

XLI. PROPHETS-MANIFESTATIONS OF GOD

Compiled from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, Abdu'l

Original English



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A. The Báb

1. Duration of the Bab's Dispensation

"The Bab said that whenever 'He Whom God will make manifest' appears, accept Him. He never said don't accept Him until after the lapse of 1000 years. Also Bahá'u'lláh says that in the year 9 of the Babi Dispensation the time was ripe for the Revelation of 'He Whom God will make manifest.' As the Bab was not only a Manifestation but a Herald of this Bahá'í Faith, the interval between His revelation and that of Bahá'u'lláh was of shorter duration. His Dispensation in a sense will last as long as Bahá'u'lláh's lasts."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, December 27, 1941: Dawn of a New Day, p. 94)

1. Declaration of the Bab

"...The believers must hold gatherings for the Bahá'ís at exactly 2 hours and 11 minutes after sunset on May 22nd ..., as this is the exact time when the Bab declared His mission to Mulla Husayn...."

(Ibid., June 22, 1943, p. 105)

1. The Declaration of the Bab and the Birthday of Abdu'l-Bahá

"...regarding the declaration of the Bab and the birthday of the Master: The Bab declared His Mission on the fourth day of the month of Jamadi I, two hours and eleven minutes after sunset, corresponding with the evening of May 22nd. But as the Bahá'í day begins after sunset, and not after midnight as in the West, the Bab's declaration is celebrated on the fifth day of Jamadi I, corresponding to the 23rd of May. Abdu'l-Bahá was born in the course of that same night, but the exact hour of His birth has not been ascertained."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, November 25, 1936)

1. The Bayan



ORIGINAL

"In the Bayan the Bab says that every religion of the past was fit to become universal. The only reason why they failed to attain that mark was the incompetence of their followers. He then proceeds to give a definite promise that this would not be the fate of the Revelation of 'Him Whom God would make manifest', that it will become universal and include all the people of the world. This shows that we will ultimately succeed. But could we not through our shortcomings, failures to sacrifice, and reluctance to concentrate our efforts in spreading the Cause, retard the realization [pg 471] of that ideal. And what would that mean? It shall mean that we will be held responsible before God, that the race will remain longer in its state of waywardness, that wars would not be so soon averted, that human suffering will last longer."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, February 20, 1932: *Living the Life*, pp. 3-4)

1. The Iqan and the Bayan

"The Bab specified that the 'Bayan' is not completed and that 'He Whom God would manifest' (Bahá'u'lláh) would complete it, though not in its actual form, but only spiritually in the form of another book. The 'Iqan' is believed to be its continuation."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, February 17, 1939: *Dawn of a New Day*, p. 78)

1. Reason for Severe Laws Revealed by the Bab

"...The severe laws and injunctions revealed by the Bab can be properly appreciated and understood only when interpreted in the light of His own statements regarding the nature, purpose and character of His own Dispensation. As these statements clearly reveal, the Babi Dispensation was essentially in the nature of a religious and indeed social revolution and its duration had therefore to be short, but full of tragic events, of sweeping and drastic reforms. These drastic measures enforced by the Bab and His followers were taken with the view of undermining the very foundations of Shi'ah orthodoxy, and thus paving the way for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh. To assert the independence of the new Dispensation, and to prepare also the ground for the approaching Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab had therefore to reveal very severe laws, even though most of them were never enforced. But the mere fact that He revealed them was in itself a proof of the independent character of His Dispensation and was sufficient to create such widespread agitation, and excite such opposition on the part of the clergy that led them to cause His eventual martyrdom."

(Ibid., pp. 77-78)

1. Portrait of the Bab

"...The portrait of the Bab should be regarded as an inestimable privilege and blessing to behold, as past generations were denied a glimpse of the Face of the Manifestation, once He had passed on."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 13, 1944: *Bahá'í News*, No. 210, August 1948, p. 2)

1. Hour of Birth of the Bab

"The Bab was born before dawn."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. The Term "Afnan" Refers to Relatives of the Bab

"The term 'afnan' means literally small branch, and refers to the relatives of the Bab, both men and women. As the Bab's only son died while in infancy, the former had no direct descendants. The 'afnan' are, therefore, all indirectly related to the Bab." [pg 472]

"As to 'aghsan', it also means branch. But it is a bigger branch than 'afnan'. It refers to Bahá'u'lláh's descendants."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 25, 1934)

1. The Sacrifice of 19 Lambs by the Bab Was Prior to His Revelation

"As regards your question concerning the sacrifice of 19 choice lambs which the Bab is reported to have made on the day of Nahr: This is indeed an Islamic custom. But the sacrifice in question was performed by the Bab prior to the revelation of His own laws, and at a time, therefore, when the laws and practices of Islam had not yet been entirely abrogated by Him."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 22, 1939)



B. Bahá'u'lláh

1. No Prophet in Same Category as Bahá'u'lláh

"There are no Prophets, so far, in the same category as Bahá'u'lláh, as He culminates a great cycle begun with Adam."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, December 26, 1941: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 41)

1. Bahá'u'lláh Has Appeared in God's Greatest Name

"...By 'Greatest Name' is meant that Bahá'u'lláh has appeared in God's Greatest Name, in other words, that He is the Supreme Manifestation of God."

(Ibid., p. 41)

1. Bahá'u'lláh Conversed with Moses in the Burning Bush

"Bahá'u'lláh is not the Intermediary between other Manifestations and God. Each has His own relation to the Primal Source. But in the sense that Bahá'u'lláh is the greatest Manifestation to yet appear, the One Who consummates the Revelation of Moses; He was the One Moses conversed with in the Burning Bush. In other words Bahá'u'lláh identifies the glory of the Godhead on that occasion with Himself. No distinction can be made amongst the Prophets in the sense that They all proceed from One Source, and are of One Essence. But Their stations and functions in this world are different."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 19, 1947)

1. **Bahá'u'lláh is Not God — But Through Him We Can Know God**

"As regards your question: Bahá'u'lláh is, of course, not God and not the Creator; but through Him we can know God, and because of this position of Divine Intermediary, in a sense, He (or the other Prophets) is all we can ever know of that Infinite Essence which is God. Therefore, we address ourselves in prayer and thought to Him, or through Him to that Infinite Essence behind and beyond Him."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 4, 1951)

1. **Why He Uses the Pronoun "We"**

"When Bahá'u'lláh uses the plural — 'We', 'Our' etc. — He is merely using a form [pg 473] which is regal and has greater power than the singular 'I'. We have this same usage in English, when the King says 'we'. The Pope does the same thing."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 18, 1951)

1. **There is No Record of a Prophet Similar in Station to Bahá'u'lláh**

"Regarding your questions: There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in station to Bahá'u'lláh having lived 500,000 years ago. There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years, but we cannot say definitely that His Revelation will be inter-planetary in scope. We can only say that such a thing may be possible. What Bahá'u'lláh means by His appearance in 'other worlds' He has not defined, as we could not visualize them in our present state, hence He was indefinite, and we cannot say whether He meant other planets or not...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 24, 1941)

1. **Hour of Bahá'u'lláh's Birth**

"Bahá'u'lláh was born at dawn."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. **The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, Certain Passages Clarified**

"Concerning the meaning of the passage on p. 12 of the 'Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh' beginning with the words 'But for Him no Divine Messenger...', this refers to the reality of God in Him and not to His Person."

"Page 20, first line, of the same pamphlet: The passage refers to any opportunities that are missed through neglect and not to any particular event."

"Page 21, line 20: The meaning of the passage should not be taken literally. The purpose is to emphasize the theme and heighten its effect."

"Page 24, line 20: It refers to the reality of Bahá'u'lláh."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 17, 1937)

1. Reckoning of Days Mentioned in the "Dispensation"

"Concerning the passage in the 'Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh' in which the Guardian quotes Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretation of the prophecy referring to the times when the sun would stand still in the heavens, he wishes me to explain that the days referred to in this prophecy have to be reckoned differently. In the Sacred Scripture of various religions there are to be found frequent references to days, but these have been considered as indicating different periods of time, as for instance in the Qur'an a day is reckoned as one thousand years. The first ten days in the above-mentioned prophecy represent each a century, making thus a total of one thousand lunar years. As to the twenty days referring to the Babi Dispensation, each of them represents only one lunar year, the total of twenty years marking the duration of the Revelation of the Bab. The thirty days in the last Dispensation should not be reckoned numerically, but should be considered as symbolizing the incomparable greatness of the Bahá'í Revelation which, though not final, is nonetheless thus far the fullest revelation of God to man. From a physical point of view, the thirty days represent the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the zodiac. They thus [pg 474] represent a culminating point in the evolution of this star. So also from a spiritual standpoint these thirty days should be viewed as indicating the highest, though not the final, stage in the spiritual evolution of mankind."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, August 7, 1934: Bahá'í News, No. 87, September 1934, p. 1)

1. Bahá'u'lláh Was a Descendent of Abraham Through Both Katurah and Sarah — Jesse, Son of Sarah, Was the Father of David and Ancestor of Bahá'u'lláh

"Regarding your question concerning the Jesse from whom Bahá'u'lláh is descended: The Master says in 'Some Answered Questions', referring to Isaiah, chapter 11, verses 1 to 10, that these verses apply 'Word for word to Bahá'u'lláh'. He then identifies this Jesse as the father of David in the following words: '...for Joseph was of the descendants of Jesse the father of David...', thus identifying the Jesse of Isaiah, chapter 11, with being the father of David. Bahá'u'lláh is thus the descendant of Jesse, the father of David."

"The Guardian hopes that this will clarify the matter for you. It is a tremendous and fascinating theme, Bahá'u'lláh's connection with the Faith of Judaism, and one which possesses great interest to Jew and Christian alike."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 11, 1942)

"Regarding your question concerning the descent of Bahá'u'lláh from Abraham: The Master has stated that Bahá'u'lláh is a descendant of Abraham through a son of his, other than Isaac and Ishmael, from his wife Katurah...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 24, 1943)

1. As the Return of Christ

"In accepting Bahá'u'lláh you have accepted Christ in His appearance as the Father, as He Himself so clearly foretold. The Catholic Church does not believe this; on the contrary, it still awaits the return of Christ. If you decide, in order to be buried next to your dear husband, to return to the Church, you either would have to, in good faith, deny Bahá'u'lláh or you would be just using the Church as a means to satisfying a desire of your own, which would certainly not be an upright and conscientious thing to do!"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 28, 1950)

1. Appearance of Later Prophets

"After Bahá'u'lláh many Prophets will, no doubt, appear, but they will be all under His shadow. Although they may abrogate the laws of the Dispensation, in accordance with the needs and requirements of the age in which they appear, they nevertheless draw their spiritual force from this mighty Revelation. The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh constitutes, indeed, the stage of maturity in the development of mankind. His appearance has released such spiritual forces which will continue to animate, for many long years to come, the world in its development. Whatever progress may be achieved in later ages — after the unification of the whole human race is achieved — will be but improvements in the machinery of the world. For the machinery itself has already been created by Bahá'u'lláh. The task of continually improving and perfecting this machinery is one which later Prophets will be called upon to achieve. They will move and work within the orbit of the Bahá'í cycle."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 14, 1935) [pg 475]

1. Fears for Next Manifestation

"As to the meaning of the quotation, 'My fears are for Him Who will be sent down unto you after Me', this refers to the Manifestation Who is to come after a thousand or more years, Who like all previous Messengers of God will be subjected to persecutions, but will eventually triumph over them. For men of ill-will have been and will always continue to be in this world, unless mankind reaches a state of complete and absolute perfection — a condition which is not only improbable but actually impossible to attain. The fundamental difference, however, between this

Dispensation and all previous ones is this, that in this Revelation the possibility of permanent schism between the followers of the Prophet has been prevented through the direct and explicit instructions providing for the necessary instruments designed to maintain the organic unity of the body of the faithful."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 1, 1934, Bahá'í News, No. 89, p. 1, January 1935)

1. **He Does Not Ask Us to Follow Him Blindly**

"Just as in the past the Prophets have been persecuted and their Mission was ridiculed, so has the Message of Bahá'u'lláh been scoffed at as a mere impractical idealism. From His earliest youth He was put in chains, expatriated and persecuted. But what do we observe in this Day? ...the principles He advocated are the only solution for practical political politics, the spiritual truths He voiced are the crying needs of man and the very things he requires for his moral and spiritual development."

