give water to a

field of grain which is not dry, we do not greatly benefit it; but if we water parched ground, we do it much good.

The man whose heart is kind and pure is near to the kingdom. The hearts of the poor are sensitive; the hearts of the rich are hard. But if a rich man be compassionate, he is very near to God, for he has come out of temptation.

PRAYER<sup>1</sup>

The heart of man is like a mirror upon which dust ever accumulates. To cleanse it he must constantly supplicate God that it may be purified. The act of supplication removes earthly desires from the heart, as polishing removes dust from the mirror. Without prayer the heart ceases to be a mirror of the divine perfections; it becomes as a rough and unpolished stone.

The delight in prayer severs the heart from the world. Prayer is the key by which the doors of the kingdom are opened. There are many questions which it is difficult for man to solve; but by prayer these are unveiled. There is nothing which man cannot learn through prayer.

<sup>1</sup> Part of a discourse by Abbas Effendi, previously published.

Mahomet said that prayer is a ladder, by which man can ascend to heaven. If one's heart is free from attachment to the world, praying is the act of ascension to God.

But we must pray only because we love God ; not because we fear Him, or fear hell, or hope for Divine bounty or for heaven.

## FROM THE WRITINGS OF BEHA ULLAH

For the following Tablets and extracts from the writings of Beha Ullah I am indebted to my friend, Mr. Hussein Rouhy of Cairo. Mr. Rouhy furnished me with literal translations from the original Arabic and Persian. In order to avoid obscurities and forms of expression and figures of speech unfamiliar to Western readers, these have been somewhat modified in form; but in all cases without departure, I think, from the meaning of the originals.

### LOVE AND BROTHERHOOD

O children of Beha, ye who have drunk from the pure wine of Reality, associate with all the people of the world, with the men of all religions, in concord and harmony, in the spirit of perfect joy and fragrance. Remind them also of that which is for the benefit of all; but beware that ye make not the Word of God the cause of opposition and stumbling, or the source of hatred among you.

If ye have a word or an essence which another has not, say it to him with the tongue of love and kindness.



If it is accepted and impressed, the end is attained; if not, leave him to himself and pray for him, but do not molest him.

The tongue of kindness is attractive to the heart, and it is the sword of the spirit; it furnishes the true relation of thought to utterance; it is as the horizon for the arising of the Sun of Wisdom and Knowledge.

Blessed is he who at night approaches his couch with heart purified from malice and hatred.

Verily the Lord is the Compassionate, the Generous.

Creatures were created through love; let them live in friendship and unity. This is the commandment of the Wronged One to his Saints and Sincere Ones.

And ye were commanded by your God, the Glorious, when He was sitting under the swords of the strangers, that if ye know of any sin or wrong committed by others ye reveal it not, nor make it public, lest He unveil you; for He is the One who veils often, the Giver, the Bounteous.

The most glorious attainment is the understanding of this great saying: "All beings are the fruits of one tree, the leaves of one branch, the drops of one sea. Honour is for him who loveth men, not for him who loveth his own."

#### ATTACHMENT

Ponder carefully upon this supreme word, which was before revealed by the August Pen: — "O Children of Knowledge! The physical eye will be hindered from seeing the world and what is in it by a very thin veil; then what will follow if the veil of attachment covers the eye of the heart!"

Say! The sword of Wisdom is stronger than the

summer heat, and sharper than the sword of steel. Draw out this sword in My Name and Power and invade with it the cities of the hearts of those who are fortifying themselves with the fortifications of desire.

## DIVINE WISDOM

He is the Sovereign of the Expounders of the Law.

We had pondered over the wisdom of the earth, its traditions, and prophecies.

Then from the chamber of the Heart of Man, clad in the raiment of his Mind, came forth a Beauteous Damsel, radiant and fair; and standing in the midst of the air she cried out in a glad voice:

“O people of the Heavens and the Earth! Verily I am she who is called the Spirit of Wisdom, the knower of that which has been written and concealed. By the grace of the Eternal who sent me forth I unveil my face, that ye may behold me as I am; that ye may know the perfections of Thought, of Wisdom, of Life, and Soul, which are hidden within yourselves.

“By the Lord of men I charge ye, O ye People of the World! Veil me not with the veils of unfaithfulness, attachment, and lust; deliver me not into the hands of these.

“As God liveth, unfaithfulness is my enemy, and it is the companion of vice and strife.

