

TEACHING PROBLEMS

by RÚHÍYYIH KHÁNUM



Bahá'í Publishing Trust

39, High Street, Manchester

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We often wonder why it is that when we have the remedy for all the ills of the world, the world won't take it. Sometimes it is very disheartening. We feel we are like a man standing at a fork in the road, voluntarily inconveniencing himself by acting as a sign-post. He points right with a sign that reads "Safety This Way" and left is marked "Danger, Precipice," but he finds most people rush the high road to the precipice and very, very few take the little unattractive path to safety. And we Bahá'ís, always trying to offer our priceless gift, many of us out in strange places as pioneers, many more travelling around as teachers or working hard and eagerly on National, Regional or Local Teaching Committees and allied Committees, wonder what on earth is the matter. Are the people all blind or is there something wrong with us?

The Ills of Mankind

The answer, of course, is, that broadly speaking, the human race to-day is certainly distracted, and, compared to an absolute standard of normalcy, somewhat demented, and we ourselves are far from being what we should be. The combination of mass disobedience to the Laws of God, and our own incomplete adherence to them, acts as a brake on the success of our labours.

It is not very hard to analyse the universal shortcomings of Mankind: the first is undoubtedly irreligion, "the vitality of man's belief in God is dying out in every land," said Bahá'u'lláh. He wrote that a long time ago and the pendulum is still swinging away. There is much less belief in God to-day than when He made that statement, and as the life of the soul of man flows from the Creator, most men are suffering from all the diseases caused by spiritual attrition. Not being content with having turned away from God they have chosen idols in His place—Racialism, Communism, Nationalism and so on. These false Gods exert no restraining influence; although they often arouse the misplaced idealism of their adherents, their handmaids are hatred, pride, fanaticism and ruthlessness. They put no brakes on the personal appetites of men, they exert no ethical influence outside the field of their defective philosophies. To-day is the day of all the wrong freedoms and none of the right. You are free to be a rabid anti-Semite or dark-race hater, free to be a nationalist at the expense of the rest of the world,

free to be a burning protagonist of any totalitarian system, free to follow your animal passions, free to divorce, free to become an alcoholic, in many places free to become a terrorist or guerrilla fighter. It is terribly sad to think that these black freedoms should be ours when one is no longer free to be virtuous without being found unstylish and peculiar, free to take a vacation in another land without being so tied up with restrictions and certificates that you feel like (and are usually treated like) an escaped convict when you get there, free to not drink without being looked upon as a social pariah, and above all, free to be happily and comfortably religious without being considered mentally deficient or emotionally unbalanced. In many countries today people are no longer free to enjoy the most innocent of all freedoms — tolerance — to be tolerant is to be disloyal. There is no middle ground.

Any newspaper, any day, supplies us with a picture of what the world's condition is like, we don't have to elaborate. And, we know only too well, from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Master and the Guardian, that the remedy for its condition can only be administered through agony. The human race still refuses to take the safe, small road of reason. It will not voluntarily reform. It will, with wild, unbelievable perversity rush down the highway to the precipice and go over the precipice into the cauldron of suffering, deep, universal, all-consuming suffering. There it seems it will ultimately coalesce into one world, not around the council table. Intelligent action it rejects, but the consequences of its madness will no doubt ultimately produce sanity.

This would seem to explain the fundamental reason why more people are not becoming Bahá'ís, why our voice is not listened to, indeed, scarcely heard. Nevertheless, we must still stand firmly at our post on the fork of the road; we must proclaim the Faith to the masses — it is our moral responsibility to do so; we must not rest, for we know there is a precipice and a cauldron; as many as can be brought to our side, the side of constructive action, of reason, of brotherhood, love for all men, we must bring. This is one aspect of the teaching problem, perhaps it would be better to say *the* aspect of it.

And What of Us?

