

A Glimpse into the Life of Laura Dreyfus-Barney

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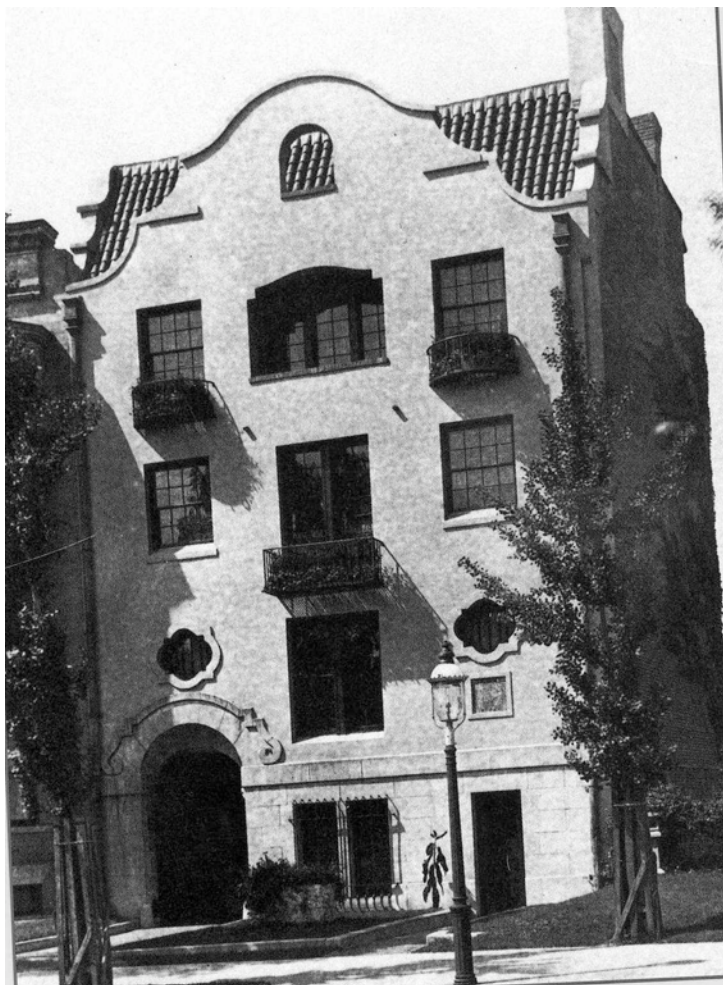
Introduction

Once, on a pleasant Sunday afternoon in Washington, a gentle nobleman's carriage stops at the door of a beautiful house. He rings the bell. He waits for a while. No one answers. He is tired but waits a little longer. He rings the bell again and still no one answers. He turns back and returns to his place of residence. He has already been to this house a few days earlier. He knows the owner of the house and her daughter. He is paying a last visit to say farewell to the hostess who had invited Him several times during His stay and graciously entertained Him.

Who is this nobleman? Why is He there? Who are the owners of the house? When was that?

That was almost 100 years ago. The year is 1912. The house is Studio House.¹ The nobleman is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The owners are the Barney family of Washington. The author passes in front of this house regularly and cannot forget the image of the Master standing in front that house, knocking on its door! How sad a day it was in 2000 when she learned that the house was being sold and its contents auctioned off.²

The author was able to visit the house and see the furniture and objects belonging to the Barney family which were up for auction. Much of the furniture was original, perhaps used by 'Abdu'l-Bahá while enjoying a meal or being entertained by His hosts. This was the last time anyone could see the house with its original contents.



Alice Barney-Hemmick's home in Washington, D.C., c. 1912

‘Abdu’l-Bahá came to this house for dinner and for tea several times during His three visits to Washington, DC in April and May of 1912.³ This was the house designed and built by Laura Barney’s mother in 1903 and called Studio House. Prominent people, artists, authors, musicians and diplomats and even the president of the US had frequented these rooms, known for their opulence, peculiar and artistically exciting architecture.

Later, Studio House was inherited by Barney daughters.⁴ Laura donated the House and its contents to Smithsonian Institution, a research and education center, to be used as a

cultural center.⁵ Several years after Laura's passing, the Smithsonian decided to sell the House because of its expensive upkeep. It was at that time that the author became interested to learn about the life of Laura Barney and began her research. Unfortunately very limited published material was found on her.

Who is Laura Barney? Why should we know about her? What are some of her achievements? How did she become a Bahá'í? Where was she from?

We immediately know of her from her greatest legacy, the book called *Some Answered Questions* published in 1908. Who was this person who conjured such deep and intriguing questions for 'Abdu'l-Bahá? Why did she spend months in the prison city of Akka? What else did she do?

Laura Clifford Barney



Laura Barney, c. 1900

In this paper, the author attempts to answer some of these questions. But even this is not easy. Unfortunately Laura's personal notes and diaries were stolen during the Nazi occupation of Paris between 1940 and 1944.⁶ Hopefully after this research is completed and a proper biography compiled, more light will be shed on the life of this distinguished Bahá'í figure. Today we begin with a glimpse into her life.

The author believes that proper recognition has eluded Laura Dreyfus Barney both within the Bahá'í community as well as the world. One reason may be the lack of her diaries or memoirs. Another factor may be that she still stands in the shadow of her

prominent and accomplished spouse, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney. Yet another might be that she divided her time between two countries, which was uncommon in those days. Therefore her heroism has been lost in unexamined history.

The author shares her story, compiled from original documents and memoirs with a minimum of interpretation; revolving around her life and the activities of her family.

The three major periods in the life of Laura Dreyfus-Barney can be considered:

1. Her family and childhood (1879-1900);
2. Becoming a Bahá'í, her Bahá'í activities and accomplishments, meeting and marrying Hippolyte Dreyfus (1900-1928)
3. Her life after the passing of her husband (1928-1974).

First Period (1879-1900): Her Family and Childhood

Laura Clifford Barney was born on Nov. 30, 1879 to a family of industrialists and artists in Cincinnati, Ohio. Her mother was Alice Pike, the daughter of Samuel Pike, a multi-millionaire entrepreneur with wide-ranging interests. He collected paintings and rare books, played the flute, wrote poetry, and built an opera house in his city. From childhood Alice was surrounded by the



Alice Pike-Barney, Laura's mother, in 1913

arts. Also at an early age, she was exposed to the robust creativity of Europe which increased her life-long passion for the arts.

Alice was an artist, writer, theater director, philanthropist, and prominent civic and social leader. With her wealth and social connections, she became a powerful ally for the arts when her family moved to the capital of the United States in 1889. She was a “willful, eclectic, and ‘eccentric,’ a term used to explain her lack of conformity to many conventions and mores.”⁷ In Washington and Paris, her name was synonymous with an unwavering commitment to the culture of creativity.

Laura’s father, Albert Clifford Barney, was a wealthy Dayton, Ohio manufacturer and financier. They were married in 1876. Their first child, Natalie, was born the same year. Laura was born 3 years later. They had a rich and privileged childhood, enjoying “satin-lined sheets and flower-bedecked baby carriages.”⁸ They had French governesses and private tutors for the early years of their education. They were accustomed to wealth and luxury from early years of their lives. Their summer residence was a house with twenty-six rooms!