"He does not ask us to follow Him blindly; as He says in one of His Tablets, God has endowed man with a mind to operate as a torchlight and guide him to the truth. Read His Words, consider His teachings and measure their value in the light of contemporary problems and the truth will surely be revealed to you. Read books such as the Iqan, Some Answered Questions, Nabil's Narrative, and you will appreciate the truth of His mission, as well as the true spirit He creates in whosoever follows His ways."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 26, 1933: Bahá'í News, No. 80, p. 5, January 1934)

1. **Christ and Bahá'u'lláh**

"The beloved Guardian has been very impressed with the latest book written by our dear departed coworker, George Townshend, 'Christ and Bahá'u'lláh'."

"This book outlines clearly the relationship of Christ and Bahá'u'lláh, and presents the manners in which the Bahá'ís are setting up the Kingdom of God for which the Christians are praying."

"It is challenging, and surely will affect many religious leaders."

"The Guardian feels your Assembly should make this book the basis of a very active teaching campaign."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, April 19, 1957: Bahá'í News, No. 316, p. 5, June 1957)

1. **Duration of the Bahá'í Cycle and Dispensation**

"Concerning your question relative to the duration of the Bahá'í Dispensation. There is no contradiction between Bahá'u'lláh's statement in the Iqan about the [pg 476] renewal of the City of God once every 1000 years, and that of the Guardian in the 'Dispensation' to the effect that the Bahá'í cycle will extend over a period of at least 500,000 years. The apparent

contradiction is due to the confusion of the terms cycle and dispensation. For while the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh will last for at least one thousand years, His cycle will extend still further to at least 500,000."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 14, 1935: Bahá'í News, No. 102, August 1936, pp. 2-3)

1. **No Explanation Given for 500,000 Year Period of Bahá'í Cycle**

"Abdu'l-Bahá has given no explanation regarding the 500,000 year period of the Bahá'í cycle. Individual believers are free to work out for themselves the explanation they desire, so long as they do not impose their views on others."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. **Identifies Himself with Other Prophets**

"As to the list of the prophets with whom Bahá'u'lláh identified Himself in the passage found on pages 26 and 27 of 'The Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh', their names are as follows: Abraham, Moses, Joseph, John the Baptist, Jesus, Imam Husayn, on whom Bahá'u'lláh has conferred an exceptionally exalted station, (and) the Bab."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, August 7, 1936)

1. **Bahá'u'lláh Did Not Name "Letters of the Living" for Himself**

"There were no 'Letters of the living' for Bahá'u'lláh, as there had been for the Bab's Dispensation. Dayyan was evidently the 3rd to believe in Bahá'u'lláh; who the second and the others were we don't know. The Bab, being the Manifestation, cannot be considered the first in this sense."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 19, 1947)

1. **The "Trustees" of Knowledge**

"We cannot be sure to whom Bahá'u'lláh refers as the 'trustees' of knowledge."

(Ibid.)

"Those words uttered by the Luminaries of Truth must needs be pondered, and should their significance be not grasped, enlightenment should be sought from the Trustees of the depositories of Knowledge, that these may expound their meaning, and unravel their mystery...."

(Bahá'u'lláh: The Kitab-i-Iqan, pp. 181-182)

1. **The Bahá'í Faith is a Way of Life Not a Mere Philosophical or Social Doctrine**

"For the Bahá'í Faith is above all a way of life. It is not a mere philosophical or social doctrine. It is a closely-knit and harmoniously functioning community, a worldwide spiritual fraternity which seeks to reform the world first and foremost by bringing about a deep inner spiritual change in the heart of individuals. To live the Teachings of the Cause should be the paramount concern of every true believer, and the only way to do so is to commune both in spirit and through actual concrete means with the entire community of the faithful. The Bahá'í Cause encourages community [pg 477] life and makes it a duty for every one of its followers to become a living, a fully active and responsible member of the world-wide Bahá'í fellowship."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 13, 1936)

1. The Teachings Should Be Conceived of as One Great Whole with Many Facets

"He feels that many of the perplexities that arise in your mind could be dissipated if you always conceived of the teachings as one great whole with many facets. Truth may, in covering different subjects, appear to be contradictory, and yet it is all one if you carry the thought through to the end. For instance the statement on life after death and the condition of believers and non-believers; you might say that a wonderful believer is like a diamond blazing in the sun, an unawakened soul like one in a dark room. But we must couple this concept with the other part of the teachings, that God's Mercy exceeds His Justice, and that soul can progress in the world beyond; the unilluminated soul can become brilliant."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 24, 1947)

1. The Whole Theory of Divine Revelation Rests on the Infallibility of the Prophets

"Regarding your Bahá'í friend who does not fully understand the infallibility of the Manifestation of God: You should influence that person to study the matter more deeply, and to realize that the whole theory of Divine Revelation rests on the infallibility of the Prophet, be He Christ, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, or one of the others. If they are not infallible, then They are not Divine, and thus lose that essential link with God which, we believe, is the bond that educates men and causes all human progress."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 11, 1942)

1. There Are a Minimum of Rituals in the Bahá'í Faith and No Man-Made Dogmas

"In response to your letter of 3rd September 1979 asking if there are dogmas and rites in the Bahá'í Faith, the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to convey its reply."

"A dogma is a principle, tenet or teaching, especially an authoritative teaching, and in these senses it is apparent that the Faith has 'dogmas'. The word is also used, however, to describe that body of rigid doctrines that have accumulated in a religion after the passing of its Founder; such man-made dogmas are entirely absent from the Bahá'í Faith, nor can it ever acquire them."

"Concerning rituals, the beloved Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer on 24th June 1949:

'Bahá'u'lláh has reduced all ritual and form to an absolute minimum in His Faith. The few forms that there are — like those associated with the two longer obligatory daily prayers — are only symbols of the inner attitude. There is a wisdom in them and a great blessing, but we cannot force ourselves to understand or feel these things; that is why He gave us also the very short and simple prayer, for those who did not feel the desire to perform the acts associated with the other two.'" [pg 478]

"Thus it can be seen that the Faith has certain simple rites prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh, such as the obligatory prayers, the marriage ceremony and the laws for the burial of the dead, but its teachings warn against developing them into a system of uniform and rigid rituals incorporating man-made forms and practices, such as exist in other religions where rituals usually consist of elaborate ceremonial practices performed by a member of the clergy. In another letter written on behalf of the Guardian his secretary stated:

'In these days the friends should, as much as possible, demonstrate through their deeds the independence of the Holy Faith of God, and its freedom from the customs, rituals and practices of a discredited and abrogated past.' (Translated from the Persian)."

"In freeing the believers from the religious rituals of the past and from those customs which are contrary to Bahá'í principles, the institutions of the Faith should be careful not to press the friends to arbitrarily discard those local traditions which are harmless and often colourful characteristics of particular peoples and tribes. In 'The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh', on page 41, we read:

'Let there be no misgivings as to the animating purpose of the world-wide Law of Bahá'u'lláh. Far from aiming at the subversion of the existing foundations of society, it seeks to broaden its basis, to remold its institutions in a manner consonant with the needs of an ever-changing world. It can conflict with no legitimate allegiances, nor can it undermine essential loyalties. Its purpose is neither to stifle the flame of a sane and intelligent patriotism in men's hearts, nor to abolish the system of national autonomy so essential if the evils of excessive centralization are to be avoided. It does not ignore, nor does it attempt to suppress, the diversity of ethnical origins, of climate, of history, of language and tradition, of thought and habit, that differentiate the peoples and nations of the world....'"

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of Bolivia, October 16, 1979)



C. Explanation of Some Bahá'í Teachings

1. What is Meant by a Personal God — God is Not Anthropomorphic

"What is meant by a personal God is a God Who is conscious of His creation, Who has a Mind, a Will, a Purpose, and not, as many scientists and materialists believe, an unconscious and determined force operating in the universe. Such conception of the Diving Being, as the Supreme and ever present Reality in the world, is not anthropomorphic, for it transcends all

human limitations and forms, and does by no means attempt to define the essence of Divinity which is obviously beyond any human comprehension. To say that God is a personal Reality does not mean that He has a physical form, or does in any way resemble a human being. To entertain such belief would be sheer blasphemy."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

1. **Man Lives in a Three Dimensional Plane of Consciousness**

"When we say that man lives in a three dimensional plane of consciousness, we should not interpret such statement in mathematical terms, though the basic idea at its root is certainly correct."

(Ibid.) [pg 479]

1. **Possibly Indians of America Were Influenced by Prophets in Asia**

"It is possible the Indians of the Americas were influenced in the remote past by Prophets in Asia. But again, as there is nothing in our teachings about it, we cannot do more than speculate."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 25, 1950)

1. **Mustaghath**

"The meaning of 'Mustaghath' is: 'He Who is invoked for help.'"

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, June 14, 1947)

1. **Reference in Gospel of St. John to Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh**

"The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26, is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

1. **"Lord" and "God" Refer to the Creator in Bahá'í Writings**

"In the Bahá'í Writings 'Lord' and 'God' refer to the Creator, not the Manifestations of God; in a few passages the word 'Lord' refers to the Manifestation, but usually it means 'God!'"

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 4, 1950)

1. **Copper Can Be Transmuted into Gold**

"Considering that a century ago, nobody knew the nature of matter, and couldn't split any kind of an atom, it should not surprise the scientist that Abdu'l-Bahá states that copper can be transmuted into gold."

"There may come a time, for all we know, when the mass of many atoms can be changed by scientists. We have no way of proving or disproving at present the statement of Abdu'l-Bahá. Just because we cannot demonstrate a contention in the Bahá'í Teachings does not mean the contention is not true."

"The same holds true of the statement of Bahá'u'lláh in the *Iqan*, regarding transmutation of copper into gold after seventy years, under certain conditions."

"We as Bahá'ís must assume that, as He had access to all knowledge, He was referring to a definite physical condition which theoretically might exist. Because we don't know what this condition is in scientific terms does not refute Bahá'u'lláh's statement at all."

"The Guardian hopes that Mr. ... will not let so small a thing stand in his path. The principle of Faith is to accept anything the Manifestation of God says, once you have accepted Him as being the Manifestation. That is really the crux of the whole matter. It is a question of confidence."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 14, 1955)

1. **Creatures Are to be Found on Every Planet**

"Regarding the passage on p. 163 of the 'Gleanings': The creatures which Bahá'u'lláh states to be found on every planet cannot be considered to be necessarily similar or different from human beings on this earth. Bahá'u'lláh does not specifically state whether such creatures are like or unlike us. He simply refers to the fact that there are creatures on every planet. It remains for science to discover one day the exact nature of these creatures."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 9, 1937) [pg 480]

1. **"Dayspring" Defined**

"I have asked the Guardian concerning the exact meaning of the word 'Dayspring'. Literally it means 'Dawn'. It is sometimes used in the sense of 'Horizon' or 'Rising point', and taken figuratively it is equivalent to fountain or source. It can also be used as referring to a Manifestation of God, as in the following expression 'Dayspring of Truth'."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 19, 1935)

1. **Absolute Being Can Be Attributed Only to God — His Creation Has Relative Existence, a Separate Reality**

"In a Tablet Bahá'u'lláh says that even though absolute being can be attributed only to God we cannot say that other objects have no being. A table has an existence even though its existence compared with the existence of the carpenter who is its maker is almost nothing. Compared to God nothing has existence but this does not mean that even stones do not have being. It is speaking relatively. Moreover, God reveals Himself in all things in the sense that He is the Source of their being and the Cause of their existence. Without Him all things will shrink down to

nothing. This however does not mean that all things are parts of God as the pantheist believes. The pantheist says that only God exists, objects are mere modes of His attributes. Bahá'u'lláh however says that objects have a separate reality that is created by God. The Master explains these things in the 'Some Answered Questions', especially in one of the last chapters. There are also many Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh explaining these matters. Most of them, however, have not yet been translated into English. Let us hope that some day this work will be done and the friends will appreciate how Bahá'u'lláh has solved their problems."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 26, 1932)

1. Meaning of "Sciences that Begin and End in Words"

"What Bahá'u'lláh meant primarily with 'sciences that begin and end in words' are those theological treatises and commentaries that encumber the human mind rather than help it to attain the truth. The students would devote their life to their study but still attain nowhere."