“By the One, the Lonely, I exhort ye! Let not my foe triumph over me, O ye People of the Earth; be not of those who ignorantly exult and trample me beneath their feet.”

Thus have we made known to thee by a parable that which lies concealed in the heart of man, and that which happened to us in the Greatest Imprisonment, that ye

may be of those who understand. For all that has come to pass, for the calamities which have befallen us in God's right way, we praise Him.

Verily if thou receivest this tablet and understandest what is written therein, greet our Beloved, and offer praise before their faces on the part of the Wronged One, the Stranger.

ADDRESSED BY BEHA ULLAH TO ONE OF HIS SONS

O Zia, be patient in calamity, tranquil at all times, confident in God. Heed the counsels of the wise, revere God, look with charity upon the mistakes of men. Follow not after desire, but hasten to God. Be as the cloud which gives its bounty to all the creatures of the earth. Have mercy for the guilty, forgive the disobedient, be steadfast in the Covenant, and firm in the Cause.

Thus commandeth thee the Wronged One.

And again revere God.

He commandeth thee also to keep faith and righteousness. Hold fast to these two. And again I say, Hold fast to these two.

JEWELS OF WISDOM

*From the Arabic of Beha Ullah.*

Of the Utterances which descended from the Majestic Might through the tongue of Power and Strength on the prophets of the past, we have taken the essence and in the garment of Brevity clothed it. And this is a kindness to the Beloved, that they may be enabled to fulfil the Covenant of God and to perform in themselves that which He has entrusted to them, that through the excellence of devotion, which is of the Spirit, they may win the Victory.

O Son of Spirit!

The first Utterance declareth:

Possess a good, pure, and enlightened heart, for therein is the Kingdom, Eternal, Unpassing, Ancient.

O Son of Spirit!

The best of all to Me is Justice. Cast it not aside if thou desirest Me. Neglect it not. By it thou wilt be strengthened to see all things, not with the eyes of men, but with thine own, to know all things, not by the knowledge of any in the world, but of thyself. Upon this meditate — how thou oughtest to be. The power of discernment have I given thee. This is My Providence for thee; keep it ever before thine eyes.

O Son of Man!

I was in My Ancient Essence and My Everlasting Being. I foreknew My Love for thee; therefore I created thee and laid upon thee My Likeness and manifested in thee My Beauty.

O Son of Man!

Because thy creation rejoiced Me, therefore I created thee. Love Me, that I may acknowledge thee and in the Spirit of Life confirm thee.

O Son of Existence!

Love Me, that thou mayest know My Love for thee. If thou lovest Me not, My Love can never reach thee. Know this, O Servant!

O Son of Existence!

Thy rose-garden is My Love, thy paradise is My Nearness. Therefore enter in and tarry not.

In My Supreme Majesty, in My Highest Kingdom, it is this which has been ordained for thee.

O Son of Humanity!

If thou desirest Me, love not thyself. If thou seekest My Grace, value not thine own. Thus thou wilt be transient in Me, but in thee I will be everlasting.

O Son of Spirit!

For thee no peace has been ordained save by turning from thyself and advancing towards Me. Verily it is the Law that thy glory is in My Name and not in thine own; that thy dependence is on My countenance and not on thine. For verily I am to be beloved above all that is.

O Son of Existence!

My Love is My Kingdom. Whosoever enters it is safe; whoever seeks it not is led astray and perishes.

O Son of Truth!

Of My Kingdom art thou; come into it, that thou mayest attain to Eternal Truth.

My Love is in thee; know it to be thyself, that thou mayest find Me near.

O Son of Existence!

My Vase thou art; My Light is in thee. Be enlightened by it and seek not any besides Me; for I have made thee rich and abundantly bestowed My Grace upon thee.

O Son of Existence!

By the Hand of Power I made thee, by the Fingers of Strength I created thee, and in thee I placed the essence of My Light. Therefore depend upon this and upon naught else; for verily Mine Action is perfect and My Decree shall prevail. Doubt not this, question it not.

O Son of Spirit!

I created thee rich. How is it that thou makest thyself poor? I made thee mighty. How is it that thou holdest thyself cheap? From the essence of Knowledge I brought thee forth. How is it that thou seekest aught besides Me? From the clay of Love I kneaded thee. How is it that thou turnest from Me?

Direct thy sight to thine own being, that thou mayest find Me standing in thee, Powerful, Mighty, Supreme.

O Son of Man!

