

# The Memorial Services of Abdul-Baha on Mount Carmel, Palestine

Account From Letters and Newspapers

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His Holiness Abdul Baha Abbas departed from this earthly world and ascended to the Most Glorious Abha Kingdom, November 28th at 1:30 a. m., 1921, at Haifa, Palestine. The funeral was on Tuesday at 9 a. m.

## BRIEF LIFE HISTORY OF ABDUL BAHÁ

He was born in Teheran, Persia, on May 23rd, 1844, on the same day of the declaration of the Bab, the first Herald of the Bahai Cause. After the martyrdom of the Bab the name and fame of Baha'Ullah was spread throughout Persia to such a degree that the Shah was frightened and exiled Baha'Ullah and His family to Bagdad. At that time Abdul Baha was about nine years old. There in Bagdad he remained with his father for eleven years. The people became immensely attracted to him and were inspired by his infinite wisdom and teachings. The pilgrims from Persia traveled to see him and his prison was a new "Mecca" to them and they flocked around him seeking his guidance and blessing. This alarmed the Shah of Persia and he requested the Turkish Government to exile them away from the Persian border, i. e., Mesopotamia. The Turkish Government accordingly banished them to Constantinople, and later to Adrianople where they remained for five years.

The number of pilgrims and visitors from all parts of the East kept increasing to such an extent that the King of Turkey became alarmed and after consultation with the Persian Government the prisoners were sent to the Most Great Prison in Acca, the oldest fortified city on the coast of the Holy Land. Here Abdul Baha remained a prisoner for forty years, surrounded by the spies of Sultan Abdul Hamid, enduring untold sufferings from the tyrannical Turkish rule.

In 1892 his father, Baha'Ullah ascended to the Supreme Kingdom and his physical body was laid in Bahje, near Acca. In 1908 Abdul Baha was freed from the prison city by the declaration of the New Constitution when Sultan Abdul Hamid was dethroned and imprisoned. Abdul Baha then built a home for himself in Haifa, and on Mount Carmel he built a tomb for the Bab. Later he brought the remains of the Bab and laid them in that most beautiful and sublime shrine.

Abdul Baha left his sister, "The Greatest Holy Leaf," his wife, "The Holy Mother," and four daughters, Zie Khanum, the wife of Mirza; Rouha Khanum, the wife of Mirza Jalal; Touba Khanum, the wife of Mirza Mohsen, and Monaver Khanum, the wife of Mirza Ahmad Yazdi. Abdul Baha was the example of virtue, purity and perfections. He was famous in the East and in the West. His followers are counted by the thousands, throughout the world. He was the essence of dignity and kindness personified. He was very patient, merciful, affectionate and a sea of wisdom. He was in love with charity, generous and tender to the orphans and widows. He was the hope of the hopeless, and the help of the helpless. We had the privilege of meeting him many times, and here we are tempted to mention what we heard from him once: "God is the Creator of all the creatures. He made



them to dwell in His land and He made them rulers of whatsoever exists, of animals, vegetables, minerals, water and air. He did not make any distinction one from another. Then the people divided this land into sections and named one England, another France, Germany, America, etc., and they began to fight and make battle. He created man gentle, peaceful and social, without sharp claws and long canine teeth. The man invented the sword and death-dealing instruments. Therefore, universal peace must be established, religions must be unified and equality must be accomplished." Abdul Baha had a supreme station in the estimation of the Kings of the Earth. Lord Allenby, at the time of his occupation of Haifa, on September 23rd, 1918, received a special order from the King of England to call and inquire about the health of Abdul Baha. The King also knighted Abdul Baha, giving him his highest medal and the title of "Sir." But Abdul Baha accepted it only for the sake of pleasing the King, and not because he cared for anything of that kind. Abdul Baha spoke in Persian, Arabic and Turkish with the utmost fluency and eloquence. In appearance he was most gentle and attractive. His hair and beard were silvery and luxuriant. His smile incomparable. His face majestic and dignified. His body perfectly built. His complexion was the color of wheat. His eyes bright and penetrating. His forehead like a dome and his dress was similar to that of all ancient prophets. Abdul Baha seldom suffered from physical diseases or illness, and not until three days before his departure did he feel indisposed, and occupy a room in his house, where many people called on him. At five p. m. of the same night of his departure two of the Notables of Haifa visited him. They asked if he would like to change his room. He said: "I saw in a dream that I should occupy this room and not choose another one. I have now stopped building on the surface of the earth and I now build within the earth." He even walked with his visitors to bid them farewell at the door, then he returned to his room and many times spoke of the approach of the end of his physical life, and that it was only a matter of numbered hours. Abdul Baha has left a complete will, a covenant which when it is read, his wishes regarding the future affairs of the Bahai Cause will be known.

