

May 27, 1960.

Why doesn't the cause progress more rapidly? There must be more than one explanation. One is the condition of the people, the degree of materialism and preoccupation with their own affairs. A large part of the population is not truly spiritual in any sense of the word. Some are intellectual, but spirituality is not a strong point. Some

On the other hand, there must be a percentage of people in every community in the world who are ready to become Baha'is if we can just find those people and give them the message in the proper way. Moving around and associating with people is one way. Keeping our eyes open is another. Do we overlook people whom we come across in the ordinary course of events?

Shoghi Effendi said we should 'discriminate in favor of the minority'. When an assembly is to make a committee appointment, for example, and two people, one a member of a minority and one of a majority appear equally competent, we should give the appointment to the member of the minority, all things being equal. Baha'is are free to enter inter-racial marriage, but not required to. 'Abdu'l-Baha when in the United States personally performed the marriage between a negro and white Baha'i couple. I do not know of His having married anyone else. If we made a greater effort to demonstrate racial unity in our teaching of others, I believe we would attract greater blessings from God because the fundamental teaching of the Baha'i Faith is the brotherhood of man. When we more fully demonstrate that, we will attract additional blessings of ourselves and our communities.

I have had a theory for many years and it has been confirmed by this visit and my experiences in travelling across the country meeting Baha'is and their friends. My thought is that there is a hard core of prejudice, evil and ignorance in the population, an aggressive, bitter prejudice which people have in their hearts. But I think there are a secondary category of prejudices which are in the nature of an optical illusion. We think they are there, but they are not and we can get through them quickly through love, education and demonstration. I think the redeemable element in society responds to these demonstrations.

It has been my observation over many years that we haven't got straight in our minds the part the administration plays in our Baha'i life and the part that we play as individuals. We have a tendency to not function properly in our administrative bodies because we will not give up our will to the will of the majority. In the first place, we don't consult properly and perhaps are not as concise in expressing ourselves as we should be. The Indians of this continent whom I met could teach us much in this respect; I urged them to teach this quality of brevity and clarity in their councils, to the nation and the world. I am intense and vehement person and when I express an opinion you would think the whole world hinged on it! There is always a lot of drive behind it; that is because I believe it. But that doesn't mean I cannot give it up. We must express our opinion, consult, and then when it comes to the point of having to take a decision, is we cannot take it unanimously (which is nicer) then we have to accept the will of the majority and drop our opinion. That is something we don't seem able to do. We drop it for a moment and then pick it up again. Sometimes we take it home or out into the community. "I told the assembly they were wrong; that this wouldn't work; but they wouldn't listen". We must cut off our hearts from our opinions, as it were, once we have expressed the opinions. That is the key to proper consultation. It is often a wrench to give up our opinion. I think that is because we are ani-

This directional drive in the animals enabled them to survive and help preserve the species through evolution. When you find people who cannot relinquish their opinions they are not in my opinion being superior in a human way. I think they are demonstrating animal qualities. We must guard against being 'over administered'. We have the administrative order laid down by Shoghi Effendi. Now that we have lost the Guardian we can look back and ask ourselves why he was always hurrying, always under pressure. Now I realize that he was hurrying all the 36 years of his Guardianship. Perhaps he had this allotted span and had to complete the world order foundation. This is not yet Baha-u-llah's world order, but is the foundation of the administrative world. He had only so much time to do it and he placed all that tremendous emphasis on administration. We must conduct our affairs in an orderly way. But we must achieve a balance between spontaneous effort, and the tendency to be 'over administrative'. We are not perambulating spiritual assemblies, we are just members of the community. Outside of our administrative bodies, we must be 'Abdu'l-Baha's to one another, and to every human being. How do we become 'Abdu'l-Baha's?

Study His life, His teachings, His talks. It is more difficult to be an 'Abdu'l-Baha to every human being than it is to 'administrate' because there is something in the nature of human beings that makes them love to legislate! Everyone fancies himself as a lawgiver. It seems to be a strong human characteristic, especially among the people of this continent. We must repress this because we have the principles and the administrative order and must not add to them so that they become cold forms instead of remaining alive and creative. Telling others what to do seem to be a Baha'i disease. We must not grow attached to our elective or appointed offices; the executive of the assembly, indeed the assembly itself, is the servant of the community. One dear old lady wrote the Guardian complaining that she had been secretary of her community's assembly for over 30 years and the ungrateful wretches had not voted her as secretary this year! This is a misunderstanding of our administrative function.