"Bahá'u'lláh surely never meant to include story writing under such a category; and shorthand and typewriting are both most useful talents very necessary in our present social and economic life."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 30, 1932)

1. Atomic Energy — "A Strange and Wonderful Instrument"

"The words of Bahá'u'lláh regarding 'a strange and wonderful instrument...' can, in the light of what the Master said in San Francisco, be taken as a reference to the great destructive power atomic energy can be made to release."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 16, 1946)

1. Bahá'u'lláh Exhorts Man to Try to Develop His Dormant Qualities

"The passage in the 'Epistle to the Son of the Wolf' in which Bahá'u'lláh says: 'Give that which is asked of you' means that man must always try to develop and reveal [pg 481] the qualities that are to be found potentially in him. It is an urge to self-improvement and individual progress, and has, therefore, no connection with that passage in the 'Aqdas' wherein Bahá'u'lláh forbids mendicity."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 8, 1936)

1. The "Veils" Are Very Thin at the Time of the Manifestation

"As to the words of Abdu'l-Bahá about the 'vineyard will not then be so easy to find', etc. This supports many such remarks: He explained often that at the time of the Manifestation the veils are very thin, so to speak. Many souls accepted seemingly spontaneously, on the basis of a dream, or just hearing the Cause existed! But later, this first phase passes, and the people require more arguments and proof, acceptance comes less as a flash of spiritual insight and

more as an intellectual process. This is quite different from the future glory of the Cause and the divine origin of its institutions, graphically outlined by Him. When the Master says the Local and National Assemblies are the 'Voice of truth', He means here that they must be obeyed, not that they are infallible."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 25, 1947)

1. **Today It is a Greater Responsibility to Reject the Manifestation**

"It is certainly a much greater responsibility to reject the Manifestation in this day than it was in the past Dispensations, inasmuch as man, and indeed humanity as a whole, have been endowed with a greater measure of spiritual receptivity than ever before, and consequently it would be a much graver sin to repudiate the revealed Truth now than it would have been the case in bygone ages and centuries."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 14, 1939)

1. **Cornerstone of All the Teachings — Oneness of Humanity**

"It is most essential that the believers should be quite clear on this point, as the principle of the oneness of humanity is the cornerstone of all the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and should be presented as such, without the least hesitation, by the friends."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 11, 1937; cited by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, August 8, 1968)

1. **"He Who Loves His Kind"**

"With reference to your question as to the meaning of the passage of 'he who loves his kind', the statement of Bahá'u'lláh does not refer to any special race or class of people. Rather it includes the entire human race, irrespective of any class, creed or colour. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh is not a particularistic appeal to a group of people. It is a Universal Message and all-inclusive appeal. His principle of the oneness of mankind is world-wide in its spirit, in its application, and covers the entire field of human relationships."

(Ibid.)

1. **"From It (Earth) We Have Created You"**

"Regarding the passage on page 231 of the 'Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh', the sentence beginning with the words 'From it (earth) have We created you', is a quotation from the Qur'an...." [pg 482]

"By 'second time' is meant the spiritual resurrection of man, that is to say, his acceptance of the Divine Manifestation. But Muslims have given this term a literal interpretation: the physical resurrection of man. Bahá'u'lláh is using this same interpretation current among Muslims to defeat their argument."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 8, 1936)

1. **Second Time — Means the Spiritual Resurrection of Man**

"With regard to the Racine Assembly's request for an explanation of the passage on page 231 of the 'Gleanings' beginning with the words: 'From it (earth) have We created you...': this is a verse from the Qur'an... Bahá'u'lláh in quoting this passage seeks to refute the argument of the Muslims, who attach a purely literal interpretation to this verse of the Qur'an, and therefore consider it as implying bodily resurrection. To these Muslims He says, you who literally believe that the human body will return to dust and will be raised from it again, and therefore attach so much importance to this mortal world, how then can you wax so proud, and boast over things which are but perishable and consequently void of any true and lasting value."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the Racine Assembly, February 7, 1939: Bahá'í News, No. 124, p. 6, April 1939)

1. **The Day of Resurrection, of Judgement, and the Tomb**

"...Concerning the meaning of 'Resurrection': Although this term is often used by Bahá'u'lláh in His Writings, as in the passage quoted in your letter, its meaning is figurative. The tomb mentioned is also allegorical, i.e., the tomb of unbelief. The Day of Resurrection, according to Bahá'í interpretation, is the Judgement Day, the Day when unbelievers will be called upon to give account of their actions, and whether the world has prevented them from acknowledging the new Revelation."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, Dawn of a New Day, p. 79)

1. **Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh Primarily for This Planet**

"...On page 231 of the same book (Gleanings): No particular force is meant. It is symbolic of the regenerative power with which a righteous act is endowed."

"As to your question whether the power of Bahá'u'lláh extends over our solar system and to higher worlds: While the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, it should be noted, is primarily for this planet, yet the spirit animating it is all-embracing, and the scope therefore cannot be restricted or defined."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 14, 1938)

1. **Abha Kingdom**

"With reference to your question as to the meaning of the term 'Abha Kingdom', it is another term for the spiritual world beyond the grave."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

1. "Singled Out"

"The term 'singled out' on p. 172 of the 'Gleanings' means chosen one or favoured one."

(From a letter of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 26, 1939, from Spiritualism, Reincarnation and Related Subjects, p. 5) [pg 483]

1. Evolution of the Soul

"The passage on p. 156 of 'Gleanings' regarding the evolution of the soul after death clearly proves that the soul after its separation from the body keeps its individuality and its consciousness both in relation to other souls and to the human beings in the world."

(Ibid.)

1. "Perishing"

"The word 'perish' on p. 190 of 'Gleanings' does not mean that the human soul will cease to exist, but will be deprived of all spiritual capacity and understanding."

(Ibid.)

1. "No Man Attaineth Everlasting Life"

"Also on p. 183, the passage: 'No man can attain everlasting life...' should not be taken literally: by 'everlasting life' is meant spiritual felicity, communion with the Divine Spirit."

(Ibid.)

1. Differences of Station and Classes in Society

"As regards the meaning of the passage of page 188 of the 'Gleanings': It is an emphasis by Bahá'u'lláh on the importance of maintaining differences of station and classes in society and does not refer to the question of race."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 22, 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 105, p. 1, February 1937)

1. "Hidden Words"

"As to the passage No. 13 of the Arabic Hidden Words: That which Bahá'u'lláh declares we can find abiding within us is the power of the Divine Spirit, the reflection of the light of His Revelation. This reflection of the Divine Spirit, however, can in no way be compared to the Revelation which God discloses to His Prophets and Messengers. The similarity in the terminology should not confuse this distinction which is most fundamental."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to two believers, December 7, 1935)

1. Iqan, Kitab-I-Iqan — "City of God", Meaning of

"...as to the meaning of the passage in the 'Iqan' in which Bahá'u'lláh refers to the renewal of the 'City of God' once in about a thousand years: this, as the word about implies, is simply an approximate date, and should not therefore be taken literally."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 29, 1938: Dawn of a New Day, p. 202)

1. **"Who Out of Utter Nothingness"**

"The statement in the 'Gleanings', pp. 64-65, 'who out of utter nothingness...', etc., should be taken in a symbolic and not a literal sense. It is only to demonstrate the power and greatness of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand 1923-1957, p. 41) [pg 484]

1. **"Hosts of His Testament" and "Cord"**

"Regarding your questions: By 'Government', on page 210 of the 'Bahá'í World' Vol. VI, is meant the executive body which will enforce the laws when the Bahá'í Faith has reached the point when it is recognized and accepted entirely by any particular nation. On page 205, indeed, the 'Hosts of His Testament' refers to those who are firm in the Will and Testament of Bahá'u'lláh and who defend and uphold it."

"The word 'cord', so often mentioned in the teachings, means both the Faith itself and also the power of the Faith which sustains those who cling to it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 18, 1941; also see The Will and Testament of Abdu'l-Bahá, pp. 14-15)

1. **Sura of the Sun, Explanation of**

"The passage in Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet in which He explains the sura of 'The Sun' should not be interpreted literally. It does not mean that after the Day of Resurrection praise and peace will cease to be vouchsafed to the Prophet. Rather it means to the end of time, i.e., indefinitely and for all times."

(Shoghi Effendi: Dawn of a New Day, pp. 79-80)

1. **Intercession**

"The intercession spoken of by Bahá'u'lláh in one of His prayers which you have quoted is a purely spiritual act and is applicable to Muhammad as well as to all Prophets. This passage, however, refers more particularly to that kind of intercession in which Muslims believe, though the manner and circumstances of it, according to Bahá'í belief, are mysterious and unknowable."

(Shoghi Effendi: Dawn of a New Day, p. 80)

1. "Knowledge Consists of Twenty-Seven Letters..."

"Regarding the passage beginning with the words: 'Knowledge consists of twenty-seven letters': this should not be interpreted literally. It only indicates the relative greatness and superiority of the new Revelation."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. Tablet of Ahmad — The Word "Ungodly"

"In the passage 'eschew all fellowship with the ungodly,' Bahá'u'lláh means that we should shun the company of those who disbelieve in God and are wayward. The word 'ungodly' is a reference to such perverse people. The words 'Be thou as a flame of fire to My enemies and a river of life eternal to My loved ones' should not be taken in their literal sense. Bahá'u'lláh's advice is that again we should flee from the enemies of God and instead seek the fellowship of His lovers."

(Shoghi Effendi: Dawn of a New Day, p. 200)

"The Tablet of Ahmad was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh to be read when one feels himself in exceptionally difficult circumstances. There is nothing obligatory about its use, and every person has to decide for himself whether he desires to learn it by heart or not...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the Bahá'ís of Kenosha, April 14, 1932)

1. The Tablet of the Holy Mariner

"The Tablet of the Holy Mariner was revealed by Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad. The [pg 485] Holy Mariner is a reference to Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and the Ark mentioned in that Tablet is the Ark of His Cause."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 8, 1936)

"Concerning the Tablet of the Holy Mariner, it is one of the most significant Tablets revealed by Bahá'u'lláh during the last days of His stay in Baghdad, and refers to the sad though momentous events which were to transpire soon after His arrival in Adrianople. Its main significance lies in the fact that in it Bahá'u'lláh clearly foreshadows the grave happenings which eventually led to the defection of Subh-i-Azal, and to the schism which the latter thought to create within the ranks of the faithful."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, August 10, 1934)

1. Tablet to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas

"Bahá'u'lláh never revealed a Tablet to the President of the U.S.A. In His Book the Aqdas He revealed words addressed to the Presidents of the Republics of the Americas, but no single Tablet was ever revealed to any one of them."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 21, 1942)

1. **Tablet of Joseph**

"The Tablet of Joseph does not refer to Joseph Smith."

"Joseph Smith we do not consider a Prophet, minor or otherwise. Certainly no references he made would have foretold the coming of this Revelation in his capacity as a Prophet."

(Ibid.)

1. **Meaning of "Verities of the Faith"**

"By 'verities of the Faith' he means the great teachings and fundamentals enshrined in our Bahá'í literature; these we can find by reading the books, studying under Bahá'í scholars at summer schools and in classes, and through the aid of study outlines."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 19, 1947)

1. **Meaning of the Word "Patron" in Seven Valleys**

"Regarding your question about the meaning of the words on page 50 of the Seven and Four Valleys: This is a verse of the Qur'an which Bahá'u'lláh quotes; the word patron here means helper — in other words when God misleads a soul, he shall find no other helper. You would find Sale's translation and comments on the Qur'an helpful in getting at the story back of such verses as this one."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 18, 1946)



D. Abdu'l-Bahá

1. **Abdu'l-Bahá**

"...The herald who proclaimed the written names is Abdu'l-Bahá Who announceth the names of those who deserve salvation and are firm in the Covenant of God...."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. III, p. 681) [pg 486]

1. **All Thy Doings Recorded**

"...Thou shalt, after thy departure, discover what We have revealed unto thee, and shalt find all thy doings recorded in the Book wherein the works of all them that dwell on earth, be they greater or less than the weight of an atom, are noted down...."