In juxtaposition to the world, we have ourselves. Bahá'u'lláh said: "And if the believers had been occupied with that which we had instructed them, now all the world would be adorned with

the robe of faith." He wrote that between seventy and eighty years ago. That statement is enough to keep us Bahá'ís awake at night for the rest of our lives. For it clearly implies that the trouble with humanity after all, is not purely its own perversity but our failure, as followers of Bahá'u'lláh, as well. If each one of us was really a Bahá'í, in thought, spirit and deed, we would exert such a leavening influence that the sodden mass of the world would become spiritualized. Every time we look at the people of the world we are inclined to feel complacent; we compare our standards with theirs, our conduct with theirs, and see ourselves an inch and a half or two inches taller spiritually. But perhaps if we looked carefully at what kind of a human being a Bahá'í should be, namely a being resembling 'Abdu'l-Bahá, our Exemplar, our complacency would evaporate and we would realize that we Bahá'ís are supposed to be a race of spiritual giants, whereas we are still pygmies just a little taller than the average spiritual dwarf inhabiting this globe.

Why? First of all most of us don't know the Teachings well. We are strong adherents of this Cause of God, but we are for the most part not informed adherents of it. Compared to what Bahá'u'lláh has delivered into our hands, we are ignoramuses; we know about ten per cent. of it. I once heard my Mother say something which impressed me very much. Someone complimented her on her knowledge of the Bahá'í Faith. She said the Bahá'í Teachings were like a University and she had been a student in it for thirty-five years and was still learning.

The Covenant is the Hub

But, in spite of the fact that our knowledge is so incomplete, we still, every little new Bahá'í included, know quite enough about it to let it change our lives and to teach it to others. The hub of Bahá'í knowledge is one great knot of truth, strong enough to withstand the pressure of the entire world with its disbelief and corruption: the Covenant. The Great Covenant, we know, is the pledge God has made with every Prophet and through Him, with all men: that He will not abandon us to ourselves but will send us Guides to lead us on our path of knowledge of Him and nearness to Him. The lesser Covenant is, so far, unique to our Dispensation, in keeping with the maturer state of the world, and is the very blood in the veins of our Cause, the steel framework which will support our administrative order, our future world order. This is the Covenant Bahá'u'lláh made with us and the Master, and continued by the

Master through the guardian: that Bahá'u'lláh would not leave us alone after His Ascension, that divine guidance and authority would not be withdrawn from this physical world when the body of the Prophet was laid to rest, but that His Mantle, to the extent of infallible guidance and interpretation of our Scriptures would fall on the shoulders of His Vice-regent, first 'Abdu'l-Bahá, now Shoghi Effendi.

When a believer has this in mind, when his heart has opened, in faith in God, and enshrined within it Bahá'u'lláh and His Covenant with the Bahá'ís, then he has the kernel of everything. To this can be added knowledge, wisdom, the improvement of his character, good deeds. That is why a totally illiterate man, a deaf mute, a person bordering on being a moron, could be a true and luminous Bahá'í if this core of fundamental faith were in him: that he believed in God, that Bahá'u'lláh was His Manifestation for this period in history and that in this dispensation, which must last at least one thousand years, that Manifestation has not taken His Fingers from the pulse of the world, but will, first through the Master and then through a line of Guardians, directly exert a guiding influence from on High over the destinies of men. If we think about it this is really the most promising feature of our Faith. There are no absolute standards in this world, as far as the voice of men go, each man's opinion can be weighed against that of his fellows and is entirely relative. But in the Guardianship a new arrangement has been introduced, one man's opinion, within a certain field, bearing on certain matters, is absolute and not relative because it is motivated not from self, but from on High.

A person who accepts any religion and becomes its believer, accepts the primary concept that its Founder or Prophet was right and perfect because He was the mirror of God and thus absolutely divinely inspired. As Christ said: "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works"—and as Muhammad emphasizes in the Qur'án by beginning every Súrih with the word "Say" to show it is not His personal voice, but a voice from on High instructing men. Jews, Muhammadans, Christians, have all believed in the sanctity of their Holy Scriptures because they were the voice of God. We Bahá'ís believe just the same of Bahá'u'lláh with the exception that we do not believe God's guidance through a human instrument stopped with His ascension, but that it went on, and will go on, in a more circumscribed form, in the same sense that the Guardians

do not creatively reveal but rather interpretively reveal, until the next Manifestation of God appears.