Great things will happen in our Baha'i communities if we increase our spiritual intensity. The tri-light lamp is an example. It sheds light when turned on, gets by all right, as it were, but if the button is turned the incandescence increases. We must increase our spiritual incandescence increases. so to speak, and thus attract more people to the faith. We will then have more love for each other and more joy in that love. We get along the way we are, but there is always a better way. The statements made by 'Abdu'l-Baha are not mere platitudes; he repeated them over and over again. Minerals will fuse only ~~at~~ at great heat; the diverse elements of humanity will fuse only through the fire of the love of God.

I remember the Guardian speaking about love to a pilgrim. He pointed out, of course, that we should love God. That is in our teachings; Baha-h-llah said, "I loved thy creation, therefore I created thee". The primary relationship of all of our existence is love for our Creator. We cannot know God directly; we must have sufficient love for His Manifestation and then we will be able, because of this great love, to love each other. Otherwise, most of the time, we cannot. It is impossible personally to love everyone. There are rare souls with the gift of divine love for every human soul, but that has nothing to do with this point. If we love our Divine Father sufficiently then we will love His other children even if we do not personally like them. Brothers and sisters are often incompatible but

if they love their parents sufficiently for the sake of the parents they will reflect the love they have for their parents towards their brothers and sisters. The only way the world and Baha'i

communities can be united is through love of God. It has often seemed to me that the Teachings are a mass of contradictions, because they are the Truth. they cover all aspects of life. Think of them as a large wheel with each spoke connecting at the centre. If you follow the wheel through the complete circle, the whole range of the teachings, you will find that everything fits in perfectly because each spoke is connected to the one at the opposite pole, so to speak. That is why studying the Teachings has such a profound effect on us.

Let us talk about justice. If God were to deal with us with justice, I don't know what would happen. There is a prayer by Baha-u-llah in "Prayers and Meditations" where He says something to the effect that "I testify that if Thou should deal with Thy creatures according to justice, we would pass away". God cannot deal with us with justice. Justice will come into the world gradually and be administered through the Baha'i institutions. The Guardian said that in the future when the Houses of Justice are administering Baha'i laws (that is, the laws of the Aqdas, not just appointing committees, etc.) they are bound to deal with justice, but the individual can go and plead for mercy. That points up how we must be to one another. Suppose someone murders my father or mother or a child is killed through manslaughter, perhaps my child, I as the aggrieved party, can go to the House of Justice and plead for mercy for the culprit. One in Haifa we had a problem in the kitchen and I told the Guardian that I would go down and deal with the situation with complete justice. He asked me, smilingly, if I thought I were capable of dealing with any situation with absolute justice. This made me pause and think. He then told me that I would do down and deal with the situation with kindness, mercy and logic.

Someone spoke about doubts and problems; the heart wanting to believe but the mind raising doubts. I sometimes have trouble with my head, too! Intellectuals and logical thinkers often have this problem. We can always speak better about what we have experienced ourselves. I have had some deep experiences, obviously, since Shoghi Effendi passed away. One of the them is that I discovered once for all that greater than any other attachment I have in the world is my love for Baha-u-llah; because, of course, my whole universe fell apart with the passing of the Guardian. It was difficult for other Baha'is, but for me it was the end of everything. I didn't want to go on, and I didn't care whether I did. But I had a few things to do and I promised Shoghi Effendi when I found him dead that morning that I would do them, and that was my business. But I didn't think I had any other reason except this deep personal love for Shoghi Effendi to go on. I went to the shrines after this and had it out with myself. I was often too numb to pray, too distraught to concentrate. But I said, "All right, after all, whatever your feeling for Shoghi Effendi was, he was not the one who revealed this Faith. Baha-u-llah

was the Revealer of this Faith.