1. Chief Objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's Ministry

"As to the three aims which Shoghi Effendi has stated in his 'America and the Most Great Peace' to have been the chief objectives of Abdu'l-Bahá's ministry, it should be pointed out that the first was the establishment of the Cause in America. The erection of the Bahá'í Temple in Ishqabad and the building on Mt. Carmel of a mausoleum marking the resting-place of the Bab were the two remaining ones."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 14, 1933: Bahá'í News, No. 51, February 1934, p. 5)

1. Experiences with Abdu'l-Bahá

"It is very important that the Bahá'ís should accurately record their experiences with the Master and events in the Cause's progress for these things form data for future histories of the Cause. They have not, however, the authority of the revealed Word of the Tablets,..."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 23, 1949: Bahá'í News, No. 228, February 1950, p. 4)

1. Stories About Abdu'l-Bahá

"He would also urge you to attach no importance to the stories told about Abdu'l-Bahá or to those attributed to Him by the friends. These should be regarded in the same light as the notes and impressions of visiting pilgrims. They need not be suppressed, but they also should not be given prominence or official recognition."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, October 2, 1935)

1. Day of the Covenant, Day of the Ascension

"The Day of the Covenant Nov. 26th, and the Day of the Ascension, Nov. 28th, anniversaries of the birth and the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá, must be observed by the friends coming together, but work is not prohibited. In other words the friends must regard observance of these two anniversaries as obligatory — but suspension of work is not to be regarded as obligatory."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, January 21, 1951: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 89)

1. When the Interpreter of the Writings Says Nothing on a Subject Then the Individual is Free to Accept or Refute

"As regards what Mirza Abu'l Fazl has said concerning the Seven Religions of the past, Shoghi Effendi wishes to emphasize that what is truly authoritative are the words of the Master. In all such cases we should try and find out what He has said [pg 487] and abide by His words, even though they seem in conflict with the findings of modern scholars. If He does not say anything on the subject, then the individual is free to accept, or refute what scholars, such as Abu'l Fazl, say. Through the discussion of these (statements by scholars), the truth will ultimately be found, but at no time should their decision be considered as final."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, February 23, 1933: On Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism and Related Subjects, A Compilation from the Universal House of Justice, p. 1)

1. **Praying to Abdu'l-Bahá**

"...he wishes me to explain that although Abdu'l-Bahá's station is not that of a Manifestation of God, nevertheless supplications may be addressed to Him. It is essential, however, that every believer should realize that while doing so he is directing his thoughts towards the Master as an intermediary between him and the Manifestation, and not as the Source of Divine Revelation and spiritual guidance. Provided this distinction is clearly established there can be no harm or objection in addressing prayers to Abdu'l-Bahá."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, December 1, 1934: Bahá'í News, No. 89, February 1935, p. 4)

1. **Through Him One Can Address Bahá'u'lláh**

"If you find you need to visualize someone when you pray, think of the Master. Through Him you can address Bahá'u'lláh. Gradually try to think of the qualities of the Manifestation, and in that way a mental form will fade out, for after all the body is not the thing. His Spirit is there and is the essential, everlasting element."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 31, 1949: Bahá'í News, No. 222, August 1949, p. 2)

1. **Photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá**

"In connection with the selection of particular photographs of Abdu'l-Bahá for circulation among the friends, the Guardian strongly feels that no definite ruling should be laid down establishing the superiority or distinction of any particular photograph. The friends should be left quite free to use their individual independent judgement in this matter."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, May 15, 1940: Bahá'í News, No. 138, September 1940, p. 1)

1. **Photograph Placed in a Dignified Position**

"It is quite important that the Greatest Name or a picture of Abdu'l-Bahá be placed in a dignified position. They should not be placed on the floor nor, on the other hand, should they be held above the heads of the people in the photograph. It would seem that the proper position would be for them to be held about chest height."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States: Bahá'í News, No. 265, March 1953, p. 4)

1. **Preservation of Relics**

"Regarding the preservation of relics associated with Abdu'l-Bahá, the general principle should be that any object used by Him in person should be preserved for [pg 488] posterity, whether in the Local or the National archives. It is the duty and responsibility of the Bahá'í Assemblies to ascertain carefully whether such objects are genuine or not, and to exercise the utmost care and caution in the matter."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, July 28, 1936: Principles of Bahá'í Administration, p. 34)

1. **Ages of the Faith and Epochs of the Ages**

"The Guardian wishes me to explain that there is no relationship between the epochs of the Divine Plan, and the epochs of the Ages of the Faith.

"The Faith is divided into three Ages: the Heroic, the Formative, the Golden Age, as has been outlined in his writings. The Heroic Age closed with the Ascension of Abdu'l-Bahá. The Formative Age is divided into epochs. The first epoch lasted 25 years. We are now actually in the second epoch of the Formative Age. How long the Formative Age will last is not known — and there will probably be a number of epochs in it."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 18, 1953)

1. **The Divine Plan**

"The Divine Plan of Abdu'l-Bahá is divided into epochs. The first Seven Year Plan constituted the first stage of the first epoch; the second Seven Year Plan constitutes the second stage; — while the 10 year Crusade will constitute the third stage of the first epoch of the Divine Plan. The first epoch of the Divine Plan will conclude with the conclusion of the 10 year Crusade."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, January 18, 1953)

1. **The Tablets of the Divine Plan Are the Charter for Teaching**

"As you are no doubt aware, the Tablets of the Divine Plan, which were revealed by Abdu'l-Bahá during the First World War, are the Charter for the teaching of the Faith. All the teaching plans launched by the beloved Guardian, as well as those subsequently directed by the Universal

House of Justice, are stages in the implementation of this master plan conceived by the Centre of the Covenant for the diffusion of the Message of Bahá'u'lláh."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, September 29, 1977)

1. **Apostolic and Heroic Age of the Faith**

"...the Apostolic and Heroic Age of our Faith fell into three distinct epochs, of nine, of thirty-nine and of twenty-nine years duration, associated respectively with the Babi Dispensation and the ministries of Bahá'u'lláh and of Abdu'l-Bahá. This Primitive Age of the Bahá'í Era, unapproached in spiritual fecundity by any period associated with the mission of the Founder of any previous Dispensation, was impregnated, from its inception to its termination, with the creative energies generated through the advent of two independent Manifestations and the establishment of a Covenant unique in the spiritual annals of mankind."

(From a letter of Shoghi Effendi to the American Bahá'ís, June 5, 1947)

1. **The Application of the Term "Iron Age"**

"The term 'Iron Age' suggests the age of labour, of construction; a relatively [pg 489] primitive epoch as opposed to a 'Golden Age', an age of fulfillment, fruition, attainment."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 19, 1947)



E. Hidden Words

1. **The "Hidden Words" — A Collection of Gem-Like Utterances**

"...the Hidden Words was originally designated the 'Hidden Book of Fatimih,' and was identified by its Author with the Book of that same name, believed by Shi'ah Islam to be in the possession of the promised Qa'im, and to consist of words of consolation addressed by the angel Gabriel, at God's command, to Fatimih, and dictated to the Imam Ali, for the sole purpose of comforting her in her hour of bitter anguish after the death of her illustrious Father. The significance of this dynamic spiritual leaven cast into the life of the world for the reorientation of the minds of men, the edification of their souls and the rectification of their conduct can best be judged by the description of its character given in the opening passage by its Author: 'This is that which hath descended from the Realm of Glory, uttered by the tongue of power and might, and revealed unto the Prophets of old....'"

(Shoghi Effendi: *God Passes By*, p. 140)

1. **The Meaning of the Name "Hidden Words"**

"With regard to your question concerning the meaning of the name 'Hidden Words'. It is, indeed, one of the most suggestive titles of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh. These words are called hidden due to the fact that men have had neither the knowledge nor a true sense of appreciation of them before they were revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. It is through Him, Who is the sole Mouthpiece of God in this age, that spiritual realities and truths have been once more reinterpreted and revealed afresh to mankind. Bahá'u'lláh's Message is thus the only key to a true understanding of the mysteries that envelop man's spiritual life."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 1, 1935).

1. The Hidden Words Have No Sequence

"The Hidden Words have no sequence. They are jewel-like thoughts cast out of the mind of the Manifestation of God to admonish and counsel men...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 22, 1949)

1. Passages in which Bahá'u'lláh Refers to Man as "Son of Spirit"

"As to your second question concerning those passages in the 'Hidden Words' in which Bahá'u'lláh refers to man as 'Son of Spirit', 'Son of existence', 'Son of humanity' etc., the word 'son' used in this connection is a kind of collective noun, meaning mankind and has, therefore, no connotation of any sex differentiation between man and woman whatever."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 19, 1935)

1. Hidden Words (Arabic) No. 13 Explained

"Thou hast asked about the statement in the Hidden Words which reads, 'O Son of Spirit! Turn thy face so that thou mayest find Me within thee, Powerful, Mighty, and Supreme.' This is the statement to which His Holiness, the Christ, referred His Apostles in the Gospel, saying: 'The Father is in the Son and the Son is in you.'"[pg 490]

"This is evident that, when the hearts are purified and through the divine education and heavenly teachings become the manifestators of infinite perfections, they are like clear mirrors and the Sun of Truth will reflect with might, power and omnipotence in such mirrors, and to such an extent that whatsoever is brought before them is illumined and ignited. This is a brief interpretation because of lack of time. Therefore, do thou reflect and ponder over it, so that the doors of significance may be opened before thine eyes."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Extract from Tablet to Thornton Chase, June 1911: Star of the West, Vol. II, Nos. 7 and 8, pp. 11-12)



F. Christ

1. Date of Birth of Jesus Christ

"Regarding the date of the birth of Jesus Christ: Abdu'l-Bahá's statement on this subject should be considered by the Bahá'ís as the standard, and as the basis of their calculation."

(From a letter dated July 10, 1939 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

1. Christ, Virgin Birth of

"First regarding the birth of Jesus Christ. In light of what Bahá'u'lláh and Abdu'l-Bahá have stated concerning this subject it is evident that Jesus came into this world through the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, and that consequently His birth was quite miraculous. This is an established fact, and the friends need not feel at all surprised, as the belief in the possibility of miracles has never been rejected in the Teachings. Their importance, however, has been minimized."

(From a letter dated December 31, 1937 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

1. Miracles Are Always Possible

"Again with regard to your question relative to the birth of Jesus: He wishes me to inform you that there is nothing further he can add to the explanation he gave you in his previous communication regarding this point. One thing, however, he wishes again to bring to your attention, namely that miracles are always possible, even though they do not constitute a regular channel whereby God reveals His power to mankind. To reject miracles on the ground that they imply a breach of the laws of nature is a very shallow, well-nigh a stupid argument, inasmuch as God Who is the Author of the universe can, in His Wisdom and Omnipotence, bring any change, no matter how temporary, in the operation of the laws which He Himself has created.

"The Teachings do not tell us of any miraculous birth besides that of Jesus."

(From a letter dated February 27, 1938 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

1. Bahá'í Teachings in Agreement with Doctrines of Catholic Church Concerning the Virgin Birth

"With regard to your question concerning the Virgin Birth of Jesus: On this point, as on several others, the Bahá'í Teachings are in full agreement with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. In the 'Kitab-i-Iqan' (Book of Certitude) p. 56, and in a few other Tablets still unpublished, Bahá'u'lláh confirms, however indirectly, the Catholic conception of the Virgin Birth. Also Abdu'l-Bahá in the 'Some [pg 491] Answered Questions', Chap. XII, p. 73, explicitly states that 'Christ

found existence through the Spirit of God' which statement necessarily implies, when viewed in the light of the text, that Jesus was not the son of Joseph."

