

## We are not ready

How can it be that we have arrived at the Age of fulfillment, the maturity of humanity, in which we are destined to finally realize our full potential, in a global civilization, and yet humanity has rejected the twin Manifestations who have announced this Age, has rejected their counsels, is breaking the Covenant of God in every thought and action, and consequently we are no closer to realizing the aims of this Age nearly two centuries subsequent to its beginning?

We are not ready.

What Age do we live in? Baha'u'llah answers this question in many of His Writings:

*It is evident that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God's appointed Day. **This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation "Seal of the Prophets" fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath, verily, ended. The Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the Ensign of Power, and is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation.*** (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXV, p. 59)

Only those who are willing to associate the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh with the consummation of so stupendous an evolution in the collective life of the whole human race can grasp the significance of the words which He, while alluding to the glories of this promised Day and to the duration of the Bahá'í Era, has deemed fit to utter. "This is the King of Days," He exclaims, "the Day that hath seen the coming of the Best-Beloved, Him Who, through all eternity, hath been acclaimed the Desire of the World." "The Scriptures of past Dispensations," He further asserts, "celebrate the great jubilee that must needs greet this most great Day of God. Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day and hath recognized its station." **"It is evident,"** He, in another passage explains, **"that every age in which a Manifestation of God hath lived is divinely-ordained, and may, in a sense, be characterized as God's appointed Day. This Day, however, is unique, and is to be distinguished from those that have preceded it. The designation 'Seal of the Prophets' fully revealeth its high station. The Prophetic Cycle hath verily ended. The Eternal Truth is now come. He hath lifted up the ensign of power, and is now shedding upon the world the unclouded splendor of His Revelation."** "In this most mighty Revelation," He, in categorical language, declares, "all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation. That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, standeth unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like."

'Abdu'l-Bahá's authentic pronouncements should, likewise, be recalled as confirming, in no less emphatic manner, the unexampled vastness of the Bahá'í Dispensation. **"Centuries,"** He affirms in one of His Tablets, **"nay, countless ages, must pass away ere the Day-Star of Truth shineth again in its mid-summer splendor, or appeareth once more in the radiance of its vernal glory... The mere contemplation of the Dispensation inaugurated by the Blessed Beauty would have sufficed to overwhelm the saints of bygone ages -- saints who longed to partake, for one moment, of its great glory."** "Concerning the Manifestations that will come down in the future 'in the shadows of the clouds,'"

He, in a still more definite language, affirms, "know, verily, that in so far as their relation to the Source of their inspiration is concerned, they are under the shadow of the Ancient Beauty. In their relation, however, to the age in which they appear, each and every one of them 'doeth whatsoever He willeth.'" **"This holy Dispensation," He, alluding to the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, explains, "is illumined with the light of the Sun of Truth shining from its most exalted station, and in the plenitude of its resplendency, its heat and glory."** (Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha cited by Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, pp. 166-168)

**And when this process of progressive Revelation culminated in the stage at which His peerless, His most sacred, and exalted Countenance was to be unveiled to men's eyes, He chose to hide His own Self behind a thousand veils, lest profane and mortal eyes discover His glory.** This He did at a time when the signs and tokens of a divinely-appointed Revelation were being showered upon Him -- signs and tokens which none can reckon except the Lord, your God, the Lord of all worlds. **And when the set time of concealment was fulfilled, We sent forth, whilst still wrapt within a myriad veils, an infinitesimal glimmer of the effulgent Glory enveloping the Face of the Youth, and lo, the entire company of the dwellers of the Realms above were seized with violent commotion and the favored of God fell down in adoration before Him. He hath, verily, manifested a glory such as none in the whole creation hath witnessed, inasmuch as He hath arisen to proclaim in person His Cause unto all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.** (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, XXXI, p. 74)

Magnify Thou, O Lord my God, Him Who is the Primal Point, the Divine Mystery, the Unseen Essence, the Day-Spring of Divinity, and the Manifestation of Thy Lordship, through Whom all the knowledge of the past and all the knowledge of the future were made plain, through Whom the pearls of Thy hidden wisdom were uncovered, and the mystery of Thy treasured name disclosed, Whom Thou hast appointed as the Announcer of the One through Whose name the letter B and the letter E have been joined and united, through Whom Thy majesty, Thy sovereignty and Thy might were made known, through Whom Thy words have been sent down, and Thy laws set forth with clearness, and Thy signs spread abroad, and Thy Word established, through Whom the hearts of Thy chosen ones were laid bare, and all that were in the heavens and all that were on the earth were gathered together, Whom Thou hast called Ali-Muhammad in the kingdom of Thy names, and the Spirit of Spirits in the Tablets of Thine irrevocable decree, Whom Thou hast invested with Thine own title, unto Whose name all other names have, at Thy bidding and through the power of Thy might, been made to return, and **in Whom Thou hast caused all Thine attributes and titles to attain their final consummation.** To Him also belong such names as lay hid within Thy stainless tabernacles, in Thine invisible world and Thy sanctified cities.

**Magnify Thou, moreover, such as have believed in Him and in His signs and have turned towards Him, from among those that have acknowledged Thy unity in His Latter Manifestation -- a Manifestation whereof He hath made mention in His Tablets, and in His Books, and in His Scriptures, and in all the wondrous verses and gem-like utterances that have descended upon Him.** It is this same Manifestation 86 Whose covenant Thou hast bidden Him establish ere He had established His own covenant. He it is Whose praise the Bayan hath celebrated. In it His excellence hath been extolled, and His truth established, and His sovereignty proclaimed, and His Cause perfected. Blessed is the man that hath turned unto Him, and fulfilled the things He hath commanded, O Thou Who art the Lord of the worlds and the Desire of all them that have known Thee!

Praised be Thou, O my God, inasmuch as Thou hast aided us to recognize and love Him. I, therefore, beseech Thee by Him and by Them Who are the Day-Springs of Thy Divinity, and the Manifestations of Thy Lordship, and the Treasuries of Thy Revelation, and the Depositories of Thine inspiration, to enable us to serve and obey Him, and to empower us to become the helpers of His Cause and the dispersers of His adversaries. Powerful art Thou to do all that pleaseth Thee. No God is there beside Thee, the Almighty, the All-Glorious, the One Whose help is sought by all men! (Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations by Baha'u'llah, LVI, pp. 84-86)

**Ages rolled away, until they attained their consummation in this, the Lord of days, the Day whereon the Day Star of the Bayan manifested itself above the horizon of mercy, the Day in which the Beauty of the All-Glorious shone forth in the exalted person of Ali-Muhammad, the Báb.** No sooner did He reveal Himself, than all the people rose up against Him. By some He was denounced as one that hath uttered slanders against God, the Almighty, the Ancient of Days. Others regarded Him as a man smitten with madness, an allegation which I, Myself, have heard from the lips of one of the divines. Still others disputed His claim to be the Mouthpiece of God, and stigmatized Him as one who had stolen and used as his the words of the Almighty, who had perverted their meaning, and mingled them with his own. The Eye of Grandeur weepeth sore for the things which their mouths have uttered, while they continue to rejoice upon their seats.

"God," said He, "is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you. This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it. Repeat the gaze, O people, and consider the testimony of God and His proof which are in your possession, and compare them unto the Revelation sent down unto you in this Day, that the truth, the infallible truth, may be indubitably manifested unto you. Follow not, O people, the steps of the Evil One; follow ye the Faith of the All-Merciful, and be ye of them that truly believe. What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify."

The more He exhorted them, the fiercer grew their enmity, till, at the last, they put Him to death with shameful cruelty. The curse of God be upon the oppressors!