Is it Baha-u-llah you accepted and folloed and believed in, or not? You must decide that now; whether you have sufficient love for Baha-u-llah to go one, and whether that is the real crux of your relationship to the Baha'i Faith or whether it has been superceded all these years by your love of Shoghi Effendi. You have lost him, the bottom has fallen out, you must decide. I think that in having it out with myself at that moment, the thing that helped me the most was that I had come to know Baha-u-llah better during my years in Haifa through the things I had heard about Him. When I was a girl I never prayed to Baha-u-llah because He was so far above me I didn't see how I could address a prayer to Him. I felt too lowly, that He was too remote, too supreme and glorious. I used to pray through 'Abdu'l-Baha. Then I went to Haifa and asked quest-

u-llah was kind like 'Abdu'l-Baha. She said that 'Abdu'l-Baha wasn't kind at all compared to Baha-u-llah. That touched me profoundly. It seemed to me inconceivable that anyone could be as kind as the Master. She was 16 when He passed away so she remembered Him clearly. Then I heard the stories, too, from Shoghi Effendi's father. He was older than Shoghi Effendi's mother. I remember his telling the story about the Arab Baha'i who came to the presence of Baha-u-llah. ((R. Khanum told in some detail the story of the Arab Baha'i who because of shyness and following oriental custom, when invited into the presence of Baha-u-llah stood with arms folded and lowered eyes, replying only when spoken to, etc. Baha-u-llah with great love and kindness commanded the man to come closer, closer, closer, to sit beside Him, to raise his eyes, to speak to Him, etc. And then he was dismissed. When the other Persian pilgrims learned what had happened they rebuked the Arab for insolence and the man was greatly disturbed fearing he had been guilty of a misdemeanor. Baha-u-llah sensing the man's crushed spirit, summoned him again to His presence, without referring to what had happened, and repeated the entire incident again, calling the man closer, telling him to seat himself, to raise his eyes, to speak directly to Him, etc.) Hearing the stories gave me another idea of Baha-u-llah, from someone so austere that I couldn't think of Him to someone I could think of. I began to feel I could think of Him in another way. I was told stories about Him by His niece who was an old woman and also remembered Him very clearly. She told me that when they were children and a peddler passed by they would always go to Baha-u-llah and He would give them coins with which to buy something from the peddler. She said: "Think of it--we spent them." She said that in their youthful folly they took the coins and instead of keeping them went out and spent them. And when Naw Ruz came, she said, Baha-u-llah would always give the members of the household small gifts and presents. She said they slept in the garden of Ridwan on the paths because there was not room for all the children and the family in the House. Baha-u-llah slept in the house, and the children and the servants in the garden under little mosquito-net tents. Baha-u-llah, she said, would sometimes rise very early in the morning and come down along the garden paths and lifting a corner of the net gently would say kindly: "Aren't you up yet? Get up! Get up!" These stories helped give me a personal picture of Baha-u-llah. All these different things made me realize how truly marvelous He was; how tender and how loving and how very approachable. Far from being unapproachable, I felt I could approach Him in my mind and heart. As I approached Him, of course I understood a little better. No one could really understand Him, naturally, but I felt I had at least an inkling and I could love Him more. That brought me greater faith and confidence, because if you understand, you love better, and if you love better, you have more faith. The two go together. I don't think faith is a purely intellectual process, but a process of the heart primarily. Baha-u-llah had a wonderful sense of humor. I urge you to read the stories the Guardian has written about Him in "God Passes By". Remember the one about the person who attempted to assassinate Him, but trembled and dropped the revolver? Baha-u-llah turned to His brother and said, "Pick it up; he seems to be in a very bad condition. Help him find his way home because I don't think he can find it alone". That, of course, is the essence of sarcasm and courage. These different stories about Baha-u-llah make Him more real. Read the wonderful things the Guardian wrote about Him in "God Passes By": His love, patience, gentleness; but He was also, apparently, very approachable, very tender and loving. All of this has been a great mainstay to me. I would love to write a book about Baha-u-llah, but I would have to learn Persian so perfectly so I could read all the original writings and manuscripts. I don't know if I even will.

Baha-u-llah was living in Bahji when His mother died in Akka. The niece of Baha-u-llah who had been a maid to the mother of Baha-u-llah told me this. Baha-u-llah went into her room and stayed alone with her body for hours, and then came out and left the house. Baha-u-llah loved His wife very deeply and after her death, Shoghi Effendi told me. He missed her very much. After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Baha's mother, Baha-u-llah missed her and lost His appetite. He never regained it. He loved his wife very much and her death affected His appetite. These little intimate things give us an idea how much He suffered.

There was an old man who used to come to Haifa, (Haji Ali), who was 95 years of age when he died. He was there a few years after I was married and then he died. He remembered all those early days in the Mission of Baha-u-llah. He followed Mohammed Ali, turned against the Master, saw that Mohammed Ali was a fraud and then repented and came back to the Faith. Shoghi Effendi loved him and when he came to dinner Shoghi Effendi would sit beside him and get him to tell the stories about the early days. As I understand it, he was the source of some of the facts in "God Passes By". Haji Ali remembers Baha-u-llah sending for him a few days before His death; and he found Baha-u-llah so upset about the developments to come in the Faith and the suffering of the believers, etc., that He could not speak, but could only pace up and down in a state of great sadness and agitation.