Natalie and Laura, c. 1900

Laura’s parents decided to send their daughters to boarding school in France and sent them to Les Ruches (in France) in 1886 for their studies.⁹ Their mother approved of this decision since her marriage to Albert was not a happy one. Her husband had a difficult personality. She decided to accompany the

daughters. By moving to Paris, she could be near her daughters and pursue her own interests such as taking painting lessons.

As to the characters of the two sister, they were as opposite in personality as they were in coloring. Natalie was blond and fearless. Laura was brunette, dark and serious; spending many days quietly posing for her mother. "While Laura looked upon her parents with adoring eyes, unable to recognize that they might be less than perfect, Natalie harbored no illusions."¹⁰

While growing up, Laura never caused any problems for her parents. She had an over developed sense of duty. Her mother would look at "her somber dark-haired daughter in amazement."¹¹ Laura was a diligent student and she always tried to improve. She was thirteen years old when she returned to America and entered a Catholic convent school in Washington. A few years earlier, her father had moved the family to Washington, DC.

Though Laura was younger than her sister, their roles were reversed in their youth. It was "Natalie who sought out the practical younger sister to take care of mundane matters."¹²

Even in her youth, Laura was quite different. The signs of her keen intelligence and curious nature had started to emerge at a very young age. There were only serious thoughts in her head which was not a family characteristic. She showed a keen intelligence and inquisitive nature with insightful observations from an early age.¹³ Perhaps it was the daily presence of physical pain from a leg injury which left her with a limp that had made her "both introspective and practical in equal doses."¹⁴

When her family returned to Paris in 1898, Laura, then 19, and her sister often attended their mother's gatherings in Paris: Laura often participated in the intellectual discussions among influential writers and artists.¹⁵ She studied dramatic arts and sculpture in Paris. She was very much intrigued with theater like her mother, which was surprising given her naturally quiet and retiring personality.¹⁶ She later wrote 25 short stories and at least two plays.¹⁷

In those years, her parents' differences were becoming irreconcilable, with her father giving way to rages and excessive drinking.

Second Period (1900-1928)

Hearing about the Bahá'í Faith, her Family's Reaction and Meeting her Future Husband

In 1900, Laura's family was living in Paris. She heard of the faith of Bahá'u'lláh through May Ellis Bolles (later Maxwell) in Paris in that year and accepted it right away.¹⁸ An early supporter of women's rights and world peace, Laura believed fully in the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith and accepted it right away. This proved to be, as the Hand of the Cause of God, Dr. Ugo Giachery later wrote; "the spark that ignited a fire never to be quenched." He continued: "Her ideals and aspirations found fulfillment in her activities in the service of the Bahá'í Faith."¹⁹ Soon after her acceptance of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh she made her first pilgrimage to Akka.

Upon her return to Paris, she became an active participant in that city's Bahá'í community and was instrumental in establishing a significant Bahá'í presence in Washington, DC later.²⁰ Laura and her mother helped find housing for Mirza Abul-Fazl, the celebrated Bahá'í scholar and teacher. Her mother had heard about the Bahá'í Faith from Laura and had become a Bahá'í.

She joined her daughter on one her visits to Akka. Upon Alice's return from Akka to Washington, she became active by opening her home, Studio House, for meetings of the Bahá'ís. In contrast to her previous gatherings, these were not the elite of politics and society: they were people of all walks of life who attended! Alice painted a portrait of Mirza Abu'l Fazl during his stay; she also painted Ali Kuli Khan. However, as an artist and given her social milieu, she may not have fully understood the Faith.²¹ She did not view it as a conflict to be both an Episcopalian and a Bahá'í. Alice's biographer believes that "of the two, the Bahai faith with its emphasis upon women's equality was appealing to her. Moreover, the faith's Persian roots appealed to her sense of the exotic."²²

The media of Washington were not very charitable when learning of their change of religion. A gossip magazine, the *Washington Mirror* wrote an article about Laura's conversion to the Bahá'í Faith and making fun of the "Mirza Abul Fazel Gulapaygan's" "own peculiar way of preaching" and considered it the family's "latest fad."²³

Laura was not at all amused by this article, and she was disdainful of the ignorance it revealed.²⁴ But this was what she had to tolerate. Yet none of this would weaken her devotion and perseverance. She was a staunch and firm believer in her faith from the beginning. Laura “with characteristic single-mindedness” continued her hard work to further the cause of her faith in Washington whenever she returned.²⁵

Not long after that, Alice was yet again shocked to see an issue of *The Washington Mirror*, making fun of Laura and the Bahá'í Faith. The article had painted a very “exaggerated scene of an incense-filled room where the audience was waiting for the appearance of and contact with Bahá'u'lláh!”²⁶ It was filled with incorrect descriptions. At the end it printed the address of the Bahá'í meeting place. As a result, crowds gathered to gawk and laugh at those who came to hear the teachings of Abu'l Fazl.

Albert, Laura's father, who cared about people's opinion of him and what was said about his family, decided to close the house where the meetings were held. The outrage at his wife and Laura was limitless and this came as a blow to his pride and to his poor health. He, who had had a heart attack several years earlier, suffered another heart attack. His doctors advised him to go to a spa to rest and recuperate. He traveled to Europe with his eldest daughter. But unfortunately he died in Monte Carlo on December 5, 1902. Laura was twenty three years old at the time. The family was saddened by his death, even though Alice was perhaps relieved that it was finally over. For the first time in “twenty-six years, Alice, Natalie, and Laura were completely free of the man who had tried to rule their lives.”²⁷ He was quite a rich man at the time. His ashes were buried at a funeral service in his hometown of Dayton.

It was in the middle of the same year that Laura and her mother moved to Studio House.

Meeting her Future Husband

Laura met Hippolyte Dreyfus in Paris in 1900. Like Laura, he was introduced to the Bahá'í Faith the same year by May Bolles. He was a Frenchman six years her senior. He had studied law and had a doctoral degree and was practicing before the Paris Court of Appeals.²⁸ He became the first French citizen to believe in Bahá'u'lláh. He visited 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Akka in 1903.

He gave up his legal career to devote himself to oriental studies, comparative religion, plus Arabic and Persian, intending to translate the Bahá'í Writings. His accomplishments are numerous and well-documented.

Let us hear in Laura's own words of their encounter:

The first meeting with Hippolyte Dreyfus that I can recall was in 1900 in Paris on the threshold of May Bolles' apartment near l'École des Beaux Arts. He was leaving; I was arriving to hear more of the Bábí epilogue. Though I was away from France almost constantly from 1901 to 1906, I knew that he had become an outstanding Bahá'í and that his father and mother,²⁹ his sister and brother-in-law had all joined the Cause.

It was not an ordinary man that Laura had met. Shoghi Effendi later spoke of him as a man who had "qualities of genial and enlivening fellowship," and was of "sound judgment and distinctive ability."³⁰ He was an outstanding man.

Laura and Hippolyte collaborated on different projects and took several trips at the request of the Master before they were married years later.