(From a letter dated October 14, 1945 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

1. **Christ's Brothers and Sisters Were Born in the Natural Way**

"We believe that Christ only was conceived immaculately. His brothers and sisters would have been born in the natural way and conceived naturally."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to Dr. Shook, November 19, 1945: Bahá'í News, No. 210, p. 3, August 1948)

1. **High Station of Mary — False Accusations**

"It would be sacrilege for a Bahá'í to believe that the parents of Jesus were illegally married and that the latter was consequently of an illegal union. Such a possibility cannot be even conceived by a believer who recognizes the high station of Mary and the Divine Prophethood of Jesus Christ. It is this same false accusation which the people of His Day attributed to Mary that Bahá'u'lláh indirectly repudiated in the Iqan. The only alternative therefore is to admit that the birth of Jesus has been miraculous. The operation of miracles is not necessarily irrational or illogical. It does by no means constitute a limitation of the Omnipotence of God. The belief in the possibilities of miracles, on the contrary, implies that God's power is beyond any limitation whatsoever. For it is only logical to believe that the Creator, Who is the sole Author of all the laws operating in the universe, is above them and can, therefore, if He deems it necessary, alter them at His Own Will. We, as humans, cannot possibly attempt to read His Mind, and to fully grasp His Wisdom. Mystery is therefore an inseparable part of true religion, and as such, should be recognized by the believers."

(From a letter of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 1, 1935: Canadian Bahá'í News, February 1968, p. 11)

1. **"Dove" Simply a Metaphor**

"...The story about the dove is simply a metaphor. No dove came down. Amongst the people, John the Baptist felt that the Holy Spirit was in Christ. The Holy Spirit was always with Christ. He knew about His mission from early childhood."

(Words of Abdu'l-Bahá: Star of the West, Vol. XIV, p. 274)

1. **The Bahá'í Faith Recognizes the Divine Origin of Christianity and the Immaculacy of the Virgin Mary**

"As to the position of Christianity, let it be stated without any hesitation or equivocation that its divine origin is unconditionally acknowledged, that the Sonship and Divinity of Jesus Christ are fearlessly asserted, that the divine inspiration of the Gospel is fully recognized, that the reality of

(Shoghi Effendi: The Promised Day is Come, pp. 109-110)

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 29, 1937)

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 12, 1933)

1. The Father Himself Has Come and Fulfilled the Mission of Christ the Son

"A Catholic background is an excellent introduction to the Faith, and one that Mrs. ... should feel gratified for having had. Though doctrines of the church today are no longer needed — as the Father Himself has come, and thus fulfilled the mission of Christ the Son — yet the foundation they lay of spiritual discipline, and their emphasis on spiritual values and adherence to moral laws, is very important and very close to our own beliefs."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to two believers, August 17, 1941) [pg 493]

1. Bahá'ís Do Not Believe in a Bodily Resurrection After the Crucifixion

"...We do not believe that there was a bodily resurrection after the Crucifixion of Christ, but that there was a time after His Ascension when His disciples perceived spiritually His true greatness and realized He was eternal in being. This is what has been reported symbolically in the New Testament and been misunderstood. His eating with His disciples after the resurrection is the same thing."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 9, 1947)

1. Bahá'ís Should Try to Find a Spiritual Meaning to the So-Called Miraculous Events Recorded in the Gospel

"Concerning the resurrection of Christ, he wishes to call your attention to the fact that in this as well as in practically all the so-called miraculous events recorded in the Gospel we should, as Bahá'ís, seek to find a spiritual meaning and to entirely discard the physical interpretation attached to them by many of the Christian sects. The resurrection of Christ was, indeed, not physical but essentially spiritual, and is symbolic of the truth that the reality of man is to be found not in his physical constitution, but in his soul. A careful perusal of the 'Iqan' and of the 'Some Answered Questions' makes this indubitably clear."

(From a letter written to an individual believer on behalf of the Guardian, August 14, 1934)

1. Jesus Christ Established Beyond a Doubt the Primacy of Peter¹

"Now with regard to your questions. First concerning the statement of Jesus Christ 'Thou art Peter and upon this rock etc.'; this saying of Jesus establishes beyond any doubt the primacy of Peter and also the principle of succession, but is not explicit enough regarding the nature and functioning of the Church itself. The Catholics have read too much into that statement, and derived from it certain conclusions which are quite unjustifiable."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, September 7, 1938)

1. Regarding the Signs that Would Herald the Advent of the New Manifestation

¹ (See also: Nos. 542, 1643)

"Now as regards the signs that would herald the advent of the new Manifestation. The Guardian wishes you to read over very carefully Bahá'u'lláh's explanation as recorded in the 'Iqan'. There it is made clear that what is meant by the appearance of the Son of God after the calamitous events preceding His coming is the revelation of His full glory and its recognition and acceptance by the peoples of the world, and not his physical appearance. For Bahá'u'lláh, Whose advent marks the return of the Son in the Glory of the Father, has already appeared, and the signs predicted in the Gospel have not yet fully been realized. Their complete fulfilment, however, would mark the beginning of the recognition of His full station by the peoples of the world. Then and only then will His appearance be made completely manifest."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 29, 1937)

1. **The Qur'an Concerning Christ**

"Regarding the passage you enclosed about the Qur'an: In reality there is no contradiction at all; when the Qur'an denies Christ is the Son of God it is not refuting His Words but the false interpretation of them by the Christians who read [pg 494] into them a relationship of an almost corporeal nature, whereas Almighty God has no parents or offspring. What is meant by Christ, is His spirit's relation to the Infinite Spirit, and this the Qur'an does not deny. It is in a sense attributable — this kind of Sonship — to all the Prophets."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 19, 1945)

1. **The Reformation Was a Challenge to Man-Made Organization of the Church**

"What contribution the Reformation did really make was to seriously challenge, and partly undermine, the edifice which the Fathers of the Church had themselves reared, and to discard and demonstrate the purely human origin of the elaborate doctrines, ceremonies and institutions which they had devised. The Reformation was a right challenge to the man-made organization of the Church, and as such was a step in advance. In its origins, it was a reflection of the new spirit which Islam had released, and a God-sent punishment to those who had refused to embrace its truth."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 28, 1936)

1. **The Period of Turmoil which Accompanies a New Manifestation**

"The passage in the Gospel of Matthew 19:30 is a reference to the period of turmoil that accompanies the appearance of a new Manifestation, at which time the humble and the lowly who accept the new Revelation will be raised and the outwardly high, but inwardly corrupt and low, will be abased and degraded."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, January 14, 1938)

1. **Ecclesiastics 12:6 — Man's Neglect of God**

"The passage in Ecclesiastics 12:6 should be interpreted allegorically, and not be taken in its literal meaning. It has reference to the effect of man's neglect of God his creator."

(Ibid.)

1. There is a Spark of Divinity in Man

"In the book of Genesis 1:26 — This passage simply means that there is a spark of divinity in man, and not that man is co-equal with the Manifestation of God. Again the friends should avoid literal interpretations of the Bible."

(Ibid.)

1. Reference to Bahá'u'lláh in St. John

"The passage in the Gospel of St. John 14:26 is a reference to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, through Whose coming this prophecy was fulfilled."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

1. We Do Not Believe in Genesis Literally — The World Was Not Created in Seven Days

"We Bahá'ís do not believe in Genesis literally. We know this world was not created in seven days, or six, or eight, but evolved gradually over a period of millions of years, as science has proved. As to where the idea of a seven-day week originated, it is certainly very ancient and you should refer to scholars for an answer."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 28, 1949) [pg 495]

1. The Years of Noah Are Not Years as We Count Them and We Cannot Substantiate Stories of the Old Testament

"The years of Noah are not years as we count them, and as our teachings do not state that this reference to years means His dispensation, we cannot interpret it this way."

"We have no way of substantiating the stories of the Old Testament other than references to them in our teachings, so we cannot say exactly what happened at the battle of Jericho."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 25, 1950)

1. When Abdu'l-Bahá States that We Believe What is in the Bible, He Means in Substance

"When Abdu'l-Bahá states we believe what is in the Bible, He means in substance. Not that we believe every word of it to be taken literally or that every word is the authentic saying of the Prophet."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer and cited on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, March 13, 1986 in a letter to a believer)



G. Islam

1. The Date of Birth of Muhammad is Unknown

"There is a disagreement among Oriental scholars relative to the exact date of the birth of Muhammad. You should refer to authorities on the subject, such as Sale, whose translation of the Qur'an has become almost classical."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939: Bahá'í News, No. 162, p. 5, April 1943)

1. Biblical References to Muhammad and Ali

"References in the Bible to 'Mt. Paran' and 'Paraclete' refer to Muhammad's Revelation: Deuteronomy 33:2, Genesis 21:21, Numbers 12:16, Numbers 13:25. Genesis 17:20 refers to the twelve Imams and in the Revelation of St. John, chapter 11, where it mentions two witnesses, it refers to Muhammad and Ali."

"The figures 1290 date from the declaration of Muhammad, ten years before His flight to Medina."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, December 26, 1941)

1. Islam

"Islam attained a very high spiritual state, but western scholars are prone to judging it by Christian standards. One cannot call one world Faith superior to another, as they all come from God; they are progressive, each suited to certain needs of the times."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian by his secretary to an individual believer, November 19, 1945: Bahá'í News, No. 210, p. 3, August 1948) [pg 496]

1. Muhammad's Teachings Heightened and Guarded the Cause of Human Development

"Shoghi Effendi hopes that your lectures will not only serve to deepen the knowledge of the believers in the doctrines and culture of Islam, but will set their hearts afire with the love of everything that vitally pertains to Muhammad and His Faith."

"There is so much misunderstanding about Islam in the West in general that you have to dispel. Your task is rather difficult and requires a good deal of erudition. Your chief task is to acquaint

the friends with the pure teachings of the Prophet as recorded in the Qur'an, and then to point out how these teachings have, throughout succeeding ages, influenced nay guided the course of human development. In other words you have to show the position and significance of Islam in the history of civilization."

"The Bahá'í view on that subject is that the Dispensation of Muhammad, like all other Divine Dispensations, has been fore-ordained, and that as such forms an integral part of the Divine plan for the spiritual, moral and social, development of mankind. It is not an isolated religious phenomenon, but is closely and historically related to the Dispensation of Christ, and those of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh. It was intended by God to succeed Christianity, and it was therefore the duty of the Christians to accept it as firmly as they had adhered to the religion of Christ."

"You should also cautiously emphasize the truth that due to the historical order of its appearance, and also because of the obviously more advanced character of its teachings, Islam constitutes a fuller revelation of God's purpose for mankind. The so-called Christian civilization of which the Renaissance is one of the most striking manifestations is essentially Muslim in its origins and foundations. When medieval Europe was plunged in darkest barbarism, the Arabs regenerated and transformed by the spirit released by the religion of Muhammad were busily engaged in establishing a civilization the like of which their contemporary Christians in Europe had never witnessed before. It was eventually through Arabs that civilization was introduced to the West. It was through them that the philosophy, science and culture which the old Greeks had developed found their way to Europe. The Arabs were the ablest translators, and linguists of their age, and it is thanks to them that the writings of such well-known thinkers as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were made available to the Westerners. It is wholly unfair to attribute the efflorescence of European culture during the Renaissance period to the influence of Christianity. It was mainly the product of the forces released by the Muhammadan Dispensation."

"From the standpoint of institutionalism Islam far surpasses true Christianity as we know it in the Gospels. There are infinitely more laws and institutions in the Qur'an than in the Gospel. While the latter's emphasis is mainly, not to say wholly, on individual and personal conduct, the Qur'an stresses the importance of society. This social emphasis acquires added importance and significance in the Bahá'í Revelation. When carefully and impartially compared, the Qur'an marks a definite advancement on the Gospel, from the standpoint of spiritual and humanitarian progress." [pg 497]

"The truth is that Western historians have for many centuries distorted the facts to suit their religious and ancestral prejudices. The Bahá'ís should try to study history anew, and to base all their investigations first and foremost on the written Scriptures of Islam and Christianity."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, April 27, 1936)

1. Clarification of Certain Issues Regarding Islam, the Imam Husayn, the Imamate, etc.

"Ali's appointment was clear to the Khalifs, who actually disregarded the Prophet's oral statements."

"The usurpation occurred immediately after the Prophet's death."

"Ali did not feel unqualified, but wished to avoid schism, which, unfortunately, could not be prevented."