## THE FUNERAL PROCESSION OF ABDUL BAHÁ

### The Momentous Hour

When the clock struck nine, Tuesday morning, November 29, 1921, the wide street, Allenby Road, was congested with the crowds from its starting place to the summit of Mount Carmel. The hearts were throbbing, the breasts heavy, the tongues dumb. Quietness and homage prevailed and the throng was like a solid mountain. In the front ranks of those who came to pay the last tribute of love and farewell were Sir Herbert Samuel, the Governor-General of the Holy Land and the members of his staff, who came from Jerusalem to attend the funeral, Mr. Sims, the Governor of Phœnicia, the Consuls of all the Governments, the Mohammedan, Christian and Jewish religious leaders, his relatives and his followers, who were burning with their grief, shedding their tears, throwing themselves on his casket, giving their last kisses to it, those kisses so filled with heat and yearning that they could restore life and bring back the soul to the stilled body if life could be restored and the soul could be brought back. Then when they withdrew from that thrilling stand and painful scene their sobs and cries were raised. Their cries and tears burst forth as the casket was carried on the palms of the men, with what it contained of Wisdom, Eloquence, and Knowledge.

The casket was of plain white wood covered with a precious Persian shawl. The procession moved, surrounded by the eyes of the on-lookers and encircled by the sorrowful hearts. In the fore-ranks a company of po-



lice and their officers; then the Mohammedan and the Christian Boy Scouts with band and flags; then the Personal Guards of the consuls; then the leaders of the various Mohammedan sects were in front of the casket, chanting heart-touching hymns. Behind the casket marched the Governor-General and his staff with the utmost dignity. The procession started with perfect order until it reached half-way up the summit of Mount Carmel, then all stood silent, immovable, as if birds were perched upon their heads. Notwithstanding the up-hill climb none showed any signs of fatigue, until they arrived at the tomb of the Bab. It was then 10:25 a. m. The casket was placed on a dias, near the high and majestic tomb which commands the most beautiful view on Mount Carmel. The Governor-General and his staff, the learned and the leaders of all sects made a ring by standing around the casket. When all the people in the procession had arrived at the tomb it made a scene that Haifa had never witnessed before.

#### **Eulogies Given by the Leaders and Poets of the Mohammedans, Christians and Jews of the Holy Land.**

Yessif Effendi El-Khatib, (a famous Mohammedan orator) was the first speaker. He said: "O Arab and Persian Gentlemen! Why do I see you gathered here? What are you contemplating, and about what are you thinking? Is it on death, or for the living-dead? Every day caravans of dead pass before your eyes, yet you do not pay attention to them. Then for whom are you weeping? Is it for the One who was great yesterday and today in his departure has become greater? Is it for the One whom you call your guide and philosopher? There should be no weeping for the One who departs to the Eternal World. Then weep for the loss of bounty and courtesy. Mourn for the loss of knowledge and generosity. Weep for yourselves because you are the losers. As to him whom you have lost, he is no other than one who has departed from your mortal world to the Immortal and Everlasting Realm. Weep for one hour for the One who has wept for you for eighty years. Look right and left, east and west, and tell me the true news, what a vacancy has taken place in nobility and dignity! What a pillar of peace has tottered! What a fluent and eloquent tongue has become silent! Ah me! Calamity is devoid of a grief-stricken heart and weeping eye! It has left you people to mourn your Elder, and made you elders to mourn your youth! Woe to the poor, for charity has left them! Woe unto the orphans, for their merciful father has gone away from them! Would that Sir Abdul Baha Abbas could be redeemed by precious souls, for then they would be sacrificed to him! But this is the will of God, and nothing can stop it. Which one of his perfect deeds can I mention to you, when they are greater than can be mentioned and more than can be counted! It is sufficient to say that in every heart he has left a glorious trace and on every tongue a beautiful mention. One who leaves behind him such glorious history and eternal memory is indeed not of the dead! O family of Abdul Baha! Console yourselves with patience, because it is impossible for an oriental or an occidental to comfort you and not find himself in more need of consolation!"

