

TRANSLATION OF A LETTER FROM
ISRAELITISH ASSEMBLY OF BAHÁ'ÍS
OF ṬIHRÁN, PERSIA

*To the House of Spirituality of Bahá'ís, Chicago,
dated Ṭihrán, Persia, May 9, 1904.*

HE IS THE MOST GLORIOUS!

PRAISE and thanks belong to the One who is the God of all nations, and who has manifested Himself at this time, as before, for the great purpose of illumining the world with the Light of Unity. Already has He united the hearts of His peoples in the Name of Light and Glory! In the Name of Bahá'u'lláh will the world learn of harmony and of love. Although many peoples are yet slumbering, and see the Truth but dimly and as in a dream, yet, through the strength of the Word of God and the efforts of the chosen few, the world at large will perceive that vision and hasten to the Light of God, manifest in His Son (i. e., 'Abdu'l-Bahá), the promised One, the Center of His Covenant and the Servant of His Command. May all souls perceive the Word of God and the expression of Unity manifest today, and partake of the joy therein!

Dear and Spiritual Friends:

Your brilliant and welcome letter was duly received. Its contents expressed the spirit of love as taught by Bahá'u'lláh. We cannot tell you in words of our feelings and of our joy at hearing from you. So we will endeavor to express this appreciation in service and action. It is indeed a great privilege for the Bahá'ís to serve, according to their strength, the Cause of God. It is a joy for them to listen to the Words of God and to feel the gentle zephyrs of His Love; but it is their duty to render such service as is directed by the Master (i. e., 'Abdu'l-Bahá), and to abide in His Command.

Regarding the subject of true brotherhood, your comments were good and consistent with the teaching in the 20th chapter of John: "Go to

my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God." He says: "Your Father," and from this we can understand that believers in God bear the relation of children to Him and of brothers to one another. Also, in the 8th chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It is further written: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs." All these indicate the degree of real brotherhood which we hope to attain in the Name of Bahá'u'lláh.

This subject of brotherhood brings to our notice a blessed Epistle of our Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, from which we quote the following: "Each one of you must serve the Cause of Love, and endeavor to increase unity and harmony among yourselves; so that one shall serve another, and prefer the comfort of another to his own. Each should consider the other as his master, and every soul his friend and helper in attaining to the Supreme Friend." These are the instructions given for our welfare. Therefore we consider it an attainment and privilege to be your servants. We are unable to express our love for you, or to describe you to our friends. Yea! It was said of old, "The believer is he who is indescribable."

As to the prophecies of the Bible: In the 33rd ch. of Deuteronomy in the 2nd v. God declares: "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from His right hand went a fiery law for them." This refers to four great

The Bahá'í World
Volume 2 : 1926-1928
(p. 275-279)

Manifestations, Moses, Jesus, Muḥammad and Bahá'u'lláh. This is a sufficient prophecy, with its fulfillment, to convince any student of the Bible. Abraham has also prophesied that the eventful Return will occur in the fourth cycle. Genesis 15th ch. 16th v. contains references to the four cycles (i. e., four generations or ages after Abraham), first to that of Moses; second, Jesus; third, Muḥammad; and fourth to the cycle of Bahá'u'lláh, which fulfills the prophecies of all nations.

In Hosea, 6th ch. 2nd v. it is said: "In the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning." Here, because the Manifestation of Moses had already taken place, only three days are mentioned. Again, the six days of creation, as mentioned in Genesis, refer to the Manifestations of Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad, and the seventh day when it is said that God rested, is this Day in which God's work attains completion. The same thing is written in the Qur'án, as follows : "God created the heavens and the earth in six days, and then He established Himself upon the throne." These prophecies confirm each other in a remarkable manner, and are fulfilled truly. Moreover, the seventh day, when "God will then manifest Himself," as stated in the Qur'án, is the time of the end, the appointed Day. Muḥammad has even referred to the place where the Manifestation of God would declare Himself. This place is: "The House of Peace" (Baghdád). In the Sura of Jonas the following verse is given: "And God will invite the peoples to (Dar-el-Salam) the House of Peace, and will guide whomsoever He willeth to the right path."

We beg of God to prepare the peoples of the world for His Message, and to help us to teach His Commands to the nations. We must pray God to keep us protected from the many tests that we encounter in life, and to guard us from such attachments in this earthly kingdom, which is mortal, as may hinder us from the Kingdom which is immortal. The things of this world should be considered as means to an end, but not the end. The more one earns in this world the greater becomes his care, the

less he thinks of the Kingdom to come. May we be children of that Kingdom!