"The schisms that have afflicted the religions preceding the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh establish its distinction from all previous Revelations, and single it out among all other Dispensations, as stated by Abdu'l-Bahá."

"The guidance vouchsafed to the Imams regarding the laws and institutions of Islam was absolute and unqualified. Their infallibility was derived directly from the Manifestation."

"The Bab's descent from the Imam Husayn is no doubt a proof of the validity of the Imamate. According to Nabil the dream the Bab had made him first conscious of His Revelation."

"The precedence of the name Husayn over Ali does establish the greatness of Imam Husayn."

"Imam Husayn has, as attested by the Iqan, been endowed with special grace and power among the Imams, hence the mystical reference to Bahá'u'lláh as the return of Imam Husayn, meaning the Revelation in Bahá'u'lláh of those attributes with which Imam Husayn had been specifically endowed."

"Joseph was one of the 'Sent Ones' of the Qur'an, meaning a Manifestation of God."

"The friends should uphold Islam as a revealed Religion in teaching the Cause but need not make, at present, any particular attempt to teach it solely and directly to non-Bahá'ís at this time."

"The mission of the American Bahá'ís is, no doubt, to eventually establish the truth of Islam in the West."

"The spirit of Islam, no doubt, was the living germ of modern Civilization; which derived its impetus from the Islamic culture in the Middle Ages, a culture that was the fruit of the Faith of Muhammad."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, July 30, 1941)

1. How to Study the Qur'an

"It is certainly most difficult to thoroughly grasp all the Surihs of the Qur'an, as it requires a detailed knowledge of the social, religious and historical background of Arabia at the time of the appearance of the Prophet. The believers cannot possibly hope, therefore, to understand the Surihs after the first or even second or third reading. They have to study them again and again, ponder over their meaning, with the help of certain commentaries, and explanatory notes as found, for instance in the admirable translation made by Sale, endeavor to acquire as clear and correct understanding of their meaning [pg 498] and import as possible. This is naturally a slow process, but future generations of believers will certainly come to grasp it. For the present, the Guardian agrees, that it would be easier and more helpful to study the book according to

subjects, and not verse by verse and also in the light of the Bab's, Bahá'u'lláh's, and Abdu'l-Bahá's interpretations which throw such floods of light on the whole of the Qur'an."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 22, 1939: Bahá'í News, No. 134, pp. 2-3, March 1940)

1. **Meaning of "Jin" or "Genii"**

"Regarding your question as to the meaning of Jin or Genii referred to in the Qur'an, these are not beings or creatures that are actually living, but are symbolic references to the power of men of evil and may be likened to evil spirits. But the point to bear in mind is that these have no positive existence of any kind."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, June 26, 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 105, p. 1, February 1937)

1. **Caliphate and Imamate**

"Both Caliphate and Imamate means successorship. Either term could be used."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 19, 1945: Bahá'í News, No. 210, August 1948, p. 3)

1. **Muhammad Says that the Jews Did Not Crucify Christ**

"Regarding your question relative to Surih 4, 156 of the 'Qur'an' in which Muhammad says that the Jews did not crucify Jesus, the Christ, but one like Him; what is meant by this passage is that although the Jews succeeded in destroying the physical body of Jesus, yet they were impotent to destroy the divine reality in Him."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 19, 1938)

1. **Muhammadanism is a Fuller Revelation Than Any One Preceding It**

"...Muhammadanism is not only the last of the world religions, but a fuller Revelation than any one preceding it. The Qur'an is not only more authoritative than any previous religious gospel, but it contains also much more ordinances, teachings and precepts, which taken together constitute a fuller Revelation of God's purpose and law to mankind than Christianity, Judaism or any other previous Dispensation. This view is in complete accord with the Bahá'í philosophy of progressive revelation, and should be thoroughly accepted and taught by every loyal Christian Bahá'í."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 12, 1933)

1. **Muhammad's Teachings Fostered the National State**

"Regarding your questions: It is not the City State, but the National State which Muhammad's teachings fostered. Christ had nothing to do with the City State concept in any direct manner."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 22, 1949)

1. **The Plurality of Wives in Muslim Countries Does Not Conform with the Teachings of Muhammad**

"Concerning the question of plurality of wives among the Muslims: This practice [pg 499] current in all Islamic countries does not conform with the explicit teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. For the Qur'an, while permitting the marriage of more than one wife, positively states that this is conditioned upon absolute justice. And since absolute justice is impossible to enforce, it follows, therefore, that polygamy cannot and should not be practised. The Qur'an, therefore, enjoins monogamy and not polygamy as has hitherto been understood."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 29, 1939)

1. **Imam Husayn**

"The names of those cited in Bahá'u'lláh's prayer in the Dispensation are quite correct as you have them."

"The Prophets 'regarded as One and the same person' include the Lesser Prophets as well, and not merely Those Who bring a 'Book'. The station is different, but they are Prophets and Their nature thus different from that of ours."

"In the prayer mentioned above Bahá'u'lláh identifies Himself with Imam Husayn. This does not make him a Prophet, but his position was very unique, and we know Bahá'u'lláh claims to be the 'return' of the Imam Husayn. He, in other words, identifies His Spirit with these Holy Souls gone before; that does not, of course, make Him in any way their reincarnation. Nor does it mean all of them were Prophets."

"Your constant and devoted Bahá'í services are deeply valued by the Guardian, you may be sure, and he will pray in the Holy Shrines that your labours may be blessed and your power to confirm the souls increased."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, February 8, 1949)



H. Israel

1. **Israel**

"The word Israel, used throughout the Bible, simply refers to the Jewish people, and not to the chosen ones of this day."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, April 21, 1939)

1. **Position of Jerusalem**

"...whereas Jerusalem is the spiritual center of Christendom it is not the administrative centre of either the Church of Rome or any other Christian denomination. Likewise, although it is regarded by Moslems as the spot where one of its most sacred shrines is situated, the Holy Sites of the Muhammadan Faith and the centre of its pilgrimages are to be found in Arabia, not in Palestine. The Jews alone offer somewhat of a parallel to the attachment which the Bahá'ís have for this country inasmuch as Jerusalem holds the remains of their Holy Temple and was the seat of both the religious and political institutions associated with their past history. But even their case differs in one respect from that of the Bahá'ís, for it is in the soil of Palestine that the three Central Figures of our religion are buried, and it is not only the centre of Bahá'í pilgrimages from all over the world but also the permanent seat of our Administrative Order...."

(From a letter of Shoghi Effendi to the Chairman of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, July 14, 1947: Bahá'í News, No. 199, September 1947, p. 3) [pg 500]

1. **All Palestine to Become Home**

"You can see that from all the parts of the world tribes of Jews are coming to the Holy Land; they live in villages and lands which they make their own, and day by day they are increasing to such an extent, that all Palestine will become their home."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Some Answered Questions, p. 66, 1985 ed.)

1. **Gathering of Israel**

"You have asked Me a question with regard to the gathering of the children of Israel in Jerusalem in accordance with the prophecy."

"Jerusalem, the Holy of Holies, is a revered Temple, a sublime name, for it is the City of God... The gathering of Israel at Jerusalem means, therefore, and prophesies, that Israel as a whole is gathering beneath the banner of God and will enter the Kingdom of the Ancient of Days. For the celestial Jerusalem, which has as its center the Holy of Holies, is a City of the Kingdom, a Divine City. The East and West are but a small corner of that City."

"Moreover, materially as well (as spiritually), the Israelites will gather in the Holy Land. This is irrefutable prophecy, for the ignominy which Israel has suffered for well-nigh twenty-five hundred years will now be changed into eternal glory, and in the eyes of all, the Jewish people will become glorified to such an extent as to draw the jealousy of its enemies and the envy of its friends."

(According to information received by the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States several years ago this Tablet was revealed by the Master in the year 1897 to a Jewish Community in the Orient: Bahá'í News, No. 250, December 1951, p. 5)

1. Journey of the Israelites

"It was both spiritual and physical. They journeyed to the Promised Land and geography and history both prove that this was a physical journey."

"Moses viewed the Promised Land but died before it was reached, having given over his charge to Joshua."

"The crossing of the Red Sea has a spiritual meaning. It was a spiritual journey, through and above the sea of corruption and iniquity of the Pharaoh and his people, or army. By the help of God through Moses, the Israelites were able to cross this sea safely and reach the Promised Land (spiritual state) while Pharaoh and his people were drowned in their own corruption."

"The Egyptian History recorded even trifling events. Had such a wonderful thing happened as the parting of the physical sea it would also have been recorded."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Daily Lessons Received at Akka, p. 45, 1979 ed.)

1. Erroneous Belief

"The belief, according to which Judah represents the Jews and Israel the Chosen people, is erroneous."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. Ten Tribes of Israel

"The Teachings throw no light on the question as to what became of the ten tribes of Israel, or whether they were absorbed into some other nation or not."

(Ibid.) [pg 501]

1. The Jews Have a Great Spiritual Destiny and Will Enter the Faith in Large Groups

"Regarding your question concerning the future of the Jews: They certainly have, as explicitly stated by the Master, a great spiritual destiny, and will gradually enter the Faith in large groups."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 13, 1937)

1. Greek Philosophers Visited Israel's Scholars and Religious Leaders

"It is furthermore a matter of record in numerous historical works that the philosophers of Greece such as Pythagoras acquired the major part of their philosophy, both divine and material, from the disciples of Solomon. And Socrates after having eagerly journeyed to meet with some of Israel's most illustrious scholars and divines, on his return to Greece established the concept of the oneness of God and the continuing life of the human soul after it has put off its elemental dust. Ultimately, the ignorant among the Greeks denounced this man who had fathomed the inmost mysteries of wisdom, and rose up to take his life; and then the populace

forced the hand of their ruler, and in council assembled they caused Socrates to drink from the poisoned cup."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 77, 1975 ed.)

I. Prophets and Prophecies of Various Religions

1. Bahá'u'lláh is the Culmination of the Adamic Cycle and the Inaugurator of the Bahá'í Cycle

"The Adamic Cycle inaugurated 6000 years ago by the Manifestation of God called Adam is only one of the many bygone cycles. Bahá'u'lláh, as you say, is the culmination of the Adamic Cycle. He is also the Inaugurator of the Bahá'í Cycle."

"Obviously there must have been Prophets and Manifestations in the ages preceding the Adamic Cycle. This is supported by the following statement revealed by Bahá'u'lláh."

'And now regarding thy question, "How is it that no records are to be found concerning the Prophets that have preceded Adam, the Father of Mankind, or of the Kings that lived in the days of those Prophets?" Know thou that the absence of any reference to them is no proof that they did not actually exist. That no records concerning them are now available, should be attributed to their extreme remoteness, as well as to the vast changes which the earth hath undergone since their time.'

"With regard to your question about the creation story, we are asked to quote the following from an unpublished Tablet of Abdu'l-Bahá."

'Know ye that the Torah is that which was revealed in the Tablets to Moses, may peace be upon Him, or that to which He was bidden. But the stories are historical narratives and were written after Moses, may peace be upon Him.'

"Concerning the story of Adam and Eve, Abdu'l-Bahá, in 'Some Answered Questions', explains that it cannot be taken literally. You are asked to refer to pages 122-126 of this book for the symbolic meaning of the story."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, March 13, 1986) [pg 502]

1. Buddha Was a Manifestation Like Christ

"The Buddha was a Manifestation of God, like Christ, but His followers do not possess His authentic writings."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of Australia and New Zealand, December 26, 1941: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, 1923-1957, p. 41)

1. Confucius Was Not a Prophet But a Great Reformer

"Confucius was not a Prophet. It is quite correct to say he is the founder of a moral system and a great reformer."

(Ibid.)