Thou art My Possession, and My Possession will never be destroyed. How is it that thou fearest thy destruction? Thou art My Light, and My Light will never be extinguished. How is it that thou apprehendest thy extinction? Thou art My Garment, and My Garment will never be worn out. Therefore rest thou in thy love for Me, that thou mayest find Me in the Highest Horizon.

O Son of Truth!

Turn to My Face and withdraw from all else besides Me; for verily Mine Authority is enduring and will never end, My Kingdom is eternal and will never be overthrown. If thou seekest something besides Me, thou wilt find it not—yea, even though thou searchest the universe for ever and ever.

O Son of Light!

Forget all else in Me, be comforted by My Spirit. This is the essence of My Command; therefore abide in it steadfastly.

O Son of Man!

Let thy satisfaction be in Me—not in the things of

the world. Seek no refuge besides Me; for verily there is naught else that will ever satisfy thee.

O Son of Spirit!

Ask thou not of Me that which I desire not for thee. Be thou satisfied with what I have ordained to thy countenance; for that will benefit thee — if with it thou art content.

O Son of Divine Wisdom!

I placed in thee a spirit from Me that thou mightest be My Lover. Why hast thou left Me and sought another lover?

O Son of Spirit!

My Right to thee is great and cannot be denied; My Bounty to thee is ample, and cannot be ignored; My Love for thee is real and cannot be forgotten; My Light for thee is shining and cannot be concealed.

O Son of Humanity!

I have ordained for thee from the Tree of Wisdom the Holiest Fruits. How is it that thou hast turned from them and been content with what is common? Return thou to thy heritage in the Highest Horizon.

O Son of Spirit!

I created thee sublime, but thou hast made thyself ordinary. Ascend to that for which thou wert created.

O Son of the Unseen Supreme Kingdom!

I beckoned thee to life, but thou preferrest death. Wherefore hast thou turned from My desire and followed thine own will?

O Son of Man!

Transgress not the bounds of thy limitation, claim not for thyself what thou shouldst not claim. Adore the Countenance of thy Lord, the Mighty, the Powerful.

O Son of Spirit!

Dost thou boast thyself over the poor? Verily I walk before them; and I behold thee in thy miserable state and for ever grieve for thee.

O Son of Existence!

How is it that thou hast forgotten thine own faults, and occupiest thyself with the shortcomings of My People? In that thou doest thus thou condemnest thyself.

O Son of Man!

So long as thou thyself sinnest, breathe not of the sins of any. If thou violatest this command, of the earth art thou. To this I bear witness.

O Son of Spirit!

Lay not upon any man what thou wouldest not have placed against thyself, and promise not what thou wilt not fulfil. This is My Command to thee; obey it.

O Son of Spirit!

Know verily that he who exhorts men to equity and himself does iniquity is not of Me, though he bear My name.

O Son of Man!

Hinder not My servant in whatsoever he may ask of thee; for his face is My Face, and Me thou must revere.

O Son of Existence!

Ponder well thy deeds each day, as though thou wert to be judged for them; for verily death cometh to thee, and then thy deeds will judge thee.



O Son of the Unseen Spiritual Kingdom!

I made death as glad tidings for thee. How is it that thou despairest at its approach? I gave thee enlightenment to guide thee. How is it that thou veilest thyself from it?

O Son of Spirit!

The Gospel of Light I herald to thee; gladden thyself with it. To the State of Holiness I call thee; enter its shelter that thou mayest rest for ever.

O Son of Spirit!

The Holy Spirit heralds comfort to thee. How is it that thou art sorrowful? The Spirit of Command confirms thee in the Cause. How is it that thou tarriest? The light of My countenance shines before thee. How is it that thou goest astray?

O Son of Man!

Be not sorrowful save when thou art far from Me; be not happy save when thou art returning to Me, when thou art near Me.

O Son of Man!

Cheer thy heart with delight, that thou mayest be fitted to meet Me and become a mirror of My Splendour.

O Son of Man!

Clothe thy nakedness with the Splendour of My Garment. Deprive thyself not of thy portion of My Beautiful Fountains, lest thirst possess thee for ever.

O Son of Existence!

Keep My Commands because thou lovest Me. Cut thyself off from thine own desires, if thou seekest My Pleasure.

O Son of Man!

Neglect not My Laws, if thou lovest My Beauty; forget not My Commandments, if thou desirest My Blessing.

O Son of Man!

