

"The world has ~~never~~ now become
too dangerous for anything less
than Utopia." J.R. Platt, physicist

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TWO WORLDS

PREFACE

As the Baha'i Faith stands for an equitable world economy, world justice and world peace, one may justly wonder why this promising new religion has not grown more rapidly. This book tries to give an answer while dealing with two worlds running parallel to each other. The non-Baha'i world, following its uncertain collision course, propelled by its own momentum in history; and the Baha'i world, as yet hardly noticed by the world's news media, with a chartered course, projecting into a distant and certain future.

While these two worlds are far apart, they follow parallel lines which bring them much closer than would appear at first sight. The non-Baha'i world has absorbed many Baha'i principles, unconscious of its source, moving unwittingly, though precariously, towards one world. The Baha'i world, on the other hand, shedding painfully and hesitantly its un-Baha'i inheritance, is constructing a world order, as yet in an embryonic form, visible in outline only, with an assurance which only Faith in Divine Providence can give.

The first chapter, based on Toynbee's "Study of History", reveals that the history of the rise and fall of civilizations can be meaningful only if we bring God into the picture. He foresees the inevitable political unification of the world, probably by force, but this will only pave the way for a new "higher religion", which, according to Toynbee, could be the Baha'i Faith.

The second chapter deals with the movements of the Left, which have embraced already more than half of the population of this earth, and in the process have split the non-Baha'i world in two. These radical movements are playing a far-reaching role in history, and as we shall see, are complimentary to Baha'i effort.

The next chapter, drawing on the writer's nineteen years experience in Africa and Latin America, looks at the Third World and gives some indications as to how it could become part of one world.

The fourth chapter describes some of the other religions and quasi-religions, which fill a need as long as the two worlds remain apart, including a short visit to Red China.

The fifth chapter makes a projection for the remainder of this century, with predictable observations as to the outcome of the shrinking of the world's food

supply. It also foreshadows a possible worldwide oppression, with further loss of human rights, which may envelope both the Baha'i and non-Baha'i world.

The sixth and seventh chapters analyze the basic difference between the two worlds. In the non-Baha'i world past religious teachings developed in the individual a moral conscience, to distinguish right from wrong, while the state remained immoral and without a guiding conscience. In the Baha'i world a new dimension in our moral and spiritual experience is being developed, namely a collective conscience, which should not be confused with social conscience, and which did not exist up to now. The seventh chapter, the kernel of this book, attempts to explain the crowning creation of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i Faith, which, as far as we can see into the future, is the only long-range basis for an equitable and just world economy and an enduring peace.

The final chapters go back to the individual and aim to make God intelligible and acceptable to non-believers. The Seven Valleys of Baha'u'llah is used to illustrate the struggle of the human soul from the known to the unknown world. As a corollary it maintains that Faith in a Mediator between man and God is as necessary now as it was in the past.

BAHA'I IN HISTORY

When someone hears the name Baha'i for the first time and asks: 'What is a Baha'i?' one can answer: 'It is the religion of the future.' This is quite a statement and also sounds dogmatic, unless one has read Arnold J. Toynbee's monumental ten volumes "The Study of History."

This chapter will try to show how Toynbee comes to the conclusion that the Baha'i Faith could become the religion of an inevitable future world civilization.

When Toynbee's "Study" was published, "TIME" described it as "the most provocative work since Marx's Capital," and Clifton Fadiman had this to say: "Of all the books published so far in this century "Study of History" is most assured to be read a hundred years from now." When in 1947 two hundred thousand copies of the first six volumes were sold in an abridged edition, publishing history was made, for it is not an easy book to read. While Toynbee's erudition and fame were at first unquestioned, his startling conclusion that history without God and religion is unintelligible, substantiating the Baha'i dictum: "Religion has been the basis of all civilization and progress in the history of mankind",⁽¹⁾ Toynbee was severely criticised by some of his colleagues. This should not surprise us coming from quarters where the existence of God and the usefulness of religion are doubted, if not denied.

Toynbee made it his lifework to study how civilizations are born, and what makes them die.

1. Abdu'l-Baha, "Baha'i World Faith" p. 270, Wilmette 1971

Reflecting on this subject he decided that history cannot be written within the framework of nations. From a historian's point of view, according to Toynbee, civilization is "the smallest intelligible field of study." Civilization is defined as a system of relationships between individuals in a given society at a given time in history. It is now accepted that before Toynbee the writing of history was nation-centered, just as before Copernicus our concept of the universe was earth-centered.

Toynbee lists twenty-one civilizations since the beginning of recorded history, of which only five are extant, and of these our own Western civilization is the most alive, though it too breathes very heavily.

THE GENESIS OF CIVILIZATION

Next he asks what happened six thousand years ago, when the first primitive people changed their way of life and entered the uphill process of civilization? According to anthropological findings primitive man has lived on this earth for about three million years. Then, only six thousand years ago, something unexpected happened. Civilization arose, one after another, twenty-one of them, in the small span of the last six thousand years. What made these primitive people change so abruptly, who were essentially static, to become dynamic and thus civilized?

Why was it that for millions of years we have no record of any civilization, and then suddenly only six thousand years ago the Egyptian civilization appeared, followed by twenty

others at short intervals? If we can explain what caused this change, we should be able to foretell if our own Western civilization is to survive or fall, and why.

Toynbee first inquired whether this development has had anything to do with heredity or race. An investigation found eleven civilizations tied to the Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean races and ten to the Brown, Yellow and Red races, almost evenly distributed. The possibility of a superior race, therefore, had to be dismissed.

The next investigation involved environment, whether climate or geographical location could pinpoint the cause of change from primitive, static people to dynamic civilizations? Here again Toynbee finds that while the Nile valley produced a great civilization the valley of Rio Grande, in similar conditions, did not produce a civilization. The great Sumerian civilization on the Tigris has no counterpart on the Mississippi. Why did the people on the Yellow river arise to a great civilization and not those on the Orinoco, Amazon or the Danube? Why did the jungles of Yucatan and the Andes of the Incas produce great civilizations and not the jungles of Africa or the Rocky Mountains? As a consequence Toynbee dismisses environment also as a determining factor in giving birth to civilizations.

Challenge and Response

Analyzing the genesis of the first known civilization, the Egyptian, Toynbee discovers the following: While great parts of Europe were covered by the Ice Age, Northern Africa was an idyllic savannah with grazing herds and happy hunters. When the

ice receded the rains stopped, the green pastures turned into the desert of Northern Sahara and all wild life died or fled south, following the rains. The people left behind had three options. One group followed the herds south and remained hunters in the rain forests of the Sudan for the next six thousand years. The second group remained as nomads, wandering from oasis to oasis, eking out a precarious living during the following six millenniums. The third group proceeded to the swamp and crocodile infested, uninhabited valley of the Nile, built dams, dried out the swamps, and changed their way of life by cultivating the land and domesticating animals. By responding to the challenge to change their life style and habitat they generated a dynamism which lifted them into the process of civilization.

Thus Toynbee developed his famous theory of Challenge and response, which explains the rise and fall of civilizations. There are many examples in history. The challenge or stimulus of the Persian wars found its response in the Periclean age. The stimulus of penalization of the Roman slaves found its answer in an astonishing religious penetration, which was the beginning of Western Christendom. Early missionaries responded to the hard environment of the forests of western Russia by creating the Orthodox Christian civilization. A successful response to a stimulus leads to a new challenge, and if a society responds successfully, it will be challenged again and again. If, however, a civilization fails to respond to a challenge it signifies the beginning of its breakdown. Continued failure to respond brings about its inevitable disintegration.

The challenge of our western ~~mark~~ civilization is to unify the world, which we shall discuss later.

But why do some societies respond to stimuli and others not? Why did David defeat Goliath, and the untried, inexperienced Japanese the mighty Imperial Russian Army and Navy in 1904? Why does one football team win rather than the other, though both may be equally qualified? Toynbee finds the answer in the spirit of man, an unknown quantity, which cannot be estimated nor measured by science.

Thus we find the genesis of civilization in the world of the unknown, the world of God, hence Toynbee brings religion back into history.

Some civilizations remained arrested, like the Polynesians, Eskimo and the Nomads. Due to difficulties of environment and the hardship of survival they were too exhausted for any other response than just to hold their own. The spirit in them and the will to live was sufficient to prevent disintegration, but was not strong enough for a forward thrust. This does not exclude the possibility of further advance if and when these arrested civilizations are faced with a new kind of challenge in a new situation.

would-be Saviors

We now have to establish the relationship between civilizations and individuals, for the source of action is never society itself but always an individual or a creative minority. When a civilization is in the process of disinteg-

ration, like ours, the creative spark is still available and some individuals arise to play the part of a savior. Toynbee lists four types of would-be saviors:

1/. The archaists appeal to the conservatives, who, like Churchill, want to preserve or reconstruct the glories of the past. They will hold on tenaciously and fight for the status quo.

2/. The futurists (not to be confused with futurologists) appeal to the revolutionary, the radical, who, like Lenin or Mao, leap into an imagined future, scrap the past, and regardless of cost build a new society.

3/. The saviors through detachment appeal to the intellectuals, who, like Plato or H.G. Wells or many scientist or philosopher, presents a blueprint for the future with the detached attitude; "take it, or leave it," and then withdraw.

4/. The savior through transfiguration appeals to the soul of men, who, like Moses, Christ, Buddha or Muhammad, are other worldly. They also present a plan, but do not withdraw. They transfigure men through a new faith, and have a following. They make society dynamic again.

The first two, the archaists and futurists, use force; the last two, the saviors through detachment and transfiguration are gentle. Archaism and detachment are passive and static, futurism and transfiguration are active and dynamic.

In an age when most historians consider God irrelevant, Toynbee puts God back into history and asserts

that religion is the cause of civilization.

Toynbee describes our Western civilization (in vol. VII-X, 1954) as "post-Christian" or "ex-Christian", and blames Christianity for the rise of Communism. Modern technology, he argues, could have abolished poverty. But the West failed to pay "the huge interim payment on account of social justice" to the poor, and in response to this failure Karl Marx produced "Das Kapital," a "Christian heresy," to offset a Christian failure.

World Unification.

Political unification of the world in the near future is, Toynbee writes, a "foregone conclusion," and once it is achieved, Christianity will be as old-fashioned as "parish-pump politics."

The disintegration of every civilization is preceded by a "universal state," which in "time of troubles" is involved in a succession of wars, evolving to world wars with a knock out blow to all rivals. The power of these "universal states", like the Roman or British Empire, is one of the great illusions of history. Out of the debris of a disintegrating civilization emerges from among the "internal proletariat" a new "universal church." Christianity was the universal church of Roman civilization, Islam of Syriac civilization and Buddhism of Sinitic civilization.

The challenge of our age is world unification through a universal state. The question is will it crystalize

around the USA or the USSR? It could be forced as Bismarck had forced the unification of the German states. The other alternative, according to Toynbee, is through religion, but not as embodied in the existing churches. It would have to be a "spontaneous rally of faith, possibly even the emergence of a new spiritual species."

In "Civilization on Trial" Toynbee foresees:

"Our descendants, as well as the descendants of our Oriental contemporaries, will be heirs to a religion and a civilization distilled from the teachings of many spiritual messians, including Confucius, Socrates, Christ, Buddha, Zarathustra and Muhammad."

In another vein, asking himself what could be the religion of the future, Toynbee listed only two possible choices, the Bahá'í Faith or the Ahmadiyan movement. The latter, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, is a modern Islamic sect, founded in the Punjab, India, in 1889, by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who claimed to be a universal mahdí. The movement split in 1914 and stresses true Islam with Ahmad and Muhammad as its prophets.

If Toynbee would have named the Bahá'í Faith only as the possible religion of the future, he could have been accused of bias, not befitting a historian of his stature. By naming the Ahmadiyans as the only other possible alternate choice, Toynbee has inadvertently revealed that the Bahá'í Faith has no serious contender for the religion of the future.

MOVEMENTS OF THE LEFT

In ^{April} 1919 the Divine Plan of Abdu'l-Baha was unveiled in New York City, ^I having had as its purpose, for the first time in religious history, the systematic and organized spiritual conquest of this earth, to culminate with the 'Most Great Peace'. Out of this Plan have emerged various Seven, Ten and Five Year Plans, resulting in Baha'i communities in over 335 countries and territories with 19,000 local Spiritual Assemblies.

In the same year, March 1919, Lenin called a congress in Moscow, the first of its kind, at which delegates from nineteen countries formulated what political scientists described as "the first global political program," which has had as its purpose the political unification of the world, global disarmament and world peace, or, as we call it in Baha'i terminology, the 'Lesser Peace.' This first Congress of the Comintern assembled in the midst of a raging Civil War, when the White Russian Army, supported by British, French and American troops and armaments was fighting the Red Army, inflicting death to twenty million people. It was the only Leftist Government in power, while ^{most} leftist leaders in other countries were hiding underground, or were in prison or exile. It was at such a time, when in Western minds the disintegration of the movement of the Left was a foregone conclusion, that Abdu'l-Baha said: "The movement of I by Mary Maxwell, then 9 years old, who became Amatu'l-Baha Ruqijja Khanum, and her cousin, at Hotel McAlpin, April 26-30

the Left will acquire great importance. Its influence will spread."²

It did spread, and today encompasses more than half of the world's population, and its influence continues to expand. As far back as 1907 Abdu'l-Baha said: "Consider an individual who has amassed treasures by colonising a country for his profit, he has obtained an incomparable fortune, whilst a hundred thousand unfortunate people, weak and powerless, are in need of a mouthful of bread rules and laws should be established to regulate the excessive fortunes of certain individuals, and limit the misery of millions of the poor..."³ And again "The rich, but for a few, shall in no wise attain the court of His presence nor enter the city of content and resignation."⁴ Insert 10

We want to state at the outset that the Baha'i Faith, at the present stage of its evolution, is non-political in character, and its adherents submit with unqualified loyalty to the laws of the country in which they reside.⁵ Baha'is are not pro-Communists or anti-Communists but non-Communists. They take no side, ^{and} ~~reassign~~ no blame in political or national disputes. In discussing the Leftist movements, we are not looking for their shortcomings, rather we want to sketch briefly their historical development, and underline wherever their aims and methods harmonize with Baha'i principles.

"Some are too rich, some too poor," taken from Baha'i writings, sounds very familiar and popular in the twentieth

(?) 2. Cleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p.160

3. Some Answered Questions, p. 314

4. Baha'u'llah, Hidden Words, p.93

5. The Baha'i World, Vol. XIV. p. 533

Insert 10

"Poverty shall disappear." It is important to limit riches, as it is also important to limit poverty. Either extreme is no good. There must be special laws made, dealing with these extremes of riches and want ... The government ... should give equal justice to all." 5

5 Abdu'l-Baha in "Baha'u'llah and the New Era." pp. 140-9

century. But since Abdu'l-Baha stated: "this is contrary to justice, to humanity, to equity," the moral implication of the Baha'i demand for social justice is portentous.