1. Daniel, Prophecies of

"As regards the question concerning prophecies of Daniel in 'Some Answered Questions'... The seventy weeks comes right to the martyrdom of Christ. The sixty-nine weeks must be understood to mean that after 69 weeks He was crucified, which, as the Master points out, brings us to the last week, the week between 69 and 70, when He ascended."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, September 21, 1957)

1. King David

"The David referred to by the Bab, and stated by Him to have preceded Moses, is not the same one as King David, the father of King Solomon, who lived in the tenth century B.C. and who obviously lived many years, and indeed many centuries after Moses. Abdu'l-Bahá has explained this in a Tablet."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of India, February 17, 1939: Dawn of a New Day, pp. 76-77)

1. Genesis 22:9 — Sacrifice of Ishmael

"As to the question raised by the Racine Assembly in connection with Bahá'u'lláh's statement in the 'Gleanings' concerning the sacrifice of Ishmael: Although this statement does not agree with that made in the Bible, Genesis 22:9, the friends should unhesitatingly, and for reasons that are only too obvious, give precedence to the sayings of Bahá'u'lláh which, it should be pointed out, are fully corroborated by the Qur'an, which book is more authentic than the Bible including both the New and the Old Testaments. The Bible is not wholly authentic, and in this respect is not to be compared with the Qur'an, and should be wholly subordinated to the authentic writings of Bahá'u'lláh."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, July 28, 1936: Bahá'í News, No. 103, p. 1, October 1936)

1. Lot

"Genesis XIX, 29-38 — the text makes it quite clear that Lot was not responsible for the action committed by His two daughters, as they gave him wine and made him drunk."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: Dawn of a New Day, p. 201)

1. Zoroaster — Was Not Abraham

"Zoroaster was not Abraham; the Muslims, some of them, contend that they [pg 503] were the same, but we believe they were two distinct Prophets. There is a misunderstanding in the reference in 'Bahá'í Proofs' to this matter."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: Letters from the Guardian to Australia and New Zealand, p. 41)

1. **Beginning of Zoroastrian Era**

"1. Regarding the beginning of the Zoroastrian era, in one of His Tablets Abdu'l-Bahá states that Zoroaster lived about 750 years after Moses; in a letter to an individual believer the Guardian's secretary wrote on his behalf: 'Zoroaster lived about a thousand years before Christ. There is no exact date in the teachings regarding the beginning of His Dispensation.'"

"2. Concerning your second question referring to a purported Tablet of the Bab stating that there were thirty Zoroasters, the Research Department states that no text from the Bab has been found on this subject. However, Mirza Abu'l-Fazal has stated in his writings that there appeared in Iran many prophets prior to the Dispensation of Zoroaster."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice, Department of the Secretariat, May 13, 1979, to Mrs. Gayle Woolson)

1. **Hindu Religion**

"...The origins of this and many other religions that abound in India are not quite known to us, and even the Orientalists and the students of religions are not in complete accord about the results of their investigations in that field. The Bahá'í writings also do not refer specifically to any of these forms of religion current in India. So, the Guardian feels it impossible to give you any definite and detailed information on that subject. He would urge you, however, to carry on your studies in that field, although its immensity is well-nigh bewildering, with the view of bringing the Message to the Hindus...."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: Dawn of a New Day, p. 198)

1. **Sabeanism**

"With reference to your question concerning the Sabeian and Hindu religions: There is nothing in the Teachings that could help us in ascertaining which one of these two Faiths is older. Neither history seems to be able to provide a definite answer to this question. The records concerning the origin of these religions are not sufficiently detailed and reliable to offer any conclusive evidence on this point."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, November 9, 1940: Extracts from the Guardian's letters on Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism and Related Subjects, op. cit.)

1. **Lao-Tse and the Sabeans**

"Regarding Lao-Tse: The Bahá'ís do not consider him a prophet, or even a secondary prophet or messenger, unlike Buddha or Zoroaster, both of whom were divinely-appointed and fully independent Manifestations of God.

"As to the religion of the Sabeans very little is known about the origins of this religion, though we Bahá'ís are certain of one thing, that the founder of it has been a divinely-sent Messenger. The country where Sabeanism became widespread and [pg 504] flourished was Chaldea, and Abraham is considered as having been a follower of that Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 10, 1939)

1. **There Were No Followers of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh from the Far East During Their Ministry**

"As there were no followers of the Bab or Bahá'u'lláh derived from the religions of the Far East in Their days, this may be the reason that they did not address any Tablets directly to these people. Also we must remember that every religion springs from some root, and just as Christianity sprang from Judaism, our own religion sprang from Islam, and that is why so many of the teachings deduct their proofs from Islam."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 5, 1957)

"The teachings bear no reference to any genealogical tie between the Prophets of the Near and Far East."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, March 31, 1941)

1. **Hinduism, Buddhism and Zoroastrianism (Following are some quotations taken from a compilation of extracts from letters written on behalf of the Guardian on these and related subjects, enclosed with a letter to an individual believer on November 30, 1980 from the Universal House of Justice)**

Lesser Prophets: "Regarding your questions: We cannot possibly add names of people we (or anyone else) think might be Lesser Prophets to those found in the Qur'an, the Bible and our own Scriptures. For only these can we consider authentic Books."

(March 13, 1950, to an individual believer)

Asiatic Prophets: "Regarding your questions: The only reason there is not more mention of the Asiatic prophets is because their names seem to be lost in the mists of ancient history. Buddha is mentioned and Zoroaster in our scriptures — both non-Jewish prophets or non-semitic

prophets. We are taught there always have been Manifestations of God, but we do not have any record of their names."

(October 4, 1950, to an individual believer)

Scriptures of Buddha and Krishna: "We cannot be sure of the authenticity of the scriptures of Buddha and Krishna, so we certainly cannot draw any conclusions about virgin births mentioned in them. There is no reference to this subject in our teachings, so the Guardian cannot pronounce an opinion."

"As our teachings do not state Zoroaster is the connecting link between the Euphrates and the Prophets in India, we cannot assert this."

"Abraham and Krishna are two separate individuals, with no connection that we know of."

"We know no more about the prophets mentioned in the Iqan than what Bahá'u'lláh states in that Book."

(November 25, 1950, to an individual believer)

Brahma and Krishna: "Your question concerning Brahma and Krishna: Such matters, as no reference occurs to them in the Teachings, are left for students of history and religion to resolve and clarify."

(April 14, 1941, to an individual believer)

Actual Dates of Prophets of Adamic Cycle Not Given: "There are no dates in our teachings regarding the actual dates of the Prophets of the Adamic Cycle, so we cannot [pg 505] give any. Tentatively we can accept what historians may consider accurate. Naturally the dates referring to Muhammad, the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh we are sure of."

(November 25, 1950, to an individual believer)

1. Existence is of Two Kinds

"Existence is of two kinds: One is the existence of God which is beyond the comprehension of man. He, the invisible, the lofty and the incomprehensible, is preceded by no cause but rather is the originator of the Cause of Causes. He, the Ancient, has had no beginning and is the All-Independent. The second kind of existence is the human existence. It is a common existence, comprehensible to the human mind, is not ancient, is dependent and has a cause to it. The mortal substance does not become eternal and vice-versa; the human kind does not become a Creator and vice-versa. The transformation of the innate substance is impossible."

"In the world of existence, that which is comprehensible, is in three stages of mortality: the first stage is the mineral world, next the vegetable world, and in the latter the mineral world does exist but has a distinctive feature which is the vegetable characteristic. Likewise, in the animal

world, the mineral and vegetable characteristics are present and in addition the characteristics of the animal world are to be found: it has the faculties of hearing and of sight. In the human world the characteristics of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds are found and in addition those of the human kind are existing. That is the intellectual characteristic, which discovers the realities of things and comprehends the all-important facts."

"Man, therefore, on the plane of the contingent beings is the most perfect being. By man is meant the perfect individual, who is like unto a mirror in which the divine perfections are manifested and reflected. But the sun does not condescend from the height of its sanctity to enter into the mirror, but when the latter is purified and turned towards the Sun of Truth, the perfections of this Sun, consisting of light and heat, are reflected and manifested in that mirror. These souls are the Divine Manifestations of God."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Translated by Shoghi Rabbani, July 20, 1919: Star of the West, Vol. XI, No. 10, p. 159)

1. Manifestations Had Some Consciousness of Their Station

"The Manifestations no doubt had some consciousness of Their station, but what the nature of that consciousness was we do not know."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 19, 1945: Bahá'í News, No. 210, August 1948, p. 3)

1. The Souls of the Prophets Are Pre-Existent

"The soul or spirit of the individual comes into being with the conception of his physical body."

"The Prophets, unlike us, are pre-existent. The Soul of Christ existed in the spiritual world before His birth in this world. We cannot imagine what that world is like, so words are inadequate to picture His state of being."

"We cannot know God directly, but only through His Prophets. We can pray to Him, realizing that through His Prophets we know Him, or we can address our prayer in thought to Bahá'u'lláh, not as God, but as the Door to our knowing God."

"We find God only through the Intermediary of His Prophet. We see the Perfection of God in His Prophets. Time and space are physical things; God the Creator is [pg 506] not in a 'place' as we conceive of place in physical terms. God is the Infinite Essence, the Creator. We cannot picture Him or His state; if we did, we would be His equals, not His Creatures. God is never flesh, but mirrored in the attributes of His Prophets, we see His Divine characteristics and perfections."

"Shoghi Effendi advises you to study 'Some Answered Questions' and the 'Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh' which help you to grasp these questions."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, October 9, 1947)

"Regarding your question concerning the passage in 'Seven Valleys' referring to pre-existence. This in no way presupposes the existence of the individual soul before conception. The term has not been absolutely accurately translated, and what is meant is that man's soul is the repository of the ancient, Divine mysteries of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 5, 1948)

1. **Hadrat — His Holiness**

"In Persian it is impolite not to use the word Hadrat before the name of the Prophet, so that strictly speaking a proper translation should always have 'His Holiness Moses' etc. However, as this seems peculiar in English, and not in the best usage of our language, he feels it can be dispensed with. Pronouns referring to the Manifestation, or the Master, should, however, invariably be capitalized."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, November 8, 1948: Bahá'í News, No. 216, p. 1, February 1949)

1. **Fundamental Purpose of All Religions**

"...the fundamental purpose of all religions — including our own — is to bring man nearer to God, and to change his character, which is of the utmost importance. Too much emphasis is often laid on the social and economic aspects of the Teachings; but the moral aspect cannot be overemphasized."

"He urges you not to allow yourself to be discouraged, as all these temporary conditions will pass away as the Faith grows, but to concentrate on the constructive work of teaching and exemplifying the Faith."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, September 6, 1946: Bahá'í Youth, p. 8)

1. **Fundamentals of Religions**

"The fundamentals of all divinely-instituted religions cannot be rigidly classified. No definite or exhaustive list of them can be set up, as we have no means of ascertaining that what we consider to be those fundamentals are common to all such religions."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939)

1. **Cosmic Religion**

"Regarding the question you have asked in connection with a passage in Dr. Einstein's 'Cosmic Religion': According to the Bahá'í conception there is and can be no incompatibility between the idea of causal law and that of an omnipotent and omniscient God, Who, if He deems it fit, may at times interfere with the normal sequence of events in the world, and thus retard or altogether stop the operation of certain laws, whether in the physical universe, or in any other worlds of nature and man."

"The other statement reported to have been made by Dr. Einstein to the effect [pg 507] that the ethical behavior of man 'requires no support from religion' is incompatible with the Bahá'í viewpoint which emphatically stresses the fact that no sound ethics can exist and become effective unless based on revealed religion. To dissociate ethics from religion is to render the former not only void of any firm foundation but without the necessary driving power."

(From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 6, 1939)

1. **Core of Religious Faith**

"For the core of religious faith is that mystical feeling which unites man with God. This state of spiritual communion can be brought about and maintained by means of meditation and prayer. And this is the reason why Bahá'u'lláh has so much stressed the importance of worship. It is not sufficient for a believer merely to accept and observe the teachings. He should, in addition, cultivate the sense of spirituality which he can acquire chiefly by means of prayer."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, December 8, 1935: Bahá'í News, No. 102, August 1936, p. 2)

1. **Oneness of Mankind Cornerstone of Teachings**

"With reference to your question as to the meaning of the passage 'he who loves his kind', the statement of Bahá'u'lláh does not refer to any special race or class of people. Rather it includes the entire human race, irrespective of any class, creed or colour. The Message of Bahá'u'lláh is not a particularistic appeal to a group of people. It is a Universal Message, an all-inclusive appeal. His principle of the Oneness of Mankind is worldwide in its spirit, in its application, and covers the entire field of human relationships."