Abraham Effendi Nassar, (one of the most celebrated of Christian writers) was the second speaker. He said: (verse) "I wept for the departure of my Master and anyone like me will weep for the departure of his Master. For whom is this mourning and shock? What is this weeping and crying? What has happened to the people? Has a mountain sunk into the earth? Or has the earth quaked? No! Not this, nor that. It is that Abdul Baha, the great soul of bestowal has departed. (verse) They took him out and all are weeping. It is like the shock of Moses when Mount Tohr fell.



Oh what a great calamity is this! It is a national loss and an universal ordeal for which the roots of the heart are cut and in such a thrilling moment the garments are rent asunder. Oh my burning heart! In the passing away of the great Master, Abdul Baha, the mountain of charity and generosity has tumbled! The echo of his departure sounded in all parts of the world. Therefore humanity is painfully suffering, the tongues are repeating the mentioning of his abundant bounties, the eyes are weeping and the hearts are bleeding! Ah me! Abdul Baha lived about eighty years and the miracle of his life was like the lives of the Prophets. He has trained, taught, assisted, rescued and guided the souls to the straight path. He brought upon the people great glory. O people! Listen! Abdul Baha is not dead nor is the light of Baha'Ullah extinguished. Far from it! His rays ever remain shining. Abdul Baha, the Beloved Baha-Ullah, has lived a life from which emanated the significances of the mortal life. Therefore, the spiritual took the place of his physical life. And he ascended from this world to the Paradise of the Lord as a pure angel accompanied with his good deeds and his sublime attributes. Yea, Oh, my people! You are taking the body of the great one whom we have lost to its last resting-place, but rest assured that your Abdul Baha will remain forever living among you in the spirit, in his words, in his sayings, in his qualities, and in all the essences of his life. We are bidding farewell to our physical Abdul Baha and his physical body disappears from our sight, but our spiritual Abdul Baha will never leave our minds, our thoughts, our hearts, and his mention will never depart from our lives. Oh, Abdul Baha! Oh, thou great and generous one! Thou who art now resting. Thou didst bestow life upon us, guided us and taught us. Thou hast lived among us, great, with all that the word, 'greatness', means. Verily, we glory in thy deeds and thy sayings. Thou didst raise the station of the East to the highest pinnacle of glory. Thou didst reform and complete thy efforts. Therefore thou hast gained the crown of majesty. Oh, ye branches of the Tree of Abdul Baha! I come to you. I am the sorrowful one. I ask my Lord to bestow upon you a beautiful comfort and to console us by protecting you."

Professor Mohammed Murad Mufti, Mohammedan Judge of the Judicial Law and the Moslem Chief of Haifa, was the third speaker. He said: "When nations lose one of their great men, whether he is great in his knowledge or great in his generosity or great in his politics or great in his principles and his benevolence, they comfort themselves in this, that there must come out from among their sons a genius who would become a successor to that great departed man. But the calamity of the world of humanity in the loss of the benevolent Abdul Baha cannot be compared to any other calamity, because his vacancy will never be filled by any of the people. I do not like to exaggerate in praising this great personage, because his generous hands in the path of service to humanity and his philanthropic deeds none can deny save one whose heart God has blinded. Abdul Baha was great in all the stages of his life. He was genius in himself,—high in his spirit; noble in his sentiments and sublime in his principles. He was a pleasing character and had the best reputation. He was famous in the Easts of the earth, and in its Wests. He possessed this exalted station through his untiring work and he gained the highest place in the hearts through his help to the helpless, his rescue of the hopeless and his comfort to the afflicted. Abdul Baha was a great, learned and remarkable professor. Even if his physical body has disappeared from the eyes his immortal deeds will never disappear from the minds. Even if the physical Abdul Baha has passed away, his name will never pass away. O thou benevolent one who art departed! Thou hast lived greatly and thou hast departed great! This big and majestic procession and this overwhelming gathering is only a brilliant proof of thy greatness in life and death. But who is to help the poor after



thee? O thou whom we have lost! Who is to assist the hungry and the distressed? Nay, rather, who is to succor the widows and the orphans after the departure of the one who is the embodiment of goodness, kindness and humanitarianism? Then rest thou comfortably in thy resting-place. Thou knowest that one who is possessed of such qualities, and such is the end of his life. Verily, he is a miracle in his deeds and eternal in his work. May God inspire thy family and relatives with the beautiful patience in this great calamity."