Her Visits to the Holy Land and the Middle East in the Early 1900s

As soon as Laura heard about the Bahá'í revelation in Paris, she began traveling to Akka, and stayed for months at a time during several of those trips. During her first trip she was twenty-one years old. In those days, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was confined to the city of Akka and was permitted to receive only a few visitors. Imagining a refined young western woman from a wealthy family in the city of Akka of those years is difficult; however, she had special attraction to living in those surroundings.³¹

She traveled several times to the Holy Land. Her third trip was in 1904. The next year, she traveled with her future husband to the native land of Bahá'u'lláh at the request of the Master. They were the first Western Bahá'ís to do so.³² They visited Tabriz and Maku and Ishqabad in Russian Turkistan where the first Bahá'í House of Worship had been built.³³ Madame Lachenay, a Bahá'í from France, was her travel companion.³⁴ Further research may yield details of this trip to Persia. While

in Tehran, Laura sent a letter to her mother, stating that the believers there were “wonderfully sincere and kind” and they were among “the most important people” of Persia.³⁵ What inadequate information that I have found is from Fazil Mazandarani’s recorded it in Zohuru’l-Hagh.³⁶ Laura and Hippolyte also met with Sadr-u Sodour while in Iran and sent a report to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. In response He revealed a Tablet for Sadr-u’l Sodour. In that Tablet, He refers to Miss Barney.³⁷

In order to meet the Bahá’ís, Laura also traveled to Egypt and Turkey.³⁸ In the autumn of the same year she returned to Akka. This time Laura was accompanied by her mother.³⁹ It was after her departure from Akka on one of these trips that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá revealed a Tablet for Laura, giving her the tile of ‘Amatu’l-Baha,’ “*Handmaiden of Baha.*”

‘Abdu’l-Bahá writes:

*I will henceforth address thee the ‘Handmaiden of Bahá’ so that it may indicate that thou hast attained to a new assignation.*⁴⁰

These visits to Akka became the center of Laura Barney’s life and sources of stimulation and inspiration. She became acquainted with the immediate family of the Master and met Shoghi Effendi when he was a young child. Of her first meetings she wrote: “Shoghi Effendi! How well I remember the first time I saw him in the Holy Land. He was then a little boy of five or six years of age, clothed in a brown Persian garment, chanting a prayer in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence; his earnest eyes, his firm mouth looked predestined.”⁴¹ Laura learned about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s interest to find a tutor for His grandson to teach him English literature. It was Laura who secured the services of a cultured and refined English lady.⁴²

Some Answered Questions

Details of her visits and travels to Akka, between 1904 and 1906, require further research and are of great significance. This period described by Shoghi Effendi as “the most troublous and dramatic of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s ministry. He was still as a prisoner of the Turkish government.”⁴³

As Hassan Balyuzi stated:

It is of particular interest to know the details of Laura Clifford Barney’s repeated and extended visits to the

Holy Land, because it was during those months, stretched over several years, that a book unique in the entire range of the Writings of the Founders of the Faith took shape. The book was *Some Answered Questions*. Questions came from Laura Barney and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered them.⁴⁴

This being, Laura Barney’s most outstanding achievement which “immortalized her name the [Bahá’í] world over.”⁴⁵

A summary of the accounts of those years will be given. These are based on the memoirs of Dr. Youness Afroukhteh. He was the secretary and translator to the Master who rendered Laura Barney’s questions from English into Persian and converted the Master’s answers from Persian to English.

Dr. Youness Khan recorded:

In the heat and confusion of Akka, she [Laura Barney] joyfully pursued her solitary task of collecting the Writings of the Master. And as she meditated and soared in the realms of spirit, she beheld the light of the celestial flame in the Sinai of her heart and discovered many divine realities.⁴⁶

Youness Khan recalled that the Master would sit at the head of the dinner table and Laura Barney sat on His left and Ethel Rosenberg, an early English Bahá’í, who had accompanied Laura, sat to her left. Often, several pilgrims and friends were also present. He himself was sitting to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s right.⁴⁷

In 1904 when Laura began posing her questions, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was concerned about the approach of turmoil and upheaval, therefore no permission was granted to anyone to enter Akka. “Miss Barney hardly ever left the House of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá except on certain occasions to visit the Shrine of Bahá’u’lláh, which was undertaken with great care and caution.”⁴⁸

“Like the other Western friends,” Youness Khan wrote, “this lady received her share of spiritual education at the dinner table.” He continued: “the Master’s excessive workload only allowed time allotted for such question and answer sessions at the dinner table and then only at lunch time, at about 1 pm.”⁴⁹



Hippolyte Dreyfus, Laura Barney and Mme Lachenay in Iran, c. 1906

Dr. Afroukhteh recorded that Laura Barney “was endowed with an avid enthusiasm for acquiring spiritual qualities and heavenly attributes” and that is why ‘Abdu’l-Bahá honoured her with the title of *Amatu’l-Baha*.⁵⁰ She had shown a keen intelligence and inquisitive nature with insightful observations from an early age. She was a shy woman: the “quintessence of purity and piety.”⁵¹ And her reserved and quiet way had a powerful impact on the followers of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

In his words she immersed “herself in the ocean of divine knowledge, where she discovered many a precious pearls.”⁵² “In her eagerness to grasp the realities of the teachings, she considered the Prison City of Akka and the small house of the Beloved of the world preferable to the most splendid mansions of Western countries.”⁵³

In the introduction of *Some Answers Questions*, Laura Barney writes that one day the Master said ‘I have given to you my tired moments,’ as He rose from the table after answering her question. Sometimes weeks [would] pass before she would get her instructions. She said: “But I could well be patient, for I had always before me the greater lesson — the lesson of his personal life.”⁵⁴ She continues: “In these lessons He is the

teacher adapting Himself to his pupil, and not the orator or poet.”⁵⁵

She was greatly favored by the Master because of her spirituality and He was content and happy with the process. The fact that He had no time to eat or enjoy His meals was not a problem. On one of these occasions, when the Master was showing a little tiredness, He rose and happily remarked:

*It is encouraging that after all this labour, at least she understands the concepts. This is refreshing. What would I have done if after all this effort she still failed to comprehend the issues?*⁵⁶

As the table talks continued the Holy family realized the significance of the precious gems coming to light, decided to have a writer attend the meetings and take down in Persian what was said.⁵⁷ Miss Barney arranged for one of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s son-in-laws or for one of the Persians of His secretariat of that period to make sure that the recording or the replies are made in an accurate way.⁵⁸ When Dr. Afroukhteh went on a trip, one of the daughters of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá took the task of translation.⁵⁹

Laura Barney became quite fluent in Persian “from her continual practice of it, as well as her study of the Holy Writings. And because of her familiarity with Bahá’í terminology and Persian expressions, it was easier for her than some other western believers who visited the Master in those years. Dr. Afroukhteh states that the discussions “were concluded in an atmosphere of joy and amity.”⁶⁰ He also writes of numerous references and interesting episodes of the Master’s manner of expression and utterance that enchanted Miss Barney.⁶¹

Then the time of compiling came. In the first months when she started compiling her book, the situation in Akka had eased somewhat.⁶²