In a world which is more and more doubtful of the existence of a personal God it is not surprising that it should be difficult to convince people a new Prophet has appeared; it is even less surprising that people, disinclined to believe in anything spiritual, should find it hard to accept an institution invested with divine and infallible authority.

We have a wonderful teaching to offer to men. We have a social, an economic, an ethical, an international set of laws, principles and values that are just unbeatable. But all the vitality and potency goes out of them unless a person is willing to acknowledge the reason why they are so perfect: because they come from a super-human source—from God. And if a man can get that far in his feeling and understanding, to accept this divine origin, then he is just quibbling if he cannot accept fully and comprehendingly the station and function of a Guardian, for it is the Guardian, and the concomitant House of Justice, that ensures the smooth functioning of Bahá'u'lláh's system. Take away this absolute standard and you take away the guarantee that what Bahá'u'lláh brought to the world will fulfil His Promises.

Understanding the Guardian

I doubt if there is a Bahá'í living who has the proper concept of what the station and functions of our Guardian are. We are, for one type of mentality, too close to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and for another type, not yet far enough from Him; sufficient historical perspective has not yet been gained, to see the true implications of the Guardianship. There are those who confuse the powers of the Guardian with those of the Manifestation of God, expecting him to be all-knowing. There are others who cannot reconcile themselves to the thought of all the power, the supreme power, vested in him. Those who endow him with an omnipresent knowledge are exaggerating, which is not rendering any service to one who seeks to properly grasp his function and position in the Bahá'í Dispensation. On the other hand many people, preponderatingly in the West, where there is such an abnormal attitude towards personality, where there is such a jealousy and fear of leadership, greatly under-rate the Guardianship's prerogatives which are in no way personal pass on the correctness of a new astro-physical theory or foretell the but rather functional. The first type demands that the Guardian

date of the end of Indian-Pakistan troubles; the second type, reading the provisions of the Master's Will, seeing the unbelievable authority vested in the Guardianship, thinks of it in terms of a man, a leader, who will dispose of means, and endowed with functions no man has ever before had, and is consequently afraid of one human being exercising so much power and tries to minimize 'Abdu'l-Bahá's statements. Both are utterly wrong. The Guardian is not the Manifestation of God who was the Heavenly Balance in which any knowledge could be weighed. Unless there is something in the Teachings to indicate an answer—maybe something only a Guardian could detect or interpret, but something—he will not pass on matters beyond his ken. Nor does he claim to know the end from the beginning. So much for those who exaggerate in one direction.

But those who exaggerate in the other direction do the Cause and themselves a much greater disservice. The Guardian of course is humanly a man, with his own particular personality, traits, preferences and likes. But this is beside the point. He is, as our Guardian, a function in a God-given system. If we should be told by a man that he registered in his solar plexus oncoming earthquakes we would laugh at him, but we would not laugh at the official seismograph recordings. It is time that those who are so afraid of personality should reform their mental concept and never think of a Guardian as a man reacting to something, but as a machine recording something. In other words, we voluntarily and semi-involuntarily react to situations, to inspiration, to the influence of God, but the Guardian reacts involuntarily, like a thing connected with a current, working automatically. This is why we must believe that in discharging all his functions and responsibilities in relation to the Faith, and us as its followers, he will never, can never, err. This is what divine guidance means, what it means to be invested by God with infallibility—it is not a voluntary thing, it is an involuntary one, not an optional thing, but a functional thing, and if the objection to so radical an innovation in man's religious life is that it is something new—why, so are radar, radio, television, jet propulsion and atomic energy. These advances and scientific revelations we accept—then why not one on the spiritual plane?

The Covenant and Teaching

This question of the Covenant, particularly as it involves us now in relation to the Guardian cannot be too much stressed in

connection with teaching problems, for it is the very crux of teaching. No matter what else a person understands or does not understand, has accepted or is not yet mature enough to grasp, he must accept and grasp the Covenant and its implications before becoming a Bahá'í because without this he is a tree with no roots in the Cause. The first wind, the first test, may carry him off. It is a strange thing and one that might well give every believer, trying to teach, pause for thought: if you look back over ten or twenty years of teaching work and see those who are not only in the forefront of the work but getting the most results, you invariably see that they are lions roaring in defence of the Covenant, so to speak, and, if you trace their Bahá'í ancestry, you will find they are whelps of still earlier Bahá'í lions, usually the first believers grounded in the Faith in the days of the Master and deeply rooted in the Covenant. Tests come and tests go, in the world and in the Faith, but nothing happens to this kind of Bahá'í because his deep roots are drawing up the proper spiritual nourishment all the time from the rich soil he is planted in—the Covenant.