**A few believed in Him; few of Our servants are the thankful.** These He admonished, in all His Tablets -- nay, in every passage of His wondrous writings -- not to give themselves up in the Day of the promised Revelation to anything whatever, be it in the heaven or in the earth. "O people!" said He, "I have revealed Myself for His Manifestation, and have caused My Book, the Bayan, to descend upon you for no other purpose except to establish the truth of His Cause. Fear ye God, and contend not with Him as the people of the Qur'án have contended with Me. At whatever time ye hear of Him, hasten ye towards Him, and cleave ye to whatsoever He may reveal unto you. Naught else besides Him can ever profit you, no, not though ye produce from first to last the testimonies of all those who were before you."

And when after the lapse of a few years the heaven of Divine decree was cleft asunder, and the Beauty of the Báb appeared in the clouds of the names of God, arrayed in a new raiment, these same people maliciously rose up against Him, Whose light embraceth all created things. They broke His Covenant, rejected His truth, contended with Him, caviled at His signs, treated His testimony as falsehood, and joined the company of the infidels. Eventually, they determined to take away His life. Such is the state of them who are in a far-gone error!

And when they realized their powerlessness to achieve their purpose, they arose to plot against Him. Witness how every moment they devise a fresh device to harm Him, that they may injure and dishonor the cause of God. Say: Woe be to you! By God! Your schemings cover you with shame. Your Lord, the God of mercy, can well dispense with all creatures. Nothing whatever can either increase or diminish the things He doth possess. If ye believe, to your own behoof will ye believe; and if ye believe not, ye yourselves will suffer. At no time can the hand of the infidel profane the hem of His Robe.

O My servant that believest in God! By the righteousness of the Almighty! Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness. Watch over thyself, and follow not the footsteps of these people. Meditate diligently upon the Cause of thy Lord. Strive to know Him through His own Self and not through others. For no one else besides Him can ever profit thee. To this all created things will testify, couldst thou but perceive it.

Emerge from behind the veil, by the leave of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the Most Powerful, and seize, before the eyes of those who are in the heavens and those who are on the earth, the Chalice of Immortality, in the name of thy Lord, the Inaccessible, the Most High, and quaff thy fill, and be not of them that tarry. I swear by God! The moment thou touchest the Cup with thy lips, the Concourse on high will acclaim thee saying, "Drink with healthy relish, O man that hast truly believed in God!" and the inhabitants of the Cities of Immortality will cry out, "Joy be to thee, O thou that hast drained the Cup of His love!" and the Tongue of Grandeur will hail thee, "Great is the blessedness that awaiteth thee, O My servant, for thou hast attained unto that which none hath attained, except such as have detached themselves from all that is in the heavens and all that is on the earth, and who are the emblems of true detachment." (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LXXVI, pp. 145-149)

**It beseemeth all men, in this Day, to take firm hold on the Most Great Name, and to establish the unity of all mankind. There is no place to flee to, no refuge that any one can seek, except Him.** Should any man be led to utter such words as will turn away the people from the shores of God's limitless ocean, and cause them to fix their hearts on anything except this glorious and manifest Being, that hath assumed a form subject to human limitations -- such a man, however lofty the station he may occupy, shall be denounced by the entire creation as one that hath deprived himself of the sweet savors of the All-Merciful. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, C, pp. 203-204)

**Verily I say, in this most mighty Revelation, all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest, their final consummation.** Thus counselleth you your Lord, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise. Praise be to God, the Lord of all worlds. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CLXI, p. 339)

**Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation direct from God, ere the expiration of a full thousand years, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will, no doubt, forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will, assuredly, send down one who will deal mercilessly with him.** Terrible, indeed, is God in punishing! Whosoever interpreteth this verse otherwise than its obvious meaning is deprived of the Spirit of God and of His mercy which encompasseth all created things. Fear God, and follow not your

idle fancies. Nay, rather follow the bidding of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Wise. (Baha'u'llah, Kitab-i-Aqdas, #37; Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CLXVI, p. 345)

O Dhabih! The Tongue of Grandeur saith: By Myself that speaketh the truth! **In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation. Whoso layeth claim to a Revelation after Him, such a man is assuredly a lying impostor. We pray God that He may graciously assist him to retract and repudiate such claim. Should he repent, God will no doubt forgive him. If, however, he persisteth in his error, God will assuredly send down one who will deal mercilessly with him. He, verily, is the Almighty, the Most Powerful.**

Behold how the people of the Bayan have utterly failed to recognize that the sole object of whatsoever My Previous Manifestation and Harbinger of My Beauty hath revealed hath been My Revelation and the proclamation of My Cause. Never -- and to this He Who is the Sovereign Truth beareth Me witness -- would He have, but for Me, pronounced what He did pronounce. Witness how this foolish people have treated the Cause of Him Who is the All-Possessing, the Inaccessible, as a play and pastime! Their hearts devise each day a new device, and their fancy leadeth them to seek a fresh retreat. If what they say be true, how then can the stability of the Cause of thy Lord be ensured? Ponder this in thine heart, and be thou of them who are sharp-sighted, who scan heedfully, who are steadfast in their purpose and confident in their belief. Such should be thy certitude that if all mankind were to advance such claims as no man hath ever advanced, or any mind conceived, thou wouldst completely ignore them, wouldst cast them from thee, and would set thy face towards Him Who is the Object of the adoration of all worlds.

By the righteousness of Mine own Self! Great, immeasurably great is this Cause! Mighty, inconceivably mighty is this Day! Blessed indeed is the man that hath forsaken all things, and fastened his eyes upon Him Whose face hath shed illumination upon all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth.

Sharp must be thy sight, O Dhabih, and adamant thy soul, and brass-like thy feet, if thou wishest to be unshaken by the assaults of the selfish desires that whisper in men's breasts. This is the firm injunction which the Pen of the Most Great Name hath, by virtue of the Will of the Ancient King, been moved to reveal. Keep it as the apple of thine eye, and be thou of the thankful. Strive thou day and night to serve the Cause of Him Who is the Eternal Truth, and be thou detached from all else but Him. By Myself! Whatever thou seest in this Day shall perish. Supremely lofty will be thy station, if thou remainest steadfast in the Cause of thy Lord. Towards Him are thy busy movements directed, and in Him is thy final resting-place. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXV, pp. 244-246)

*Baha'u'llah affirms the divine endowment which is universal to all creation:*

**Know thou that every created thing is a sign of the revelation of God. Each, according to its capacity, is, and will ever remain, a token of the Almighty. Inasmuch as He, the sovereign Lord of all, hath willed to reveal His sovereignty in the kingdom of names and attributes, each and every created thing hath, through the act of the Divine Will, been made a sign of His glory.** So pervasive and general is this revelation that nothing whatsoever in the whole universe can be discovered that doth not reflect His splendor. Under such conditions every consideration of proximity and remoteness is obliterated.... Were

the Hand of Divine power to divest of this high endowment all created things, the entire universe would become desolate and void. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XCIII, p. 184)

*The capacity to recognize the sign of God is universal to humanity, according to its capacity, superlative among the creations of God:*

**Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word** -- the Word upon which must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men... (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XLIII, p. 96)

**He hath endowed every soul with the capacity to recognize the signs of God.** How could He, otherwise, have fulfilled His testimony unto men, if ye be of them that ponder His Cause in their hearts. He will never deal unjustly with any one, neither will He task a soul beyond its power. He, verily, is the Compassionate, the All-Merciful. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LII, pp. 105-106)

*If this universal endowment is acted upon by each individual, the promise of God can be fully manifested at any time:*

The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures. **Success or failure, gain or loss, must, therefore, depend upon man's own exertions. The more he striveth, the greater will be his progress.** We fain would hope that the vernal showers of the bounty of God may cause the flowers of true understanding to spring from the soil of men's hearts, and may wash them from all earthly defilements. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XXXIV, pp. 81-81)