The task of correcting and rereading by the Master and translation and comparison were very difficult both for the Master and Miss Barney, especially when the compilation time arrived. Laura states that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá decided that they should be recorded in Persian as well. She describes how the Master corrected Mirza Munir’s first draft and then the corrections were reviewed by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and then approved and singed each corrected subject.⁶³ The Master read the

transcriptions and altered as needed with His red pen, then signed and stamped each one with His seal. Laura later wrote that it was the same stamp that 'Abdu'l-Bahá used for His revealed Tablets.⁶⁴ Dr. Afroukhteh explains that: "...the Amatu'l-Baha, due to her strong faith and intense devotion, was able to compile her book properly and this received 'Abdu'l-Bahá's approval. Therefore, each word and line of that book should be considered as the revealed Word."⁶⁵

The original Persian texts are in the Bahá'í archives of Haifa. Laura Clifford Barney was able to complete the work and present this great service to the Bahá'í world, a gift that will cause her to be remembered eternally.⁶⁶

The book was first called the 'table talks.' She did not intend to publish them at the time and were simply for her future reference. She requested permission from 'Abdu'l-Bahá to publish them in 1907 which was granted. She published them in English and Persian in 1908.⁶⁷ A copy of *Mufavezat* was sent to Edward G. Browne the British Orientalist after its publication in 1908.⁶⁸ She also later collaborated with Hippolyte Dreyfus to translate *An-Nuru'l-Abha-fi-Mufawadat* into French.⁶⁹

This is how this work "unique in all religious literature" came into existence.⁷⁰ In that same year, she went yet on another Pilgrimage to Akka.⁷¹ 'Abdu'l-Bahá was also freed that year after the revolution in the Ottoman Empire and the overthrow of the Sultan.

Now we examine the developments of her family. In 1909, Laura's mother met a popular bachelor, Christian Dominique Hemmick, thirty years her junior in Washington. He was a few years younger than her younger daughter, Laura! They became engaged and planned to get married. Both daughters strongly opposed it when they heard the news of their upcoming marriage.

In the same years, Natalie, Laura's sister had followed a different path. She was living in Paris and was leading a very unconventional life style, befriending prominent women artists of the time. She was also holding salons for prominent authors, artists, poets. Laura's mother did not approve of her life style, but then accepted it since she believed it had brought happiness to her life.⁷² The two sisters were living completely different lives.

God's Heroes

In 1909 Laura wrote the script of a play.⁷³ This was Laura's defensive reaction to protect the Faith and the Bab.⁷⁴ Let us see why. A well-known Great Russian Playwright, Ms. Isabella Grinveskaya had written a play on the life of the Báb which had successful runs in St. Petersburg.⁷⁵ A French playwright intended to write a play about the Báb also and to have Sarah Bernhardt play the role of Tahirihi. Laura Barney was shocked by the thought of what they would show on the Paris stage with the life of the Báb that caused her to write a play called "*God's Heroes: A Drama in Five Acts.*" The protocol among artists was that if someone was planning and working on a play, other creative people would not use the same subject. The following year, it was published in London.

Year 1911: Her Marriage to Hippolyte

Another significant year in her life was the year 1911.

First let us talk about her marriage. She had known Hippolyte since 1900 and it was through their collaboration on the translation of *Some Answered Questions* and their travels together that they realized how well they could work together. They discovered their common aspirations. Hippolyte was a scholar and active member of the Bahá'í community in Paris. He was an intellectual who tempered his brilliance with humor. "He was also a gentle and compassionate man possessed of infinite patience when it came to Laura."⁷⁶

Her mother suggested a double wedding ceremony for herself and for Laura! Laura, in a gesture of harmony agreed. Laura and Hippolyte had a joint civil ceremony with Laura's mother on April 15, 1911. Laura was 32 years old at the time.⁷⁷ They adopted the last name of Dreyfus-Barney. Laura and Hippolyte traveled to his summer house called 'Daru'l-Salam' on Mont Pelerin and Montreau both in Switzerland for their honeymoon.

Their life, both before and after their marriage, was filled with partnership and untiring activities and travels. Her Bahá'í activities intensified after this union. It was after her marriage that for the first time she seemed almost relaxed and untroubled.⁷⁸

Accompanying the Master in Europe

The other significant event of that year was that of Mr. and Mrs. Dreyfus-Barney joining 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His first visits to Europe. Laura wrote: "...when the Master visited Europe I again gained admittance to His presence."⁷⁹

They were in the presence the Master to London, Paris and Switzerland. Juliet Thompson has recorded her memories of those days with several references to Laura and her husband.⁸⁰ She wrote that Laura and Hippolyte were confidants of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The Dreyfus-Barneys were present with the Master at Hotel du Parc in Thonon, France and Hotel de la Paix in Geneva.⁸¹ Juliet Thompson remembers that in Geneva the Master was either with Laura and Hippolyte in her room or they were in His "in the most charming informality."⁸²

In a story, she writes:

...we did the most amazing thing: the Master, Laura, Hippolyte, and I went for an automobile ride!

"Did you ever think, Juliet," said the Master, laughing, as we got into the car with Him, "that you and Laura would be riding in an automobile with me in Europe?"

They drove to a country inn. Several children were selling bunches of violets and 'Abdu'l-Bahá bought all of them. The Master paid them but they held out their hands for more. Laura did not want the Master to be bothered. "Don't let them impose!" cried Laura. The Master said: "Tell them, that they have had their share."⁸³

They walked to a bridge where the Master was very excited over the beauty of the forest and the bridge. When they returned to the inn, the children again swarmed around Him asking for more money. Laura firmly ordered them to leave since she thought they were imposing. "He would give away everything He has," she whispered to Juliet. But the Master had seen a child much younger than the others, a newcomer with a very sensitive face, who was looking at Him. "But," He said: "to this *little* one I have not given." He made sure that He has given coins to all the children who were there.⁸⁴

During their drive, they stopped at a water-fall and the Master left the car and walked towards it. Juliet said that tears

came to Laura's eyes and mine as we watched that "rapt Face delighting in some secret way in the beauty of the waterfall."⁸⁵

In September of that year, the Dreyfus-Barneys traveled from Paris to London to assist the Master with translations during His stay at Cadogan Gardens, the home of Lady Blomfield, an early Irish believer who had visited the Master in the Holy Land. They were among the scores of friends who arrived during His stay.⁸⁶ Lady Blomfield, wrote that: "Foremost amongst our visitors were Monsieur and Madame Dreyfus-Barney, the brilliant French scholar and his no less brilliant American wife, who spoke Persian with 'Abdu'l-Bahá, translated for Him, and were altogether helpful, courteous, an charming."⁸⁷

The Master's visit to Paris began on Oct 3. Lady Blomfield referring to the Dreyfus-Barneys as the "Friends of 'Abdu'l-Bahá" stated that they found an apartment for Him in the French capital.⁸⁸ His residence was a delightful and sunny apartment at 4 Avenue de Camoens. The Dreyfus-Barneys were again serving as interpreters for Him and for several other people. The Master's every word and exhortation was noted by several people. And it is through their effort that His addresses were later published in English under the title *Talks By 'Abdu'l-Bahá Given in Paris*, later know as *Paris Talks*.⁸⁹ Laura assisted with the translation from Persian to French and for subsequent French publication of this book in Geneva.⁹⁰

During His stay in Paris, 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent a good deal of time at the Dreyfus-Barney home. On Oct. 25, the Master recounts: "Yesterday evening when I came home from the house of Monsieur Dreyfus I was very tired – yet I did not sleep, I lay awake thinking. I said, O God, Here am I in Paris! What is Paris and who am I? Never did I dream that from the darkness of my prison I should ever be able to come to you, though when they read me my sentence I did not believe in it."⁹¹

These were some brief references to the Master's visits to Paris with only those where the Dreyfus-Barneys were present. It does not report His triumphant trip to that city.