The purpose of the Prophets in the past was to prepare men for this especial time. The purport of all their writings was concerning this Day. To illustrate: Daniel the prophet, at the close of his book (ch. 12th) gives three historical prophecies regarding this dispensation. One is concerning the Báb and His time, under the name of Michael. He mentions another as "time, times (the dual, two times) and a half" "Time" is the expression of a thousand, and "two times" of two hundred, and "a half" of fifty, the total of which is 1250 years. (Another reckoning of the "times" is according to the Metonic cycle of 360 years, viz: One "time" equals 360; two "times" equals 720, and "half a time" equals 180. Together they equal 1260 years.)

This time fills the interval between the appearance of Muḥammad, the Prophet, and the day of the public declaration of Bahá'u'lláh. It is an exact prophecy and its fulfillment is to the moment. The third date given by Daniel concerns the spread of this blessed Message and the time wherein the Spirit of the Word shall encompass the world, even as our Master, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—May we be His devoted servants!—emphasized the truth that the fragrances of Life shall reach all parts of the globe.

Among other beautiful utterances, which have come from the Master regarding this point, we cite the following:

"Praise be to God! That His Cause in this Bahá'í Dispensation is one of absolute Love, of pure Spirituality. It is not of this kingdom, the earth, for it is not war and distress, nor the oppression of one people by another. Its army is the Love of God, its victory is the ecstasy of the knowledge of God, its battle is that of truth—the exposition of the Word, its warfare is against selfishness, its patience is its 'reserve,' its entire meekness is its conquering power, and its love for all is a glory forevermore. In a word: It is Spirit and it is Love. Be not harsh to the ant, far less to a man; tread not upon the serpent, how much less upon a man. Be ever ready to give life, joy, rest, health and comfort to all, be they friends or foes. Consider not the purity of the pearl to compare it with the

The Bahá'í World
Volume 2 : 1926-1928
(p. 275-279)

impurity of a man, but look to the boundless Mercy of the Great Creator.”

Jesus Christ in referring to His second coming points to the prophecy of Daniel concerning the “1290” in connection with the “Abomination of desolation.” The reader is referred to the 24th ch. of Matthew.

Again we have the prophecies of John in the Revelation ch. 11, “And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy a thousand, two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sack-cloth.” This refers to the prophet Muḥammad and His successor, ‘Alí, whose manifestations were analogous to Moses and Aaron, and whose prophetic day endured until the appearance of the Rib (the First Point). It also refers to the power which was exerted by Muḥammad as a witness preceding the Báb who fulfilled this prophecy to the date.

Another prophecy occurs at the beginning of this same chapter (Revelation 11). “And the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.” Forty-two months equal 1260 days, each day of which corresponds to one prophetic year. Thus we see that the prophecy regarding the 1260 years is well fulfilled in the appearance of Muḥammad and its culmination in the appearance of the Báb.

Prophecies concerning Zion and its becoming the religious center of the earth are given in many places, some of them in our Bible. Among them are the following: Psalm 65, “Praise waiteth for Thee, O God, in Zion: and unto Thee shall the vow be performed. O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh (peoples) come.” In Psalm 87, “The Lord loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.” Also in Psalm 132, v. 13, “For the Lord hath chosen Zion: He hath desired it for His habitation.” Psalm 9, v. 11, “Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people His doings.” Psalm 76, “In Judah is God known: His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is His tabernacle, and His dwelling-place in Zion. There brake He the arrows of the bow, the shield, and the sword, and the battle.” Psalm 99, “The Lord reigneth; let the people tremble: He sitteth between the cherubims; let

the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion; and He is high above all the peoples.” Psalm 147, v. 12, “Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; Praise thy God, O Zion. For He hath strengthened the bars of thy gates.” Isaiah 52, v. 8, “They shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.” Isaiah 60, v. 14, “And they shall call thee, The City of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” Hosea 2, v. 15, “And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor (‘Akká) for a door of hope.” Psalm 48, v. 12, “Walk about Zion, and go round about her.” (This is an ancient sacred practice.)

The prophecies regarding this wonderful Manifestation are too numerous to be contained in this letter. We will however mention a few more. Let us first refer to Revelation 11, v. 9, “And they of the peoples and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which saw them.”

The three days and an half mentioned are three years and an half, and the three years and an half equal a thousand, two hundred and sixty days, each day of which is accounted as one year, and this also indicates the coming of the Báb.

Again, Revelation 12, v. 6, carries confirmation of this statement, where it is mentioned that the woman was fed in the wilderness for a period of a thousand, two hundred and threescore days. Consider also the 14th verse of that chapter, where “she is nourished for a time, and times and half a time,” which corresponds with the date first given by Daniel.