And now, concerning thy question regarding the creation of man. Know thou that all men have been created in the nature made by God, the Guardian, the Self-Subsisting. Unto each one hath been prescribed a pre-ordained measure, as decreed in God's mighty and guarded Tablets. **All that which ye potentially possess can, however, be manifested only as a result of your own volition. Your own acts testify to this truth.** Consider, for instance, that which hath been forbidden, in the Bayan, unto men. God hath in that Book, and by His behest, decreed as lawful whatsoever He hath pleased to decree, and hath, through the power of His sovereign might, forbidden whatsoever He elected to forbid. To this testifyeth the text of that Book. Will ye not bear witness? Men, however, have wittingly broken His law. Is such a behavior to be attributed to God, or to their proper selves? Be fair in your judgment. Every good thing is of God, and every evil thing is from yourselves. Will ye not comprehend? This same 150 truth hath been revealed in all the Scriptures, if ye be of them that understand. Every act ye meditate is as clear to Him as is that act when already accomplished. There is none other God besides Him. His is all creation and its empire. All stands revealed before Him; all is recorded in His holy and hidden Tablets. This fore-knowledge of God, however, should not be regarded as having caused the actions of men, just as your own previous knowledge that a certain event is to occur, or your desire that it should happen, is not and can never be the reason for its occurrence. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, LXXVII, pp. 149-150)

*Baha'u'llah states that while it was intended that humanity commence its stage of maturity and fulfilment of prophecy during His lifetime, that certain souls were not ready to accept this change:*

**Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word -- the Word upon which must depend the gathering together and spiritual resurrection of all men.** (Baha'u'llah, Lawh-i-Dunya, in Tablets of Baha'u'llah, p. 88; Gleanings, XLIII, p. 97)

Gracious God! **It was intended that at the time of the manifestation of the One true God the faculty of recognizing Him would have been developed and matured and would have reached its culmination. However, it is now clearly demonstrated that in the disbelievers this faculty hath remained undeveloped and hath, indeed, degenerated.** (Baha'u'llah, Tajalliyyat, in Tablets of Baha'u'llah, pp. 52-53)

*Who are these "disbelievers" to which Baha'u'llah makes reference?*

A new life is, in this age, stirring within all the peoples of the earth; and yet none hath discovered its cause or perceived its motive. **Consider the peoples of the West. Witness how, in their pursuit of that which is vain and trivial, they have sacrificed, and are still sacrificing, countless lives for the sake of its establishment and promotion. The peoples of Persia, on the other hand, though the repository of a perspicuous and luminous Revelation, the glory of whose loftiness and renown hath encompassed the whole earth, are dispirited and sunk in deep lethargy.** (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, XCVI, p. 196)

Religious fanaticism and hatred are a world-devouring fire, whose violence none can quench. The Hand of Divine power can, alone, deliver mankind from this desolating affliction...The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: **Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship...Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendent and most sublime station, the station that can ensure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspirations. So long, however, as the thick clouds of oppression, which obscure the daystar of justice, remain undispeled, it would be difficult for the glory of this station to be unveiled to men's eyes....** (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXXXII)

**Souls are inclined toward estrangement. Steps should first be taken to do away with this estrangement, for only then will the Word take effect.** If a believer showeth kindness to one of the neglectful, and, with great love, gradually leadeth him to an understanding of the validity of the Holy Cause, so that he may come to know the fundamentals of God's Faith and the implications thereof -- such a one will certainly be transformed, **excepting only those seldom-encountered individuals who are even as ashes, whose hearts are 'hard as rocks, or harder still.'**[Qur'an 2:69 ] (Abdu'l-Baha, Selections from the Writings of Abdu'l-Baha, #209, p. 264)

*We have been taught that the Cycle of Fulfillment, the coming of age of humanity began in the year 1844, nearly two hundred years ago. Why then are there so few Baha'is? Why then is there no world peace? Why are our lives in such disorder? The simple and straightforward answer is that the leaders of humanity, the kings and queens, the clergy and*

*scientists who lived at that time, and the masses who followed them did not recognize either of the Twin Manifestations. In fact, most of those who encountered the least trace of their existence, rejected it out of hand. Hence, the promised day in which mankind will actualize its potential and attain to the glorious global civilization promised by the Manifestations of God, the blueprint for which was revealed by Baha'u'llah "is approaching" and "is yet to come."*

"The heights," Bahá'u'lláh Himself testifies, "which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. **The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men.**" (Baha'u'llah cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 167)

**The ages of its infancy and childhood are past, never again to return, while the Great Age, the consummation of all ages, which must signalize the coming of age of the entire human race, is yet to come.** The convulsions of this transitional and most turbulent period in the annals of humanity are the essential prerequisites, and herald the inevitable approach, of that Age of Ages, "the time of the end," in which the folly and tumult of strife that has, since the dawn of history, blackened the annals of mankind, will have been finally transmuted into the wisdom and the tranquility of an undisturbed, a universal, and lasting peace, in which the discord and separation of the children of men will have given way to the worldwide reconciliation, and the complete unification of the divers elements that constitute human society.

This will indeed be the fitting climax of that process of integration which, starting with the family, the smallest unit in the scale of human organization, must, after having called successively into being the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, continue to operate until it culminates in the unification of the whole world, the final object and the crowning glory of human evolution on this planet. It is this stage which humanity, willingly or unwillingly, is resistlessly approaching. It is for this stage that this vast, this fiery ordeal which humanity is experiencing is mysteriously paving the way. It is with this stage that the fortunes and the purpose of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh are indissolubly linked. It is the creative energies which His Revelation has released in the "year sixty," and later reinforced by the successive effusions of celestial power vouchsafed in the "year nine" and the "year eighty" to all mankind, that have instilled into humanity the capacity to attain this final stage in its organic and collective evolution. It is with the Golden Age of His Dispensation that the consummation of this process will be forever associated. It is the structure of His New World Order, now stirring in the womb of the administrative institutions He Himself has created, that will serve both as a pattern and a nucleus of that world commonwealth which is the sure, the inevitable destiny of the peoples and nations of the earth.

Just as the organic evolution of mankind has been slow and gradual, and involved successively the unification of the family, the tribe, the city-state, and the nation, so has the light vouchsafed by the Revelation of God, at various stages in the evolution of religion, and reflected in the successive Dispensations of the past, been slow and progressive. Indeed the measure of Divine Revelation, in every age, has been adapted to, and commensurate with, the degree of social progress achieved in that age by a constantly evolving humanity.

"It hath been decreed by Us," explains Bahá'u'lláh, "that the Word of God, and all the potentialities thereof, shall be manifested unto men in strict conformity with such conditions as have been

foreordained by Him Who is the All-Knowing, the All-Wise....**Should the Word be allowed to release suddenly all the energies latent within it, no man could sustain the weight of so mighty a Revelation.**" (Baha'u'llah cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, p. 117)

For the revelation of so great a favor a period of intense turmoil and wide-spread suffering would seem to be indispensable. Resplendent as has been the Age that has witnessed the inception of the Mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has been entrusted, **the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an unrepentant humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit.**

Into such a period we are now steadily and irresistibly moving. Amidst the shadows which are increasingly gathering about us we can faintly discern the glimmerings of Bahá'u'lláh's unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history. To us, the **"generation of the half-light,"** living at a time which may be designated as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of 169 which we can as yet but dimly recognize. We may well believe, we who are called upon to experience the operation of the dark forces destined to unloose a flood of agonizing afflictions, that the darkest hour that must precede the dawn of the Golden Age of our Faith has not yet struck. Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. Through the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh this New World Order may be said to have been conceived. We can, at the present moment, experience its stirrings in the womb of a travailing age -- an age waiting for the appointed hour at which it can cast its burden and yield its fairest fruit.

**"The whole earth," writes Bahá'u'lláh, "is now in a state of pregnancy. The day is approaching when it will have yielded its noblest fruits, when from it will have sprung forth the loftiest trees, the most enchanting blossoms, the most heavenly blessings. Immeasurably exalted is the breeze that wafteth from the garment of thy Lord, the Glorified! For lo, it hath breathed its fragrance and made all things new! Well is it with them that comprehend."** "The onrushing winds of the grace of God," He, in the *Suratu'l-Haykal*, proclaims, "have passed over all things. Every creature hath been endowed with all the potentialities it can carry. And yet the peoples of the world have denied this grace! Every tree hath been endowed with the choicest fruits, every ocean enriched with the most luminous gems. Man, himself, hath been invested with the gifts of understanding and knowledge. The whole creation hath been made the recipient of the revelation of the All-Merciful, and the earth the repository of things inscrutable to all except God, the Truth, the Knower of things unseen. The time is approaching when every created thing will have cast its burden. Glorified be God Who hath vouchsafed this grace that encompasseth all things, whether seen or unseen!"