Professor Abdullah Effendi Mukhlis (one of the distinguished, learned Mohammedans), was the fourth speaker. He said: "Have you seen the sun set, the disappearance of the moon and the falling of the stars? Have you heard of the crumbling of the thrones, the leveling of the mountains? Have you felt the thrilling and dreadful tragedies that are caused by and the accidents that occur in experimental inventions that make the souls and the hearts and the bodies tremble? All such tragedies cannot be mentioned in comparison with our great calamity for which it behooves us to tear out our hearts. . . . Yea, the Sun of Knowledge has set; the Moon of Virtues has disappeared; the Throne of Glory has crumbled and the Mountains of Kindness is leveled by the departure of this benevolent one from the mortal world to the immortal realm. I do not see that I need to explain the sublimity of the great one whom we have lost or to enumerate his great qualities. For all of you are witnesses who are just, and testify to what has been given him of personal beauty, beauty of his character, greatness of his heart, vastness of the sea of his knowledge and generosity. Alas! Who will after him feed the hungry, clothe the naked, rescue the distressed, guide those astray, help the widows and assist the orphans and satisfy those who thirst for knowledge from his pure fountain and beautiful rose garden? Nay, rather, who will after him address the meetings, stand in the pulpits, use the pen and paper? All are left without their only banner, their incomparable hero and their shining moon. I beg your pardon if I fail in doing my duty as far as faithfulness is concerned, or if I am unable to pay the generous one who has departed what he deserves of the best and highest praise because what my tongue utters has emanated from a wounded memory and broken heart. Indeed, they are wounds and not words; they are tears and not phrases.

And you, Oh Bahai Gentlemen! This is not your calamity alone. Nay, rather, it is a blow to Islam, and a calamity for the whole world, of the past and the present. The teachings of Baha 'Ullah and Abdul Baha are spread in the East of the earth and in its West, and the Bahais, who are very numerous, join with us in this commemoration.

O I can only imagine what the Bahais are going through today after they received the shocking news through the cablegram. O, how they are seeking patience, but are not finding it; asking for consolation, but cannot gain it, and looking for comfort but cannot find the way. Therefore the sacred country of Hidjaz, Egypt, Damascus and Persia that has produced this precious jewel and priceless pearl is sharing with the Holy Land its grief and sorrow for the generous one who has departed and now is resting in the heart of Mount Carmel, the dwelling-place of Elijah and Joshua, and the rest of their prophet brethren.

May God send upon us and unto you reward and recompense, bestow upon us and unto you patience for this calamity. (Verse.) This calamity has made all previous calamities to be forgotten. But this calamity will never be forgotten."

Sheikh Younis Effendi el-Khatib (a noted Mohammedan poet), was the fifth speaker. He recited a poem that he composed: "God has ordained the departure of Abdul Baha who is the Lord of virtues, perfections and wisdom. The people are weeping and mourning for the separation of the one who was the Eye of all times. He planted favors in his sublime rose garden. They grew and bore sweet fruits. The creatures are the collective witnesses of his perfections and deeds that surpassed everything. . . ."



His Honor Bishop Bassilious, the leader and head of the Greek Catholic Church of Haifa, was the sixth speaker. The Bishop spoke in the praise of Abdul Baha, especially mentioning his remarkable, majestic personality and his matchless philanthropic deeds toward the poor.