Speed thee to the land of the Supreme Kingdom, haste to the space of Heaven. Thou wilt not find rest save in obedience to My Command and in devotion before My Face.

O Son of Man!

Glorify My Cause, that I may make known to thee the secrets of My Greatness and shine upon thee with the Enlightenment which is eternal.

O Son of Man!

Obey Me that I may come to thee. Advance My Cause that thou mayest be crowned a Victor in the Kingdom.

O Son of Existence!

Mention Me in Mine Earth that I may mention thee in My Heaven; that thine eye and Mine Eye may be content.

O Son of the Throne!

Thy hearing is My Hearing; hear thou with it. Thy sight is My Sight; see thou with it. Attest for Me in thine inmost soul a supreme holiness, that I may attest for thee in Myself an exalted place.

O Son of Existence!

Suffer in My Cause with a joyful heart, receive with thankfulness that which I have destined for thee; that thou mayest rest with Me in the tents of Glory behind the veils of Might.

O Son of Man!

Consider what it behooves thee to do; act wisely. Is it dearer to thee to die upon thy bed, or to be martyred in My Name upon the dust and become the Dawning-place of My Cause and the Manifestation of My Light in the highest estate of Paradise? Be wise, O Servant!

O Son of Man!

By my Splendour! Thy will to tinge thy hair with thy blood is dearer to Me than the two realms of the universe, than the brilliance of the two Great Lights. Therefore cherish it, O Servant!

O Son of Man!

To everything there is a sign; and the sign of Love is patience to endure the trials, the destiny, ordained by Me.

O Son of Man!

The true lover longs for the test as the rebel for pardon, as the criminal for mercy.

O Son of Man!

If thou avoidest affliction how canst thou walk in the hard way of those who are content with that which pleaseth Me? If thou fearest lest calamity befall thee on My Path, how canst thou gain the Enlightenment of My Splendour?

O Son of Man!

My Calamity is My Providence. Without, it is fire and vengeance; within, it is Light and Mercy. Therefore welcome it with joy, that thou mayest become Everlasting Light and an Eternal Spirit. This is my Command; know thou it.

O Son of Humanity!

If good fortune come to thee, let it not rejoice thee ;  
if humiliation overtake thee, mourn not because of it ;  
for verily there shall be a time when both shall cease and  
be no more.

O Son of Existence!

If thou art stricken with poverty, sorrow not ; for  
verily riches shall one day be thine. Fear not abase-  
ment, for exaltation shall be thy portion.

O Son of Existence!

If thou lovest the Ancient and Unending Kingdom,  
the Unpassing and Eternal Life, turn from this transient  
and mortal state.

O Son of Existence!

Let this world not engross thee.

Verily fire is the test of gold; with gold We prove the  
hearts of men.

O Son of Man!

Thou desirest gold, but I desire thy separation from it.  
Thou hast thought to find thy riches in heaping it to-  
gether ; I know that to purify thyself from it is thy  
wealth. By My Life ! That is thine imagining, this My  
knowledge ; how can thy thought agree with Mine ?

O Son of Man!

Distribute the gold which I have given thee among  
My Poor, that thou mayest in Heaven give from the  
Treasures of Exaltation which have no end, from the  
Stores of Glory which cannot be exhausted.

But by My Life! The sacrifice of thyself is more  
glorious, couldst thou behold it with Mine Eye.

O Son of Humanity!

The temple of thy life is My Throne. Cleanse it utterly, that I may occupy it.

O Son of Existence!

Thy heart is My House ; sanctify it, that I may enter it. Thy spirit is an aspect of My Essence ; purify it for Mine Appearance.

O Son of Man!

Put thy hand into My Treasury, that I may raise My Head, shining with brilliancy, from above thy treasures.

O Son of Man!

Ascend to My Heaven that thou mayest come near to Me, that thou mayest drink from the Pure Wine which has no likeness—from the Everlasting Cup of Glory.

O Son of Man!

Many are the days that thou occupiest thyself with the superstitions and imaginings of thy fancy. How long wilt thou thus sleep upon thy bed? Lift thy head; for verily the Sun has arisen and ascended to the zenith, that He may shine upon thee with the Light of His Splendour.

O Son of Man!

Enlightenment has come to thee from the Horizon of the Mount, the Spirit of Holiness has breathed from the Sinai of thy heart. Therefore cleanse thyself from hindrances and imaginings ; enter into the Court that thou mayest be prepared to meet Me—that thou mayest be fitted for the Everlasting Life where no trouble, weariness or death can befall thee.