Year 1912: With 'Abdu'l-Bahá's in the US

It was in 1912 that 'Abdu'l-Bahá traveled to the United States. Laura was in New York, New Jersey, and in Washington, DC, her American home.⁹² On the Master's first visit, the Dreyfuses were not in Washington. But Laura's

mother, now Mrs. Alice Barney-Hemmick, whom the Master had met in 1905 in Akka, was living at Studio House with her second husband. She was actively working for women's equality, a new interest of hers.⁹³

Agnes Parsons, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's hostess in Washington, who has left her diaries of those days, mentions Laura's mother several times. She records that in 1912, the weekly Bahá'í Sunday Schools were held at Studio House, and it was at this regular meeting that 'Abdu'l-Baha spoke.⁹⁴ She also records that on April 21, 'Abdu'l-Bahá talked at an event, then drove for an hour after the meeting before going to lunch at Mrs. Hemmick's.⁹⁵ Again after a talk on April 23, the Master went for a drive with Laura's mother. The Turkish ambassador was also in the car and was "much interested in the conversation."⁹⁶ Two days later, after a meeting the Master went out motoring during the afternoon and met with people at Mrs. Hemmick's and Mme. Ali-Kuli Khan's.⁹⁷

It was on this Sunday of April 28, as noted at the outset, that the carriage of this gentle noble man, that of 'Abdu'l-Bahá stopped at Studio House to say goodbye to Laura's mother, but she was out! She, thus, did not have the bounty of receiving the Master on His way to the railway station!⁹⁸

The second visit of the Master to Washington was in May of the same year. Laura in a letter wrote that she "had the honour of attaining His presence" during this visit, as did her husband.⁹⁹ They went to the railway station to welcome the Master. It was Laura's car that took the guests over to Agnes Parsons' home for tea.¹⁰⁰

During this visit, 'Abdul-Baha spent a large portion of His time speaking to the believers. He also met with several people of prominence. One afternoon He addressed a group of women, and then visited a home for the poor which had been established through the efforts of Mrs. Alice Barney Hemmick. Laura was present at both events and had accompanied the Master in the car afterwards. He had a ten o'clock dinner at her mother's home.¹⁰¹

After leaving the United States in December 1912, the Master stopped in London. Dreyfus-Barneys were again present. It is recorded that the closing remarks following a speech made by the Master were made by Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney.¹⁰²

Year 1913: With 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Paris

'Abdu'l-Bahá visited Paris a second time in January of 1913. His home in Paris was an apartment in 30 rue St. Didier that Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney had rented for Him.¹⁰³

Laura and her husband were again present during this visit and attended many of the significant gatherings. Dreyfus-Barneys were among those who hosted meetings in Paris where seekers and enquirers were welcome. On January 31, they hosted such a gathering where the Master was present.¹⁰⁴ On March 9th, one of His talks had to be curtailed because Professor and Mrs. Edward Browne had called. 'Abdu'l-Bahá talked with Edward Browne for more than an hour. "He was very tired that evening and spoke of hastening to the Holy Land."¹⁰⁵ Hippolyte was present at this meeting but Laura had to be excused and accompanied Mrs. Browne.¹⁰⁶ 'Abdu'l-Bahá celebrated the Festival of Naw-Ruz on March 21st. The same evening He addressed the friends at a gathering at the home of the Dreyfus-Barneys. The celebrations for the Anniversary of the Declaration of the Báb were held on May 23rd again at the home of Laura and Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney.¹⁰⁷

A few days later, 'Abdu'l-Bahá moved yet another time in Paris. He was taken to a secluded hotel to rest. He was very tired and needed to relax. The Dreyfus Barneys knew where He was and knew that the meals at the hotel did not suit Him. They arranged for food to be cooked at their home and delivered to Him. But the Master asked them not to do this.¹⁰⁸ Gatherings were again organized after the Master gained some strength. An important meeting took place at the home of Dreyfus-Barneys when Consul Schwarz of Germany spoke.¹⁰⁹

These were some of the references to the visits of 'Abdu'l-Bahá where Laura and her husband were present.

The Years from 1913 to 1928

Towards the end of that year (November 1913), Laura and Hippolyte arrived in Washington on the first leg of a planned a visit to Indo-China and other regions of eastern Asia.¹¹⁰ They left Washington in January of 1914.¹¹¹ They asked Laura's mother to join them as far as San Francisco. Laura was hoping the trip might provide an opportunity to find out if her mother was still happy in her marriage. Laura continued to be displeased with her mother's re-marriage.¹¹²

By March, Laura and Hippolyte had reached San Francisco and boarded their ship for Japan. They were going around the world visiting several countries in response to the wishes of the Master. They stayed in Japan for a short time.¹¹³ They had planned to travel to Korea, China, India, Persia and France.¹¹⁴ When they arrived in China, rumors of war had followed them from Japan to Korea. Laura recalled that when they were in China ready to go on Yangzi River and to visit Yunnan, the war broke out. They were forced to return to the United States and then to Paris, arriving in France after two months of waiting in New York. By the end of December, Hippolyte assumed his military obligations as a member of the French Army.¹¹⁵ During the war, Laura served with the American Ambulance Corps as a night nurse in Paris.¹¹⁶ After the war, Laura was subsequently made a Chevalier of the French Legion of Honor, the highest French decoration created by Napoleon, for her work among the wounded.¹¹⁷

It was after the World War II that Laura Dreyfus Barney placed a great importance on the League of Nations and as a result became the representative of the International Council of Women in that body and played an important role in cultural exchange.¹¹⁸ Laura was the co-founder of the first children's hospital in Avignon and worked in a hospital with war refugees in several different departments.¹¹⁹ She was also engaged in re-education of the mentally and physically handicapped at the Military Hospital in Marseilles.¹²⁰

The Dreyfus-Barneys' next visit with the Master was in 1918. They were the first pilgrims to arrive from the West after the war.¹²¹

Her mother's sagas continued. In 1919 a rift developed between Alice's mother and her second husband. Laura heard of her mother's serious marital problems, and with her sister Natalie, tried to give her advice as to how to dissociate herself from him. She was divorced in 1920.¹²²

It was in the same year that Shoghi Effendi visited the Dreyfus-Barneys in Paris. Madame Barney's affection for Shoghi Effendi had grown into "an ever-deepening sense of admiration and respect."¹²³ It was she who introduced him to an American Bahá'í artist, Mr. Edwin Scott and his wife, who were living in Paris and whose studio 'Abdu'l-Bahá had visited in 1911. Shoghi Effendi met them on one of his stops on the way to Oxford. This visit triggered a new interest in Shoghi

Effendi: he became captivated by the art world. His interests in architecture, sculpture and paintings opened up a vast field of knowledge under the guided supervision and attention of this renowned artist.¹²⁴

Laura and Hippolyte's last visit to Akka was in 1921 on their way to the Far East. During this visit, Laura had plenty of time with 'Abdu'l-Bahá to discuss social issues and she writes that these matters "have come to pass and revolutionized the present social order."¹²⁵ It was in Rangoon, Burma, that they heard of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's passing.¹²⁶ There is no doubt that this was shocking news to Laura and her husband had devoted their lives to His Cause.