Wadie Effendi Bistany (one of the brightest Christian youths and poets) was the seventh speaker. He recited a poem that he composed: "In the souls and in the minds Thou art immortal. One like thee, who has all perfections, virtues and honor is eternal. . . . For thy departure they are weeping with grief. In their hearts Thou art, and Thou art their hope. In their eyes Thou are ever present, and so is Thy father, Baha 'Ullah. Acca has embraced him—Baha 'Ullah—in its delightful place, Bahje, and Haifa has opened its bosom for Thy tomb, Abdul Baha. O Abdul Baha, son of Baha 'Ullah! Men die, but their names live. O Abdul Baha, O son of Baha 'Ullah! May my soul be a sacrifice to one like Thee. Thou art the all-wise and all else beside Thee are only learned. What can the poets say in Thy day? Thou hast dawned in the West,—then its morning appeared. They have seen Thy light from afar and we are flooded with Thy effulgences. O Abdul Baha, O son of Baha 'Ullah! Thou wert just as God wanted Thee to be and not as others wish. Thou hast departed in the Holy Land wherein Christ and the Virgin Mary lived. The land that received Mohammed; the land, the dust of which is blessings and wealth. The land we consecrate, even if it oppresses. Therein is a paradise and a heaven. The tombs of the saints shall not be degraded; the souls will be their sacrifice. We shall be sustained from this Tomb and the One it contains. The Covenant of love and devotion will remain forever between us. . . ."

Mr. Slamon Bouzogle, one of the most progressive Jewish leaders in Haifa, was the eighth speaker. He spoke in French. He said: "It is very strange in this infidel, faithless and absolutely materialistic age that there should appear such a great philosopher as the one whom we mourn—Abdul Baha. It is he who speaks to the hearts and consciences, satisfies the thirsty souls with his teachings and principles which are known to be the best foundation for all religions. He knew how to convince, with his words and explanations, the greatest orthodox of the age. As to his life—it was the living example of self-sacrifice, preferring the good and the welfare of others to his own. Blessed are those who were near him, for they have read in him the biggest page of religious and social philosophy. Since the days of Aristotle until this day all philosophers and social reformers have been fanatically using every means to uphold their own sectarian and limited theories, and woe unto whomsoever disagrees with them. But here, with Abdul Baha, there is no prejudice of any kind. All men are brothers. Here is found the essence of humanitarianism who has the best principles of all the existing religions. Abdul Baha taught them and we all agree on them. The Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan prophets who seeking to establish such a spiritual brotherhood are in this day stretching their arms to embrace the Prophet Abdul Baha and his sacred principles.

The philosophy of Abdul Baha is plain and simple, but it is big and comprehensive. It conforms to every human taste and by its virtues all prejudices and superstitions vanish. . . . The philosophy of Abdul Baha is original. It is logical, reasonable, and scientific. It is clearly evident that the age needs such a philosophy. In spite of our dependence upon the power of inventions, discoveries and scientific researches, the human hearts are singing the melodies of Universal Peace. Abdul Baha, and before him, Baha'Ullah, have carried on their shoulders this glorious work,—the establishment of Universal Peace. There are two factors, two things, that always separated or differentiated the East from the West. On one hand you see the East striving to discover the secrets of nature, to bring out the hidden things and make science grow, by all that it can, through inventions and discoveries. On the other hand, you see the East as the dawning-



place of the great prophets, the founders of religions and lawgivers. Their teachings spread and grow and the hearts and the souls become filled with their spiritual light. Therefore the East and the West are rivals. The first is exalted by its religions, and the second by its inventions. Both are essential for the life of our body-politic.

Abdul Baha has departed at Haifa, Palestine, the Holy Land wherein the prophets appeared throughout centuries and ages and this fact has been demonstrated today in the departure of Abdul Baha. We are not the only ones who are weeping for him in whom we take pride. Nay, rather, there are many in Europe and America and in all the world who thirst for his universal principles which are conducive to real brotherhood, who are weeping, too, for missing Abdul Baha. Abdul Baha has departed after remaining some forty years in the Turkish prison city, Acca. Bagdad, the capital city of the Abbasi kings, also had witnessed his and his father's imprisonment. As to Persia, the ancient cradle, it had rejected its children!

Does it seem that there is a divine wisdom in all these affairs in specializing the Holy Land to be, as it always has been and always shall be, the source of higher and more spiritual idealism?"

Sheikh Assad Shkeir (a most prominent Mohammedan scholar and statesman) was the ninth speaker: He said: "The ancient and modern Mohammedan Arabs have been accustomed to hold ceremonies to eulogize their departed ones for certain purposes.