Ever since 1844, coinciding almost to the hour with the birth of the Baha'i Faith, new movements have emerged, often simultaneously, in various parts of the world. With an ever increasing insistence these movements have demanded social justice, that is, a fairer distribution of income.

In the pre-machine age, before 1844, man was quite satisfied with his lot, for he could not have changed it even if he had wanted to. Centuries had to pass by without any noticeable change in society. The steam engine was the cause of a great transition, by upsetting production and income, and by bringing about a social revolution with reverberations of unimagined magnitude. The machine produced in quantity while its benefits were distributed unevenly. The people resented this, for they knew, perhaps intuitively, that ^{they} we had entered a period of social evolution when equity became a virtue within reach. The keynote of all subsequent mass movements was social justice. "The fury of conservative forces," writes Shoghi Effendi, "the opposition of vested interests, and the objections of a corrupt and pleasure-seeking generation, must be reckoned with, resolutely resisted, and completely overcome."⁶

In this chapter we shall discuss the Labor, Cooperative, Socialist and Communist movements, whose beginnings were contemporaneous with the Baha'i Era.

The Labor Movement

The unprotected workingman man was among the first to demand equity. But his voice was not heard until workers organized into unions. In unity labor found its strength, but unions were made illegal. An American judge called unions in 1841 "a criminal conspiracy." Due to public pressure, in 1842, the first law was passed in the United States allowing workers to organize into unions, provided they do not hurt the employer. This law did not solve the conflict between capital and labor. On the contrary, it intensified the struggle, for capital, deriving its income from profits, had to hold down expenses and wages, while labor, aspiring for higher wages, remained in continuous conflict with the employers' immediate interests.

Sam Gompers, founder, life-long supporter and then President of the American Federation of Labor met Abdu'l-Baha in 1912 in Washington. Unfortunately we have no record of this historic meeting.

In 1920 Supreme Court Justice James Van Sicken ruled: "The Courts must stand at all times as the representatives of capital, of captains of industry." The owners fought labor unions by legal and other means. Labor fought back and bloodshed was not uncommon. There are many martyrs in the annals of Labor. A committee of the United States Senate reported in 1930 that American manufacturers spent eighty million dollars a year hiring labor spies, which, according to Senator LaFollette, "proved to be one of the most effective weapons in destroying

genuine labor collective bargaining activities on the part of workers." As a protective measure the Wagner Act was passed by Congress in 1935, barring employers from interfering with union organizations. In consequence, the American Labor movement had increased its membership within ten years from four to fifteen million.

There is no longer any doubt that labor unions have improved the standard of living of all workers. They have fought often with questionable means, against an inequitable situation, for a fairer distribution of income. In 1871 about 25,000 workers marched up Broadway, asking for an eight hour day. It took them more than seventy years of unremitting effort before this and other improvements in working conditions were universally recognized.

The unions exerted also an educational influence on the workers. The administrative structure of unions is organized locally, nationally, federally, and in many cases, even internationally. Each member is trained for collective action by regularly attending meetings, where they vote for officers and delegates, discuss finances and formulate their common problems.

Many millions of American C.I.O. members pledged, before joining a union, that they would "never discriminate against a fellow worker on account of creed, color or nationality." Most unions educate their members not to differentiate against others on account of race, color or creed. There are million of

women union members demanding equal pay for equal work and thus emphasize the Bahá'í principle of the equality of the sexes.

The difference between capital and labor, however, has not been resolved, rather, it has become more pronounced. The union movement has brought no solution to the problem, for both capital and labor remained antagonistic to each other within our competitive system. Only an integrating force, representing the interests of both, could solve the problem. Our western democratic system, inherently divisive and individualistic, has not found the answer.

We may add, however, that postwar Germany has successfully developed the principle of "Mitbestimmung," which means that in industries employing more than hundred workers about one third of the Directors of the Board are workers' representatives. The results were so satisfactory, that Sweden, Norway, France and Belgium are now adopting the same system.

The Cooperative Movement

On December 21st, 1844, the year of the Bab's historic announcement, twenty-eight Englishmen started a new venture in Rochdale, England, with a collective investment of one hundred and forty dollars. Within a hundred years, the capital of this venture increased to five hundred and twenty million dollars. The membership of the cooperative movement in England alone expanded in the same period from the original twenty-eight members to eight million. Cooperatives have since been established in more than forty countries with a total membership of several hundred million.

When in 1844, the twenty-eight founder-members opened the first cooperative store, their neighbours ridiculed this unusual venture, and were certain that it would fail. The motivating idea of these twenty-eight workers was to reduce the income of the rich and channel apart of it to the poor. If the poor would associate in cooperative enterprise, it was hoped the workers themselves could jointly own and enjoy the benefits of big business, which had hitherto been an exclusive domain of the rich.

The basic difference between private and cooperative enterprise is that, in a private business, each shareholder has as many votes as shares; in a cooperative enterprise, each member has only one vote, regardless of the number of shares he owns. In a private business, profit is divided according to ownership. In a cooperative profit is divided according to patronage, that is, to the extent members buy as consumers or sell as producers. The aim of cooperatives is to abolish excessive private profit, but not necessarily private capital. Cooperatives also aim to transfer control of natural resources and monopolistic enterprise from a few wealthy owners to the many producers and consumers.

Through cooperatives the individual discovers a new power in himself, obtained through collective effort. The unequal bargaining position of a poor worker facing a monopoly or trust has been considerably lessened by cooperatives, notably in England, Sweden and Denmark. The Scots, who are famous for recognizing a good thing when they see it, joined cooperatives to the extent of seventy-five per cent of their population. Of all

Of all Swedes, forty percent are members of cooperatives, owning hundreds of factories and doing a considerable part of Sweden's retail trade.

Cooperatives have also a great educational value. The pre-industrial age was essentially agricultural, with each man for himself, giving birth to the individualistic laissez faire philosophy, which limited moral and social responsibility to the individual. It has educated individualistic workers, craftsmen and farmers to work with others, not as owner with employee, which is relatively easy, but as equals, which is more difficult. Cooperatives, too, have their regular meetings to elect their officers, approve minutes, discuss finances, formulate policies and stimulate fellow workers to share responsibility.

The cooperatives are an answer to the needs of the age, and will undoubtedly continue to exert a beneficial influence. Their contribution, however, is overshadowed by other social forces, more insistent and militant, aiming for the same end in view, equity. For "equity is the most fundamental among human virtues."⁷

THE SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

According to the American Journal of Sociology, the word socialism was first used by Leroux in 1845, the second year of the Baha'i era. Socialism is defined by Webster's New International Dictionary as "a political and economic theory, the essential feature of which is governmental control of economic activities, to the end that competition shall give way to cooperation and that the opportunities of life and the rewards of labor shall be equitably apportioned." This definition

7. Baha'u'llah, Baha'i world Faith, p. 131

compares with the following Baha'i reference to: "A world legislature, whose members will, as the trustees of the whole of mankind, ultimately control the entire resources of all the component nations and will enact such laws as shall be required to regulate the life, satisfy the needs and adjust the relationships of all races and peoples."⁸

The fundamental distinction between the socialist and capitalist systems is that, while the socialists envision a state controlled economy regulating prices, production, and income, the capitalist school upholds the free enterprise system in which the regulator is the law of supply and demand in a free market, with as little government interference as possible. The socialists claim that without state control national income cannot be distributed equitably, nor could production and prices be regulated to prevent the recurring recessions, inflations and unemployment, which have been characteristic of free, competitive economies. Socialists would have to add to it now, that control has to be supranational.

The classic socialist example is the case of a son inheriting two hundred thousand dollars, which brings him an income all his life. This heir could therefore live comfortably without work, enjoying the products and services of others without contributing anything in return. After his death the estate would pass intact to his son, and so from father to son for ever, establishing a privileged class enjoying unearned benefits by mere title to a fortune. This classic example has lost some of its validity since the introduction of graduated

8. Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah, p. 40

income and inheritance taxes, which were originally advocated by Baha'u'llah. "It is then clear and evident that the repartition of excessive fortunes amongst a small number of individuals, while the masses are in misery, is an iniquity and an injustice."⁹

The objection of socialists to private ownership and control of factories, mines, utilities and other commercial enterprises is that the owners can take undue advantage, nationally and internationally, of workers and consumers. Such excesses, the socialists claim, can be remedied only if the people that is, the state, or, more effectively a world government, assume control if not ownership of such enterprises.

Some socialist countries, like Sweden, which has been under a socialist government for the last twenty five years, left ninety percent of its industry under private ownership, but with its rate of income tax up to eighty percent, it has reached one of the highest standards of living, and has abolished poverty and slums.

The gradual adaptation of socialist programs like workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, pensions, medicare, government control of public utilities, transport and monopolies, have greatly improved the lot of the majority in capitalistic countries. They have, however, not solved basic problems like national security and world peace, for the sovereign nations still refuse to heed Baha'u'llah's injunction that: "This earth is one country and mankind its citizens," and that we have become "a world of interdependent nations and that the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole."¹⁰ The part cannot be healed, if the

9. Abdu'l-Jaha, Some Answered Questions, p. 316
 10. Saogai Effendi, Promised Day is Come, p. 127

whole is not well.

The Communist Movement

Within six months after the birth of the Founder of The Baha'i Faith, Carl Marx was born in Germany. In the fourth year of the Baha'i Era the Communist manifesto, the most celebrated socialist document, which is a call to the workers of the world to unite, was proclaimed in Paris by Marx and Engel, and a movement of hope and terror was launched which already has encompassed ^{twenty-one} ~~sixteen~~ countries and more than one third of the human race.

Marx named the first group he founded "The League of the Just," as if he ^{had} ~~would have~~ known Baha'u'llah's words: "The best beloved of all things in My sight is Justice."¹¹ For his radical views Marx was persecuted and exiled from Germany, Belgium and France. He finally settled in London, where he lived and died in poverty. His forty years of married life to a descendant of the Duke of Argyll is considered a model of affection and respectability.

History, to Carl Marx, was a struggle for advantage. He saw this conflict among the rulers and between classes; slave against master, serf against lord. He predicted the next struggle between the worker and the bourgeoisie, and its outcome: a classless society ruled by the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Marx, the atheist, believed that man is moved primarily by self-interest. He offered no explanation for the

moral compulsion in man, nor for the self-sacrifice and compassion of so many of his early followers. Strangely enough, Marx feared the power of the state, and therefore believed that it would ~~w~~ither away in a classless society.

His first successful followers appeared in Russia. They were determined to change man and to improve the world. Persecution, exile, even death did not temper their fanatic devotion. Among the most outstanding was Lenin, who said: "Our teaching is not a dogma. We know the direction. But only the experience of millions, as they move to the task, will discover the road."

The communists' first historic congress in Minsk, attended by only nine delegates in 1898, proclaimed the "Russian Social Democratic Labor Party." The second congress was held in Brussels in 1903. There the revolutionaries split into two parties, the majority, the Bolsheviks, insisting with Lenin for an all-out revolution and dictatorship, while the minority, the Mensheviks, were advocating the capture of existing states by peaceful and constitutional means, and became the socialists of today.

The Bolsheviks took over the government of Russia in November, 1917, with less violence and bloodshed than any other social revolutionary regime in history, according to Prof. S.R.L. Schuman of Williams College. It was only when the white Russians, supported by western democracies, attacked and fomented a civil war, that Lenin established the first totalitarian state of the century. And it was only then that the class

struggle in Russia became terrifying and ruthless.

Prior to the adoption of the Russian Constitution, a hundred thousand copies of its draft were published in all languages. Half a million meetings were held with thirty-six million people attending, to discuss the constitution. Many thousands of proposed changes were made, which were sifted until forty-three such recommendations were adopted in the final draft. The Soviet Constitution is the first in recorded history for which the population was consulted in mass meetings before final approval was given.

Since the Bahá'í form of government does not provide for opposing political parties, the following explanation by a high official of the Russian one-party system is noteworthy: "Several parties, and consequently, freedom for parties, can exist only in a society in which there are antagonistic classes... say capitalist and workers, landlords and peasants, etc.. In the U.S.S.R. there are only two classes, workers and peasants, whose interests are not hostile but friendly. Hence, there is no ground in the U.S.S.R. for the existence of several parties." It is interesting to note that the Soviet conception of democracy is a system of government in which all antagonisms have been resolved. The communists believe that true democracy is impracticable in countries divided by political parties and conflicting economic interests. Their legislative, judicial and executive branch of government is not divided either.

In the U.S.S.R. all productive property (as distinct from private property), is owned by the state, or by

Not US
Constitution

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cooperatives, or by collective farms. A Russian can own a handicraft shop or a farm, but he cannot hire help. According to the Constitution only the State can employ others. In some Communist countries, like Poland, a private factory owner could employ up to twentyfive workers.

Article 123 of the Soviet Constitution (1936) states: "any direct or indirect restriction of the right of, or, conversely, any establishment of direct or indirect privileges for citizens on account of their race or nationality, as well as advocates for racial or national exclusiveness or hatred and contempt, is punishable by law." Moses, a Prophet of God, decreed: "Do not kill, do not steal." This law has been incorporated into the legal system of all civilized countries. Bahá'u'lláh, who is also a Prophet of God, decreed the abolition of racial and national prejudice. The U.S.S.R. has the distinction of having ^{been} the first country in the world to incorporate this law into its legal system.

The U.S.S.R. is a federation in which each ethnic group is guaranteed cultural autonomy and local self-determination within the economic and federal system.

'Soviet' means in Russian assembly or council. A Communist's life is closely tied ^{to} soviet or assembly meetings, on factory, collective farm, municipal, regional and higher levels. On each level consultation is solicited, group decisions are made by majority vote, delegates are elected, until they reach the National Party Congress, which meets every five years and elects the Politburo, the highest authority in the land.

The Soviets, having the second most powerful economy in the world, can justly boast for having been first with the H. bomb, space ship, man in space, I.C.B.M. (inter-continental ballistic missile,) and supersonic airliner. ^{Insert 23} Life expectancy has been increased from forty years in 1930 to ~~for~~ seventy years. It was the first country to establish universal free education and free medical care. Begging, and its need, have been abolished. Women receive equal pay for equal work.

This might be the right place to elaborate Shoghi Effendi's following statement: "The chief idols in the desecrated temple of mankind are none other than the triple gods of Nationalism, Racism and Communism, at whose altars governments and peoples, whether democratic or totalitarian, at peace or at war, of the East or of the West, Christian or Islamic, are, in various forms and in different degrees, now worshipping." 12 When Shoghi Effendi speaks of Nationalism, which generates hatred and wars, he does not include patriotism, for a Bahá'í desires "to serve in an unselfish, unostentatious, and patriotic fashion, the highest interests of the country to which he belongs." 13 And when he speaks of Racism, which also causes hatred and wars, he does not want to suppress the diversity of ethnical origins, of language and tradition, or racial minority rights. And when he speaks of Communism, which also has been the cause of hatred and wars, and which has deprived its citizens of basic civil rights, (which are probably of a temporary nature,) he does not condemn the socialist and humanitarian achievements of Communism, to some of which we have referred before.