Belief in the Centre of the Covenant (at present Shoghi Effendi, the Centre of the Master's Covenant) and love for him are the shield and the sword of a Bahá'í. He can conquer with them, without them he is defenceless.

The First Step

There are so many "dos" and so many "don'ts" to the teaching work. Every believer who has ever opened his mouth and tried to teach soon forms a little set of his own. I cannot go into them all—I neither profess to know enough to, nor have I time and space to attempt to. But just by way of sharing my observations and ruminations on this subject I can give out a few ideas.

I once heard a Bahá'í, in respect to the teaching work, use a very homely metaphor: she said our teachings were like a huge department store; everybody that came to us wanted at least one thing, whether it was a grand piano or an egg beater, and we had everything, was it conceivable that we could not satisfy the desire of that customer? This is a wonderful idea because the moment someone is truly seeking—not just living in a whirl or a profound lethargy or merely self-satisfied—we have, somewhere in our Faith, the answer to that person's needs. One of our main difficulties is that we do not always find out what the seeker wants and then give it to him.

Some of us forget that you cannot fill up something unless you first empty it. The seeker who comes to our meetings or whom we casually meet, is most often full, but unsatisfied. We do not even let him unburden himself to us, relieve his mind of its doubts or complications or theories. We know we have the answer and we promptly try to force it on him. It rarely is successful. Why? Because there was no room made for it, and we tried to cram it in before the man could create, by emptying into us his own trouble or thought, a space for our teaching to get into.

We should consider ourselves doctors and all those we meet patients. We have all the remedies, we must always try and give as much of them as we can. But supposing you go to your doctor, how do you feel? You want to tell him what is wrong, your symptoms, all about it. And supposing after you just get inside his office and sit down he starts telling you how he feels, or what he thinks the future course of international events is going to be, or all about his wife's dreams. Are you going to like it, does this technique attract you? And if he gives you a bottle of pills as you leave, are you going to take them?

To teach, is, to a great extent, the art of listening. If you will listen to the one you want to teach and find out what he wants and needs to hear then you can start your treatment by giving him, from our teachings, the right answer, the right remedy. But unfortunately all of us have hobbies, pet subjects, pet angles, even in the Cause. And so not infrequently you find that a person who is passionately interested in economics is being vigorously tackled by an enthusiastic Bahá'í—whose keenest interest is in the life after death. Whilst he raves about wages, hours, free trade and profit sharing, she eagerly retaliates with the qualities of the soul and its journey back to God. Or someone who hears voices, sees visions and senses auras comes up against the stone wall of a Bahá'í who tries to pooh pooh her out of it as he expatiates on the practical perfections of the World Order.

A person who wants something wants it, even if it is only an egg beater, he needs it and he needs it right away—so give it to him. If you are not a sufficiently well-rounded out student of the teachings to talk economics with the economist and spiritual data with the psychic, then at least be wise enough to acknowledge your limitations and turn your truth seeker over to someone whose "hobby" in the Cause corresponds to that of the person's deepest interest.

Sincere Concern for Others

How often we meet a fellow-Bahá'í who has the radiant glint in his eye, and that expression of contentment reminiscent of a cat who has just swallowed a mouse, which is promptly explained by the statement "I've just been giving the Message!" Yes, we dare say you gave it, but did the recipient take it? He wanted something from you, did he get it, or did you just have the pleasure of "giving him the Message"?

How often, how very often, 'Abdu'l-Bahá greeted people with "are you well, are you happy?" His loving interest reached out and surrounded them like sunshine. This sincere concern for an interest in the person you confront is the greatest teaching technique in the whole world and nothing will ever surpass it.