Do you remember Baha-u-llah calling His family around Him and comforting them, saying "I am pleased with you all"? These things indicate the sweetness of His nature. Also, when in Akka in the Most Great Prison, Baha-u-llah was separated from the other believers. In the evening they would tell stories and laugh very heartily, and Baha-u-llah asked them once to not laugh to loud because everyone would think they were mad. Always after dinner Baha-u-llah would say, "It is laughing time" and the family and believers would gather around Him and tell stories and jokes and laugh heartily.

The oldest Persian Hand of the Cause tells us this one, of his meeting with Baha-u-llah. He went in and was overwhelmed. He came of a good family and loved Baha-u-llah deeply. And when he prostrated himself in greeting, his hat rolled off! You always keep your hat on in the east as a mark of respect. He was ashamed and nervous and couldn't find his hat; but Baha-u-llah picked up his hat and put it on his head for him and then said: "Get up; it is alright!" Baha-u-llah poured tea for Samandari but he couldn't drink it; his mouth was dry and couldn't hold his cup steady. Baha-u-llah saw his condition and casually asked him about his trip, and if he had a good time, and several other very ordinary questions and then after a while Samandari felt at home. He said: "Drink you tea!" These are small indications of the nature of Baha-u-llah and how much He suffered and how He loved the Master. He used to sit in His room in the Mansion and watch the road to Akka and when He saw 'Abdu'l-Baha approaching in the distance He used to call to the people and say, "The Master is approaching; go and greet Him" or receive Him, as a mark of respect and affection to 'Abdu'l-Baha. Visiting Baha-u-llah's Shrine is a wonderful experience; there is an extraordinary atmosphere there that is very tangible and not one's imagination. I have perhaps too much of a reasoning mind. I said to myself: "Well, you feel this because of your condition, perhaps." But I have observed that even to this day after 23 years of having the privilege of going to the shrine of Baha-u-llah that no matter how upset I am--sometimes so numb and crushed that I cannot concentrate or pray--I have never ceased to feel as if there were a fountain of peace in that blessed place not found anywhere else. The atmosphere is so tangible and extraordinary, I don't see how any human being could visit without feeling it. Many non-Baha(is do and are profoundly moved by the spirit of the Shrine; some consciously, some half, and some are impervious and don't seem affected one way or the other. Shoghi Effendi had all these wonderful qualities of kindness, etc. I used

to say "Oh Shoghi Effendi, you are so kind." He would say, "I'm not kind at all". I would say, "But you shower people with kindness; Mrs So-and-So is so happy and grateful for what you did". He would say, "I wasn't kind at all". He didn't even realize he had been kind; it was such a spontaneous, unself-conscious thing. He would never accept any compliments for himself. He had an extraordinary degree of selflessness. But he was very proud when it came to the Faith or his position as Guardian. He would tolerate no affront to himself, as Guardian of God's infat Faith, but as a man a human being he would turn everything away from himself personally. I have never seen anything here like it. When pilgrims would say "How wonderful it is to be here with you and to meet you", he would say, "the object of the pilgrimage is to visit the Shrines. He would never accept anything of of this nature in a personal sense. He wouldn't accept compliments for himself--although he couldn't shut me up! I used to say, "Oh Shoghi Effendi, you are so beautiful! You look just like a king! He had a face which increased in beauty with age because as he got older and suffered more although he didn't have the radiance of youth he had an even more beautiful face than as a young man. He would say to me "Nonsense!" You imagine these things!" He would never accept anything as a personal tribute. He thought always of the Cause, of the world of the Cause, and the progress of it, and of the ten year plan which is the thing that really made Shoghi Effendi happy. You see, he had been through the terrible unhappy situation, inherited from Ali's days, of all the covenant breaking, and all the members of his family who turned against him, abandoned him, left him. The day came when he had to make it public and it broke his heart. It was not a situation that happened in his lifetime at all; it stemmed from something that happened far back, in 'Abdu'l-Baha's days. The whole situation was brewing and the harvest fell in his hands. That is something many Baha'is don't realize; that years before 'Abdu'l-Baha passed away the whole thing that matured in Shoghi Effendi's lifetime was cooking and just came to a head and caused the Guardian all this grief and suffering. And when there was no one left in the Master's family who remained steadfast and he was all alone, he was so heart-broken that he just did not smile or laugh for about a year--not even the tiniest smile. Of course, it just broke my heart because he had the most beautiful smile and to see the Guardian in that condition was just killing for all of us. And then he found that the Baha'is were true and there was a response, and he began to be encouraged and he gave the 2nd 7-yr plan and later the 10-yr plan, and the progress made during those 2 plans and particularly during the world crusade up to the time of his death changed the whole attitude of Shoghi Effendi. He became so much happier; he laughed and joked. In many ways, he was never happier than toward the end of his life. But the whole crusade is the thing his heart was pinned on, so to speak. I remember the joy he took in preparing the beautiful maps and compiling the statistics. In a little black loose-leaf notebook he kept all the statistics and who and where the pioneers and goals were, and what the funds were, the lands, the temple funds, and so on. He used to say to me: "Do you realize that the whole Baha' world is in this little book? It was beside his bedtable when he passed away. The book is in Haifa and will be preserved. He used to keep his statistics in it. He constantly received information from the assemblies of the world and revised the figures. When a goal territory fell vacant after being opened by a pioneer he used to say with a twinkle in his eye that the area had "lapsed into virginity!" He called them virgin areas. One day I remember he received word that three pioneer posts had fallen vacant. He was very distressed about it. He read the names and then to took two of them off his list, crossing them off in the book, as having no pioneer there. He didn't do anything about the third one. He looked