12, The Promised Day is Come, p.117

13, Guidance for Today and Tomorrow, p.112

"The U.S.S.R. produces in two and a half working days as much wealth as Tsarist Russia produced in the whole of 1913. (Manchester Guardian, 13. Nov. 1977)

do not read

"Russia is the largest producer in the world of oil, iron, steel, cement, refrigerators, etc. The Five Year Plans launched in 1928 are credited with multiplying Soviet output 50-fold from 1913 to 1973. C.I.A economists calculated that from 1968 to 1974 the Soviet G.N.P. (Gross national product) had an annual growth rate close to 4.7% compared to about 2.4% for the USA."

Life expectancy is 70 years. By 1970, the Soviet Union had the highest ratio of doctors to population in the world - 23.8 doctors for each 10,000 persons, compared to 15.0 in the US, though health care, which is free, is far below western standards. X

X THE RUSSIANS, Henrick Smith, (N.Y. Times Chief of Moscow office)
Sphere Books Ltd, London, p. 97-269

Of the four movements we have discussed, Communism stands out as the mostly widely spread, most militant and probably the most attractive to the poor, who are "half of the world's ^{four} ~~two~~ billion people and have a per capita income of less than \$ 200.00 per year. According to an inquiry of the World Bank, Washington, nine hundred million people subsist on less than \$ 75.00 a year in an environment of squalor, hunger and hopelessness." ¹⁴

And as to the future of Communism Lenin himself said: "only the experience of millions, as they move to the task, will discover the road."

Although the U.S.S.R. is a godless State, not all Russians are atheists, nor do all Westerners act as Christians. It is reported that about one half of the people in Russia believe in God, which is not far off the ratio of the rest. Insert 24

The final formula for the redemption of the world has not been written either in the U.S.S.R. or in the U.S.A. We shall come back to this formula in the fifth chapter.

Insert 24

According to a Soviet publication "Science and Religion" as many as half of the newlyweds in some areas, including Moscow, were having church weddings and more than half of the newborns were being baptized.

THE RUSSIANS, Hendrick Smith, p.527

Chapter III

CLASH OF CULTURES

Although Abdu'l-Baha's Divine Plan for the spiritual conquest of this earth was unveiled in 1919, the Baha'i community was too small and too loosely knit to take up the challenge systematically until 1937, when the First Seven Year Plan was launched. At that time Baha'is were residing in forty four countries, ^{and} having six hundred eighty three local Spiritual Assemblies. Since then this ~~new~~ nascent religion had reached three hundred thirty five countries or dependencies with ^{nine} ~~seventeen~~ thousand local Spiritual Assemblies.

We do not want to dwell on statistics, nor is it within our scope to describe this phenomenal expansion, which has no parallel in religious history, rather, we want to limit this chapter, even at the risk of being personal, to our own experiences in Africa and Latin America, with special focus as to the clash of cultures, the clash of two worlds, of which we were participants.

During this period of territorial expansion my wife and I volunteered to pioneer. We had pioneered one year in Venezuela, fourteen years in South Africa and ^{six} ~~four~~ years in Mexico, making a total of ^{twenty one} ~~nineteen~~ years of unusual experiences and adventures. The rest of the time our home was in Montreal, from where we travelled, speaking about our Faith, all over the Western Hemisphere and the greater part of the Eastern.

Since this chapter deals mostly with personal impressions in the Third world, and since the reader might wonder

from where we got the money to finance these trips, and what made us do it, a brief auto-biographical sketch might be inserted here.

When I was fifteen years old, an Austrian friend told me, that he had read in a German newspaper of the death in Palestine of an important personage, who supposedly had similar ideals to mine, namely a world government, a universal concept of ethics and world peace. ~~I asked for a clipping of that paper but my friend could not find it.~~ That was how close I came to the Baha'i faith in 1921, when Abdu'l-Baha's passing was reported in the world's press.

The first seven years of my education I had received in Hungarian schools, and was converted to as fervent a nationalist as any other good Hungarian. The next two years, in German schools, I had discovered to my great disappointment that German literature and culture far surpassed the Hungarian. When Transylvania became part of Rumania, my father's economic circumstances necessitated that I spend my last three years in a Rumanian high school, where I discovered to my surprise that their culture was much richer and more extensive than I had been made to believe. By this time I had enough of nationalism, and was longing for a world, where all men were treated equally, regardless of nationality or creed.

For, I may add, in these schools I was exposed to discrimination not only on account of my nationality but also, and this was worse, because of the religion of my parents which I no longer shared. Many of my contemporaries, who had also lost

their religious ties, found compensation and a new identity in Zionism and in its nationalistic aspirations. I could not share their feelings since by this time I was already convinced that the time for nation building was over. I had developed an atheistic philosophy, which I called humanist, considering myself a citizen of the world, ^P subscribing to world federation with world civilization as the ultimate goal.

I was twenty when I landed in Montreal with eighteen dollars in my pocket, and went to all free public lectures to learn English. That was how one Sunday afternoon I attended my first Bana'i meeting, the most fateful turning point in my life. At that time the whole Canadian Bana'i community consisted in Montreal of a small group of well-dressed and well brought up ladies and gentlemen, and a similar but smaller group in Vancouver. As a poor immigrant boy, I felt very awkward and out of place. That we, inspite of my innate shyness, their English reserve, and the barrier of language and culture, could stay together, develop a warmth and an enduring friendship, testifies to the power of this Faith.

Though I came from a very different and distant world, I could marry one of their daughters, and with my Bana'i passport entered many Anglo-saxon home across Canada and the U.S.A., whose doors otherwise might have remained closed. Thus for the first time in my life the clash of cultures had been overcome.

Now as to the question of finance. After having worked as laborer, dishwasher, office boy, salesman, I have had

learned enough English to apply for employment among the great corporations. I found out however, soon enough, that I had no chance due to my background. Thus I had to become an import agent, though I was warned that my chances for survival were very slim. In spite of the depression years somehow I did survive, and when it was decided to establish the Faith in Toronto, I opened a branch office there, giving me the wherewithal for regular visits. Later, when the Guardian called for Baha'i communities in every province of Canada, I extended my business and made annual journeys across the country.

When I arrived for the first time in Regina, Saskatchewan, an arrangement had been made for ^{me to} a lecture before the Institute of International Affairs. I remember standing on the platform, facing about fifty strangers, with no other Baha'i in that room or, for that matter, in Saskatchewan, to proclaim for the first time in that province the Call of Baha'u'llah. Since I was a young and untried believer, I had to rely on the power of my faith, for lack of any other more immediate moral support, and the result was overwhelming. Consequently I was invited by Mr. Hodgekins to address an assembly of his High School, and every year the People's Forum, which was at that time Regina's largest adult education activity.

When in the Forties the call went out for pioneers in Latin America, I opened an export department of my company, which paid for our year's stay in Venezuela, a four months trip through all the countries of Latin America, except Paraguay, and the major islands of the Caribbean. We repeated this trip the

following year in a smaller circuit.

In later years several journeys were made to Europe and one to the Far East, conveniently combining Baha'i activities with business. When in the Fifties the need for pioneering was in Africa, my Canadian enterprise was discontinued and we started a new importing business in South Africa, where we almost lost everything, but with the confidence that comes with prayers we recovered.

SHOCK OF POVERTY

A young French-Canadian couple came to visit us in Mexico on their first trip abroad. Although ^{they} he was well informed and ^{and} a university student of history, they could not get over the shock, after crossing the border, of seeing people live in such poverty. We tried to explain that what they saw was nothing compared to the abject poverty they are going to encounter as pioneers in other countries. In Mexico the average annual income in 1974 was ¹¹⁹⁰ ~~seven hundred forty~~ dollars per capita, while in Haiti it was ¹⁷⁰ ~~sixty three~~ dollars. Almost half the people of the world had in 1972 an annual income of less than hundred dollars per person. ¹

Of the thousands of Baha'is who left their homeland to pioneer in foreign lands, the majority came from North America, since they were financially in a better position to do so. To teach and exemplify the Faith to native people one had to enter their humble huts, share their food, gain their confidence and friendship, which is a very different experience from that of a tourist, who goes from one airconditioned hotel to another in an air-conditioned plane or car.

1. Encyclopedia Britannica, Year Book, 1974.

What about
Iran?

When we first came in contact with such poverty, our impulse was to share some of the things we had. The news soon spread that if one joins this new religion, one gets free clothing, blankets, food, and will be taken on long trips, all expenses paid. When we realized our mistake we tightened up. Then we saw in many an inquiring face the question: 'what kind of brotherhood are you speaking about, if you are not willing to share some of your wealth?' This meant that we had to establish from the outset a relationship of friendship on a much deeper level of consciousness, which had slowed down the process of teaching but the results were more lasting.

Baha'is have no paid, professional clergy nor missionaries. Their volunteers are of all ages; young people who want to gain experience while earning a living; the middle aged of some means who are willing to take risks and establish themselves anew, in an often hostile environment; and lastly older people with an income, who are young enough in spirit to adapt themselves to different conditions and a new life.

This small army of ^{North} American pioneers, born into the world's wealthiest environment, may yet serve as a vanguard, for having voluntarily given up comfort, security, prestige and an innate sense of superiority, in order to bring hope and faith to the neglected people of the Third world. If the wealthy nations are not willing to follow their example, will they be compelled to do so by the irresistible forces of history?

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

In 1938 I met at the Shrines in Haifa a young Iraqi Baha'i with whom I had a pleasant visit. Later in the evening I asked Shoghi Effendi, at whose table I was the only guest, why my Eastern brother could not be present and share in the conversation? The Guardian answered that Abdu'l-Baha's procedure to house and entertain Eastern and Western pilgrims separately was being continued for a time, though it would be changed in the future. Later in New York, Rafi Nottaheden explained to me that differences of Eastern and Western eating habits, tastes, language, culture and interests, were all reasons for the separation.

Shoghi Effendi also explained to me, as far as I can recall, why Iranian believers at that time were not to visit or teach in America. He wanted each community to draw directly from the writings, use its own resources, while developing its own characteristics and at the same time preserving unity in diversity. This view may find an echo in the following words of Shoghi Effendi: "I urge them (the Youth Group of Montreal) to study profoundly the revealed utterances of Baha'u'llah and the discourses of Abdu'l-Baha and not to rely unduly on the representation of the teachings given by Baha'i speakers and teachers."²

The meaning of these words struck me after visiting Baha'i communities in twenty five countries and islands in Africa. In about ten of them the pioneers were Iranian. Without exception the African believers greeted each other, and the speakers their audience, with Allahu'Abha, as if this form of greeting was an

2. The Baha'i World, Vol.IV, p.57

essential part of their religion. This will remain confusing, until they do understand that this is an Iranian and not^{necessarily} a universal Baha'i custom.

North American pioneers are often tempted to stress administrative procedure, western efficiency and punctuality, which is out of context and beyond the experience of the natives of most countries. A farmer who plows with oxen and whose greatest concern is the next rain, which may come next week, or next month, or next year, has a different conception of time than a ^{jet-}pilot who has to land his plane within a certain minute.

My wife often prepared a meal with great care, and the guests having accepted the invitation for a certain hour, arrived two hours late, or not at all. When I was in Lagos, Nigeria, a Persian pioneer prepared a sumptuous supper for forty invited guests; only four showed up. A luncheon guest of ours arrived in Guadalajara one week late, but then neither he nor we had a telephone. Another guest did arrive on time, but brought five others along who were not expected.

Other pioneers had similar experiences for the same reason. Two thirds of mankind still live in villages with primitive agriculture as their main occupation. A Venezuelan friend told us once that time is the invention of watch manufacturers. Futurologists calculate that by the year 2000 only forty per cent of this earth's population will live in villages, which could be good or bad news.

When we ask a friend in most parts of the Third world for a commitment, whether an invitation for a meal or to

do something, he will not answer in the negative, for that would be considered rude. He will say "yes" since he wants to please you, though he does not really mean "yes" but "maybe." His commitment implies that he will do so, if God does not interfere, if nothing more attractive comes inbetween or, if he should not forget it. One should never expect an apology for non-compliance nor ask for an explanation. Since you are a friend you should know that he would have fulfilled his commitment if he had not been prevented. Any further discussion on the subject is considered poor taste.

We are facing here a different philosophy of life. Their concept of time is, like that of Einstein, relative. We appear to them too rigid and dogmatic with our insistence for punctuality, strict compliance to commitments, a life full of activity and tension, when there is so much time and when the relaxed, happy-go-lucky way is so much more pleasant.

Max Weber, the German sociologist, explained Latin irresponsibility versus the sense of duty of Protestants. The Catholic European was assured for centuries that his sins will be forgiven if he confesses, attends Mass and makes his offerings. His northern Protestant counterpart, however, could find forgiveness for his sins only in good deeds and a frugal life. Hence the Protestant developed through hard work a greater sense of responsibility and self-discipline. By subjecting himself to an ascetic way of life, thrift became a virtue, which laid the foundation for modern capitalism, although prior to the eighteenth century most wealth was with the Latin nations. Weber's explanation

might give some light as to the behaviour of our Latin American friends, it does not, however, cover all situations in the Third World. Social responsibility is a virtue in its early stages of development.

When visiting Liberia in 1965 it had three assemblies established by six Black American and two West Indian pioneers. From Monrovia I flew in a small plane two hundred miles inland to Nimba, a mining town, to visit Bill Foster, Liberia's first pioneer, and his community of native believers. Since Bill was a company official he was allocated a modern apartment, which we shared. As he was to return shortly to his family in the U.S.A. most of our concern and conversation revolved around the enthusiastic young Liberians who were to carry on the work after Bill left. After two days of conversation about "we and they" we still did not realize, that Bill and I, both western, though of different color and background, had much more in common than Bill and his Liberian fellow-believers. Over-shadowing these differences was our common faith, which made everything else inconsequential.

In Bathurst, Gambia, I met two pioneers, one from Sri Lanka, (Ceylon) and the other from California. One day we drove to a muslim village, and told a large gathering that we three came to Africa from Asia, Europe and America, of Buddhist, Jewish and Christian background, ^{respectively,} to speak to Muslims about the Baha'i Faith. Was this a coincidence, or an illustration of the power of this Faith?

We may add here that the ex-buddhist Baha'i had nine children and no money back home in Colombo, when he felt an

irrepressible urge to pioneer. His great desire was fulfilled when the Local Spiritual Assembly of Colombo offered to look after his family, and the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran agreed to finance him for two years. As to the American, having been a Baha'i only two years, he cashed his savings and gave up a secure job in San Francisco to pioneer. I visited him in his primitive hut in the native quarters of Bathurst, which was modestly though attractively furnished. He did not mind his neighbours chicken running in front of ^{the} its entrance.