Not long after the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi made the decision to call a number of capable and experienced Bahá'ís to Haifa. He wanted to consult with them on the future of the Bahá'í Faith. Laura and Hippolyte were among those honored ones who went to share their grief in the company of the friends.¹²⁷ In a letter to her sister, she wrote that the Master's family was "filling the great vacancy left in their lives by continual activity in carrying out His wishes."¹²⁸ Shoghi Effendi discussed with these believers the needs to develop the foundation of the Universal House of Justice.¹²⁹

Laura and her husband traveled widely in those years to spread the Bahá'í teachings. They joined with Martha Root and George Townshend in giving a series of talks in Europe.¹³⁰ In 1925, at the request of the Guardian they traveled to the United States and attended Convention of the Bahá'ís of America at Green Acre Bahá'í School in the state of Maine.¹³¹

Madame Barney spent the next few years in service to humanity and to her faith. She was a true pioneer in these fields of activities.¹³² She formed, under "the aegis of the League of Nations, the Liaison Committee of Major International Organizations to promote better understanding between peoples and classes, and became a permanent member of the committee as well as its liaison officer."¹³³ She was the only woman appointed by the League Council to sit on the Sub-Committee of Experts on Education, a post which she held for many years, beginning in 1926.¹³⁴

Third Period (1928-1974)

Her life after the passing of her husband

The first event was the passing of her beloved husband. Hippolyte, Laura's life partner, whose 'distinctive and inestimable services', according to Shoghi Effendi, achieved for him 'a standing which few have as yet to be attained' died towards the end of 1928 after a slow and painful illness.¹³⁵ The Guardian, who knew them both intimately, sent letters of condolence to Laura.¹³⁶ In a letter dated Dec. 21, he wrote: "I can confidently assert, among the Bahá'ís of the East and the West, combined to the extent that he did the qualities of genial and enlivening fellowship, of intimate acquaintance with the manifold aspects of the Cause, of sound judgment and distinctive ability, of close familiarity with the problems and condition of the world — all of which made him such a lovable, esteemed and useful collaborator and friend."¹³⁷

This loss caused her overwhelming sadness and sorrow; Laura had lost the closest person in her life. They had a rich life together. She was not yet fifty years old when she became a widow. After his death, she tried to overcome her loneliness by intensifying her efforts on behalf of the Faith and the cause of peace.¹³⁸ Even though this devotion to promoting human cooperation and bringing people together had started from the day she became a Bahá'í, they intensified after the loss of her husband.¹³⁹

Three years later, she lost her mother. Her mother passed away a month after presenting her ballet, *'The Shepherd of Shiraz'* at the Hollywood Bowl, a prestigious and important outdoor amphitheater in Los Angeles!¹⁴⁰ Thus Laura lost the last person to whom she was truly close, the person she had loved and admired throughout her life.¹⁴¹



Laura Dreyfus Barney

After 1928: Her Humanitarian Activities

Despite her deep sorrow, she continued her activities. The same year, she organized, under the auspices of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography of the League of Nations, the first congress for women, held in Rome

in 1934.¹⁴² She also became a member of the Advisory Committee of the League of Nations on Teaching; she was also a member of the French Committee on Intellectual Cooperation.¹⁴³

It was in 1937 that Madame Barney was promoted to Officer of the French Legion of Honor; she became a Chevalier.¹⁴⁴ Later she became a member of its Board and an officer of the American Society of the French Legion of Honor. She was also a trustee of the President James Monroe Foundation in Fredericksburg, VA.¹⁴⁵

As American citizens, Laura and her sister were forced to leave Paris at the outbreak of the Second World War. Laura returned to Washington. It was during that time that she represented the National Council of Women of the United States on its Coordinating Committee for Better Racial Understanding, and served on several other boards. She also established a portraiture prize in her mother's name for the Society of Washington Artists' annual exhibition and arranged several retrospectives of her mother's work. The first was held in 1941 and attended by First lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who had visited Studio House in 1913.¹⁴⁶ During World War II, Laura Dreyfus-Barney was a delegate of the French National Committee on Women to the Commission on Racial Affairs.¹⁴⁷

At the request of the Guardian, she attended the celebration in Wilmette of the centenary of the birth of the Bahá'í Faith in 1944. As a brilliant speaker, she gave a moving address at this event.¹⁴⁸

Upon her return to Paris, at the close of the war, Madame Barney found that some of her belongings were taken by the German secret police.¹⁴⁹ The most valuable of all: her memoirs and her notes from her trips!¹⁵⁰ She had many priceless notes which recounted her personal witnessing of the Bahá'í history. She had wished to compile and send it to Shoghi Effendi before publication and distribution but that did not prove possible!¹⁵¹ She remained very active in her Bahá'í life in Paris, active by guiding and meeting with the prominent people of the Bahá'í Faith.¹⁵² She attended the opening of the first Hazirat'ul Quds in Paris on rue de la Pompe, in 1955.¹⁵³

Laura Dreyfus-Barney was a widow for the majority of her life. She had no children. According to someone who knew her in those years, her life would have evolved differently had her

husband lived longer. It must have been difficult for her in Paris after the passing of her husband with no one close except an infamous sister.¹⁵⁴ She lived near her sister, but Natalie proved to be more burden than help. Toward the end of their lives, communication between them was mainly through letters and messages carried by common friends.¹⁵⁵ The memories of their mother and discussion of their finances, which was not easy for them, seemed to be their only emotional links.

In 1960, the sisters donated Barney Studio House to the Smithsonian Institution in memory of their mother to be used as an intimate venue for arts and cultural programs. Laura and Natalie also donated the paintings of their mother to that Institution's National Museum of American Art. Natalie died in Paris in 1972.

During last few years of her life Madame Barney stayed close to home. Friends visited her occasionally and she lived with the memories of her rich and fruitful life. Although her body was handicapped by rheumatism and a childhood physical handicap, her mind was as alert and brilliant as ever.¹⁵⁶ Her beautiful earthly life came to an end on 18 August 1974. She was 94 years old. She was buried in the Passy Cemetery of Paris.¹⁵⁷ An appreciative message was sent by the Universal House of Justice recognizing her outstanding achievement during the Heroic Age of the Faith. Her death was reported in the media both in Washington and Paris.¹⁵⁸

Ugo Giachery, who knew Madame Laura Barney writes: "Those who had the rare privilege of knowing her over a period of many decades can testify that her undaunted zeal for the objective of the brotherhood of man remained alive and glowing to the very last day of her life on earth."¹⁵⁹

Closing Remarks

This brings to a close some highlights of this heroine of the Bahá'í Faith. Her unforgettable services to the Cause and to humanity were reviewed. Our time today gave us a glimpse of the life and work of this zealous and devoted Bahá'í — a true world citizen, lived a Bahá'í life both in her words and in her deeds.