O Son of Man!

My Eternity is My Creation and I have created it for thee ; therefore make it the garment of thy temple. My Oneness is Mine Invention and I have invented it for thee ; therefore clothe thyself with it. Thus mayest thou be the Arising-place of My Omnipresence forever.

O Son of Man!

My Greatness is My Gifts to thee, My Majesty is My Mercy to thee ; but that which is due to Me none can realise or comprehend. I have kept it in the treasures of My Secrets, in the stores of My Mysteries,—as a kindness to My Worshippers and a Mercy to My Creatures.

O Children of the Unseen Essence!

Ye will be hindered from loving Me—your hearts will be disturbed when I am mentioned, for the mind cannot grasp Me, the heart cannot encompass Me.

O Son of Splendour!

By My Spirit and by My Providence! By My Mercy and by My Splendour!

All that which I have made known unto thee by the Tongue of Might and written for thee with the Pen of Power, is revealed according to thy place and station, not according to My Supreme Reality.

O Children of Men!

Know ye why I created ye from one dust? That no one should glorify himself over the other, that ye should always bear in mind the manner of your creation. Since I have created ye from one substance, it behooves ye to be as one, walking with common feet, eating with one mouth, living in one land ; until in your natures and your deeds the signs of the Unity and the essence of the Oneness shall appear.

This is My advice to ye, O ye People of Light! Profit by it, that ye may pluck the fruits of Holiness from the Trees of Might and Power.

O Children of the Spirit!

Ye are my Treasuries ; for in ye have I stored the Pearls of my Secrets, the Gems of My Knowledge. Guard them, lest the unbelievers among My People, the wicked ones among My Creatures, should discover them.

O Son of Him Who stands in His own Essence in the Kingdom of Himself !

Know that I have bestowed the Fragrance of Holiness upon thee, have accomplished the Utterance unto thee, have perfected all Grace for thee, have willed for thee what I have willed for Myself. Therefore dwell in Me with love and gratitude.

O Son of Man!

On the tablet of thy soul write all that I have enjoined upon thee, with the ink of Light ; and if thou canst not, write it with ink taken from the essence of thy heart ; and if still thou canst not, write it with the red ink shed in My Cause, which verily is dearer to Me than all else ; that its radiance may be confirmed for ever.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION

THAT a religion enjoining such fraternal relations between men, advocating such enlightened social regulations, holding up as exemplars such ideals of life as that of Abbas Effendi, and able to inspire its followers with such self-forgetting and whole-souled devotion to its cause, must effect a vast amelioration in the conditions of life of those peoples to whom it was immediately addressed and whom it can reach directly by means of the Persian and Arabic languages, both used by its founders, and is surely destined to leave a deep impress upon the history of mankind, there seems to be no room for doubt. Beha'ism has already demonstrated that it is a great religious force. But can we go a step further — can we arrive at any conclusion as to the validity of the claim of the Beha'is that theirs is a Divinely inspired world-religion in its first youth? Probably the intellect alone is incompetent finally to decide



this question, but there are certain indications which appeal directly to the intelligence, the force of which can be estimated by the reason.

The examination of the great religions of the world, of late years very searching, has shown us an identity of essence in them, from the very earliest of which we have record to the latest. The great Upanishads, the most ancient and the grandest of sacred books, tell us of the oneness of all beings—teach us to look in them for ourselves and for God; teach us, that is, that the first and the last guide-post for the aspiring soul is to the path of kindness, compassion, and love for all that lives.

The Bhagavad Gita, the lineal descendant of the great Upanishads, handing down their lesson in sublime celestial song, pulsating with the life and warmth and vigour of the Good Law, which has perhaps been venerated by more millions of human beings than any other sacred book, begins and culminates in the declaration, "He who sees Me in all beings and all beings in Me, who, ever perceiving the One Life, loves Me dwelling in all beings, he who sees the same life in all things as in himself, he it is, O Arjuna, who seeks Me by the highest path."

And hear the Buddha, that mighty man, the

most majestic figure of ancient days, who trod the plains of India for nigh to half a century, uttering his words of peace and love.

“And he [the follower of the Path] lets his mind pervade one quarter of the globe with thoughts of love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of love, far-reaching, grown great, and beyond measure.