When I inquired in Milano, ^{Italy,} one evening about the next Baha'i meeting, a French voice told me over the telephone that they were just having a gathering, and ^{inquired} whether I would like to join them. When I arrived a Persian, whose house I entered, embraced and kissed me on both my cheeks. In contrast in Abidjan, on the Ivory Coast, when I met my first Arab Baha'i he only embraced me, and when I remarked on the difference he elucidated that it is not an Arab custom for men to kiss each other.

In South Africa most of our African guests entered our apartment through the servants entrance. We found this very embarrassing, but our friends accepted this humiliation rather than expose us to possible repercussions with the authorities. It was not against the law for whites to entertain Africans in one's home, provided no alcohol was served, but it was not the South African way of life. We pioneers were exposed to the Suppression of Communism Act, under which any alien could be deported at short notice, without any explanation or opportunity for appeal. Shortly after our arrival a young Rabbi, a former Rhodes

scholar, was given two weeks notice to leave the country. The only explanation his friends could give us was that he entertained African and Coloured intellectuals in his home and that his sermons were too outspoken. As Baha'is we had to obey the law of the country, but we also wanted to speak about our Faith. To reconcile the two meant to walk on a tight rope.

Eventually we were investigated by the Secret Police. Since we were found genuinely religious, non-political, non-violent and law-abiding, we were allowed to remain. Nevertheless, we were watched and at times followed, for fear that subversive elements may use us as cover. My wife was allowed to enter the locations to establish libraries in eleven schools for African children, where she placed over ten thousand books which were privately donated. Her permit was gradually restricted and eventually withdrawn.

One day I opened our back door for Robert, a sixteen year old student from one of these schools. This must have been about his fifth visit for his Baha'i lesson. After letting him in, Robert proceeded to our refrigerator and when he opened the door and I asked him what he wanted, he said he was hungry and wanted something to eat. I told him that perhaps he waits until Rosemary finds something, as she always did when he came to visit us. Robert complied easily but I have felt guilty ever since.

It is a tribal custom among Africans to share food, the sustenance of life, among themselves. When we stopped on the

road, and gave a child a sandwich or a piece of cake, invariably that child would not eat it, but run to his brothers and sisters and share it with them. Seldom did we see an African carrying food when travelling in the country. He knew that in almost any hut where he stopped somebody would share his meal with him. Robert's impulse, to save Rosemary the trouble of serving him, must have been prompted by his tribal antecedents, which I did not understand. Since then he has taught the Faith to many people and serves now on the National Spiritual Assembly, too busy I hope, to remember the incident.

THE BIR CAN TELL

We lived for one year in Zululand seventeen miles ^{inside} within a native reserve. The road was so bad and mountainous that it took us an hour and a half to traverse it in dry weather. If it rained we were cut off from the nearest doctor, telephone or source of supplies up to a week, since the slippery road and the two unbridged rivers we were to cross became impassable. We were running a trading station, which served also as post office and registration of births and deaths for about three thousand Zulus, who lived around us.

Immediately after our arrival our customers came in droves to snap and to look us over. I remember an old Zulu with a finely chiselled and intelligent face looking at us intently but puzzled. After a long while of wonderment he finally asked one of our assistants who we were. He was told that we were: "abelungu pcheééa," which means in Zulu, by giving the right intonation to "pcheééa," - 'white men from very far, far across

the sea. Hearing this answer our interlocutor's face lit up, for now he understood. Although he had seen many white men before, he had never before met white people with eyes like ours. As were to him of a different breed.

Every white South African learns from early childhood that he is superior to the Black. This belief is reinforced every day of his life, whatever action he may take or wherever he may go. When he looks into the eyes of an African his stern, impersonal glance conveys who is master and that he intends to remain master for ever. Even in the eyes of a white minister of the Church, the African may perceive at the best of times, the eyes of a father looking at his children.

A Dutch colonial Governor once asked an educated Javanese why his people hated the Dutch so bitterly. They were efficient administrators, stopped all tribal wars, built roads, schools, hospitals, developed agriculture and brought prosperity to Java. The Governor asked, what more do you want? The Indonesian was silent for a while, then he said: 'We do not like the evil in your eyes.'

Some call it arrogance. There is perhaps nothing that cuts a deeper hurt in a human soul than to be treated inferior because of the color of one's skin. Just as a tongue can be sharper than a knife, a glance can be more devastating than the tongue. "Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other."³

I asked many in the Third World what brought them to this Faith? This is always interesting to ask, since this

3. Baha'u'llah, Hidden Words, p. 20

Faith has many possible aspects for attraction. Some are attracted through the power of Baha'u'llah's words. Others through Bible studies. Some through the "Hidden Words", or another book. Or through the impact of a personality they have met. But these poor villagers, who can hardly read and who, because of the difficulties of transportation, have met very few Baha'is, what could they have found to hold them to this Faith? Although they were not always articulate in English or Spanish, which was their second or third language, they usually answered that it is the feeling of unity or oneness.

Take as an example Cuca of Colima, a town in Mexico. She runs with her husband a tiny supply store sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, on an unpaved, bumpy and dusty street, on the other side of the trucks. Whenever we call, her face lights up, she embraces us, takes us to her windowless store-room, which serves also as their bed and dining room, and the meeting place for Baha'i gatherings. She cannot read or write, except her name, has hardly any conception of the world, its problems or the implications of the world order of Baha'u'llah. Yet her faith is so obvious. One can see it in her eyes, in her eagerness to invite her neighbours to her house to hear about the Faith.

In Ecuador we still can remember the face of an old Indian woman, who could hardly speak Spanish, but came barefoot, poorly dressed, to every meeting. What we westerners discover labouriously after much study and questioning, many of our unlearned friends grasp intuitively and without effort. In spite of

our differences of culture and learning we reach the same conviction: "that we are all leaves of one tree, drops of one ocean and children of one father."

QUESTION OF AUTHORITY.

When we arrived in Africa in 1954 there were only three independent nations: Egypt, Ethiopia and Liberia. When we left fourteen years later there were forty. Our attempt to conquer Africa spiritually coincided with its political emancipation. Abdu'l-Baha is supposed to have said that nothing happens by accident. Future historians will probably elaborate how these two parallel events have had a complimentary effect. In these fourteen years we felt the wind of change and heard the insistent rumbling for independence. We could also witness that the lifting of colonial domination did not realize the long cherished dream of peace and prosperity.

For centuries the Africans' experience with authority was that of master and servant, and in religion father and children. This relationship was based on fear of punishment, or fear of hell, neither of which was conducive to develop individual initiative or a sense of social responsibility. Then the Baha'is came along with no leaders or clergy. They proceeded to create a religious community where authority rests with a Spiritual Assembly of nine, elected by the people, who were to be obeyed without fear of coercion from without, but rather from an inner compulsion which comes with maturity and faith in Baha'u'llah.

For this the African friends were not ready,

anymore than they had time or opportunity to prepare themselves for political democracy. This situation, however, does not discourage the pioneers, for time is on the side of the Africans. Having traversed so rapidly from the age of the ox-wagon to that of the jet-planes, they can face the future with confidence as they acquire experience and understanding of the world Order of Baha'u'llah.

SOUTH AFRICA

Having lived in South Africa for many years, we have to say a few words about this country, rich in natural resources, endowed with an excellent climate and unsurpassed natural beauty. Its people, of all colors and abilities, have before them a great future as yet undisclosed. In the society of nations this country with its apartheid laws is in disrepute. South Africa has the questionable distinction of being the only country in the world where it is illegal to marry across the color line. It is the only country where, depending on the color of one's skin, the law determines where one lives, eats, what salary one gets, where one worships, studies, plays, and what kind of a job one is allowed to exercise.

It may be a strange coincidence that the ratio between blacks and whites in South Africa is in the same proportion as between the rich and poor nations on this earth. In either case less than twenty five per cent of the population own or control most of its natural resources, enjoy its riches, while the great majority live in comparative misery. Is not the kettle calling the pot black? "Wherefore do ye wear the guise of shepherds, when inwardly ye have become wolves, intent upon My flock?" 4

If South Africa is in an explosive and untenable situation, is not the First world in relation to the Second and Third world endangered by a similar collision? Which is going to learn first that the "Most Great Justice" is a new law of God and that those who oppose it shall perish? "The day is approaching when we will have rolled up the world and all that is therein, and spread out a new order in its stead." ⁵

THE PIONEERS.

When pioneers leave the security and comfort of their homes to teach their Faith in foreign lands, the emphasis, at least at first, is not on teaching but on learning. We have to learn the language, customs, history, anything we can about the people whose confidence we want to gain, before we can tell them why we came. We are constantly exposed to the stimulation of new people, new ideas and new impressions, learning most of our waking hours, with rare opportunities to teach, except by example. In contrast to our new life with its many interests, back home appears dull, with the same faces, same streets and the same activities. Having got out of the rut, we feel somehow freer, detached, poorer perhaps in worldly goods, but happy. We have not yet met a pioneer who was sorry for having left home.

The path was not strewn only with roses. We had to face rats, cockroaches, dirt, disease, beggars, poverty; all landmarks of the Third world. We also had to cope with cheating and stealing; byproducts of injustice and misery.

On balance we could take it all, for our sacrifice, if there was any, was fully compensated. Out in the front-line

5. Cleanings from the writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 313

we felt closer to Baha'u'llah, and confident of His support. That is why when failure seemed apparent, we were not discouraged, knowing that success is born out of constant effort, which, sometimes, became visible only many years later.

When after years we did come home, the joy of meeting old friends was sometimes dulled by our inability to communicate and share our new experiences. Our cities had grown bigger, with more cars, more noise and more pollution. The people seemed less friendly, and we experienced a stronger culture shock in reverse, than when we left at the outset.

Most of us go back to the Third World, for we cannot resist its pull. The First world has more telephones and sanitation, but it has sold its soul to the machine. Perhaps the First world will not regain its composure, until it embraces the people of the Third world by sharing rather than dividing the wealth of this earth, and by remembering that: "This earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens."

CHAPTER IV

SOME OTHER RELIGIONS

According to sociologists no society has as yet existed without religion. Antropologists claim that up to now no primitive society was found without a religion. Primitive religion is concerned mostly with the unknown in the world of nature, while revealed religion is concerned with the unknown in the spiritual life of man. Somebody said that history is the march of God through time. While studying history Toynbee came to the conclusion that civilizations are unintelligible without religion. Whether a society can function without religion has not yet been proven.

While Communism has declared war on religion, it has its shrines, tombs, heroes, symbols, martyrs and sacred writings. Since Communism denies God it is only a quasi-religion. Nationalism has often competed with religion for the loyalty of its subjects. It built shrines and monuments for its national heroes, as they were once erected for saints.

RELIGION HAS VARIOUS PHASES.

Religions like civilizations pass through different stages of evolution, childhood, adolescence, maturity, old age, and then they disintegrate. Sorokin describes their development in three phases; idealistic, ideational and sensate. Listening to a Spanish philosopher in Caracas, a former student of Ortega y Gasset, he describes the three stages as follows:

In the first stage consciousness of God is all pervasive, and is the keynote of the period. It is the time when

churches and cathedrals are built, when faith and devotion are the springboards of all activity, and when pilgrims travel the highways to places of worship.

In the second stage the emphasis is no longer on God but on Culture. This is the period when theatres and museums are built, when a poet or composer is more welcome in society than a man of religion. In religious life, theology, that is intellectual interpretation, becomes more important than faith itself, and is, therefore, the cause for splitting into sects. On the highways we now find, instead of the pilgrim, the troubadur, the painter and the artisan, not to worship, but in search of beauty.

In the third period, which inevitably follows the first two in every civilization, the keynote is not God nor Culture but Power. The most imposing and costliest buildings that stretch into the skies, are now not cathedrals nor art galleries, but fortifications or the headquarters of industry and finance. The most absorbing questions now are: how many bombers, or how many snares?, or how much does it cost, or how much one earns? In religion it is not Faith nor Theology that characterizes this period, but Tradition. The vitality and purposefulness of religion are gone. All that remains is conformity, custom, the rigid outward form, tradition. And on the highways, it is not the pilgrim nor the artisan we now meet, but the tourist, who does not seek a place of worship or beauty, but of pleasure.

Recently a Jesuit Professor of the Catholic University in Lyons wrote: "It is the essence of Catholicism

to be traditional. Tradition is its living soul. It is from tradition that it derives its strength." Every organization develops its traditions as means to an end. If, however, tradition becomes the end itself, then the end of the organization is in sight. When Communists call religion the opium of the people they are right, but with this qualification. What they mean and understand by religion is its third stage, when it is old, decrepit and dying. Since it takes centuries for a religion to die, the confusion is understandable. Just as it is unfair to judge the strength and usefulness of a man on his death bed, likewise our judgement of religion is distorted if it is based on its remnants in old age, tradition.

It has not been natural for man to change rapidly. It took millions of years for sea creatures to adapt themselves, when the seas were receding, to become land creatures. The fastest means of travel for man five thousand years B.C. was by camel eight miles per hour. The first mail coach in England did ten miles per hour in 1784 A.C. While man has an innate and irrational resistance to change, he could and did adapt himself to new climates, new tools and new ideas.

According to a Gallup poll survey of 1957 only fourteen per cent of all American adults believed that religion is losing in influence. In 1970 their number increased to seventy five per cent. A 1974 Gallup survey estimates the Sunday service attendance in a typical week as follows: U.S.A. forty per cent, France twenty five per cent, Sweden nine per cent. The Benjamin

Franklin library in Guadalajara has fifteen thousand books. Almost all its readers are university students. When I asked the librarian why on religion there ^{were} are only thirty books on the shelves, she explained ~~the reason is~~ that there is no demand for books on religion.

Hiking through the countryside of Mexico, we came to many village churches with no priest in attendance, since none are available. According to various reports enrollments in theological colleges are dangerously low. Insert 47

Hermann Hesse, the German writer and philosopher, (whose works have had ^{lately} latterly an unusually favorable reception, not only among North American college students, but also among Spanish speaking students,) wrote in "Steppenwolf": "Human life is reduced to real suffering, to hell, only when two ages, two cultures and religions overlap ... with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standard and no security." Hesse did not explain what he meant by the overlapping of two ages and religions. Did he know about the emerging Bahá'í era, or was it the poet's intuitive knowledge?