"The Call of God," 'Abdu'l-Bahá has written, "when raised, breathed a new life into the body of mankind, and infused a new spirit into the whole creation. It is for this reason that the world hath been moved to its depths, and the hearts and consciences of men been quickened. Erelong the evidences of this regeneration will be revealed, and the fast asleep will be awakened." (Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Baha cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, pp. 168-169)

*'Abdu'l-Baha refers to this stage of maturity in one of His talks, which was cited frequently by the Guardian:*

All created things have their degree, or stage, of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit bearing. The maturity of a plant is the time of its blossoming and flower. The animal attains a stage of full growth and completeness, and in the human kingdom man reaches his maturity when the lights of intelligence have their greatest power and development.

Similarly, there are periods and stages in the life of the aggregate world of humanity, which at one time was passing through its degree of childhood, at another its time of youth but now has entered its long presaged period of maturity, the evidences of which are everywhere visible and apparent. Therefore, the requirements and conditions of former periods have changed and merged into exigencies which distinctly characterize the present age of the world of mankind. That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race could neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day and period of newness and consummation. Humanity has emerged from its former degrees of limitation and preliminary training. Man must now become imbued with new virtues and powers, new moralities, new capacities. New bounties, bestowals and perfections are awaiting and already descending upon him. **The gifts and graces of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of the world of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity. The playthings of childhood and infancy no longer satisfy or interest the adult mind.** (Abdu'l-Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 438-439; cited in Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day is Come*, pp. 118-119; Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, pp. 164-165)

*The age of maturity, the onset of adulthood in the Persian Bayan was eleven. According to Baha'u'llah, it is fifteen. We may conceive of ourselves as adolescents then, teenagers, and consider whether we are ready to assume the burden of adulthood at this age. Clearly we have rejected this burden, we want to continue to play, like children, we want to act like children and be cared for by others like children.*

Dearly-beloved friends: **Though the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh has been delivered, the World Order which such a Revelation must needs beget is as yet unborn.** Though the Heroic Age of His Faith is passed, the creative energies which that Age has released have not as yet crystallized into that world society which, in the fullness of time, is to mirror forth the brightness of His glory. Though the framework of His Administrative Order has been erected, and the Formative Period of the Bahá'í Era has begun, yet the promised Kingdom into which the seed of His institutions must ripen remains as yet uninaugurated. Though His Voice has been raised, and the ensigns of His Faith have been lifted up in no less than forty countries of both the East and the West, yet the wholeness of the human race is as yet unrecognized, its unity unproclaimed, and the standard of its Most Great Peace unhoisted.

"The heights," Bahá'u'lláh Himself testifies, "which, through the most gracious favor of God, mortal man can attain in this Day are as yet unrevealed to his sight. The world of being hath never had, nor doth it yet possess, the capacity for such a revelation. The day, however, is approaching when the potentialities of so great a favor will, by virtue of His behest, be manifested unto men."

For the revelation of so great a favor a period of intense turmoil and wide-spread suffering would seem to be indispensable. Resplendent as has been the Age that has witnessed the inception of the Mission with which Bahá'u'lláh has been entrusted, the interval which must elapse ere that Age yields its choicest fruit must, it is becoming increasingly apparent, be overshadowed by such moral and social gloom as can alone prepare an unrepentant humanity for the prize she is destined to inherit.

Into such a period we are now steadily and irresistibly moving. Amidst the shadows which are increasingly gathering about us we can faintly discern the glimmerings of Bahá'u'lláh's unearthly sovereignty appearing fitfully on the horizon of history. To us, the "**generation of the half-light**," living at a time which may be designated as the period of the incubation of the World Commonwealth envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, has been assigned a task whose high privilege we can never sufficiently appreciate, and the arduousness of which we can as yet but dimly recognize. We may well believe, we who are called upon to experience the operation of the dark forces destined to unloose a flood of agonizing afflictions, that the darkest hour that must precede the dawn of the Golden Age of our Faith has not yet struck. Deep as is the gloom that already encircles the world, the afflictive ordeals which that world is to suffer are still in preparation, nor can their blackness be as yet imagined. We stand on the threshold of an age whose convulsions proclaim alike the death-pangs of the old order and the birth-pangs of the new. Through the generating influence of the Faith announced by Bahá'u'lláh this New World Order may be said to have been conceived. We can, at the present moment, experience its stirrings in the womb of a travailing age -- an age waiting for the appointed hour at which it can cast its burden and yield its fairest fruit.

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*We are in our adolescence:*

His mission is to proclaim that **the ages of the infancy and of the childhood of the human race are past, that the convulsions associated with the present stage of its adolescence are slowly and painfully preparing it to attain the stage of manhood**, and are heralding the approach of that Age of Ages when swords will be beaten into plowshares, when the Kingdom promised by Jesus Christ will have been established, and the peace of the planet definitely and permanently ensured. Nor does Bahá'u'lláh claim finality for His own Revelation, but rather stipulates that a fuller measure of the truth He has been commissioned by the Almighty to vouchsafe to humanity, at so critical a juncture in its fortunes, must

needs be disclosed at future stages in the constant and limitless evolution of mankind. (Shoghi Effendi, Summary Statement - 1947, Special UN Committee on Palestine)

**The long ages of infancy and childhood, through which the human race had to pass, have receded into the background. Humanity is now experiencing the commotions invariably associated with the most turbulent stage of its evolution, the stage of adolescence, when the impetuosity of youth and its vehemence reach their climax, and must gradually be superseded by the calmness, the wisdom, and the maturity that characterize the stage of manhood. Then will the human race reach that stature of ripeness which will enable it to acquire all the powers and capacities upon which its ultimate development must depend.** (Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Baha'u'llah*, p. 202)

*We have no excuse however for despondency, for hopelessness, for abandonment of the ancient desire of humanity...for the Cycle of Fulfillment, the Cycle of Maturity, also called the Baha'i Cycle, which has just begun will last no less than a half million years:*

Be ye not seated and silent! Diffuse the glad-tidings of the Kingdom far and wide to the ears, promulgate the Word of God, and put into practice the advices and covenants of God; that is, arise ye with such qualities and attributes that ye may continually bestow life to the body of the world, and nurse the infants of the universe up to the station of maturity and perfection. Enkindle with all your might in every meeting the light of the love of God, gladden and cheer every heart with the utmost loving-kindness, show forth your love to the strangers just as you show forth to your relations. If a soul is seeking to quarrel, ask ye for reconciliation; if he blame you, praise him; if he give you a deadly poison, bestow ye an all-healing antidote; if he createth death, administer ye eternal life; if he becometh a thorn, change ye into roses and hyacinths. Perchance, through such deeds and words, this darkened world will become illuminated, this terrestrial universe will become transformed into a heavenly realm, and this satanic prison become a divine court; warfare and bloodshed be annihilated, and love and faithfulness hoist the tent of unity upon the apex of the world.

These are the results of the divine advices and exhortations, and the epitome of the teachings of the **Bahá'í Cycle**. (Abdu'l-Baha, *Baha'i World Faith - Abdu'l-Baha Section*, p. 353)

## **'Abdu'l-Baha on the postponement of the Golden Age**

### **Thousand Years Must Elapse – Examining a Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Baha**

Harry Liedtke

A Tablet by 'Abdu'l-Baha addresses the present debasement of Persia and its future glory. It was translated by Shoghi Effendi and included in a letter from the Guardian to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States. It was dated January 12, 1923. This is an extract from the Guardian's letter, followed by the full text of 'Abdu'l-Baha's Tablet:

An extract from the Guardian's letter:

"Only the other day, in the course of my study of various Baha'i documents[,] I came, as if by mere chance, across a very important message from our beloved 'Abdu'l-Baha, bearing no date, and revealing no sign as to exactly where, how and to whom it was given, written in the Master's own handwriting upon a leaflet that seemed ordinary and ill- preserved in appearance but which on close study proved of the profoundest interest to all believers in the East as well as in the West.