Another prophecy is in the 13th chapter of Revelation, where the beast is mentioned as having “power given unto him to make war forty and two months.” This refers to the spirit of warfare which became manifest in Muaviah, who was a descendant of Bani-Umayya, who made war after the departure of Muḥammad, and continued it until the secret declaration of Bahá'u'lláh to His disciples.

The Bahá'í World
Volume 2 : 1926-1928
(p. 275-279)

Also Revelation 11, v. 11, "And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet." This three days and an half refers to three years and an half, which in turn corresponds to forty and two months, which figures a thousand, two hundred and sixty days. Each day has one year's duration. The Spirit of life there mentioned refers to the Báb, whose name is composed of Muḥammad and 'Alí. Since He brought a return of that Spirit, His name was transposed to 'Alí Muḥammad.

As to prophecies of this time, made from the Muḥammadan point of view, they are many and long, and we fear we have already taxed your time; so we will content ourselves with one quotation from the Qur'án. This occurs in the Sura of Worship, as follows: "The path will be made plain on earth from Heaven, and He will ascend thereto in the day which shall last a thousand years according to your reckoning."

It took the religion of Islám two hundred and sixty years to become established, and its condition of spiritual inspiration ceased in a thousand years, at which time He ascended and manifested Himself. So this thousand, two hundred and sixty years confirms also the prophecies of the Christian religion.

A beautiful prophecy is made in the Epistle of Paul to Timothy, ch. 6, v. 14, "Keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in His times He shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen." Here, in the first place, we have the time of the Manifestation predicted, especially so when we refer to Daniel, as Jesus directed His disciples to do. Second, the name of the home of Bahá'u'lláh is given, and in the original we have this very well protected from any interpretation, because the word "Light" is so accented as to prevent its being mistaken for the light of the sun or moon. Paul refers to it as a Light which is "far from the near," thus indicating that it represents the name of a place; because the light of sun and moon shines everywhere. "Far from the near" means that

the City of Núr (Light), located in Mázindarán, is far from the Holy Land which was "the near." Third, he says that no man shall see him. "Him" there refers to the body, that is, no man shall see Him as the Son of Mary, for in that form did they see Him first.

In studying the Bible the student will meet with many symbols and prophecies relative to this time. If a Christian should say: "I am waiting to see my Lord come as was prophesied, and I will not have these prophecies interpreted by the reason," we say, "Very well. Have the prophecies made before the time of Jesus, and concerning Him, been literally fulfilled? Or have they been interpreted according to the time and the symbols used?" If they do not accept this second Manifestation, how can they accept the former one in Jesus?

Peter has well said in his second Epistle that, "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Thomas believed in Jesus because he saw Him. He believed because he heard His words, not because of the miraculous works. Yet Jesus said unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen Me thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John ch. 20, v. 29.) Therefore, if the seeing of the Manifestation is not the basis for knowledge, how much less is the witnessing of His Signs. Furthermore, if the faith of the people of the Gospel depends upon signs this condition is contrary to that stated by Jesus, Mark ch. 8, v. 12, "Verily I say unto you, there shall no sign be given unto this generation."

In brief, the only sign and the only proof of the Manifestation is the Living Word that He gives, the power of which lasts forever. It is the Word that gives Life, and it is the Spiritual Life that man seeks.

For the Muḥammadans the Qur'án contains similar statements as to miracles. For instance, in the Sura of Imrán, "Say, verily, if I had what ye seek (miracles), then ye would not endeavor to find for yourselves what God has wished for you to know." It is a wonderful change that a Prophet effects in a people when He raises their standard of truth. It is through

The Bahá'í World
Volume 2 : 1926-1928
(p. 275-279)

His teachings that the people attain to the knowledge of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. May all people of the world soon attain this understanding.

You have written regarding the recent martyrs, and expressed your sympathy for the friends. Indeed, this recent calamity softened the hearts of all, even those of stone. The oppressors and destroyers caused the ruin of many homes, but we call them destroyers because in reality they destroyed themselves. Everyone of those martyrs manifested joy when the last moments came, and hastened to the Abode of the Beloved. The Bahá'ís here are ever thankful for persecutions, and the

martyrs are grateful to those who release them, for thereby they attain to the Highest Station.

The Bahá'í friends in Tīhrán, including our Zoroastrian brothers, Muḥammadan brothers and ourselves the Israelites are in perfect harmony, working for the same purpose. We wish to be remembered to you, and through you to all our American friends. Hoping that you may attain greater light, and that we may serve you in promoting love and peace in the world, we are your servants in His Name,

THE ASSEMBLY OF ISRAELITISH BAHÁ'ÍS
OF TĪHRÁN.

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