THE NEW GENERATION

Returning to North America after living fourteen years abroad we found the young people different. They were definitely not like the youth of my generation. We used to dress like little gentlemen, and wished to behave like gentlemen. We wanted success to emulate and surpass our fathers. The girls were wearing skirts, behaved like ladies, and we had to treat them

Insert 47

Pope Paul complained in April 1977 that since 1969 the number of new priests throughout the world had dropped by almost a third. Andrew Greeley, sociologist, writes that the USA is the most religious of all industrialized nations. Nevertheless among USA Catholics in the last ten years Sunday Mass attendance has fallen from 71 to 50%, and monthly confessions from 37 to 17%. (The TABLET, 15.1.1978)

"The Episcopal Church has lost a member every fifteen minutes over the past decade." Time, 26.12.1977 p.30

There are half as many missionaries in the field of mainstream religions than ten years ago.

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Accordingly. But now it was not only the length of their hair, their beard, their unselfconscious behaviour and informal attire that was different. There was something else about youth that intrigued us, and we wanted to know what it was. Speaking to young people we got a new insight, which was strengthened by reading Chaires A. Reich's "The Greening of America."

This book describes in three stages, Consciousness I, II and III, the gradual unfolding of the soul of America. Consciousness I was developed in the first centuries of American history. It produced the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and its philosophy of liberty and rugged individualism. It suited the individual farmer, (in the early days most Americans were farmers,) the few tradesmen and small businessmen, each self-reliant, working for himself, captain of his own soul. Religion regulated morality with little or no interference from the state. There was space, there were opportunities, ^{for those} and who wanted to get ahead. This was the grassroot period of America. It stretched past the early part of this century up to the Great Depression.

The first Americans ^{to} ~~who have accepted~~ the Bahá'í Faith ^{within} ~~up to~~ this period grew up with this Consciousness I, since Consciousness II and III, as we shall see, came later. Most early believers accepted the Faith through the study of bible prophecies, making the transition from Christ to Bahá'u'lláh. They had hardly any knowledge of Baha'i Administration, nor were conditioned to grasp its social implications.

Consciousness II, according to Reich, developed from

the thirties on, when many a farmer migrated to the cities and with other Americans got employment in factories. Instead of working for themselves as free men, now they had to do work directed by others, learn to operate the machine often at the cost of their own real self. To place their trust in modern technology meant the loss of faith in humanity. The rules of the Corporation overshadowed the importance of the Bill of Rights. The organization men became indoctrinated, were trained to play their role, behave and dress according to status, say what was expected of them to say, or lose their job. Men with Consciousness II were establishment minded, traditional in religion, conservative and hallow in ideas, and tended to live in suburbia. For them the word Baha'i was too exotic, excentric or esoteric to merit closer investigation.

In the Thirties, Forties and first half of the Fifties very few people in the Western world crossed the line to join the Baha'i world. People with Consciousness I or II could not make the grade nor encompass the constantly growing vista, with which the world Order letters of Shoghi Effendi enriched the Baha'i world. Since there was hardly any progress on the home front, the Guardian launched in 1937 the first Seven Year Plan, followed by the second, and then by the Ten Year Crusade, which lifted the Baha'i Community out of a rut, and changed its image and influence in the world.

After 1957 - the year of Shoghi Effendi's passing - young people developed in America and other affluent countries developed

Consciousness III. They came to realize that life offered affluence, the comforts of technology, in exchange for the sterility and loneliness of city living, the ugliness of its streets, the commercialism of most values and the synthetic quality of almost everything. "All of Consciousness III's criticisms of society were brought into sharpest focus by the Vietnam War. For the war seemed to sum up the evils of our society: destruction of people, destruction of environment, depersonalized use of technology, war by the rich and powerful against the poor and helpless, justification based on abstract rationality, hypocrisy and lies, and a demand ~~for~~ that the individual, regardless of his conscience, values, or self, make himself into a part of the war machine, an impersonal projectile bringing death to other people. Those who said they could not go believed that compulsory service in a war they hated would be so total a destruction of their genuine values that even if they did return to the United States, they could never return to the ranks of the genuinely living." ¹

Those with this consciousness rejected every antagonistic doctrine and the lifestyle of their parents. They dressed differently, in jeans, work shirts, informal clothing, poor and rich alike. No one tried to surpass the other. There is no snobishness or servility among them. They seek no status nor want to compete against others. No one judges the other, for all are brothers.

That they reject the world inherited from their

1. Charles A. Reich, The Greening of America, A Bantam Book, p.247

fathers with Consciousness II is evident. They also reject organized religion. Freeing themselves from slavery to the machine, from the nation-state that leads to war, they want to prepare themselves for Consciousness IV, V and VI, which Reich mentions in his book without describing them. He apparently leaves their description to us, and we hope the reader will find it in Chapter VII of this book.

From the Sixties on there was a large increase in the membership of the Baha'i Community in North America. The new believers, mostly youth, gave many indications of the characteristics of Consciousness III. At the St. Louis Conference in 1974, the largest Baha'i gathering in history, with an attendance of twelve thousand believers, the great majority were young people, giving every evidence of belonging to a new type of man. Their consciousness strengthened by their newly-found faith, gave them a new purpose in life, and were obviously emancipated to a higher level of understanding which made them true citizens of the world. Serious and responsible young people, they were concerned about the future, knowing that it will not be easy, but were willing to take it on, come what may, confident in the promise of ultimate victory.

A VISIT TO CHINA.

A business trip took us to Canton for one week in the fall of 1969. It was not very successful since the Communist export executives are hard men to deal with. The impression, however, created by these poor, honest and industrious people was overwhelming.

The first thing that strikes the visitor is cleanliness and order. Coming by train from Hong Kong, the contrast was very evident. The fields looked well-tended and neat like like gardens. We saw hundreds of field workers bent over their task, none were loafing, though they were all working for the state. Canton, an industrial city of four million people, had no smog. The reason was obvious. There were hardly any cars on the cleanly swept streets. Transportation was on foot, by bicycle or bus.

There was no corruption, nor bribes, nor tips. Many hundreds of western businessmen were buying at this Fair for millions of dollars. The Chinese officials we were negotiating with were earning about forty dollars a month. We could not invite them for a meal, nor would they accept any gifts. They were incorruptible. A taxi driver ran after me into the hotel lobby, giving me a banknote with the explanation that I had overpaid. The meals were excellent and inexpensive, but the waitresses would not accept any tips. If we left any money on the table, they would run after us to return it. A few guests slipped some notes under a plate and escaped unnoticed. Next day there was a message on a blackboard that at such a table number so much money was forgotten, which should be picked up at the cashier's desk.

The people were all poor, dressed alike in grey or blue cotton uniforms, whether it was the boy who brought us tea or the department chief from the Peking head office. Although we were dealing with large amounts, there was no feeling of greed or envy. The average annual income in China was at that time under

hundred dollars per person. The Chinese did not create that depressed, dejected atmosphere we often experience among the very poor. They appeared eager, confident and busy, without that exhausted, tired look we often associate with our competitive, industrial world.

We made friends with several contacts and three interpreters. One evening five of them were in my room, talking for hours comparing their world with the west. They appeared so naive, honest, unsophisticated and, of course, brainwashed, that too much knowledge of the west might only confuse and contaminate them. I spoke to them about our Baha'i objectives to which, at this point in time, they could give only polite attention.

The Communists were very proud at having conquered the recurring ordeal of famine. The only famine the west remembers, excepting in the war years, was the Great Irish potato famine in 1848, when one and a half million men, women and children starved to death. China's experience with famine is much more recent and devastating. Uncounted tens of millions of human beings have died in China of hunger. In 1929 in only one province six million people died. Then the average life expectancy in China was twenty five years, while in the U.S.A. in the same year it was sixty four. No one knew from year to year, when and where famine would strike.

Within twelve years after taking over the country, the Communists built forty six dams, much of it by hand labor for lack of machinery, controlled the Yellow River, and have had no famine since 1961. This collective effort, for the benefit of

all, seems to have given the people a feeling of togetherness, assurance and satisfaction, which to a Baha'i observer was very revealing. Here was a poor country, the most populous in the world, with no apparent greed or corruption, no rich people and no one hungry. It had no inflation nor unemployment, no beggars, no drugs, no vice nor crimes. The picture of Mao-Tse-Tung, his Red Book and his sayings were everywhere. The people seemed united and happy. It could not have been a perfect state, but we could feel and see that some Baha'i principles, as described in Chapter II, were in operation here.

Teilhard de Chardin, who had lived in China, asked: "Modern totalitarianism, monstrous as it is, is it not really the distortion of something magnificent, and thus quite near the truth?"

When I left China I felt a deep affection for its people, which was not sentimental and which I cannot describe. I have also felt that they have grasped and applied some of the principles of Baha'u'llah, and if they can continue to progress in peace, they may discover the source of the Power of the New Age and will then have an unimaginably glorious future.

TOWARDS THE YEAR 2000

The next twenty ^{two} ~~five~~ years appear more frightening than cheerful. The world's food supply is running short. The world's fish catch is declining, with little prospect of reversing the trend. Continued inflation with gainfully high food prices seems inevitable. Ecological undermining of major food systems are visible for all to see, and predictable for years to come. Famine is among us. At the World Food Congress in Rome experts estimated that between fifty to two hundred million people will die of hunger within the next ten years, without any visible means of preventing it. Actions taken or projected to curb population growth are considered insufficient. Mounting pollution of land and sea continues at an alarming rate.

We have no leaders anywhere in sight to cope with these global problems. We have no governments nor world authority to legislate, impose its laws, and reverse the direction from global catastrophe. Where is the conscience we can appeal to? Where is the will to surrender national sovereignty to a world court?

The average North American, representing six per cent of the world's population, consumes close to two thousand pounds of grain per year, per person, of which only two hundred pounds are used for bread, pastries and breakfast cereals. The rest is consumed indirectly in the form of meat, eggs and milk. In the Third World the average grain consumption

is ~~and~~ four hundred pounds per person annually, most of which is consumed directly, since very little is left to convert into livestock products.

Since the Third World includes the oil exporting countries and many others, where in recent years remarkable progress has been made, though with grossly uneven distribution of income, the term "Fourth world" is increasingly being used.

SHORTAGE OF FOOD

The Fourth world includes ~~nine hundred million~~ ^{over one billion} people in about forty countries with an average per capita income from ^{70.00} ~~60.00~~ to less than ^{200.00} ~~100.00~~ per year. Its population is concentrated in the Indian subcontinent, in sub-Saharan Africa, and in pockets of Latin America. The Fourth world, with scarce resources, cannot meet the sky-rocketing prices for energy and fertilizer, and is in desperate need of assistance. "The silent crisis of malnutrition may be denying close to a billion human beings the basic right to realize their full genetic potential, their full humanity."¹ China with the same per capita income with a population of eight hundred million is usually not included in the Fourth world, probably for reasons explained in the previous chapter.

The tragedy of the sub-Saharan countries is an illustration of what is happening in many parts of the world. Over the last thirty five years human and livestock population doubled in this area. To support themselves overgrazing and deforestation was encouraged, which advanced the Sahara Desert

1, BE BEYOND BOUND, Lester R. Brown, Published for the Overseas Development Council, 1974, p. 12. Part of the data in this chapter is taken from the above book.

up to thirty miles per year along its southern fringe of 3,500 miles, thus diminishing the earth's food-producing capacity. The southward advance of the Sahara condemned so far twenty two million people to starvation. As it advances to more populous regions hundred million human beings will be affected.

Within the next ten years the world's grain production has to be increased by thirty three per cent, while we are facing shortages in the four basic agricultural resources: land, water, energy, and fertilizer. The grain producing countries are reaching the limits of their production capacity. If they are to increase production, not only would they suggest contamination, but the price of food would rise beyond the reach of the poor. The other alternative is to increase food production in underdeveloped countries where large pools of underemployed labor is available, but they need fertilizer and help.

The world's fish catch after twenty years of continuous growth has been shrinking in the last few years. Without a global control overfishing is inevitable. The ocean has not the answer for the growing need for food.

TIME FOR DECISION

The demand for food was doubled in the last twenty years. While food experts anticipate an equal increase in demand, they do not know where it will come from in the next twenty years. One answer would be that the affluent nations substitute vegetable protein for animal protein. It requires ten times as much arable land to produce one pound of animal protein than one

pound of vegetable protein. Will however the dimension and urgency of this problem be recognized soon enough to bring about a radical change in our diet?

The economic and political structure of the powerful nations appears inflexible. Unless they can shed their short range, nation-centered point of view, the world will be locked in a pattern of chaos and conflict not unlike the decade preceding the Second World War. The German army has invaded twice in this century the Ukraine, then the bread basket of Europe. Today the bread basket of the world is the U.S.A. Will hungry Asian ~~forces~~ ^{armies} invade America next time?

"If an affluent minority throughout the world continues to expand its consumption of livestock products, grain prices may be pulled out of reach of the poorest quarter of mankind. And if Americans continue to drive large automobiles, consuming a disproportionately large share of the world's available energy supplies, the world energy supplies will become more scarce, and farmers in India and elsewhere in the developing world may be unable to obtain fuel to operate their irrigation pumps. The world food problem has many new dimensions, but none is more complex or difficult to deal with than the moral one." ²

Non-military foreign aid of the U.S.A. in 1975 represented one third of one per cent of its total production. ³

(Insert 68)

2. Ibid p.15-16

3. U.S. News and World Report, 9.15.1975

Using United Nations figures, the average fuel consumption in 1966 of the "rich" countries, representing 31% of the world's population, was 4.52 metric ton of coal equivalent, while the remaining "poor" people consumed 0.32 metric ton c.e., roughly one-fourteenth of the rich. The United States with 5.6% of the world population uses up about 40 per cent of the world's primary resources. Here is a quotation which could be repeated many times in the coming decades: "Enough is good, more-than-enough is evil."⁴

"The essence of the Baha'i economic teachings is this, that immense riches far beyond what is necessary should not be accumulated."⁵

4, SHALL IS BEAUTIFUL, E.F. Schumacher, p.248

5, STAR OF THE WEST, vol. 10, No. 18 p. 329-330
Abdu'l-Baha

WORLDWIDE OPPRESSION

Abdu'l-Baha and Shoghi Effendi are supposed to have said that ^{we} Lesser Peace and the political unification of the world are to be achieved before the end of this century.

Of Abdu'l-Baha's "Seven Lights of Unity," which may not necessarily follow the order in which they were written, the first three do seem to have a logical sequence. The first light "Political Unity" implies the political unification of the world, or the Lesser Peace, which will be brought about by the non-Baha'i world. The second light "Unity of Thought in World Undertakings" can mean a ^{global} ~~world~~ plan for a more equitable distribution of food and resources, the logical first step of a world government burdened with starvation in many parts of its realm. The third light, "Unity of Freedom," implies the need for freedom and suggests, that the political unification of the world may be achieved only at the expense of civil rights and freedom, probably by means of force and oppression.

Did Baha'u'llah refer to this period when he said: "These great oppressions that have befallen the world are preparing it for the advent of the Most Great Justice?" ⁶

Insert 69 In an unpublished tablet Baha'u'llah was reported to have said: "A great change will sweep over the world: first a wave of oppression, then will come the Most Great Justice, then the Most Great Peace."