Teaching is excellent discipline for the personal ego, for to teach successfully you have to put yourself in the background and subdue your will and self-expression enough to be a sensitive receiving instrument that will pick up the seeker's correct wavelength. If you tune into that person you can commune with him and through that sympathetic thought you can begin to let the light of the Cause into his mind, you cannot force yourself into another person's soul or pound the truth into him just through sheer conviction that you are right.

Co-operative Effort

There is a delicate balance somewhere between wanting, whether you are capable of it or not, to teach a certain person all by yourself and thus have all the triumph yourself and barging in on other people's contacts at the wrong moment. As I think actual examples are more instructive than theorizing I will give two which impressed me very much in the course of my Bahá'í education.

'Alí Kuli Khán, who is an excellent speaker, had been addressing one evening, a large and somewhat exclusive group of people in a private home. When he had finished, to my horror, he called upon me to say a few words. It was very unexpected and I was very taken aback. After the meeting was over I asked him why on earth he had done that; after such a comprehensive lecture himself it was unnecessary. He said that no matter how long he addressed a given audience there would always be a certain percentage of people in it who would not respond to his mind, no matter

what he said, but that another speaker might reach these he could not reach. I never forgot that remark. It is really a mathematical certainty that one person, out of a hundred people, could only reach a percentage of them. And it is certainly just as true of those we contact daily. Your mind may never be able to kindle a spark of interest in a certain individual, maybe even your own husband or wife, but another Bahá'í might. It is no small part of teaching to have the wisdom to see that Mr. X is just the type for Mrs. Y to give the message to, and not your type at all.

Non-Interference

The second lesson I learned was about not interfering in other people's teaching work and was even more vivid for it involved disastrous results. A young woman had been attending Bahá'í meetings for a long time and studying with my Mother; at length she expressed the desire to become an active believer. My Mother, with the approval of the Spiritual Assembly, had a final long talk with her, telling her mostly about the Covenant and the Master's Will. This girl was a very thoughtful, quiet person and I think took the step she was about to make very seriously. She needed to be left alone to decide. As my Mother had told her: now she knew everything about the implications of this Faith and she must make up her own mind. Just at this point, a well-meaning friend tried to make it up for her. She tried through a pressure type of approach to shove her into the Cause. The quiet, conscientious girl felt this was proselytizing, she became suspicious and uneasy, never became a Bahá'í, gave up her friendly association with us all!

The Watchful Public

We must always remember that even those who seem most indifferent to us are watching keenly. There are many, many people who know the Faith and take a very peculiar attitude towards it: they are not ready to become Bahá'ís, either they do not believe in it or they don't want to live up to its responsibilities, but they want to see if we really are Bahá'ís or just bluffing. In other words do we live up to what we preach or not? I think we have no idea at all to what an extent we are under observation all the time and it is a very interesting psychological fact, and a very touching one, that these observers long to see us live up to our high standards and get very distressed, scornful, and even resentful when we do not.

I once had a friend visiting me, the young daughter of a Bahá'í whom he was most anxious should become one herself. She was invited to a party at the house of some people who attended our meetings occasionally but evinced no desire to become Bahá'ís. I did not go with her as I had something to do at home. The next day her host called me up and burst forth indignantly, " Say, what kind of Bahá'í is that you've got visiting you! She accepted a drink!" Of course I immediately asked him what right he had to think she was a Bahá'í? And, explained that she was not one, but that I hoped some day she would be one. The relief in his voice when he heard this was a great eye-opener to me. He offered what he thought was a Bahá'í a drink, showing how non-Bahá'ís continually probe us to see if we are sincere, but when she accepted he was really angry, and the reason he was angry was because he was disillusioned! I am glad to say the girl in question has become a most radiant and active believer.

One of the reasons humanity has become so irreligious is because it no longer finds people, in churches, mosques or synagogues who live their teachings. It is all lip service and lip religion is dead religion. This is why Bahá'u'lláh and the Master so constantly emphasized deeds, actions, example. If we read our teaching aright we see that in this day the Manifestation of God has raised the jump, so to speak; in the past, belief was acceptable, but now belief is no longer enough, not acceptable unless backed up by deeds. " In this day naught will be accepted save pure and stainless deeds."