Laura Dreyfus-Barney moved easily between two worlds: that of her wealthy and flamboyant family and that of her Bahá'í life, in particular her spiritual and intellectual partnership with

her distinguished husband. When others would have left one world for the other, she moved gracefully between the two. The worlds of the rich and the poor, the sojourns at summer resorts of Europe and America and that of her stays to the old prison city of Akka!

“With her keen intelligence,” Dr. Giachery wrote, “logical mind and investigating nature, she devoted her whole life, from adolescence, to improving human relations, bringing together people of the different races, classes and nations.”¹⁶⁰ Her services were “rendered joyfully with steadfastness and perseverance.”¹⁶¹

As her primary service to the Cause, “she left as a memento for future generations a significant book from the utterances of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.”¹⁶² It was her greatest accomplishment and “achieved immortal fame” for her.¹⁶³ Shoghi Effendi refers to Laura Barney’s work as an “imperishable service” to be transmitted to “posterity.”¹⁶⁴

Although Laura Dreyfus-Barney is perhaps best known throughout the Bahá’í world for her compilation of *Some Answered Questions*, her other services to the Faith are equally glorious. Here are a few:

1. Helped with the purchase of the land and plans for a suitable home for ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and His family on 7 Haparsim Street;¹⁶⁵
2. Involved in gathering notes of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s utterances in Paris which were later published as *Paris Talks*;
3. Secured the services of an English tutor who proved to be a great asset in the education of Shoghi Effendi;
4. Helped fund education of some young Bahá’ís (i.e. Badii Effendi Bushrui);¹⁶⁶
5. Helped ladies of the Holy family with learning of the English language;¹⁶⁷
6. Among the first Western Bahá’ís to visit the cradle of the Faith;
7. Consulted by Shoghi Effendi after the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá;
8. Abiding devotion to the family of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá;¹⁶⁸

9. Assisted her husband in many of his translations of the Writings;¹⁶⁹
10. Translations of many of the Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from Persian into English;¹⁷⁰
11. Author or co-author of books, articles and monographs;¹⁷¹
12. Establishing a scholarship for a Bahá’í student in the name of her husband.¹⁷²

Baha’ullah writes: “*The names of handmaidens who are devoted to God are written and set down by the Pen of the Most high in the Crimson Book.*”¹⁷³ It rests with the historians of the Faith of Bahá’u’lláh to bring to the fore the accomplishments of those like Laura Dreyfus Barney.

Laura Dreyfus Barney, this *Handmaiden of Baha*, deserves honor in the annals of the history. Her services merit increased study and recognition that of a woman who broke down many barriers on two continents. The author is aware only of one event in the United States when she was honored by the Bahá’í community. That was the centennial celebration of the International Council of Women; Laura was honored at a luncheon at Studio House on 26 June 1988.¹⁷⁴

Let us close by reading from a Tablet, among the many, written by ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to Laura Barney:

To the honored & attracted [Handmaiden] servant of God

Miss Barney (Upon her be BehaUllah El-Abha!)

Washington

He is God!

O thou dear Servant of God!

If thou knowest how far thy confirmation, Abdu’l-Beha asks for help and assistance from the Kingdom of Abha, thou wilt undoubtedly put forth feathers & stretch wings by the dint of joy and happiness, & soar up to the Apex of exultation and felicity! I beg of the True One that thou mayst at every instant, witness the ray of a new Favor & be strengthen by a successive Confirmation. O thou dear servant of Beha! I will

henceforth address thee the '[Handmaiden] Servant of Beha', so that it may indicate that thou hast attained to a new assignation. This title is a crown of munificence upon thy head, the gems and pearls of which crown will scintillate forevermore! Consider the succeeding ages, & thou wilt know what a gift is this.

O thou [Handmaiden] Servant of Beha! Have joy and happiness and be in spiritual cheerfulness, & arise in such manner in the Cause, that thou mayst move the territory of America! Thy services are accepted and approved in the Threshold of the True One. Thou art indeed devoted (in service)!

Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued in His own handwriting:

*O thou [Handmaiden] servant of Beha! The Power of the Holy Spirit is confirmatory: Be thou assured! At every moment, I seek heavenly Bounties, in the world of Spirit, in thy behalf, Turn thy face into the Kingdom of God at early dawns, & thou wilt find Abdul'Beha thy companion.*¹⁷⁵

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NOTES

¹ Studio House is designated by the city of Washington as a historical site and thus preserved from destruction.

² Smithsonian Institution who was the owner of the House auctioned the contents of the house and sold it in 2000. The current owner of Studio House is the Embassy of Latvia.

³ Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 178, p.189, p. 318.

⁴ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 299.

⁵ Smithsonian Institution, research and education center, at Washington, D.C.; founded 1846 under the terms of the will of James Smithson of London.

⁶ Giachery, *La Penesee Bahá'íe*, no. 56, p. 24 and Anita Chapman, interview.

⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

⁹ Ibid, p. 86.

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 103.

¹¹ Ibid, p. 115.

¹² Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 116.

¹³ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 150.

¹⁴ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 116.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 132.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 111.

¹⁷ Manuscript of a play "From the Peace of the East to the War of the West" by Laura Clifford Barney, from Smithsonian Archives.

¹⁸ Glen Cameron, *A Basic Bahá'í Chronology*, p. 141.

¹⁹ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 535.

²⁰ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 185

²¹ Chapman, interview.

²² Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 169.

²³ Ibid, pp. 169-170.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 170.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 170.

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- ²⁶ Ibid, p. 172.
- ²⁷ Ibid, p. 135.
- ²⁸ Rassekh, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.
- ²⁹ From <http://bahai-library.org/essays/barney.html> referring to *the Bahá'í World* article by Laura Clifford Dreyfus Barney, vol. III, p. 210.
- ³⁰ <http://bahai-library.org/essays/barney.html>
- ³¹ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 315.
- ³² Cameron , *A Basic Bahá'í Chronology*, p. 162.
- ³³ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, pp. 87-88.
- ³⁴ Moojan Momen by e-mail. May 2008 and Star of the West (in Persian), Vol. I, March-1910-1911, p.4.
- ³⁵ Letter of Laura to Alice Barney, dated July 5, 1905, from the Smithsonian Archives.
- ³⁶ Fazel Mazandarani, *Zurhur-I Hag* (in Persian), Vol. 8, p. 78 Iran: Moasseseye Melli Matbouate Amri, 131 Badii.
- ³⁷ MASABIHE HEDAYAT (in Persian), Edited by Azizullah Soleimani, Iran: Moassesseh Melli Matbouat Amri, 118 Bdi, Vol. V, pp. 32-32..
- ³⁸ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 202.
- ³⁹ Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 81.
- ⁴⁰ Tablet from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, from the Archives of the National Assembly of France, translated by A. K. Khan, Oct. 29, 1903.
- ⁴¹ 'Only a Word', *The Bahá'í World*, vol. V, p. 667. Cited in *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 536.
- ⁴² *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 536.
- ⁴³ Ibid, p. 536.
- ⁴⁴ Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 82.
- ⁴⁵ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 536.
- ⁴⁶ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 315.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 316.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 328.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 315.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 314.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., p. 150.
- ⁵² Ibid, pp. 314-5.
- ⁵³ Ibid, p. 315.
- ⁵⁴ *Some Answered Questions*, p. v.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid, p. v.
- ⁵⁶ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 316.
- ⁵⁷ Ibid, p. 318

⁵⁸ For additional commentary on this work, refer to Shoghi Effendi's statements in *God Passes By*, pp. 107, 260, 268, 305, 383.