Did Abdu'l-Baha refer to the end of this century when he said in 1904: "... Ere long shall the clamour of the
6. Advent of Divine Justice, p. 23

"This Most Great Justice is indeed the Justice upon which the structure of the Most Great Peace can alone, and must eventually rest." 7

7, Shoghi Effendi, Promised Day is Come, p.4

multitude throughout Africa, throughout America, the cry of the European and the Turk, the groaning of India and China, be heard from far and near. One and all, they shall arise with all their power to resist His Cause." 8

In a recent letter ^{dated 26-11-76} the Universal House of Justice foreshadows "the worldwide opposition which is to come, and unequivocally giving the assurance of ultimate victory."

Insert 70

THE TWO WORLDS

we have started this chapter by enumerating ^{some of} the frightening problems the non-Baha'i world is to encounter between now and the end of this century. ^{This chapter closes} ~~we have finished this~~ chapter with prophetic quotations about oppression and opposition that are to befall the Baha'i and non-Baha'i world. These two worlds and their destiny are closely ^{linked,} ~~tied together.~~ Neither can rest nor find peace until they come together. The next chapter will try to elucidate how this can be brought about.

Insert 70

Here is another quotation of Abdu'l-Baha's which ties us to the end of this century. "In the future there will be no very rich nor extremely poor. There will be an equilibrium of interests, and a condition will be established which will make both rich and poor comfortable and content. This will be the outcome of the ... 20th century which will be realized universally."

HAS SOCIETY A CONSCIENCE ?

If the day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor an American father, ^{Washington, D.C.} would have given his son, an airforce pilot, a gun and told him to kill their Japanese neighbor, his son could not have done so. He could not have killed this enemy of his country not only because it would have been against his conscience, a conscience conditioned by thousands of years of religious teachings, but also because it would have been against the laws of his country. It would have been murder. Yet in uniform the same American pilot could have released a bomb over Tokyo, killing thousands of men, women and children, and then it would not have been against his conscience, nor against the laws of his country, or those of any other country.

Does this mean that the individual has a conscience, while society has none?

Let us take another example. An impoverished Spanish nobleman, while attending a banquet at the court of Queen Isabella, could not have been tempted to steal a silver spoon. He could not have done so, not only because of his Christian upbringing, but also because it would have been against the laws of ^{society} his country. And yet the same nobleman, at the head of his army, did not hesitate to invade the land of the Incas and steal shiploads of silver from people who had never done him or his country any harm. For looting was not against his Christian conscience nor against the laws of his country or those of any other country.

How could the American kill thousands of Japanese, and the Spaniard appropriate the lifesavings of a nation without remorse or fear of punishment? Indeed, they were welcomed back as national heroes by their respective countries. Our contention is that the religions of the past were able to inculcate in man a moral restraint, which in time was legalized to regulate life and custom between individuals, within the family, the tribe, and even within the nation, but left a void in the relationship between classes, nations and races.

THE CHRISTIAN INDIVIDUAL IN AN IMMORAL SOCIETY

Not much scrutiny is required to establish the absence of Christian love in the structure of our western civilization. The pivot around which Christian civilization revolves is the ten commandments of Moses rather than the gospel of love. If the government of a Christian nation can maintain "law and order," which is the keynote of the ten commandments, we call it civilized. Virtues characteristic of Christian individuals are not typical of established "Christian" governments. The message of Jesus Christ was essentially for the individual. It influenced individual conduct rather than collective behaviour.

At the time of Christ, nations as we know them today, did not exist. Christ spoke to simple people who could neither read or write, living in small rural communities where they knew each other by their first names. They had no social consciousness of a nation, much less of the world. When Christ said "Love thy neighbor," they took Him literally and ever since

Christians have tried and usually have succeeded in being kind to their neighbors as long as they were individuals.

The people Christ taught did not belong to an integrated society with an awakened social consciousness. How could it have been otherwise? In an agricultural world, for the Christian world was, until very recently, mainly pastoral and agricultural, the individual tiller of the soil lived a solitary and contemplative life. He depended for his sustenance on the elements of nature rather than the life of the community. While worshipping God and getting along peacefully with his neighbors, he remained ignorant of the world and its inhabitants. In our age of speed we are apt to forget that for eighteen hundred years the average Christian did not wander more than thirty miles from the place of his birth in a lifetime.

The teachings of Christ satisfied the deeper emotional needs of the individual and made life easier. What could build a greater character than the words: "But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you"? Christ's message demanded a pure heart and stressed man's duty to his neighbors as an essential part of his duty to God. It consoled the suffering, comforted the destitute, and offered hope when there was no more hope. It reiterated the moral code of Moses and spread it to the far corners of the earth.

There is no evidence that Christ intended to organize society. His contribution was a universal, ethical and non-political religion, acceptable to both Jew and Gentile. He

emphasized the possibilities of the good life, regardless of external and political conditions. His teachings were followed by individuals rather than by nations. We can point to many a man or woman who has lived a saintly Christian life, but not to the history of any nation which could be called truly Christian. The words of Christ: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" are of great historic consequence. "Indeed, Christ's emphasis on the idea that government was in one sense irrelevant because it was unable to touch the truly spiritual and socially minded men could in itself readily become a doctrine of lack of duty towards the state."¹

Both St. Augustine and St. Isidore of Seville believed in the divine appointment of wicked rulers, and St. Gregory taught the duty of submission to evil kings. Calvin wrote: "Therefore if we are cruelly vexed by an inhuman prince or robbed and plundered by one avaricious ... it is not for us to remedy these evils; for us it remains only to implore the aid of God in whose hands are the hearts of kings and changes of kingdoms."²

The highest spiritual teaching on individual behaviour seems to be expressed in these words of Christ: "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also, and whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain." This, however, could not have been intended to solve the problem of social justice.

¹ Thomas I. Cook, History of Political Philosophy, New York, p.163

² Calvin's Institutes, Book IV, Chap. XX

DOUBLE STANDARD

Love is purest where it desires no return for itself. Ideal love is only possible between individuals where mutual advantages are not consciously sought as the result of love - a condition that nations cannot match. We can, therefore, assume that Christ did not advise going the second mile in the hope that the Roman state might relent, or giving the thief all in the hope that he might return what he had taken, or loving the criminal with no other motive than to disarm him. Love is not social justice although social justice needs love. Christ's teachings on love can be applied effectively by individuals but not by the state. Christ promised neither political peace nor social justice to a world that was too immature to receive a collective message.

That in spite of the limitations of the message of Christ - a limitation imposed by the conditions of his time - Christian institutions were organized, proves that material means, however imperfect, are necessary for the spreading of spiritual truth. The finest wine needs a bottle to contain it. And around the Spirit that came from Nazareth a church was built, without which the message of Christ would have been lost as a river in the desert.

This church, which was so necessary for the spreading of the gospel and which, in the course of centuries, became one of the wealthiest and most powerful institutions in the world, failed when it tried to direct the economic and political affairs of nations. For Christian love, while it could solve problems

between individuals, could not settle differences between classes and nations. It was, therefore, unavoidable that the Church, after repeated unsuccessful attempts to take over the reins of temporal power, should eventually^{be} forced to leave politics to Caesar and Machiavelli.

"In Christian circles a double morality ... prevails, which is explained by the high position given to the State... The State with its 'morality' plays its part as a world independent of God and His Kingdom. Anything that puts itself beside God will itself be God. This exalting of the State to the same plane with God must be intolerable to the Christian conscience... In home affairs the boundless power of the State may be limited by the claims of Christian morality, but in foreign affairs and the closely associated questions of minorities of other nationality or of other religious confessions it is often quite otherwise. In these spheres the negation of all morality frequently becomes 'morality', if only the interests of the nation may be thereby furthered. Here is the hitherto unconquered stronghold within which the spirit of the world, the spirit of might, has fortified itself."³

The Doukhobors, the Mennonites, the followers of Tolstoy, and other Christian sects - conscious of the conflict between pure individual morality and the "immorality" of the state - withdrew from the world to live apart in segregated communities. Out of this philosophy has grown opposition to military service. People who function by the usual "double morality" often find it very difficult to understand these small

3. Dr. Max Huber, Professor of International Law at Zurich, later President of the Permanent Court of International Justice, STAATEN-POLITIK UND EVANGELIUM, 1924, p. 40.

Christian sects. But according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica "the Doukhabors found their relations to other people exclusively on love" and "when living up to the standard of their faith (they) present one of the nearest approaches to the realization of the Christian ideal which has ever been attained." These communities strive, with simple logic, to apply the teachings of Christ.

The tendency to withdraw from this "wicked" world to the seclusion of convents and monasteries, in order to lead a "saintly" life, amounts to a tacit recognition that Christian virtues so intimate in the life of individuals remained foreign to the secular world. The Protestant was not less explicit than the Catholic, in his emphasis on the individual who, following the footsteps of his Master, lived a good Christian life. He believed that he could be "saved" while living in an unjust and, by his own Christian standards, immoral state.

THE CHRISTIAN IN POLITICS AND ECONOMICS.

An early 12th Century statue carries the following inscription:
~~One of the statues of Christian Sweden of the early twelfth century reads as follows:~~ "A land should be built with law and not with deeds of violence... Law must be given and maintained to protect the poor, secure peace for the peaceful, but to deal punishment and terror to the violent... Because if there were no law, no man could live in the land. Therefore law (not love) was made, in the beginning by God, and afterwards by our king, with the consent of noblemen and the whole of the common people."⁴ Here again, love, as taught by Christ, is conspicuously absent.

The Scandinavians, in common with other European nations, have established and maintained civilization by enforcing the law and

4. Quoted by Sigrid Undset in *FREE WORLD*, 1943, p.212

order of the Old Testament, rather than by using the principle of love and forgiveness as contained in the Gospel. They did not do so out of disloyalty to Christ, but rather because of their inability to translate the moral value of love into their social needs.

Christian love arouses pity for a starving man but remains helpless in the face of famine in Africa or slum conditions in Alabama. To the poor are offered charity and hope but not a social revolution. Contemporaries, who vainly seek for love and compassion in industrial and political leaders, jump to the erroneous conclusion that Christianity has failed. They argue, and not without logic, that what Christianity could do for the individual it should do for society, forgetting that Christianity was not intended to be a social religion. It offered salvation to individuals but not to society. It did not guarantee social justice; at best it mitigated human suffering through pity and philanthropy. "The devotion of Christianity to the cross is an unconscious glorification of the individual moral ideal. The cross is the symbol of love triumphant in its own integrity, but not triumphant in the world and society. Society, in fact, conspired against the cross."⁵

It is not our purpose to minimize the influence of the teachings of Christ. Who could measure the comfort and hope he instilled in the hearts of untold millions of unfortunates by saying: You too are a man! You too can be saved! He inspired many a noble deed and improved human behavior by giving man a moral conscience.

"The final importance of Christianity from an ethical point of view is perhaps the insistence that true progress is inward,

5. Reinhold Niebuhr, MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY, N.Y., p.82

a matter of the individual, and that outward change can never of itself bring about the good life. The danger involved has always been that, turning inward, men might forget the importance of social justice as a basis for that good life, a danger particularly great since a concern for eternity might lead to the view that earthly conditions were unimportant. The individual might have the duty to be conscientious in his own behavior towards his fellows; but he would not necessarily have a duty to struggle for the general reform of society or for the creation of a more perfect political order. In short, while social welfare might be prompted by political means when opportunity offered, one could perform one's duty as a Christian and as a member of society despite the existence of political oppression. State and society were not synonymous.... Government, as a result, could too easily become at once authoritarian and negative, preserving the existing political and social pattern, and acquiesced in, if not supported by, religion."⁶

Social justice is a problem left unsolved by Christianity, although many who gave our nations character and direction were God-fearing men who believed in Jesus Christ. Christian principles inspired many social reformers who left their mark on our social institutions. But there was something in group behavior which could not obey the dictates of individual conscience. The Christian individual soon discovered that the political majority to which he belonged could make no concessions to a minority out of love. Many an industrialist, known in his private life as a

⁶. Thomas I. Cook, op.cit. pp. 164-5.

good and conscientious Christian, proved callous in his labor relations without conflict of conscience. That groups and nations can be more covetous and selfish than the individuals that compose them, has been borne out by many an event.

The evils we are fighting have often been called social, political, or economic, beyond the reach of individual action. The fault was not found with the individual as an individual, but rather when that individual merged his individuality with the group or nation. At that stage the Bible ceased to be his guide. The highest moral expression of collective conscience is social justice, for which the Christian individual, nurtured in love, has not been prepared. Love for his master did not liberate the Negro from slavery, nor did labor obtain fairer wages because of the employers' brotherly attitude.

Christ united man with God, and man with man, but not class with class, nation with nation. Social justice and the consciousness of the oneness of mankind are still foreign in the Christian world, not because of any limitations of Christ, but because of the limitations of the people to whom He spoke.

Formulating the foreign policy of a western country, the Prime Minister said: "Our nation has no eternal friends, only eternal interests." This is the meaning of another patriotic statement: "My country, right or wrong" - the dilemma of the twentieth century as it was startlingly illustrated in the Nuremberg trials.

The American Peace Corps, however selfless the motivation of its young members, is still suspect, because the State that sponsors it, like any other State in a pre-Bahá'í society, is primarily interested in the welfare of its citizens.

don't, then that relationship is in trouble."⁷

"It is necessary to insist that the moral achievement of individual goodwill is not a substitute for the mechanism of social control. It may perfect and purify, but it cannot create basic justice. Basic justice in any society depends upon the right organization of man's common labor...no moral idealism can overcome a basic mechanical defect in the social structure... A profound religion...cannot afford to dismiss the problem of justice or to transcend it by premature appeals to the goodwill of individuals...moral purpose must become incorporated in adequate social mechanisms if it is not to be frustrated and corrupted."⁸ We cannot ^{say} ~~that~~ Christian principles have been incorporated in the past in our political and economic institutions to ensure basic justice, nor can we hope, in the light of history, that Christianity can do so in the future.

RELIGION UNITES YET SEPARATES.

Under the name of a Buddha, a Moses, a Christ, or a Muhammad more people have been united for a longer period of time than under the name of a Caesar, a Plato, a Lincoln, or anyone else in history. Religion has been, we must admit, the greatest of all unifying forces. Ecclesiastical religion, it is true, made very pronounced demarcations between men and was the cause of many wars. Still, it has brought together more people and

⁷. Henry Kissinger, TIME Oct. 27, 1975

⁸. Reinhold Niebuhr, AN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS, 1937, pp. 192-3.

The Secretary of State of the same country said recently: "If we have a close relationship with a foreign government, it must be because we believe that we have permanent interests. If we don't then that relationship is in trouble."⁷

has been a greater influence for a peaceful community life than any other factor. It was religion that developed man's interest in God, an interest outside himself, in devotion to which he forgot his baser self, at least for a while. This education in self-forgetfulness unwrapped the egocentric individual, awakened his mind, and transformed him gradually into a civilized man.