"As to the authenticity of these remarkable words, so clearly and forcibly written, there is no doubt whatsoever, and the measure of assurance it shall inspire the loved ones of Persia and the spirit of hopeful encouragement it shall breathe in the friends of the West, have urged me to communicate it to you, that, subject to your consideration and consent, it may be published amongst the friends and redouble their confidence in the very remarkable share the West is destined to contribute to the immediate spread of the Movement throughout the world. Recently, I have rendered it myself into English and enclosed is a copy of the full translation."

Here follows the Tablet of Abdu'l-Baha referred to in Shoghi Effendi's letter to the NSA of the United States dated 12 January 1923:

**"A thousand years must elapse before Persia can, by the aid of material power, rise to the height of the peoples and governments of Europe. Baha'u'llah, however, has illuminated that land and will surely raise her high in the eyes of all the world. That country shall so advance and develop as to excite the envy and admiration of the East and the West.**

**"The land of Hedjaz, though deserted and sterile in its soil and its tribes ignorant and barbarous, yet the power of the Cause of God has made of such a spot a Point of Adoration and the Focal-Centre of world devotion. How foolish are the people of the East to have incarcerated for well-nigh fifty years the like of this glorious personage! But for His chains and prison, Baha'u'llah by this time would have gained absolute ascendancy over the minds and thoughts of the peoples of Europe, would have made of Persia the Garden of Paradise, would have raised its sons in the esteem of mankind, nay He would have made it such that all peoples and governments would seek enlightenment from its people.**

**"Consider and reflect upon the result of my few days stay in London and the profound effect it has had here and in the surrounding regions. Ponder then in your heart, what the coming of Baha'u'llah would have achieved! Had He appeared in Europe, its people would have seized their opportunity, and His Cause, by virtue of the freedom of thought, would by this time have encompassed the earth. But alas! This Cause, though it first appeared in Persia, yet eventually it shall be seen how the peoples of Europe have wrestled it from its hands! Take note of this and remember it in future. Ultimately you shall see how it has come to pass. And yet behold! how the Baha'is are still persecuted by the people of Persia!"**

[Adib Masumian:] *The original Persian text of this Tablet has been published in *Kháṭirát-i-Ḥabīb*, vol. 1 (Bahá'í-Verlag, 1998), pp. 301-02: <https://bahai-library.com/bahailib/354.pdf#page=332>*

Here, then, are some observations about this Tablet by Harry Liedtke:

The reference to **"the Land of Hedjaz"** may require a brief explanation: Known as al-Hajaz or Hijaz, it is Saudi Arabia's desolate coastal desert region along the Red Sea in which the holy places of Mekka and Medina are situated.

Since everything authored by the Master, whether it was spoken or was in writing, is significant, it is a pity that the Guardian was unable to establish when 'Abdu'l-Baha wrote these observations.

However, the wording, especially the use of the word "here", suggests that He wrote this Tablet while He visited London, England. 'Abdu'l-Baha wrote:

**"Consider and reflect upon the result of my few days stay in London and the profound effect it has had here and in the surrounding regions."**

He must have pondered what a huge influence Baha'u'llah would have had on Western audiences had He been able to address them as He, 'Abdu'l-Baha, had just done. The vital point 'Abdu'l-Baha is making and which should be remembered when teaching the Faith, is:

**"His Cause, by virtue of the freedom of thought, would by this time have encompassed the earth."**

Freedom of thought which alone promotes an independent investigation of truth is a precondition for spreading the Cause of God. 'Abdu'l-Baha laments,

**"Alas! This Cause, though it first appeared in Persia, yet eventually it shall be seen how the peoples of Europe have wrestled it from its hands! Take note of this and remember it in future. Ultimately you shall see how it has come to pass."**

Equally significant is His prophecy that

**"A thousand years must elapse before Persia can, by the aid of material power, rise to the height of the peoples and governments of Europe."**

Here one notices three things: He refers in the same breath to "**peoples and governments**," clearly implying that it is the people who shape their governments. He then asserts that progress will be achieved "**by the aid of material power**," meaning by science and technology. It reminds us of the bird of humanity which can only fly using both wings, the wing of religion and that of science. Religious fervor alone will not establish the Kingdom of God on Earth.

Elsewhere in His writings 'Abdu'l-Baha has referred to science as "**the first emanation of God towards man**" and "**the means by which man finds a pathway to God.**" His warning that a thousand years will pass "**before Persia can....rise to the height of the peoples and governments of Europe**" seems to indicate that Persia's deeply entrenched opposition to the Cause of God and to the spiritual renewal it alone can bring the world, places a severe handicap on the country's future development. The great irony is that as a result of the persecution of the Baha'i Faith in Iran, the new powers this Faith has released for humanity are least reflected in the land of its origin. The fact that spiritual enlightenment is withheld from the persecutors seems confirmed by the following passage found in the Koran:

“O ye who believe! make not your alms void by reproaches and injury, like him who spendeth his substance to be seen of men, and believeth not in God and in the latter day. The likeness of such an one is that of a rock with a thin soil upon it, on which a heavy rain falleth but leaveth it hard: No profit from their works shall they be able to gain; for God guideth not the unbelieving people.” (The Qur’an (Rodwell translation), Sura 2)

Unwelcome as some of these thoughts may be, a slow and protracted development of humanity which the Tablet seems to be alluding to, corresponds entirely with pilgrim’s notes that were taken in Haifa by Mr. William Allison in 1957. He was the last pilgrim before the Guardian traveled to London where he passed away in November of that year. The notes can be found in the Baha’i Library On-Line ([https://bahai-library.com/allison\\_pilgrims\\_notes](https://bahai-library.com/allison_pilgrims_notes)).

The passage that records the Guardian’s explanation seems to run exactly parallel to ‘Abdu’l-Baha’s mention of a period of one thousand years. It reads:

**“...Now the Baha’is are in the formative phase of establishing the administrative order of the „Plan“.....Near the end of the formative period the nations will unite of their own volition and with a non-concomitant expansion of the Cause become merged into the fabric of the World Order of Baha’u’llah. There will be another Manifestation before this will happen...”**

One would have to assume that neither Iran nor any other nation would be left out when the nations of the world eventually “will unite of their own volition.” But we are also told in the Baha’i Writings that “another Manifestation” will not appear before the lapse of at least one thousand years counted from the time Baha’u’llah had the first intimation of His Mission in Teheran’s Siyah Chal dungeon in 1852.