⁵⁹ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 328.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 316.

⁶¹ Ibid, pp. 316-18.

⁶² Ibid. pp. 318-19.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 328.

75 Le lezioni de San Giovanni d'acri, Casa Editrice Bahai, Roma, 1976, pp. 374-5. Closing remarks by Laura Dreyfus-Barney written in 1961, translated by K. Mazlum.

⁶⁵ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, pp. 341-344.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 319.

⁶⁷ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 101.

⁶⁸ Letter or E.G. Brown handwritten dated, Sept. 2 1908 at the Archives of Smithsonian.

⁶⁹ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 536.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 536.

⁷¹ Balyuzi, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 82.

⁷² Ibid, p. 220.

⁷³ In her play *God's Heroes*, she mentions that received help from Prof. E.G. Browne in translating some part of the quotes in one her chapters. Cited in N.B.

⁷⁴ Chapman, interview.

⁷⁵ She was a playwright of the time, wrote a play about the Báb which had two very successful runs in St. Petersburg. Grinevskaya became a Bahá'í and later met with Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi. www.bahaindex.com/documents/tolstoy.pdf.

⁷⁶ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 223.

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 224-5.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 223.

⁷⁹ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 344.

⁸⁰ Thompson, *The Diary of Juliet Thompson*, pp. 159-160

⁸¹ Ibid, 159.

⁸² Ibid, p. 167.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 174.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 175.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 175.

⁸⁶ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 130-1.

⁸⁷ Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, p. 151.

⁸⁸ Ibid, p. 179.

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- ⁸⁹ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 104.
- ⁹⁰ Blomfield, *The Chosen Highway*, pp. 180-181.
- ⁹¹ *Paris Talks: Addresses Given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 30.
- ⁹² Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'ie*, no. 56, pp. 27-28.
- ⁹³ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, pp. 234-5.
- ⁹⁴ Parsons, *Agnes Parsons' Diary*, p. 14.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 16.
- ⁹⁶ Agnes Parsons' Diary, p. 35.
- ⁹⁷ Ibid, p. 47.
- ⁹⁸ Parsons, *Agnes Parsons' Diary*, p. 58.
- ⁹⁹ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 344.
- ¹⁰⁰ Parsons, *Agnes Parsons' Diary*, p. 61.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid. p. 65.
- ¹⁰² Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 148.
- ¹⁰³ Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 373.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 376.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 379.
- ¹⁰⁶ Mahmoudi, Houshang. Cited in *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, Vol. I. March 9, 1913: from page 175 of the *Safar Nameh* (in Persian), Vol. II Paris: pp. 370-371, translated by Mona Khademi.
- ¹⁰⁷ Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 394.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 394.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 395.
- ¹¹⁰ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹¹¹ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 236.
- ¹¹² Chapman, interview.
- ¹¹³ Sims, *Japan Will Turn Ablaze* , p 5.
- ¹¹⁴ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 237.
- ¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 241.
- ¹¹⁶ *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹¹⁷ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 264. The Legion of Honor is created by Napoleon Bonapart and is the highest award given by the French Republic for outstanding service to France. It has different ranks: Chevalier, Officer, Commander, Grand Officer, Grand Crosses.
- ¹¹⁸ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹¹⁹ Ibid, p. 537 and *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹²⁰ *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹²¹ Balyuzi, *'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 433.
- ¹²² Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 277.

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- ¹²³ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI 16, p. 536.
- ¹²⁴ Translated by the author from *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, no. 56, p. 27.
- ¹²⁵ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 344.
- ¹²⁶ Ibid, p. 344.
- ¹²⁷ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 207.
- ¹²⁸ Letter of Laura to Natalie Barney, her sister dated Feb. 27, 1911 from Haifa; Smithsonian Archives, Washington, DC.
- ¹²⁹ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 208-9.
- ¹³⁰ Garis, M.R. *Martha Root: Lioness of the Threshold*, p. 256.
- ¹³¹ Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, p. 27.
- ¹³² *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI 16, p. 535.
- ¹³³ *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹³⁴ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹³⁵ Weinberg, *Ethel Rosenberg*, Ft. 375 p. 269.
- ¹³⁶ Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, p. 27 and on bahai-library.com/essays/barney.html
- ¹³⁷ bahai-library.com/essays/barney.html
- ¹³⁸ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹³⁹ Ibid, p. 537.
- ¹⁴⁰ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 226.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid, p. 229.
- ¹⁴² *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹⁴³ *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹⁴⁴ Rassekh, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.
- ¹⁴⁵ *Who's Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹⁴⁶ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 301.
- ¹⁴⁷ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 538.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid, p. 537 and p. 535.
- ¹⁴⁹ Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, p. 24.
- ¹⁵⁰ Chapman, interview and Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, p. 24.
- ¹⁵¹ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 344.
- ¹⁵² Chapman, interview.
- ¹⁵³ Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá'íe*, p. 27.
- ¹⁵⁴ Chapman, interview.
- ¹⁵⁵ Kling, *Alice Pike Barney*, p. 302.
- ¹⁵⁶ Ibid, p. 302.
- ¹⁵⁷ *The Bahá'í World*, vol. XVI, p. 538.

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- ¹⁵⁸ Obituaries in *The Washington Post*, August 22, 1974; and “Star” dated August 22, 1974 at Smithsonian Archives and in *Le Monde* cited in Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá’íe*, p. 31.
- ¹⁵⁹ *The Bahá’í World*, vol. XVI, p. 535.
- ¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 535.
- ¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 535.
- ¹⁶² Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 315.
- ¹⁶³ *The Bahá’í World*, vol. XVI, p. 535, from the Message of the Universal of House Justice on her passing.
- ¹⁶⁴ Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, p. 260.
- ¹⁶⁵ *The Bahá’í World*, vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹⁶⁶ Muayyad, *KHATERAT HABIB*, p. 60.
- ¹⁶⁷ Afroukhteh, *Memories of Nine Years in Akka*, p. 315.
- ¹⁶⁸ *The Bahá’í World*. vol. XVI, p. 537.
- ¹⁶⁹ Giachery, *La Pensee Bahá’íe*, p.26.
- ¹⁷⁰ Tablets of ‘Abdul-Baha Abbas, p. 19.
- ¹⁷¹ *Who’s Who in America 1972-1973*.
- ¹⁷² Letter of Shoghi Effendi to Laura-Dreyfus-Barney, dated march 12, 1929 from bahai-library.com/essays/barney.html
- ¹⁷³ Bahá’u’lláh. From a Tablet translated from the Persian, in compilation, vol. 2, p. 358, cited in Weinberger, *Ethel Rosenberg*, p. 85.
- ¹⁷⁴ E-mail dated May 12, 2008, from Fulya Vekiloglu, representative to the United Nations Office for the Advancement of Women, Bahá’í International Community.
- ¹⁷⁵ Tablet of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to Miss Barney. Translated by A. K. Khan. Dated Oct. 29, 1903. Original pdf file from National Spiritual Assembly of France. [Editor’s note: the alternate spellings in this version of the tablet come from the original translation and have been preserved here in their unaltered form.]