Religion has been not only the greatest factor in binding people together, it has also been the greatest moral force. Can we compare the influence for good of a Buddha, a Christ, or a Moses with that of a Socrates, a Marcus Aurelius, a Shakespeare, or any other great historical figure? The materialist, arguing that human nature cannot change, must admit that human behavior has changed. Who can disprove that religion has been the greatest single factor to improve human behavior in the course of centuries? Behavior often repeated becomes a habit, and habit is, as we know, second nature, which is as good as human nature.

If we wonder why a humanitarian may be self-sacrificing and still not adhere to any religion, the answer lies behind centuries of habit-forming ancestors and a cumulative human environment impregnated with spiritual virtues. Many an agnostic could not help but assimilate, often unconsciously, the ethical values of his religious background.

Religion has not made perfect individuals, much less has it created a perfect society. But, if we add up all that can be said for and against it, the balance sheet will show that it has done more good than harm, that it has brought more peace than strife, that, in many of the wars that were fought in its name, it was used as an excuse to shield human failings, and

that when religion was served as opium to the people, it was of a kind that lightened their suffering without undermining their health. (Since man craves for intoxication, intake of the spirit of God seems preferable to distilled spirits from fermented grains.) "All religions are," as C.G. Jung, the famous psychologist puts it, "therapies for the sorrows and disorders of the soul."

Religion has been the greatest civilizing force, though often misused. This was inevitable, for man found in God a Power greater than himself, a Force he could not fully understand. Encouraged by his initial success, he was bound to overreach himself and thus hampered his own progress. A Canadian clergyman said: "with respect to religion we have reached the end of one era and the beginning of another." In this politically and economically interdependent but strife-ridden world is it not logical to ask whether religion could not again supply unifying force as of old, but this time on a scale to encompass the whole earth?

TOWARDS MATURITY.

The greatest commandment of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," does not mean that the United States should love Mexico as itself, or that all Irishmen should love all Englishmen collectively as one Christian can love another Christian. When we enter into the realm of social relations, it is not love nor law but the combination of both, justice, which is the highest moral coefficient. Individuals belonging to a group or nation can express love, truthfulness, charity, and other Christian virtues, but not justice. An individual can never be sure if he is just in his dealings, but he can always be sure if he loves a person or not. If two people love each other, they solve their problems without

recourse to justice. This is not true either of two corporations or of two nations. The highest moral expression between groups or nations is not love, which can issue only from individuals, but justice, which is the impersonal expression of a collective conscience. Love, the highest moral conception of Christianity, did not and cannot supply the key for the solution of our economic and political problems.

The lawgiver of the Hebrews made social progress possible within certain limits. Under the banner of law and order individuals could band together, and establish a comparatively peaceful community life. The modern world, however, has lost its equilibrium. Economic interdependence compels us, though traditionally and psychologically unprepared, to be more conscious of groups and nations than of individuals. Neither the love of Christ nor the law of Moses can offer help, for neither can insure social justice to the whole world.

"The Revelation associated with the Faith of Jesus Christ focused attention primarily on the redemption of the individual and the moulding of his conduct, and stressed, as its central theme, the necessity of inculcating a high standard of morality and discipline into man, as the fundamental unit in human society. Nowhere in the Gospels do we find any reference to the unity of nations or the unification of mankind as a whole. When Jesus spoke to those around him, he addressed them primarily as individuals rather than as component parts of one universal, indivisible entity. The whole surface of the earth as yet unexplored, and the organization of all its peoples and nations as one

unit could, consequently not be envisaged, how much less proclaimed or established."⁹

Baha'is believe that 1844 marks the beginning of a new spiritual renaissance, which is awakening in men the social awareness necessary for social justice. The liberation of slaves, the socialist and cooperative movements, progress toward political and economic democracy, and many other humanitarian movements, all had their origin at about the same time in the nineteenth century. The basic principle of the Baha'i Faith is the oneness of mankind, and it offers a unique and challenging pattern for the development of a world order. Just as Christ taught individual discipline, so Baha'u'llah is offering a maturing humanity the means for imposing social discipline on itself. The Baha'i Faith is like the great religions of the past in that it upholds a belief in God and stresses ethical conduct in the individual, but it differs greatly in that its chief concern is the creation of a world government and a world civilization based on justice.

Adolescent boys cease fighting each other when they reach manhood, as it is not seemly for grownup men to settle an argument with their fists.. Likewise nations will, as they outgrow their adolescence, gather around a table and dispose of their differences as mature men. In a mature age which, according to Bahá'u'llah, we are now approaching, a new world-ethic is required. Conformity to law as stressed in the Old Testament, the significance of love as stressed in the New Testament, find their synthesis in social justice, as expressed in the collective conscience of an

⁹. Shoghi Effendi, THE PROMISED DAY IS COME, Wilmette, Ill, p. 124.

awakened humanity.

Baha'u'llah has declared that justice is the foundation of all human virtues. Justice is the world-ethic essential for the well-being of all people. And yet when we read of the strikers from an African mine, or the dock workers of Hong Kong, or the share-croppers of Brazil, how many of us would crusade for justice? Baha'is believe, and they have demonstrated it already in a world-wide community, that the new emphasis in human experience is centered around the consciousness of the oneness of mankind. With them, this is not a sentimental or intellectual acceptance of the brotherhood of man, but a deep-rooted conviction experienced through faith in Baha'u'llah.

"The principle of the Oneness of Mankind—the pivot round which all the teachings of Baha'u'llah revolve — is not mere outburst of ignorant emotionalism or an expression of vague and pious hope. Its appeal is not to be merely identified with a re-awakening of the spirit of brotherhood and good-will among men, nor does it aim solely at the fostering of harmonious cooperation among individual peoples and nations. Its implications are deeper, its claims greater than any which the Prophets of old were allowed to advance. Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. It does not constitute merely the enunciation of an ideal, but stands inseparably associated with an institution adequate to embody its truth, demonstrate its validity, and perpetuate its influence. It implies an organic change in the structure

of present day society, a change such as the world has not yet experienced... It calls for no less than the reconstruction and the demilitarization of the whole civilized world - a world organically unified in all the essential aspects of its life, its political machinery, its spiritual aspiration, its trade and finance, its script and language, and yet infinite in the diversity of the national characteristics of its federated units." ¹⁰

Our conclusion is that however moral we may be as individuals, we live in an immoral state. The citizens of a country taken as individuals may be friendly, trustworthy, likeable and charitable. Yet the same people collectively, as a nation, can be guilty of cruelty, oppression and mass murder, entirely out of character in relation to their individual members. Why? Because the impact of the religions of the past stopped short somewhere along the line of our evolving conscience. The problem of our age is a breakthrough, transcending the limitations of racial, national and religious loyalties.

Can moral sanctions have the same restraining effect on a nation as they have on individuals? Since moral laws are incorporated in our legal system to regulate the relationship between individuals, why are there no similar laws in existence to prevent conflict between classes, strife between ethnic groups and wars between nations? Can the good which is in each citizen be expressed collectively through the state?

The next chapter has the task of answering these questions. 11

¹⁰ Iqbal Effendi, THE WORLD ORDER OF BAKA'U'LLAH, N.Y., p.42
¹¹ Part of the material in this chapter is reprinted from the writer's earlier book: "THIS EARTH ONE COUNTRY," now out of print.

CHAPTER VII
SOCIETY WITH A CONSCIENCE

We are now coming to the central core of this book. So far we have seen that western society has not been able to generate a conscience comparable to that of the individual, since ^{our society} it is motivated primarily by self-interest. In describing the following social situation we shall try to illustrate how the Baha'i Faith transforms society into a living organism and does give it a conscience. At the same time we shall also endeavor to answer the question we are often asked: 'Has the Baha'i Faith anything really new to offer to the world?'

Cursory readers of Baha'i literature may conclude that there is nothing really new in it besides its name. A study of comparative religions shows that all religions teach the Golden Rule. The Baha'is stand for agreement between science and religion, equality between men and women, harmony between people of different races and cultures, world government, a universal tongue, a world police force and world peace. These are praiseworthy aims, and were daring in the latter half of the nineteenth century when announced by the founder of the Baha'i Faith, but his followers do not claim for these ideals a world copyright. Baha'is also believe in the oneness of mankind, which others may call the brotherhood of man, but this apparently is not new either.

What then is new in the Baha'i Faith? For unless this faith has something new and vital for our age, not available in the other religions, Baha'is have no logical justification to form a new religion, and thus ^h threaten a further division of our fragmented society. Baha'u'llah did bring something new and of

great urgency, for our times. It is so new that we have no adequate words in our language to make it readily intelligible, just as television was a meaningless word not so many years ago.

For what Baha'u'llah has brought to the world we can call a new invention. It is certainly a new creation, a new experience in mankind's social and spiritual life. It is more than an idea and more than a law. It is more than a technique, and has already been tested in a pilot plant. Those who have genuinely tried it can testify that it works. People were skeptical at first of the feasibility of television, until they could see that the thing worked. May we not similarly expect resistance, when we are dealing with a new dimension in the realm of moral and social experience, especially when the proof of seeing it work requires more preparation than the buying of a television set?

THIS FAITH WAS SOMETHING NEW.

For purposes of illustration we shall assume three identical countries facing the same situation. Each country has recently emerged from colonial status, and finds its population evenly, though not geographically, divided into two linguistic groups of equal importance. The countries involved cannot break up, and are too small and too poor to afford the expense of two official languages, two systems of education and media of communication. The problem is which of the two languages to choose.

The first country is a dictatorship, therefore, the solution is simple. The result, however, is not satisfactory, since half the nation has to learn a language it did not choose. Psychologists tell us that resentment against a people can develop

a mental block which makes it almost impossible to learn its language. With impeded communication this country's progress is seriously retarded, coupled with the uncertainty that a future military coup could reverse the choice of language, throwing the country into deeper turmoil.

The second nation emerges as a modern democracy, with the best parliamentary system human ingenuity so far ~~dit~~ could devise. The country forms two parties along linguistic lines, since it is the predominant issue of the day, and proceeds to an orderly election. The elected party with a very small majority decrees its tongue the official language of the country, which gives its members a great economic advantage. The losing party submits outwardly, but seethes within with obvious dissatisfaction which hampers progress for many generations to come.

In neither case is the nation really united, for the decision to choose the national language was made by and in the interest of the party in power. Furthermore, the possibility of future frictions or conflicts remain with no prospect of achieving a national consensus, much less a national conscience.

We shall now turn to the third country, which is a Baha'i state. For purposes of a more effective comparison we want to assume that the Baha'is as individuals in this third state are not better or more mature than the citizens of the other two countries. The only difference is that their Faith has endowed them with an instrument which, in its present embryonic form is called the Administrative Order, which in the future will be named the World Order of Baha'u'llah. It is the system with which

Baha'is solve their social problems, in this case the selection of an official language. The first action will consist in organizing Regional Conventions where each adult citizen votes for a number of delegates, based on proportionate representation, for the annual National Convention. The National Convention in turn will elect the National Spiritual Assembly, consisting of nine adult men or women, in the future to be called the National House of Justice, which will decide on the country's official language.

There is, however, a great difference between political elections as we know them, and Baha'i elections. In a Baha'i society there are no parties, which divide the nation; there are no candidates, since there are no pressure groups; there is no party platform, since every elected member follows freely the dictates of his own conscience, and is not committed nor responsible to any group or party. There is no electioneering either to serve special interests or stir up emotions.

All votes are cast by secret ballot in person, or by mail, in a calm and prayerful atmosphere. For a Baha'i to vote is just as sacred an act as prayer or communion is to a Christian. It is an integral part of his spiritual life. The person he votes for does not represent^s his interests but his conscience, since both were nurtured in their common faith and love for Baha'u'llah. Thus in the process of such an election selfish interests tend to become selfless. Their state of mind is best expressed in these words of Abdu'l-Baha, written when He was thirty one years old: "To regard humanity as a single individual, and one's own self as a member of that corporal form, and to know that if pain afflicts

any member of that body, it must inevitably result in suffering for all the rest." ¹

The process of Baha'i elections brings both factions together. It does more, it ties them together into one organic whole. The question of language becomes secondary to their faith in Baha'u'llah, and to their conviction that the whole is more important than the part. There is no solution for the section without submitting to the interests of the whole nation. To claim rights for the part at the expense of the whole would be tantamount to the giving up of one's faith. It would be disloyalty to Baha'u'llah and to God, ^{would cause} and the crippling of one's soul. A Baha'i's spiritual health is tied to the world community. A fish will die outside of water. A Baha'i will also die spiritually outside of his community to which he is tied organically.

"Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Be ye as the fingers of one hand, the members of one body. All the saplings of the world have appeared from one tree, and all the drops from one Ocean, and all beings owe their existence to one Being." ² We may add to this: "A community in which the friends love each other, encourage each other, work together, and are as one soul in one body, become a true, organic, healthy body...In such a body all will receive spiritual health and vitality from the organism itself." ³

CONSULTATION

We can now discuss the National Spiritual Assembly of nine members who meet for consultation and are to decide which

1. Abdu'l-baha, SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION, p.39

2. Baha'u'llah, PROMISED DAY IS COME, p.118

3. Universal House of Justice, WELLSPRINGS OF GUIDANCE, p.39

of the two languages to choose. It could happen that four are of one language group, and five of the other, though it would be more likely, that one or more are bilingual ^{have} family ties with both sides. As we said before none of them are committed to either section. Their consultation and the vote of each remains secret. Before consultation and voting they pray. They will pray intensely for their main concern is to please God and to preserve the unity of the nation. Everyone of them knows that to prefer the interests of a faction without regard for the nation as a whole is not only ~~xiafan~~ selfish but sinful and would go against his conscience, which has been trained from childhood that "the advantage of the part is best to be reached by the advantage of the whole."

Since the Assembly wants to be just to both linguistic sections of the nation, it will enact laws to fully compensate any economic or other disadvantage suffered by those who will have to learn a new language. The section whose tongue was chosen might be subject to a provisional extra tax to pay for the education and loss of time of the others ^{involved in learning his language} whatever decision is arrived at by majority vote the whole nation accepts as just, because of their trust in their National Assembly and their common faith and loyalty for Baha'u'llah.

The secret of the Assembly's success lies in the fact that Baha'u'llah has evoked a new dimension of social consciousness, and made them collectively responsible to God. For a Baha'i to contemplate a law which is unfair to a minority group would be just as difficult as for a believing Christian to plot a burglary of his church.

While each assembly member is encouraged to present his views as convincingly as he can, he knows that he sees only one facet of the whole truth. He knows that he represents only a part, and that the greatest good is in the whole. After he has presented his opinion, it is no longer his. A Baha'i gives away his opinion in the Assembly, as a Christian gives away a Xmas gift.