1. To teach some good lessons to those who are present and can hear.
2. To awaken the heedless and the negligent. As the prophet Mohammed once said to Omar, 'Death is a sufficient teacher.'
3. To encourage the hearers to follow in the steps of the departed one and to characterize themselves with his excellent morals and good deeds.
4. To comfort his family and his people by the mentioning of his sublime qualities. Then the hearts will sympathize with them and this will lighten some of the heavy burden of the painful calamity.
5. That every thoughtful soul may gain according to his capacity and insight. It should be evident that every creature voluntarily lives and goes about, thinks, assists, teaches and administers. Often, with the assistance of his Creator, he investigates the manifestations of his perfections. Then the end comes.

I am grieved over such eulogies. The Master, Abdul Baha, is considered one of the inhabitants of Acca because these inhabitants lived with him for more than forty years. His meetings were meetings of learning wherein he explained all the heavenly books and traditions. His philosophy includes all philosophy, ancient and modern. His philanthropies to the widows and orphans were never interrupted. Whenever a friend of his passed away he never forgot the survivors with his charity and generosity. He had so great a station; yet, he never failed to help the distressed! In the winter season he met with the learned and notables of Acca at the home of Shikh Ali Meeri, and in the summer the meetings were held in a court in the Fakhoreh (near the home of Baha'Ullah). In both of those meetings the attendants found him a book of history, a commentary on all the heavenly scriptures, a philosophy of the pages of contemporary events that pertain to scientific or artistic topics.

Then he moved to Haifa, and then went to Europe and America, where he gave comprehensive and eloquent addresses and exhortations. His intention was to bring about Unity among religions and sects and to remove the severe strife from their hearts and from their tongues, to urge them to take hold of the essence and let go the non-essential. He did that by presenting his message in a scientific manner. A group of Persians and others criticized him and found fault with his ideals in pamphlets they published and spread. Nevertheless, without paying any



attention to their criticism and opposition, nor being hurt by their hatred and enmity, he went forward and proclaimed (his teachings).

It is the law of God among His creatures,—a law which will not be changed—that the original declaration of principles inevitably must have those who agree and praise and those who disagree and reject.”

Mohammed Effendi Safadi (a highly educated Mohammedan poet) was the last speaker. He recited a poem:

“On Monday night, Heaven was opened and the spirit of Abdul Baha flew, with its glory.

It was received and entertained by the Prophets.

He was washed by the water of Paradise.

All the people reverently walked for him, even the Kings and their Governors.

Oh, Mount Carmel, thou art now more proud than Heaven, for thou hast become the holiest mountain.

Abdul Baha, thou art now missed by those thou didst care for; thou didst cure their ailments and thou wert their remedy.

I shall weep with tears for thee as long as I am living; how often thou didst wipe them with thy hands!

It is befitting that the creatures should weep for thee because in thy departure they have lost their moon and intelligence.

God is Great! Adam, Noah, Moses, Christ, and Mohammed have sung praises to thy soul, yearning for its meeting.

If I could I would have composed a poem of the jewels of the stars

For the praise of the people of Abdul Baha.”

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The following extract from Baha’Ullah is very applicable to the present condition:

The Nightingale of Separation (perching) on the Branch of the Horizon (of the world) is warbling (saying): Verily, this is a Separation, O longing ones.

The Bird of Fidelity is singing from the Tree of Eternity, saying: Now is the Separation, O longing ones.

The Dove of Parting is cooing from the Sadrat of Separation, saying: O longing ones, the Separation has come.

Say: Verily the time of Union is over and the Separation has come through Divine Decree; and this is a Separation, O longing ones.

The Tears are flowing from the eyes of the People of Eternity from among the Supreme Concourse on account of this Separation; O longing ones.

The Breeze of Joy has ceased to Blow from the Garden of Light on account of this Separation: O longing ones.

By GOD: Verily the Face of those that are occupying high Balconies have turned pale on account of this Separation: O longing ones.

The Joy of life of everything between the Heaven and the Earth has changed on account of this Separation: O longing ones.

The Houries have tinged their eyes with tears of blood when they hear the announcement of this Separation: O longing ones; and they will not adorn themselves with the Robes of Eternity when they heard the announcement of this Separation: O longing ones.

Verily this is a sorrow with which no sorrow in the Kingdom of Spirituality can be compared. For the Breeze of Separation has blown. O longing ones.

Translated by Mirza Barakatullah. For May 28th, Midnight Service.

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This pamphlet can be secured at all the Bahai Assemblies throughout America and Canada.