The Ready Public

We present the Cause to the public, to all those we contact, why do we make so few new believers? Let us say (purely arbitrarily, for I have no idea at all what a true statistical basis would be) that only ten per cent. of the population of the United States of America at present is really receptive to the teachings, and by receptive let us say we mean those who could become believers at once and those who will after contacting the Faith, later become believers. Let us go further and suppose, that in a city of a hundred thousand, two per cent. are ready to embrace the Cause if given a fair chance, that is two thousand souls. Why do we not reach those two thousand? In the first place, they are distributed in all age groups, from High School students to the bed-ridden old, and in all classes from the sister of the wealthy magnate who lives on the hill to the charwoman who cleans out the trains at four in the morning.

Let us say this town is newly opened to the Faith, are such extremes in age and position as the types cited above likely to be contacted by the average pioneer or pioneers working in that city? The answer most certainly is no. Are such people likely to come to public meetings? Of course not. In fact, if we analyze it, we see that the radius of our average Bahá'í contact is extremely small. An almost infinitesimal percentage of the population of America ever attends a public lecture and those who do attend are usually lecture-goers. So, essential as this type of teaching is, we must not expect too much from it. In Montreal there is a Peoples Forum held weekly in one of the best known churches and it has access to the best speakers who tour America, names like Julian Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Sarojini Naidu, appear on its programmes and yet it is, even for such speakers, not over-filled. We should constantly try to improve our technique of public meetings, have good Bahá'í speakers, good sympathetic outside speakers, but not expect this method alone is going to reach many of that theoretical "two thousand" waiting souls.

The Immature Believer

After public meetings come private contacts. I think this is where we Bahá'ís really fail, for dozens of reasons. There are those—few in number let us hope—who are unwilling or too shy to let other people know they are Bahá'ís. They are afraid of seeming "queer" in the eyes of their fellow-students, their business associates, or their friends. Such an attitude is sad, for it indicates great immaturity on the part of the individual. Any one, in any field, who stands for something new is sure to receive a certain amount of ridicule, for human beings, *en masse*, are like sheep, they all "baa" together, they all graze together and they all stampede together. For a Bahá'í not to be able to realize that through identifying himself with the most progressive, constructive movement in the whole world, he has risen above the herd and covered himself with distinction, is pitiful. It is not necessary for a believer to rush around loudly proclaiming himself a Bahá'í or to become a pamphleteer and thrust tracts upon everyone he meets. On the other hand he should want everyone to find out he is a Bahá'í, he should want his fellow students to know that the reason that his ideas are so progressive is because they are Bahá'í ideas, or if he is in business, his employer should come to associate his reliability, willingness, courtesy and co-operativeness with the fact that our

Faith produces such characteristics; in the circle of his friends his good habits, his sincerity, his chaste conduct, his tolerance and lack of prejudice should label him a believer, without his being considered a religious crank or something peculiar.

The Force of Example

A Bahá'í's way of thinking, way of talking and way of conducting himself should be such that everyone will say, "you know, I suspect the reason George is such a reliable, decent sort of fellow has something to do with that Bahá'í thing he belongs to. I like him."

We must, without proselytizing, make friends for the Faith and create in the public an admiration for the Cause. We have got to create an atmosphere of respect for our religion and for us as followers of it. And we must realize that the primary thing is not what we say but what we do. As a matter of fact no one cares very much what we say. Everyone is saying something these days, from every loud speaker in the world, in Chinese, Czech, Spanish and so on, people are shouting good plans, good precepts, good ideas—many of them are in fact similar or identical with our Bahá'í plans, precepts and ideas—but they are, as we can see them from the state of the world, largely ineffectual. Why? Because nothing goes behind them, there is no right action, no upright conduct backing them up and everyone knows it. So, our chief, not our exclusive, but our chief way of teaching has got to be our example. When the world discovers that we Bahá'ís are Bahá'ís it will follow our footsteps as the children flocked after the Pied Piper, led by an irresistible impulse!

