

VOL. VII

DAILY ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF

ABDUL BAHÁ

AS RECORDED IN THE DIARY

OF MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

APRIL 26th to SEPTEMBER 13, 1914

INTRODUCTION

In this series there are eleven Volumes.

The first nine Volumes, containing the original letters written by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab recording the daily account of the life of Abdul Baha, begins with December 5, 1912 and ends June 25, 1915. These are the daily records of what was going on around Abdul Baha, his talks, remarks and description of the life of the Bahais in Europe and in the Near East.

1. The letters covering the first seven months were mailed day by day to Miss Harriet Magee in New York City. These were read in the Bahai Assembly and copies were made and distributed among the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

2. The second portion of the diary letters up to the beginning of the first World War were mailed to Mr. Joseph Hannen of Washington, D. C. Mr. and Mrs. Hannen and other volunteer workers made extensive copies of these diary letters and shared them with the Bahai Assemblies in the United States and Canada.

3. The last portion of these diary letters, which covered the early stages of the first World War, were kept in Palestine and have neither been copied nor published. From June 25, 1915 to the end of the first World War the diary letters were kept in the Persian language and can be found in another series of volumes of manuscripts.

These letters were very generally and widely distributed among the Bahais in the East and West. Some of the Bahais made collections of them in typewritten and mimeographed forms; extracts of these diary letters were published in the "Star of the West;" a Bahai, Mrs. Mary Rabb, of California made a collection of extracts which were published serially in the "Star of the West" and later in a book under the title "The Divine Art of Living." These diary letters exerted an influence on the thoughts and lives of the early Bahais and they form an inestimable document portraying the thoughts and the life of Abdul Baha toward the end of his life.

It is unavoidable that, in this vast collection of documents and in mailing them from Palestine to the United States and in having carried them from one place to another in the past many, many years, some copies have been lost.

(a) 8 pages of the letter of Jan. 21, 1913 are missing; (b) letters from Sept. 14th to Oct. 9, 1914 are missing; (c) letters from Jan. 17th to Jan. 27th, 1915 are missing; (d) the letter of June 14, 1915 is incompleated; (e) from June 5th to June 21, 1915 the letters are missing; (f) the last letter dated June 25, 1915 starts with one line and then stops.

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Volume X contains samples of the typewritten and mimeographed copies of these diary letters as they were distributed in the early days. In the same volume there is a miscellaneous collection of various Bahai documents from 1901 to 1927.

Volume XI is a continuation of Volume X, giving more examples of typewritten and mimeographed copies of the diary letters.

M. A. SOHRAB

Compiled October, 1940

No 23.

The Diary of Mirza Ahmad Sohrab.

Beginning	April	26th	1914
Ending	May.	13th	1914

Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria
Alhammeh, Lake Tiberias, Syria

27. Baha Allah celebrating days of Reguman in Bagdad. By A. B.
60. Abouzar and Salman at the Feast. By A. B.
64. The Arab maiden and the Chushtan youth. By A. B.
83. Abdul Baha's transactions in real estate. By A. B.
103. The two men who tried to practice what Christ says about the turning of the cheek. By A. B.

Bahai Nest
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria
April 26th 1914

Dear friends!

More than 3 weeks ago a cablegram from Mrs Lua Getsinger conveyed the following message:- "Invitation from Maharaji. Going today. Supplicate Confirmations. Lua." Her latest letters describe her warm reception and her spiritual work ^{for} by and amongst her noble guests. God has greatly blessed her in her efforts in India and the fruits of her faithful labor are not only apparent to day but will become a hundred fold in the future. In one of her letters she writes the following touching prayer:-

"O my God! I pray Thee send Abdul Baha to India very soon. Let this land behold the Light of His Face. Cause this country to be quickened by his Life-giving Personality and open the eyes of this people to all ^{the} effulgent Glory of His Divine Reality! Our hearts are longing for Him! Our souls are pining for Him!"

In his talk to the believers last night ^{Abdul Baha} he said:- "The influence of the word of God is all-penetrative. One must simply arise and engage in the service of the Cause. A letter ^{was} received today from Lua. There was a very important Personage that Lua

desired to meet and speak with him about the Cause. She would have been glad, even if she could see him accidentally for a few minutes. Hearing that this particular gentleman was going to sail for Europe she was willing to risk all and embark on the same steamer in the hope of seeing and speaking with him. One day just as unexpectedly she received a telegram from him inviting her to be his guest. Lua starts immediately with another Zoroastrian woman, Doulat. Arriving at the station she finds the automobile of that personage is waiting for her. He receives her graciously and in the evening gives a reception in her honor. The next day he sends again his automobile with the message that as long as she stays he will have the pleasure to entertain her every night. From an outward standpoint it looked quite impossible for Lua to meet this Personage but through the Confirmations of God it was realized. Today whomever arises in the servitude of the Holy Threshold the Confirmations of the Holy Spirit will surround him. The Armies of the Supreme Concurrence are drawn in battle array on the plain of the Kingdom of Alpha and are gazing down to see who steps into the field of active engagement so that they may come immediately to his reinforcement. "