### **Sources of the Pilgrim Notes that Harry Liedtke cites above:**

*William Allison*

[https://bahai-library.com/allison\\_pilgrims\\_notes](https://bahai-library.com/allison_pilgrims_notes)

(William and Thelma W. Allison, pilgrim notes, 1957)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILXDyCota0A&ab\\_channel=AIB](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILXDyCota0A&ab_channel=AIB)

 [Bill Allison speaks on the Baha’i Faith at the interfaith gathering on 4/29/2018](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWuPWQ5XIS0&ab_channel=irajkhodadoost)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWuPWQ5XIS0&ab\\_channel=irajkhodadoost](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWuPWQ5XIS0&ab_channel=irajkhodadoost)

### **Pilgrim Notes:**

One evening the Beloved Guardian envisioned the future World Order of Bahá’u’lláh in terms that are difficult to forget. He began by saying that the Bab had announced the "Plan". Bahá’u’lláh established the laws of the "Plan". Abdu’l-Bahá laid out the "blueprint" for the erection. Now the Bahá’is are in the formative phase of establishing the administrative order of the "Plan". He pointed to the establishment of the Divine "Arc" of Salvation being likened to the "Arc" which the Bahá’is are erecting on Mount Carmel with the Shrine of the Bab, the Archives Building, the House of Justice and the Temple. Outside

of this arc the Bahá'ís are carrying out this plan by their widespread teaching activities which is part of this "Arc of Salvation". Near the end of the formative period the nations will unite of their own volition and with the non-committant [sic] expansion of the Cause become merged into the fabric of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. There will be another Manifestation before this will happen. (pp. 2-3)

## **Baha'u'llah on when the Cause of God will become universal**

*There is no Tablet of Baha'u'llah in which He gives a date for the occurrence of the calamity that will precede the establishment of His World Order. However, there is the answer He gave to Mirza 'Ali Muhammad, known as Varqa (1856-1896), a Baha'i traveling teacher in Adhirbayjan who made his home and raised four sons in Tabriz. Around 1891 he went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land with his two elder sons, 'Azíz'ulláh and Rúhu'lláh. He may have asked a question that was answered by Baha'u'llah in this account. (<https://bahaipeida.org/Varq%C3%A1>)*

### **Provisional translation by Nima Rafiei:**

Varqá inquired of the Blessed Beauty by what means the cause of God would become universal. He responded: **'The riches of the earth عالم دول will increase در ازدیاد until they become the instruments of hellish fire آلات ناریه, to the extent they become like a venomous serpent ثعبان. They will attack each other and shed much blood. The leaders of thought among the nations ملل جمع عقلاى will then gather to investigate the reason for this and realize the source علت خونریزی is prejudice تعصبات است, the worst kind being 'religious' است همه تعصب دینی است above all others. They will attempt to do away with religion all together سعی میکنند تا دین تعصب هم که فرع دین است [فرع] to religion است که بشر بدون دین نمیتواند. They will then realize that man cannot truly live without religion که بشر بدون دین نمیتواند. For this reason, they will compile and collect all را جمع مطالعه of the teachings/principles از زندگی کند لهذا تعالیم of the current religions ادیان موجوده in order to determine which one of the religions is compatible with the exigencies of the age. میکنند تا ببینند کدامیک از ادیان منطبق با مقتضیات زمان است. At that time, the cause of God will become universal. آنگاه امرالله عالمگیر میشود.**

(Translation by Nima Rafiei ([nrafiei@gmail.com](mailto:nrafiei@gmail.com)), edited by PTT, from [tarjuman@bahai-library.com](mailto:tarjuman@bahai-library.com))

### **Provisional translation by Joshua Hall (1 December 2021):**

**The countries of the world will continue to increase their armaments, those instruments of hellish fire, until each becomes like a hissing serpent. These countries shall vie one with another and commit many acts of bloodshed. The learned people of the world, having assembled, will investigate the cause [of this bloodshed] and discover that it is from fanaticism, in its diverse expressions, that such violence and unrest proceeds. Finding likewise that the most severe fanaticism is that of religious zealotry, the learned will strive to stamp out religion itself, so that such fanaticism, which stems from religion, might also disappear. In time, however, it will become clear that, without religion, humankind cannot exist. [When this occurs] The learned will therefore collect and study the teachings of [the] existing religions to determine which of them is most suited for the exigencies of the time. It is at this point that the Cause of God [the Baha'i Faith] shall embrace the world [shall be embraced throughout the world].**

(Original text: file:///C:/Users/Owner/Videos/sulaymani\_masabih-i-hidayat\_vol\_1-2nd-edition.pdf  
(Afnan Library) Mas.aabeeh-i-Hedaayat, Volume 1, page 263

### **Similar texts that are already published in English translation:**

Compose your differences, and reduce your armaments, that the burden of your expenditures may be lightened, and that your minds and hearts may be tranquillized. Heal the dissensions that divide you, and ye will no longer be in need of any armaments except what the protection of your cities and territories demandeth. Fear ye God, and take heed not to outstrip the bounds of moderation, and be numbered among the extravagant.

We have learned that you are increasing your outlay every year, and are laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is more than they can bear, and is a grievous injustice. Decide justly between men, and be ye the emblems of justice amongst them. This, if ye judge fairly, is the thing that behoveth you, and beseemeth your station. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXVII, pp. 250-251)

O kings of the earth! We see you increasing every year your expenditures, and laying the burden thereof on your subjects. This, verily, is wholly and grossly unjust. Fear the sighs and tears of this wronged One, and lay not excessive burdens on your peoples. Do not rob them to rear palaces for yourselves; nay rather choose for them that which ye choose for yourselves. Thus We unfold to your eyes that which profiteth you, if ye but perceive. Your people are your treasures. Beware lest your rule violate the commandments of God, and ye deliver your wards to the hands of the robber. By them ye rule, by their means ye subsist, by their aid ye conquer. Yet, how disdainfully ye look upon them! How strange, how very strange!

Now that ye have refused the Most Great Peace, hold ye fast unto this, the Lesser Peace, that haply ye may in some degree better your own condition and that of your dependents.

O rulers of the earth! Be reconciled among yourselves, that ye may need no more armaments save in a measure to safeguard your territories and dominions. Beware lest ye disregard the counsel of the All-Knowing, the Faithful. (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, CXIX, pp. 253-254)

The peoples of Europe have not advanced to the higher planes of moral civilization, as their opinions and behavior clearly demonstrate. Notice, for example, how the supreme desire of European governments and peoples today is to conquer and crush one another, and how, while harboring the greatest secret repulsion, they spend their time exchanging expressions of neighborly affection, friendship and harmony.

There is the well-known case of the ruler who is fostering peace and tranquillity and at the same time devoting more energy than the warmongers to the accumulation of weapons and the building up of a larger army, on the grounds that peace and harmony can only be brought about by force. Peace is the pretext, and night and day they are all straining every nerve to pile up more weapons of war, and to pay for this their wretched people must sacrifice most of whatever they are able to earn by their sweat and toil. How many thousands have given up their work in useful industries and are laboring day and night to produce new and deadlier weapons which would spill out the blood of the race more copiously than before.

Each day they invent a new bomb or explosive and then the governments must abandon their obsolete arms and begin producing the new, since the old weapons cannot hold their own against the new. For example at this writing, in the year 1292 A.H.[1875] they have invented a new rifle in Germany and a bronze cannon in Austria, which have greater firepower than the Martini-Henry rifle and the Krupp cannon, are more rapid in their effects and more efficient in annihilating humankind. The staggering cost of it all must be borne by the hapless masses. (Abdu'l-Baha, The Secret of Divine Civilization, pp. 61-62)

Observe that if such a happy situation be forthcoming, no government would need continually to pile up the weapons of war, nor feel itself obliged to produce ever new military weapons with which to conquer the human race. A small force for the purposes of internal security, the correction of criminal and disorderly elements and the prevention of local disturbances, would be required -- no more. In this way the entire population would, first of all, be relieved of the crushing burden of expenditure currently imposed for military purposes, and secondly, great numbers of people would cease to devote their time to the continual devising of new weapons of destruction -- those testimonials of greed and bloodthirstiness, so inconsistent with the gift of life -- and would instead bend

their efforts to the production of whatever will foster human existence and peace and well-being, and would become the cause of universal development and prosperity. Then every nation on earth will reign in honor, and every people will be cradled in tranquillity and content. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*, pp. 65-66)

The greatest catastrophe in the world of humanity today is war. Europe is a storehouse of explosives awaiting a spark. All the European nations are on edge, and a single flame will set on fire the whole of that continent. Implements of war and death are multiplied and increased to an inconceivable degree, and the burden of military maintenance is taxing the various countries beyond the point of endurance. Armies and navies devour the substance and possessions of the people; the toiling poor, the innocent and helpless are forced by taxation to provide munitions and armament for governments bent upon conquest of territory and defense against powerful rival nations. There is no greater or more woeful ordeal in the world of humanity today than impending war. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Talk on 5 September 1912*, in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 317)