Increasing Contacts

To get back to our town and how to reach those two thousand people: we see we must have public lectures for the prestige of the Faith, to make the name Bahá'í familiar to the Public, to publicize the Cause's existence. We must also, with dignity, but fearlessly, be known as Bahá'ís and *liked* as Bahá'ís. Of course we must try to get together a group and hold a weekly fireside class, probably the most effectual form of teaching at present. But every believer, pioneer or long established resident of a place, knows by experience that these methods soon reach a saturation point. The public meetings only reach a certain limited number; the firesides probably lead to the establishment of an Assembly, maybe each year a few

new people enrol, but of that hypothetical two thousand only five per cent. seems at most to be made available to the Faith. Why?

I think it is because those two thousand people are tucked away in various pockets, so to speak, and each one of us, like every other person, lives within a certain radius. We must learn to increase our radius of contacts. We have a tendency to wait for souls to be "led to us." They often are, but others, probably the vast majority, need digging for. For instance, let us say a pioneer contacts one hundred of those potential Bahá'ís through the public meetings and another fifty people through fireside gatherings (generous estimates!) If he has a job he may draw from those he meets in his work five people or so to his meetings, say another five receptive people are met casually through his social life, introductions of his new friends, etc. Now, that believer has a home, a job, a small circle of friends, a Bahá'í meeting he attends once a week and a study class also once a week. His radius of contacts is so to speak at the saturation point. Of the two thousand he has reached one hundred and sixty. There he stops. What can he do? As far as I can see the only thing he can do is to cross over into another pocket. If he waits for that one contact—the advertised public meeting—to reach the other one thousand eight hundred and forty people who are theoretically waiting to become Bahá'ís he will have to wait a century. The Golf Club, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Junior League, the Child Welfare, the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Esperanto Society—these and a hundred other types of either social, sport or humanitarian clubs and groups with kindred interests to ours are "pockets" where our future fellow-Bahá'ís may be concealed. If we want them we have to go after them. It requires sacrifice of our time and energy in some cases, in others it might be a very good addition to our own lives. Let Bahá'í young people swim at the Y.W.C.A. or Y.M.C.A. and meet new young people to invite to their youth group or to interest in forming with them a youth group. Let them join the Junior League or the Junior Board of Trade, or any group whose aims are purely non-political, and through association bring themselves as Bahá'ís, with their high ideals and standards, to the attention of others. They will soon find some of the missing eighteen hundred and forty! Let Father do the same, a chess club a country club, a debating society, a camera club, or be active on some committee of a progressive or philanthropical nature, at his factory or his place of business, or in civic affairs—something, any-

thing that will bring him in touch with new people. Mother can do the same. Women in every city have dozens of clubs and organizations for child, civic or home welfare which are progressive and constructive and with which a Bahá'í can identify himself without in any way infringing on our principle of non-affiliation with religious or political movements.

Our Responsibility

If we are conscientious about teaching, about giving to this mad world, rushing along the path to destruction, at least an opportunity to hear of this redeeming message, then we will not waste our time running on a treadmill of daily routine and habits like a squirrel in a cage, to the office, from the office, our bridge, our hobbies, our selfish pleasures. We will try and make our pleasure and leisure hours not only of use to ourselves but a means of reaching those few souls, who, like jewels buried in a mine, are truly believers in this new Day of God and only waiting to be found.

Our responsibility is very great. They say there is not a doctor living, who has practised for any length of time, who cannot look back on some patient and say that if he had done differently or better that patient would now be alive instead of dead. I am afraid we Bahá'ís too, who have had any experience at all in teaching are forced to admit that there are people who, if we had been more careful, more thoughtful, more tactful, wise and loving, would today be believers instead of having drifted into and out of the orbit of the Cause. To fail in one's moral duty to humanity these days is a heavy failure. How would we like to be without this Cause today? Where would we see any hope, any real security ahead in the future? How could we live without that sense of nearness to God and understanding of His ways which our teachings confer as their greatest blessing? Can any one of us feel he can receive such a bounty and yet withhold it from others, rest quiescent in his own inner sense of security and leave others untaught and unhelped in these disastrous days the world is passing through?

To-day, if ever, must ring in our ears the battle cry of Mullá Husayn "Mount your steeds, oh heroes of God!"

Haifa, Israel.

March 18, 1949.