Then changing the theme of his conversation he spoke about the old Parsees: - "The Zoroastrians must be very endeared, very attracted, very independent after their search for Truth, and very sympathetic toward this Message of Brotherhood, for many centuries the sun of Persia had set, but it has now arisen with iridescent rays from the East of the Placeless. The luminary of their ancient glory and majesty has again dawned. Soudherjans has come and instead of unifying only Persia, He is the Unifier of mankind. The Parsee community must greatly rejoice, for their Promised One hath come. The Orb of Persia & success and greatness is slowly rising, The Glory of the King of Kings is vouchsafed to them. . . "

Having now quoted extracts from the talk of the Master and the letters from Mrs Stannard and Mrs Getsinger concerning the promotion of the Cause in India, - in order to complete the picture for the present I will quote also a few extracts from the Magazines and the newspapers of the country, reflecting more or less the state of public opinion on the subject. The Indian Daily News of Calcutta says: - "Considerable interest has been aroused within recent weeks in many centers of Hindu religious and philosophic thought in Calcutta through lectures

delivered on the subject of the Persian faith, its teachings and aims. The lecturer Mrs J. H. Stannard, an English lady, for some years resident in Egypt and Syria, has seen life under many conditions in the Ottoman Empire and her enthusiasm over what this religious movement of progress and reform can accomplish in ameliorating human life, social and moral, in Moslem lands is pronounced Some consolidating influence would however greatly facilitate the work of progress and this influence should come with the force of a religious impetus - one that would have power to draw a solidarity of thought making for union and peaceful development. This constructive ideal based on a sound social and moral Code such as the Bahai teachings lay down, would, Mrs Stannard declares, provide the one possible means for Islamic race to draw their future inspiration ^{to} and work upon The ethics and religious principles form a notable synthesis of Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, if one lays aside a few theological dogmas found in each of these religions If the enquirer can accept the fundamental premise that all religions are "one" in principle and that there are many "Messiahs" who have taught the same truths, uttered the same essential teachings, then the position

of progressive revelation becomes clear, for the Bahais accept
 accept the validity of all sacred scriptures when these are not
 confused with theologies. The new Leader declares
 he comes to restore peace on earth, establish the future univer-
 sal religious teachings, and that wars must cease and the great
 brotherhood of man ^{be} proclaimed. He ordered all his followers to
 lay down defensive arms and act with submission, resi-
 gnation and divine Will. He proclaimed the oneness of
 religion and the unity of races, ^{and that} ⁽²⁾ for ^{has} until inter-racial and
 inter-religious unity had become a practical matter and
 was truly lived ⁽¹⁾ [no harmony on earth is possible]; His strength
 (Abdul Baha) has enabled him to visit all the principal countries
 of Europe and Armenia, meeting hundreds of his followers.
 His sympathetic reception was instantaneous and cordial
 everywhere. His spiritual addresses in the famous City
 Temple, St John Westminster, and other notable places,
 will form important landmarks in the Western history
 of religious evolution, when its modern aspect comes to
 be considered. In view therefore of the great value
 and practical utility of the Bahai spheres of
 influence engendering inter-racial and religious
 fraternity, a more than superficial study of the laws

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and teachings become imperative, for these, if accepted with all the enthusiasm that eastern races invariably show when conviction is roused, may work incalculable good on countries that are the despair of reformers and missionaries combined"

The Hindu Patriot of March 23 says: "..... This Persian Movement has one of the most remarkable and stirring histories behind it. Certainly, not since the Mohammedan Conquest, has the ancient country, now fallen into dissolution, been so deeply moved and roused as when in the early half of the 19th century, there arose the cry that a religious and learned Person had come forward, claiming to be the Bab, or door of a new era The Unique claim^{made} by this last World Teacher is the Unity of Religion and Humanity on Earth, and towards the ideals of Peace and brotherhood he concentrated his influence and teaching. Religions had been made the cause of dissensions, racial prejudices had brought blood shed and selfishness had completed men's ruin. Wars, he declared, authoritatively, must and should cease and the human race come definitely into simpler and more permanent relationship and understanding. This, he showed could never be realized until humanity came

into a practical, rational outlook upon the question of essential religious principles - such as the Oneness of God and the Unity of the human spirit. All these societies, working for the propagation of advanced religion, peace or social reform, flocked to hear his teachings (Abdul Baha's while travelling in Europe and America) and we learn that many are now incorporating the Bahai ideals and beliefs in their writings. It is hoped that the revered leader ^{may} be induced to visit India next year, when here too, it is probable, he would draw many sincere souls who long to advance along roads of peace and unity. "