The Great Being saith: O ye children of men! The fundamental purpose animating the Faith of God and His Religion is to safeguard the interests and promote the unity of the human race, and to foster the spirit of love and fellowship amongst men. Suffer it not to become a source of dissension and discord, of hate and enmity. This is the straight Path, the fixed and immovable foundation. Whatsoever is raised on this foundation, the changes and chances of the world can never impair its strength, nor will the revolution of countless centuries undermine its structure. **Our hope is that the world's religious leaders and the rulers thereof will unitedly arise for the reformation of this age and the rehabilitation of its fortunes. Let them, after meditating on its needs, take counsel together and, through anxious and full deliberation, administer to a diseased and sorely-afflicted world the remedy it requireth....** It is incumbent upon them who are in authority to exercise moderation in all things. Whatsoever passeth beyond the limits of moderation will cease to exert a beneficial influence. Consider for instance such things as liberty, civilization and the like. However much men of understanding may favorably regard them, they will, if carried to excess, exercise a pernicious influence upon men.... Please God, the peoples of the world may be led, as the result of the high endeavors exerted by their rulers and the wise and learned amongst men, to recognize their best interests. How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society?... The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective. I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth, may grant that the end of their conduct may be profitable unto them, and aid them to accomplish that which becometh their station. (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CX, pp. 215-217)

We are considering the divine plan for the reconciliation of the religious systems of the world. Bahá'u'lláh has said that if one intelligent member be selected from each of the varying religious systems, and these representatives come together seeking to investigate the reality of religion, they would establish an interreligious body before which all disputes and differences of belief could be presented for consideration and settlement. Such questions [234] could then be weighed and viewed from the standpoint of reality and all imitations be discarded. By this method and procedure all sects, denominations and systems would become one. (‘Abdu’l-Baha, *Talk on 14 July 1912*, in *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 233-234)

The Book of God is wide open, and His Word is summoning mankind unto Him. No more than a mere handful, however, hath been found willing to cleave to His Cause, or to become the instruments for its promotion. These few have been endued with the Divine Elixir that can, alone, transmute into purest gold the dross of the world, and have been empowered to administer the infallible remedy for all the ills that afflict the children of men. No man can obtain everlasting life, unless he embraceth the truth of this inestimable, this wondrous, and sublime Revelation. (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, XCII, p. 183)

That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error. (Baha'u'llah, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, CXX, p. 255)

## Duration of the Baha'i Cycle

“Erelong you will hear the call of the clamorous impostor, don't pay attention to him, but leave him to himself. Set your faces toward Him Who is the Object (the Qiblih) of the adoration of all mankind, who has fulfilled the proof with this Proof that is revealed through the power of truth (God, al-Haqq). **The Lights have attained their consummation in this source (horizon) whence the splendor of (the) Might and (the) Grandeur is diffused.** Blessed is the soul that hath been brought up as the servant with respect to God in that which has been sent down in the Scrolls and the Tablets. Say: If in each day another one is manifested, the cause of God will not find rest in the cities and the lands. **This is the Revelation (Manifestation) that manifests itself (His own Self) every 500,000 years time only once.** Moreover, we unveiled the cover and we lifted the veil. Blessed is the man that recognized ('arif) the purpose of God. In his recognition ('irafah) has rejoiced in his heart and been made firm in the cause such that he cannot be made to stumble by the entire creation. Verily We unveiled in this Tablet a secret wrapt in secrets. This Revelation We have concealed that which is the Hidden lest the tumult of the wicked rise.” (Provisional translation of Baha'u'llah, Ma'idih Asmani, volume 8)

*Verse by verse in the Persian original and provisional English translation:*

مآئده آسمانی - جلد ۸

صفحات موسسه ملی مطبوعات امری - ایران ۱۲۹ بدیع: ناشر حضرت بهاءالله: صاحب اثر: ۲۰۷

\_ مطلب بیست و ششم

Topic Twenty Six

: بناعقین نباید توجه کرد قوله تعالی

One should not pay attention to the enemies, He saith, exalted be He:

سوف تسمعون ندا ناعق لا تلتفتوا الیه دعوه بنفسه

Erelong you will hear the call of the clamorous impostor, don't pay attention unto him, but leave him to himself

مقبلین الی قبله الافاق قد تمت الحجة بهذه الحجة التي ظهرت بالحق

Set your faces toward Him Who is the Object (the Qiblih) of the adoration of all mankind, who has filled the Proof with this Proof that is revealed through the power of truth (God, al-Haqq)

و انتهت الانوار الی هذا الافق الذي منه اشرفت شمس العظمة و الاقتدار

The Lights have attained their consummation in this source (horizon) whence the splendor of (the) Might and (the) Grandeur is diffused.

طوبی لنفس تربي العباد بحدود الله التي نزلت في الزبر و الالواح

Blessed is the soul that hath been brought up as the servant with respect to God in that

Which has been sent down in the Scrolls and the Tablets.

\_قل لو يظهر في كل يوم احد لا يستقر امر الله في المدن و البلاد

Say: If in each day another is manifested, the cause of God will not find rest in the cities and the lands.

هذا لظهور يظهر نفسه في كل خمسمائه الف سنة مرة

This is the Revelation that manifests itself once every 500,000 years time, only once.

واحدة كذلك كشفنا القناع و ارفعنا الاحجاب

Only once, furthermore, we unveiled (kashfana) the cover and lifted the veil.

طوبى لمن عرف مراد الله من عرفه بفرح قلبه

Blessed is the man that recognized ('arif) the purpose of God, in recognition ('irafah) rejoiced in his heart, and

و يستقيم علي الامر علي شان لايزله من في الابداع

been made firm in the cause such that he cannot be made to stumble by the entire creation.

قد كشفنا في هذا اللوح سرا من اسرار

هذا الظهور و سترنا ما هو المكنون لنلا ترتفع ضوضا الفجار

Verily We unveiled (kashfana) in this Tablet a secret wrapt in secrets.

This Revelation We have concealed that which is the Hidden, lest the tumult of the wicked rise.

Here is the Tablet of 'Abdu'l Baha stating that 1,000 years and 500,000 years are approximations:

<http://reference.bahai.org/fa/t/ab/SWA4/swa4-198.html>

(Note: I have not verified the contents of this Tablet.)

According to 'Abdu'l-Baha by every day of above mentioned Alf Sanih [thousand years duration of the Baha'i Dispensation] may become a thousand years:

Ishraq-i-Khavari. Ma'idih Asmani. Second volume, chapter 67, p. 84

(Note: I have not verified the contents of this Tablet. If we count every day of a thousand years, there are 365,000 days. If each day was to be a thousand years in length, the next Manifestation could come 365,000,000 years in the future. I think this text is either unauthentic or erroneously translated. If the Dispensation of Baha'u'llah could last 365,000,000 years, why would it be a subset of the Cycle of Baha'u'llah, which is 500,000 years!)