at it and then decided to leave it on. I asked him why he didn't remove the third name; after, all, there was nobody there I pointed out. He turned to me and said: "I just couldn't take all three of them off at once...I will take it off in a few days". It was heartbreaking! I know it hurt him to have to draw a line through it; it meant so much to him. There is no doubt about it: the success and progress of the work was the thing that brought the Guardian the greatest joy. He was very happy, you know, that last summer. It is a very extraordinary thing that he should have passed away, because he was in better health than he had been for years. His doctor had seen him. He had taken care of his health that summer. He felt very well and everything was fine, but then this thing suddenly happened; and no one in the world could have foreseen it and nothing could have prevented it. I remember he was very lighthearted. The midway point in the crusade was approaching. One day he had taken a hot bath (he liked hot baths, as many orientals do) and had been wrapped up afterwards in blankets. Then he came into the room; his face was very rosy from the hot bath and his eyes were sparkling. His eyes were hazel in color but sometimes they turned grey. They were very expressive, wonderful eyes. He said, "Guess what I have thought of?" I protested that I am no good at guessing; but he would always say "Guess what?" and I would say "I Cannot!" This time I said: "I can't guess. What have you thought of? Please tell me!" He said, "I am going to have 5 intercontinental conferences; I am going to mark the midway point of the world crusade; 8 new hands of the Cause and another auxiliary board with 9 protection members," and so on--it simply poured out like an ocean. "Guess who the Hands of the Cause are?" he asked. I guessed 7 out of the 8 because I knew very well what he was thinking because he mentioned people so often and was so proud of what they accomplished for the Faith. I could imagine, so I guessed 7 out of the 8, and the 8th was somebody else. He had that whole thing come to him in a flash; that was my point. He was so very happy over it. He immediately sat down and began to organize his message and work out the points, the salient ideas of his great message. It meant so much to him, the whole thing. If he hadn't given us that message and called the Hands the "Chief Stewards" and called forth those 5 Conferences, I don't know what would have happened, because it was the most marvelous protection for the faith. Just that year he passes away. But through the conferences the Baha'is could come together and in coming together they had the great feeling of spiritual strength among them all over the world that permitted them to carry on and gain new victories for the Faith. It was providential and if he hadn't elaborated on the functions of the Hands in the last few years and called us the chief stewards we would perhaps have done what we did but we wouldn't have had the strength and weight that came through the last message of Shoghi Effendi.

Q. Do you think the Guardian had a premonition?

A. I don't know, my dear; I don't know.

Q. It seems to me he organized everything.

A. I think it was coming like a shadow. I couldn't see it. If I had, I would have killed myself; I could never have lived with it. As I look back at many things toward the end, I realize it must have been coming--but from God, not from a pain flu or anything like that.

(He had never mentioned the midway point before that day).

(This much abbreviated outline of the address was prepared from shortened notes recorded by R. White).