“Just, Vasetha, as a mighty trumpeter makes himself heard, and that without difficulty, towards all the four directions; even so of all things that have shape or form, there is not one that he passes by or leaves aside, but regards them all with heart set free and deep-felt love.”

This, too, is the one insistent note of the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth — that wise and holy man whose followers have heaped dogma upon dogma, vain fabrications of darkened intellects, obscuring and hiding the pure and simple lesson of his life, until God and religion are but names and shadows to the Western world.

Whatever its source, this is the one great lesson which has been taught by the great teachers of all ages, and it now rings forth a

second time from the valleys of Palestine as fresh and clear as it sounded from the slopes of the Himalayas more than three thousand years ago.

Secondly, few, I presume, who will read this book, have not had occasion to marvel that a religion could be thought to be both divine and, though limited by the necessities of place and time, exclusive. No thinking and unbiassed man can believe that the Creator of a Universe has made to any man, to any institution, to any nation, or even to any age, alone and exclusively, those communications necessary for the welfare of all mankind in every age. From our childhood we of the West have been drilled in the efficacy of a single faith, a single name, a single church; and if we have ever dropped our mental swaddling-clothes, we have come to know that such a claim can be nothing but delusion. Happy are we, if, with that shaken confidence, we have not lost all faith and hope; if we have had the perseverance and good fortune to learn that this intolerance is not to be attributed to the spirit of primitive Christianity, but to the prejudices which have accumulated and crystallised about it in the course of twenty centuries.

Such claims carry their own refutation; but

to have known and outlived them fits us the better to appreciate the splendid liberality of this new faith. Here is no close communion ; no trust or monopoly of Divine grace. Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Christ, Mahomet, and Beha Ullah, each in his turn reflected the rays of Divine Truth. No man is asked to surrender that which is dear to him by association or inheritance. He hears only a renewal of the oft-repeated message which has been dulled and dissipated by the lapse of ages. Whether or not this be a Divine message we may perhaps feel ourselves unable to decide ; but that it is offered to us in a manner to win the approval of our intelligence and our hearts, we are bound to admit.

In the third place, there is a distinct probative force in the lives of those by whom it is proposed and in the type of character which it attracts and develops. Those who have sought far and long for a solution of the mystery of existence which would satisfy their reason and their hearts, who, baffled and confused by the mazes of philosophy and dogma, by the labyrinths of imaginative speculation which human ingenuity has fashioned in countless forms since time began, but who have at length discerned the single golden thread lying at the root of

all, gleaming as brightly at the dawn of history by the Ganges as in later times from the plains of Galilee, — many of these have believed that they had found in this co-ordinating golden link a basis of truth upon which they might repose; and yet, while they have felt and reasoned that this must be so, their confidence has wavered when they reflected that, beautiful and convincing as was this teaching of universal identity, brotherhood, and love, there were to be found nowhere in the broad earth, it seemed, living exemplars of its power to mould life and action into conformity with its precept. If this doctrine is indeed true, why, they have demanded, are there not those whose lives it has fashioned into the ideal which it prescribes? Where is there at least one man whose godly life will prove to us that this path is practicable for men?

To know the Master of Akka is at once a confirmation and a revelation to those who have thus searched and thought. Their reason and intuition is justified, the possibilities of human nature are revealed to them. Here is a man who proves to us that self can be utterly forgotten; that all-embracing love can be substituted for egotism as the motive-power of a human life; that the recorded lives of Buddha

and Christ may indeed be realised by those who follow in their path. There are many men for whom this spectacle will change belief into conviction with the certainty of knowledge.

In the fourth place, if it belongs indeed to the Divine order that Messengers be sent to men when faith has waned and true religion been forgotten, it would seem that the present time is very opportune. In both the East and the West men are wandering in the dark. The East has been the cradle of all the great religions; yet many of its peoples, overridden by selfish and ignorant priesthoods, slaves to curious and complicated superstitions, quite oblivious to their glorious heritage, follow their spiritual guides into unimaginable depths of selfishness, isolation, and hardness of heart; while, in the West, religion has for the most part become a hollow name, assumed for the sake of fashion or of ostentation. If a new divine impulse was ever needed, it would seem that it is called for now.

However we may judge the pretensions of the Beha'is, they have a most substantial claim to our respect; and every well-wisher of his fellow-men will extend to them, as they do to all, the hand of fellowship and good-will.

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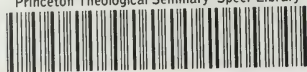




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