The ~~Enquirer~~ of the current month says "While politics and revolutions convulsed society and Shaks came and went in a country fairly contingent to this, a movement making for order, peace and religious construction had been born. Steadily permeating all ranks, its members openly or in secret carried out their work and teaching; and that they risked all in so doing appears to have weighed lightly in the scale against the implicit loyalty they owed to their orders of their leader. Among others he enjoins that all must work, rich or poor, and be usefully employed in order that the extremes of poverty and wealth be gradually

avoided. The arts, crafts, sciences and agriculture must be restored and work looked upon as a divine service. Education is to be universal and the girls to receive equal advantages with the boys, and since monogamy is decreed, replacing the Koranic permission for a plurality of wives, a far better standard of family life will inevitably work out It is possible that the world will see later a great advance in the question of the social status of Eastern women, especially in countries where Bahai religion rules, the founder having declared for the equality of sexes and the need for communities to elevate the position of mothers. The leader declared that that as he had come to inaugurate peace on earth, all fighting must cease. Arms were laid down and by the time that the great years of struggle and passive resistance had been completed, some 20,000 souls paid with their good life-blood the price of their conversions. From Burma to Teheran via Bombay, and then by the Caucasian route to Vienna and Paris, a Bahai could travel and meet "brethren" at every stage, and it is in the remote civilizations of borderland countries that this religion has brought such improvement and happiness. The

Teachings claim to form a link between all religions by revealing means for unity and concord on essential points

Mrs Stannard has been giving a great number of lectures on the Bahai Movement to the various religious and philosophic groups of Calcutta

I will bring to a close these extracts ~~with~~^{from} one from the Indian Messenger of March 22, 1914 :- "We accord a cordial welcome to Mrs J. H. Stannard, the Bahai Missionary, who has been in our midst for the last few days. Saturday before last she delivered an address in our Mandir in connection with the students' Service. Pandit Sitamath Tattvabhushan was in the chair. It was a very eloquent and beautiful ^{address} not only couched in elegant language but warm throughout with fervent feeling. The speaker's account of the long and severe persecution to which her people and leaders have been subjected, was simply thrilling. The Bahai martyrs number over twenty thousand. Under God's dispensation, however, the blood of martyrs is the cement of the Church. The ideals and principles of the Movement seem to be in deep harmony with those of ^{the} Brahmo Samaj. Last Sunday Mrs Stannard met a few Brahmo and Bahai gentlemen at the Samaj Gallery, addressed a ladies'

meeting in the Mander on Thursday and spoke at the Bhowanipuri Sammilan Samaj on Saturday. We wish her a long stay in our midst and a close study of the inner life of our Samaj, so as to see what kind and extent of Co-operation is possible between her movement and ours."

I cannot help but to quote another extract from Amrita Bazar Patrika of April 4th which gives a short outline of Mrs Stannards' talk before Devalaya Society. "The speaker next said:- 'All religions are one. God's universe is like a beautiful garden. Now and then God sends a gardener - an incarnation of supreme gardeners. Supreme gardeners plans for the future garden. The trees are beautiful and many will come and sit under their shade and exchange their thoughts.'"

This morning the Beloved called a number of pilgrims who are on the eve of departure. A number of Tablets were revealed at their request. They have been most eager to stay a long time in Haifa but the Master thought otherwise. They have been staying here ^{re}most than three weeks. One hour of these days is equal to one year. "Intoxicated" he said "With the wine of love of God and the service of man you must go forth with intensified faith and focalized attraction."

Each one of you must become a storm center of spiritual influence, and a whirling vortex of divine stimuli. Each one of the believers of God is a teacher. Let him just turn his heart to the Blessed Perfection and unloose his tongue. God will inspire him. Teaching the Cause of God is dependent upon the spiritual Power and not upon the variety of knowledges or the vast range of information. Let a soul advance towards the True One, entreat assistance from the Beauty of Abha and then commence to speak. Let him but begin teaching and God will come to his succor. There are, however many Tablets, many books by Mirza Abul Fazel and other Bahai writers which you ^{should} read and keep ^{may bring} their contents in your memory, so that you ~~may~~ ^{bring} those proofs into your conversation. It has often been observed that a learned and wise man has gone into a town but ^{to} could not teach the Cause of God. ^{but did not succeed} On the other hand a simple man, attracted, holy, spiritual, divine ^{has been able} is enabled to teach many souls. The higher the flame of the fire of the Love of God in the heart, the more eloquent and fluent becomes the tongue. The believers must strive so that each one of them may become a teacher in the Cause."

When the Pilgrims retired he dictated a number of Tablets for the believers in Persia and then went out

for a walk.

In the afternoon the carriage was made ready and the Beloved with his three sons-in-law drove towards the summit to call on a German gentleman. On his return he came to the Pilgrim's Home, walked around the flowery fields, visited the Holy Tomb, chanted for us the visiting Tablet and then delivered a most significant talk on God and His attributes. Shiekh Ali Akbar of Ghoutchaw, a learned teacher of the Cause asked, then, a number of theological questions which have always disturbed the minds of the eastern metaphysicians, and the Master uttered such conclusive and clear answers as to satisfy the troubled hearts.

The Master is trying to reduce the number of the Oriental pilgrims. But hardly a party leaves before another party takes its place. He has reiterated his former command that no pilgrim must leave his eastern home without at first receiving permission. In three or four days most every one will leave ^{here} and the Pilgrim's Home ^{will} ~~may~~ enjoy a holiday for a few days. For the last five months I have met and associated with ever so many Bahais coming from ^{the} various parts of the world ^{and} that it has been quite a unique experience.