As a further testimony to the greatness of the Revelation identified with Bahá'u'lláh may be cited the following extracts from a Tablet addressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to an eminent Zoroastrian follower of the Faith: "**Thou hadst written that in the sacred books of the followers of Zoroaster it is written that in the**

latter days, in three separate Dispensations, the sun must needs be brought to a standstill. In the first Dispensation, it is predicted, the sun will remain motionless for ten days; in the second for twice that time; in the third for no less than one whole month. The interpretation of this prophecy is this: the first Dispensation to which it refers is the Muhammadan Dispensation during which the Sun of Truth stood still for ten days. Each day is reckoned as one century. The Muhammadan Dispensation must have, therefore, lasted no less than one thousand years, which is precisely the period that has elapsed from the setting of the Star of the Imamate to the advent of the Dispensation proclaimed by the Báb. The second Dispensation referred to in this prophecy is the one inaugurated by the Báb Himself, which began in the year 1260 A.H. and was brought to a close in the year 1280 A.H. As to the third Dispensation -- the Revelation proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh -- inasmuch as the Sun of Truth when attaining that station shineth in the plenitude of its meridian splendor its duration hath been fixed for a period of one whole month, which is the maximum time taken by the sun to pass through a sign of the Zodiac. From this thou canst imagine the magnitude of the Bahá'í cycle -- a cycle that must extend over a period of at least five hundred thousand years." (Abdu'l-Baha, Tablet to a Zoroastrian Baha'i, in Shoghi Effendi, The World Order of Bahá'u'llah, pp. 101-102)

**Our Exalted Lord said that a great Manifestation appears on the earth every 500,000 years. The difference between a great Manifestation and a lesser One, is as that between the sun and the planets.** The 7th "day" of Genesis, 1st chapter[1], refers to the Great Manifestation. (Pilgrim Notes from 'Abdu'l-Baha, dated 10 August 1900; in Prayers, Tablets, Instructions and Miscellany, Gathered by American Visitors<sup>1</sup> to the Holy City During the Summer of 1900, published by Adair Press, Chicago, 1900<sup>2</sup>) [1] **1Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.**

**Thus ended a life which posterity will recognize as standing at the confluence of two universal prophetic cycles, the Adamic Cycle stretching back as far as the first dawns of the world's recorded religious history and the Bahá'í Cycle destined to propel itself across the unborn reaches of time for a period of no less than five thousand centuries.** (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 1944, pp. 54-55)

Gathered within the walls of its national Shrine -- the most sacred Temple ever to be reared to the glory of Bahá'u'lláh; commemorating at once the centenary of **the birth of the Bábí Dispensation, of the inauguration of the Bahá'í era, of the inception of the Bahá'í Cycle** and of the birth of 'Abdu'l-Bahá... (Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, 1944, pp. 400-401)

The Bahá'í Faith revolves around three central Figures, the first of whom was a youth, a native of Shiraz, named Mirza Ali-Muhammad, known as the Báb (Gate), who in May, 1844, at the age of twenty-five, advanced the claim of being the Herald Who, according to the sacred Scriptures of previous

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<sup>1</sup>Edward and Lua Getsinger, Arthur and Elizabeth Dodge and William and Anna Hoar

<sup>2</sup><https://www.h-net.org/~bahai/diglib/books/P-T/P/PTIM/PTIM.htm>

Dispensations, must needs announce and prepare the way for the advent of One greater than Himself, **Whose mission would be according to those same Scriptures, to inaugurate an era of righteousness and peace, an era that would be hailed as the consummation of all previous Dispensations, and initiate a new cycle in the religious history of mankind.** (Shoghi Effendi, Summary Statement - 1947, Special UN Committee on Palestine)

Moved to share with assembled representatives of American Bahá'í Community gathered beneath the dome of the Most Holy House of Worship in the Bahá'í world, feelings of profound emotion evoked by this historic occasion of the world-wide commemoration of the First Centenary of the Martyrdom of the **Blessed Báb, Prophet and Herald of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle, Inaugurator of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle.** (Shoghi Effendi, Letter dated July 4, 1950, in Citadel of Faith, p. 80)

This final and crowning stage in the evolution of the plan wrought by God Himself for humanity will, in turn, prove to be the signal for **the birth of a world civilization, incomparable in its range, its character and potency, in the history of mankind -- a civilization which posterity will, with one voice, acclaim as the fairest fruit of the Golden Age of the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh, and whose rich 156 harvest will be garnered during future dispensations destined to succeed one another in the course of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle.** (Shoghi Effendi, Letter dated May 4, 1953, in Messages to the Bahá'í World - 1950-1957, pp. 155-156)

Fervently supplicating at the Holy Threshold for an unprecedented measure of blessings on this vital and indispensable organ of the embryonic and steadily unfolding **Bahá'í Administrative 60 Order, presaging the emergence of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh which must pave the way for the establishment of the World Civilization destined to attain maturity in the course of successive Dispensations in the Five Thousand Century Bahá'í Cycle.** (Cablegram dated April 6, 1954, in Shoghi Effendi, Messages to the Bahá'í World - 1950-1957, pp. 59-60)

This vast and irresistible process, unexampled in the spiritual history of mankind, and which will synchronize with two no less significant developments -- the establishment of the Lesser Peace and the evolution of Bahá'í national and local institutions -- the one outside and the other within the Bahá'í world -- will attain its final consummation, in the Golden Age of the Faith, through **the raising of the standard of the Most Great Peace, and the emergence, in the plenitude of its power and glory, of the focal Center of the agencies constituting the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The final establishment of this seat of the future Bahá'í World Commonwealth will signalize at once the proclamation of the sovereignty of the Founder of our Faith and the advent of the Kingdom of the Father repeatedly lauded and promised by Jesus Christ.**

**This World Order will, in turn, in the course of successive Dispensations of the Bahá'í Cycle, yield its fairest fruit through the birth and flowering of a civilization, divinely inspired, unique in its features, world-embracing in its scope, and fundamentally spiritual in its character -- a civilization destined as it unfolds to derive its initial impulse from the spirit animating the very institutions which, in their embryonic state, are now stirring in the womb of the present Formative Age of the Faith.** (Shoghi Effendi, Letter dated November 27, 1954, in Messages to the Bahá'í World - 1950-1957, pp. 74-75)

Regarding your questions: There is no record in history, or in the teachings, of a Prophet similar in Station to Bahá'u'lláh, having lived 500,000 years ago. **There will, however, be one similar to Him in greatness after the lapse of 500,000 years, but we cannot say definitely that His Revelation will be inter-planetary in scope.** We can only say that such a thing may be possible. What Bahá'u'lláh means by His appearance in 'other worlds' He has not defined, as we could not visualize them in our present state, hence He was indefinite, and we cannot say whether He meant other planets or not..." (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer, December 24, 1941; in Lights of Guidance, #1955, p. 472)

Concerning your question relative to the duration of the Bahá'í Dispensation. **There is no contradiction between Bahá'u'lláh's statement in the Íqán about the renewal of the City of God once every 1000 years, and that of the Guardian in the 'Dispensation' to the effect that the Bahá'í cycle will extend over a period of at least 500,000 years. The apparent contradictions is due to the confusion of the terms cycle and dispensation. For while the Dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh will last for at least one thousand years, His cycle will extend still farther to at least 500,000.** (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, November 14, 1935; in Bahá'í News. No. 102. August 1936, pp. 2-3; Directives from the Guardian, #21, p. 7; Lights of Guidance, #1565, pp. 474-475)

**'Abdu'l-Bahá has given no explanation regarding the 500,000 year period of the Bahá'í cycle.** Individual believers are free to work out for themselves the explanation they desire, so long as they do not impose their views on others. (From letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer, July 10, 1939; in Lights of Guidance, #1566, p. 475)

**The Bahá'í cycle is, indeed, incomparable in its greatness. It includes not only the Prophets that will appear after Bahá'u'lláh, but all those who have preceded Him ever since Adam. These should, indeed, be viewed as constituting but preliminary 8 stages leading gradually to the appearance of this supreme Manifestation of God.** (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, in Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, #21, pp. 7-8)

**After Bahá'u'lláh many Prophets will, no doubt, appear but they will be under His Shadow.** Although they may abrogate the laws of this Dispensation in accordance with the needs and requirements of the age in which they appear, they nevertheless draw their spiritual force from this mighty Revelation. **The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh constitutes, indeed, the stage of maturity in the development of mankind.** His appearance has released such spiritual forces which will continue to animate, for many long years to come, the world in its development. **Whatever progress may be achieved, in later ages, after the unification of the 62 whole human race is achieved, will be but improvement in the machinery of the world. For the machinery itself has been already created by Bahá'u'lláh. The task of continually improving and perfecting this machinery is one which later Prophets will be called upon to achieve. They will thus move and work within the orbit of the Bahá'í Cycle.** (From a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, in Shoghi Effendi, Directives from the Guardian, #164, pp. 61-62)