"It is most essential that the believers should be quite clear on this point as the principle of the oneness of humanity is the corner-stone of all the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and should be presented as such, without the least hesitation, by the friends."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, March 11, 1937, cited in a letter by the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, August 8, 1968)

1. **Primary Importance of the Cause Among Existing Religions**

"The primary importance of the Cause among the existing religions of the world is that, whereas the others have no coherent program upon which they are united, the Movement is rich with the very spirit and teachings the world needs for solving its present international problems...."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, January 14, 1932: Bahá'í News, No. 59, February 1932, p. 2)

1. **Meaning of "Mysterious Power that Creates New Spiritual Worlds"**

"You inquired regarding the meaning of the sentence, 'The mysterious power that creates new spiritual worlds'. This, Shoghi Effendi believes, refers to the transcendental Essence of God Who

is the Creator of this world and the worlds to come; for Bahá'u'lláh says, 'God's worlds are infinite'."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to the Spiritual Assembly of Eliot, Maine, March 27, 1933: Bahá'í News, No. 73, May 1933, p. 2) [pg 508]

1. Meaning of Personal God: Value of Religion Please refer to No. 1574

1. Religion Should Change Our Acts as Well as Our Thoughts

"...The inestimable value of religion is that when a man is vitally connected with it, through a real and living belief in it and in the Prophet who brought it, he receives a strength greater than his own which helps him to develop his good characteristics and overcome his bad ones. The whole purpose of religion is to change not only our thoughts but our acts; when we believe in God and His Prophet and His teachings, we find we are growing even though we perhaps thought ourselves incapable of growth and change."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 3, 1943)

1. World Religion Day, Purpose of

"Your letter of September 30, with the suggestion that 'there should be one day in the year in which all of the religions should agree' is a happy thought, and one which persons of good will throughout the world might well hail. However, this is not the underlying concept of World Religion Day, which is a celebration of the need for and the coming of a world religion for mankind, the Bahá'í Faith itself. Although there have been many ways of expressing the meaning of this celebration in Bahá'í communities in the United States, the Day was not meant primarily to provide a platform for all religions and their emergent ecumenical ideas. In practice, there is no harm in the Bahá'í communities' inviting the persons of other religions to share their platforms on this Day, providing the universality of the Bahá'í Faith as the fulfillment of the hopes of mankind for a universal religion are clearly brought forth."

(From a letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Local Spiritual Assembly of Chicago, October 22, 1968)

1. Significance of Remains of the Prophets

"...There is no special physical significance in the remains of the Prophets or relics of Their Persons. But there is a profound spiritual significance in the sense that Their dust was the physical mirror of the greatness of God. In other words we know God through His Prophets, Who have bodies, these bodies — Their very dust — are precious through association. It is natural for people to be touched by a lock of hair or some token of one they loved; how much more should we treasure and feel moved by a relic of the Beloved of God."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 13, 1944: Bahá'í News, No. 210)

1. The Atoms of the Prophets Are Just Atoms

"The reflection of the qualities of holy souls can take place at any time; it is not confined to the period when the Manifestation is on this Earth."

"The atoms of the Prophets are just atoms, like all others, but the association of this great spiritual power with them leaves in the place They are laid to rest a spiritual atmosphere, if one can use this expression. They are, no doubt, endowed with a tremendous spiritual influence and far-reaching power. But the physical character of Their atoms are not different from other peoples, any more than Their bodies and physical functions are different."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 28, 1949) [pg 509]

1. The Four and Twenty Elders

"Regarding the four and twenty elders: The Master, in a Tablet, stated that they are the Bab, the 18 Letters of the Living and five others who would be known in the future. So far we do not know who these five others are."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 22, 1943: Bahá'í News, No. 171, November 1944, p. 2)

1. Perfection of God Found in His Prophets

"We find God only through the Intermediary of His Prophet. We see the Perfection of God in His Prophets. Time and space are physical things; God, the Creator, is not a 'place'; as we conceive of place in physical terms. God is the Infinite Essence, the Creator. We cannot picture Him or His state, but if we did, we would be His equals, not His creatures. God is never flesh, but mirrored in the attributes of His Prophets we see His Divine characteristics and perfections."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: High Endeavors, Messages to Alaska, p. 70)

1. References to Bahá'u'lláh

"As to the questions thou hast asked: Concerning Malachi, chapter 3, verses 16, 17 and 18 refer to the friends of God, and in St. Matthew, chapter 25, the object of verses 31, 32 and 33 is the Blessed Beauty. As to Micah, chapter 5, the 4th verse refers to Christ. In Zephaniah, chapter 1, verses 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18, and in Zechariah, chapter 2, verses 10, 11, 12 and 13, and in St. Luke, chapter 21, verses 20 to the end — all these refer to the century of the Blessed Beauty."

(Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas, translated by Shoghi Rabbani, June 4, 1919: Star of the West, Vol. X, No. 12, p. 232)

1. The Ark and the Flood

"The statement in 'Seven Days of Creation' certainly cannot be considered authoritative or correct. The Ark and the Flood we believe are symbolical."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 28, 1949: Bahá'í News, No. 228, February 1950, p. 4)

1. **Generation, the Word Has Different Meanings**

"...the word generation has a different meaning in different places. Christ referred to the Christ Dispensation, or cycle, and the other refers to the physical generation."

"For example, if a man does a great injustice to another in his life, then, after his death, his son will be despised for having had such a father and in some cases the injury might be so serious that the effect would reach to the grandson, etc., or a man may, by wrong living, fall into consumption and give that disease to his children unto the third or fourth generation."

"Both physically and mentally the sins of the fathers may be visited upon the children."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Daily Lessons Received at Akka, 1979 ed., pp. 45-46)

1. **The Cross — This Figure Exists in All Things**

"As for the symbol of the cross, appointed in former times: Know verily, that the cross form is a wonderful figure and consists of two right lines placed crosswise — one perpendicular to the other — and this figure exists in all things." [pg 510]

"Meditate upon these words and pay attention to the tissue in all existing substances, either plant, animal or man, and thou wilt see that they all are formed of the cross figure or two crosswise lines. Consider this intently with true meditation. Then thou wilt be taught by the Holy Ghost that it is for this reason that God hath chosen this symbol to be displayed as the token of sacrifice in all periods of the ages."

"As for the crescent: It hath reference to the beginning of the religion of God which shall grow to be a full moon."

"As for the stars: They are types of guides; for, verily, the star is a guide to people, even in the most gloomy darkness, on both land and sea. In former centuries, people were guided by the pole-star in whatever direction they went."

(Abdu'l-Bahá: Tablets of Abdu'l-Bahá, Vol. III, pp. 598-599)

1. **The Teachings of Swedenborg and Emerson Should Be Considered as Advanced Stirrings of the Time**

"...The teachings of such spiritually enlightened souls as Swedenborg, Emerson, and others should be considered as the advanced stirrings in the minds of great souls foreshadowing that Revelation which was to break upon the world through the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh. Anything they

say which is not substantiated by the Teachings, however, we cannot regard as absolute truth, but merely as the reflection of their own thoughts."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 6, 1943)

1. Emanuel Swedenborg

"In connection with your question regarding the reference made by Abdu'l-Bahá to 'His Highness Emanuel' in Vol. III of His Tablets, this obviously refers to the Bab as the text shows it clearly and is in no way a reference to Swedenborg."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, May 9, 1938: Bahá'í News, No. 134, March 1940, p. 2)

1. Abdu'l-Bahá Praised Emanuel Swedenborg for His Efforts for Social and Religious Reconstruction

"...concerning Emanuel Swedenborg and his writings: While Abdu'l-Bahá praised the man and his noble efforts for social and religious reconstruction there is nothing in the Master's Writings that can justify the believers in giving him any special station or importance beside that of an enlightened and constructive thinker of wide spiritual vision. There can be therefore no official Bahá'í attitude in respect of the man or his work."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, October 7, 1939)

1. Because of the Progressiveness of the Teachings of Swedenborg He Can Be Considered a Herald of This Day

"Regarding your questions: The rational faculty is a manifestation of the power of the soul. The soul is the mirror of reflection. Swedenborg, because of the extreme progressiveness of his teachings may, in a way, be considered a herald of this Day. There is nothing definite in the Teachings concerning the subconscious mind's relation to the spirit of man."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, September 26, 1943)
[pg 511]

1. People Like Emerson Were No Doubt Inspired by God

"The point of view expressed in your letter was of special interest because it was typical of those sincere and seeking souls who are trying to obtain peace and inward certainty by reading the universally-minded writers of our age. People like Emerson were undoubtedly inspired by God, for many of the thoughts that quicken us in this day were uttered and stimulated by them. Only gradually will we come to appreciate their work and place them in the growing world of ours. The tendency of these writers, however, is rather to diminish rather than to enhance the position of the prophet in civilization. These bid us come into communion with God by looking within us. They tell us that the prophets were humans and that we can become like them if we only strive. This renders religion the religion of the few, the religion of only those who have experiences."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 29, 1929)

1. **The Difference Between the Gnostics and the Religionists**

"Abdu'l-Bahá says that the main difference between the gnostics and the religionists is that the gnostics maintain the existence of only two worlds, the world of God and the world of the creature. The prophets, however, maintained the existence of three worlds: the world of God, the world of the Will or the Word, and the world of created things. The prophets, therefore, maintained that a knowledge of God is impossible. As Abdu'l-Bahá says, man can never know God or even imagine Him. If he does, that object is not God but an imaginary idol."

(Ibid.)

1. **Christ Referred to the World of the Prophets as the "Word", Abdu'l-Bahá Calls It the "Will"**

"There is, therefore, only one way to God and that is through the realization of his Manifestation or Prophet in that age. Christ called the world of the prophets 'the word' in the verse of 'the word became flesh' while Abdu'l-Bahá calls it the Will. Anyhow it is only through these that we can know God. These manifest the divine attributes and therefore by knowing them we can know God. The mystic path that the traveller should follow is therefore to the Prophet. By coming in contact with Him will he obtain peace."

(Ibid.)

1. **God Will Continue to Send His Prophets that Man May Obtain His Highest Goal**

"If these are the only means through which man can obtain his highest goal, namely the knowledge of God, could we believe that God has ceased to send them? As Bahá'u'lláh says, will it not be a blasphemy to say that God's bounty existed in the past and that ever since the time of Christ it stopped to pour — and for all eternity. No, God has ever sent and will ever send these prophets who would represent God on this earth and by reflecting the divine attributes give us a knowledge of Him."

(Ibid.)

1. **Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon**

"Regarding your question concerning Joseph Smith and the 'Book of Mormon': [pg 512] as the Bahá'í Teachings quite clearly outline the succession of Prophets from the days of Christ as being Muhammad, the Bab, and finally Bahá'u'lláh, it is obvious that Joseph Smith is not a Manifestation of God."

"The Bahá'ís should deal with the members of all religious sects, however, with the greatest tolerance and friendliness, and try to point out to them the significance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to the world in this great Day. The Guardian would advise you to teach the Mormons like everyone else, the Faith, when you find them receptive. They have many good principles,

and their teachings regarding chastity, not drinking or smoking, etc., are quite similar to ours, and should form a point of common interest."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, August 18, 1941: Bahá'í News, No. 416, November 1965)

1. **Status of Joseph Smith**

"As for the status of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon Faith, he is not considered by Bahá'ís to be a prophet, minor or otherwise. But of course he was a religious teacher sensitive to the spiritual currents flowing in the early 19th century directly from the appearance of the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh and the Revelation of Their Messages of hope and divine Guidance. In this respect you might find chapter ten in the late Hand of the Cause George Townshend's book, 'Christ and Bahá'u'lláh,' interesting."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, February 7, 1977)

1. **The Mormons Have High Principles and Ideals**

"The Mormons are a people with high principles and ideals, and the step spiritually into the Cause is not as difficult for them as for many others not possessing their faith and devotion. However, the very zeal with which they serve their own Faith makes it difficult for them to grasp the greater vision of our Holy Cause."

(From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer: cited in a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to an individual believer, February 16, 1976) [pg 513]