Without preparatory training, group thinking can easily be disturbed and swayed by a dominant personality. "The members of the Assembly," writes Abdu'l-Baha, "must in every matter search out the truth and not insist upon their own opinion, for stubbornness and insistence in one's views will lead ultimately to discord and wrangling and the truth will remain hidden." Conditioned from early youth, after presenting his case as well as he can, a Baha'i will try to understand the other point of view rather than defend his own. The religious mind is often a closed mind. Not so in the Baha'i Faith, for therein one's ego is constantly tested and purified, as the will of the individual, on matters of group action, has to submit to the will of the Assembly.

A little girl approaching her father asked him what he was doing. He answered, "I'm writing my sermon for next Sunday." His daughter asked: "Daddy, how do you know what to write?" After some hesitation the minister answered, "God tells me." "Daddy," the girl asked, "if God tells you what to write, why do you rub out so much?" When we listen only to our inner voice we are not really sure how much of it is the voice of God and how much the voice of our ego.

In Baha'i consultation each mind gives as well as takes, and is constantly trained to remain open. The ideas born

in such a meeting are the result of creative interaction of unselfish minds. One freed from personal ambition has greater vision and deeper insight. This is the detached attitude of the scientist absorbed in an objective search, and yet with a passion for truth. It is a new process of intercreative thinking. It cures the opinionated person whose mind is all made up.

No special authority is conferred upon the chairman of the Assembly, and his vote does not carry more weight than that of any other member. While a decision may have been reached by a majority of the Nine, it has the same effect as a unanimous vote. For when the nine members present their views - and their vote - they give it away, and transfer individual responsibility to collective responsibility. Whether an individual was for or against an issue is immaterial after a vote is taken. That is one of the reasons why there are no minority groups or schisms in the Baha'i Faith.

With the creation of the Baha'i administrative order, Baha'u'llah has endowed the community of his followers with collective moral responsibility. By imposing collective responsibility on the community, this Faith endows society with a collective conscience.

NOT BY WORDS ALONE

An American philosopher wrote: "For its effective salvation mankind will need to undergo something like a spontaneous religious conversion, one that will replace the mechanical world picture with an organic world picture."⁴ Is not this what

⁴ Lewis Mumford, THE MYTH OF THE MACHINE, p.413

Baha'u'llah is offering to the world? Ortega y Gasset, Spain's outstanding philosopher said: "Communities are not formed that people may live together, but to do something together."

Words cannot demonstrate what Baha'u'llah has brought to the world. That is, perhaps, why some people who attended a Baha'i meeting never went back. The Baha'i way of life is participation. It is not sitting and listening, watching and praying. Saint Patrick went to Ireland and founded Christianity there. A Christian missionary can build a chapel in a heathen village, settle, and claim the establishment of his Faith. A Baha'i pioneer cannot do the same. For his Faith is not established until there is a community with a functioning Local Spiritual Assembly. "To dissociate the administrative principles of the Cause from the purely spiritual and humanitarian teachings would be tantamount to a mutilation of the body of the Cause, a separation that can only result in the disintegration of its component parts, and the extinction of the Faith itself." ⁵ For the same reason Baha'i statistics give usually the number of Local Spiritual Assemblies rather than the number of believers in the world. The developing and maturing of the individual believer is conditioned by his interrelationship with the Baha'i community, its committees and assemblies.

One who obeys his conscience has overcome his baser instincts. A community with a collective conscience overcomes the desire for national supremacy, for monopolistic privileges or for racial priority. The Baha'i administrative system incorporates not only individual good will into a social mechanism, but

5. Shoghi Effendi, GUIDANCE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW, p. 99

produces a quality of the soul which can be born only out of a collective experience.

Impact 97 Justice as an abstract idea is relative. It is the balance between reward and retribution. This balance is impossible between individuals without love. Between nations, or between minority and majority groups, this love is expressed through justice. Though love and justice spring from the same divine source, their expression is different. One hundred true Christian, Muslim or Jewish believers will, as individuals, show the same qualities of love and goodwill as one hundred true Baha'is, but with this difference - the one hundred Baha'is will, in addition, elect a Spiritual Assembly and will express their social attitude towards others as one organic unit, with a collective conscience, trained for collective action, collectively responsible to God.

Justice cannot be enshrined in any constitution. No book can contain it. Justice like love cannot be preserved in a legal document or established by precedent. Justice like love cannot be separated from conscience. When conscience goes, justice goes with it. Social justice is impossible without a collective conscience. And it is this collective conscience which is the basic working principle of the future Baha'i House of Justice.

It is a new kind of experience, so new that even Baha'is describe it as embryonic, meaning that it is still in the process of birth. To explain it to the uninitiated is not easy. Perhaps that is why Abdu'l-Baha wrote: "Nothing on earth can be demonstrated by words alone, and every level of existence is known

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"Its message is applicable not only to the individual, but concerns itself primarily with the nature of those essential relationships that must bind all the states and nations as members of one human family. 6

6, Shoghi Effendi, World Order of Baha'u'llah, p.42

by its signs and symbols, and every degree in man's development has its identifying mark."⁶

"Is not the object of every Revelation to effect a transformation in the whole character of mankind, a transformation that shall manifest itself, both outwardly and inwardly, that shall affect both its inner life and external conditions? For if the character of mankind be not changed, the futility of God's universal Manifestation would be apparent."⁷

A NEW KIND OF LEADERSHIP.

In contrast to the religious communities of the past, which were essentially father-centered, the Baha'i world Community is centered around assemblies. The minister of many a Christian community is still addressed as father. Kings and sultans, popes and bishops often filled the need of a father image. Going back still further, the patriarchal society was the established pattern.

For the last six thousand years leadership meant individual personal impact. Until recently it was assumed that leadership, and for that matter any accomplishment requiring skill and knowledge, let alone judgement, could come only from the individual. An organization, we assumed, could perform only simple, repetitive, regimented work.

It is only since the early half of this century, coinciding with the beginning of the Baha'i world, that we can discern a trend of leadership from king to parliament, from minister to cabinet, from general to war council, from judge to

6. Abdu'l-Baha, SECRET OF DIVINE CIVILIZATION, p.98

7. Baha'u'llah, BAHAI WRITINGS, Wilmette 1942, p.45

jury. The large business organizations are no longer built or run by one man. Great decisions are increasingly entrusted to the interaction of many minds, be it a board, a commission, or council. Even our great inventions are today the result of the working together of many scientists.

A Spiritual Assembly, whether of a local, national or international Baha'i community, represents a new type of leadership. An Assembly's influence on a community is different from the impact of a leader's personality. An assembly can never address a community with the authoritarian and often condescending voice of a father's "my children." A leader's relationship to a community is like that of a father to his children. A Baha'i assembly's relationship to its community is a new way, born out of their common faith and understanding, rather than subservience and authority.

When a community is mature, not only in a physical sense, namely, that each Baha'i voter is over twenty-one, but also emotionally and spiritually, the assembly's decision is accepted as the ultimate good for all. The bond that binds the Baha'i voter to his assembly, his collective conscience, is deeper, and different from that of any other voter in relation to his government.

When a Baha'i votes he is performing a consecrated act of his faith, and when an assembly consults and reaches a decision it does so in conscious affirmation of their common faith. In such a relationship, when the grace of God is evoked, the impact of human personality with its inherent limitations is out of place.

The shift is thus inevitably from father to

assembly centeredness, from personality to idea centeredness; from immaturity to maturity.

"All created things," wrote Abdu'l-Baha, "have their degree of maturity. The period of maturity in the life of a tree is the time of its fruit-bearing ... in the human Kingdom man reaches his maturity when the light of his intelligence attains its greatest power of development."⁸

About thirty years ago Shoghi Effendi wrote: "That mystic, all pervasive, yet indefinable change, which we associate with the stage of maturity inevitable in the life of the individual and the development of the fruit ... must have its counterpart in the organization of human society. A similar state must sooner or later be attained in the collective life of mankind ... and endowing the whole human race with such potentialities of well-being as shall provide, throughout the succeeding ages, the chief incentive required for the eventual fulfillment of its high destiny."⁹

8. PROMISED DAY IS COME, p.123

9. Part of the material in Chapters VI and VII is reprinted from the author's article in WORLD ORDER, Fall 1967, p.27-31.

CHAPTER VIII

GOD AND THE SEVEN VALLEYS

Scientists calculate that our earth has been in existence ^{from its} ~~for two~~ thousand million years. Sir James Jean, as well as other physicists, estimate that our planet should endure another two thousand million years. ~~That would place us somewhere halfway in the expected lifespan of this globe.~~ Prehistoric man has lived on this earth for ^{five} ~~three~~ million years, or more. Recorded history can't trace us back further than the relatively short period of six thousand years. Toynbee's twenty one civilizations, as we have seen in the first Chapter, encompass the same time-span of six thousand years. The Adamic cycle, which started with Adam, the first man with a consciousness of God, also has had its beginning, according to Abdu'l-Baha, six thousand years ago.

Looking into the future, the Baha'i cycle is to last five hundred thousand years, which is not as much as it seems, since this planet with man on it has a scientifically calculated life expectancy of two thousand million years. This means that there is enough time left, barring accidents, for four thousand cycles to last, like the Baha'i cycle, five hundred thousand years each.

Between these calculations stands puny man in the year 1978, wondering if there is an Intelligence greater than himself in the universe. Life for beasts in the field and birds in the air revolves around food. To them life and food are synonymous, for with the end of food life ends. Children circle around their parents who give them food, affection and security. Man has also

always turned for security and protection to a Power greater than himself, worshipping whether the sun, or the goddess of fertility or of rain, or God as taught in the revelations of successive high Prophets.

Man needed a Deity and he built a religion around it, which gave him equilibrium in the environment ^{in which} he has lived. Man being endowed with a vivid imagination, his conception of God varied with time and place. Superstitions and half-truths of all kinds were unavoidable. We cannot deny religious disputes nor wars in the name of an imagined god. Nor can we blame entirely our contemporaries who have turned against God and religion.

It is fashionable not to believe in God in academic, leftist and other circles. To them God is dead. Man needs God most in a crisis. Will we need an atomic holocaust to destroy two thirds of mankind as intimated in the Scriptures?

Baha'is believe that God is beyond our comprehension, space, time and recognition. Since God is the Primal Point, the Source of all life it is important and vital for our well-being. If we can establish a relationship with this Source of Life, we call God, as for instance a plant establishes a relationship with the sun, it could only enrich our life as it has enriched the life of many millions before us.

A LOGICAL PROOF.

There are two worlds, the known and the unknown. That the unknown world exists we can easily prove since the world we know was once unknown. Animals are afraid of the unknown. Man, being partly animal, is partly afraid of the unknown. When

man closes his mind and has no further curiosity in a particular field of inquiry, believing that he knows all that is to be known, he has reached the point where the known meets the unknown, with no intention to go further. By closing his mind he refuses to enter the unknown. When Dr Stephen Leacock was asked by his McGill students about the desirability of a Ph.D. degree, he answered whimsically: A doctor's diploma certifies that the bearer has acquired all knowledge available in the discipline concerned, and is absolved of any further study or investigation.

What we do not know, or the unknown, must be infinitely more important and extensive than the known. Einstein said that his greatest knowledge is his knowledge of the vastness of the unknown. When Socrates said "I know that I do not know" meant the same thing. All discoveries, inventions, creative and original accomplishments belonged once to the unknown world. All advancement of human knowledge is the result of crossing the line where the known world meets the unknown. Since God is unknown, It belongs to the unknown world. To say that since we do not know nor comprehend God It does not exist, makes no sense. After all, how can the finite mind encompass the infinite?

Our conception of the Universe consists of everything there is, therefore, it includes both the known and the unknown world. Since the known and the unknown worlds are part of a whole, there is a relationship between them. Belief in God gives that relationship meaning. A non-believer in God can use the following simple mathematical equation:

$$\frac{a - b^x}{c} = x$$

What do
symbols
mean?

to find a logical explanation of ~~and~~ the existence of God.

^{Any} Every mathematician can tell us that the X on the right side of the above equation mark represents the unknown quantity. This X repeats itself in every mathematical problem. Mathematics is considered not only the most exact but also the foundation of all sciences. On the left side of the above equation mark are letters representing facts which are known. We then have in the above mathematical illustration two worlds facing each other, the known and the unknown. Although X is unknown, every scientist will admit that the mathematical formula has balance, purpose and meaning. They will go further and tell us, that without X, the unknown quantity, the whole structure would have no balance, nor purpose, nor meaning. This X, the unknown quantity, which dwells in the unknown world, is what Baha'is call God.

Abdu'l-Baha speaks of two kinds of knowledge; the knowledge of the essence and the knowledge of the qualities. The essence cannot be known except through the qualities. Science, for instance, does not know what electricity is. It is known only through its characteristics. Biologists do not know what life is. What we do know is only from observation of its qualities. In the same way we do not know God, except through its qualities. We can therefore say "God is that which animates and dominates all things which are but manifestations of its energy."

THE RELATIONSHIP.

Having thus established God as essential in our concept of the universe, the next question is how to establish a relationship with God. Just as a plant has to have a relation-

ship with the sun to survive, man needs a relationship with the Unknown, the Source of all life, X, the all-encompassing Intelligence we call God, to give our life meaning, purpose and balance. Toynbee, in his life-long study of the rise and fall of civilizations, observed that when men lost all awareness of a Godhead, their life lost meaning, purpose and equilibrium, causing the disintegration of that civilization. We can make the same observation studying the checkered life of individuals we know, or reading biographies of peoples' successes and failures.

One might say that some did quite well without establishing a conscious relationship with God. For instance, take a famous composer who was an agnostic. He found his fulfillment in music. He lived for it. As a composer he was intuitively in contact with the unknown, for he has created new compositions, which gave him meaning and purpose in life. We will find, however, that he lacked balance, since he had many problems and disappointments in his personal and social relationships, which could have been avoided. We know of many creative people who, although atheists, found great inner satisfaction in entering the unknown world, nevertheless were guilty of many eccentric and capricious characteristics of imbalance.

Then there are the mystics and esoteric teachers, some with large followings, who aim for direct contact with the Divine essence, or God. We cannot say that they do not get some results. But these could never compare with the influence and effectiveness of the Higher Prophets, the founders of the higher religions.

THE MEDIATOR.

The most recent Founder-Prophet of the religion of the future is Baha'u'llah, most of whose writings are available in English. Those who believe in Him, accept Baha'u'llah as the Mediator or Messenger of God for this day, and thus establish the most up-to-date relationship with God.

We have a friend in Canada who has been coming for years to Baha'i meetings. He would have liked to have that inner assurance and composure which come with faith, but he could not believe in God, nor accept Baha'u'llah except as a great seer. He admired and even envied his Baha'i friends for the tranquility and radiant acquiescence to life which their faith gave them, but he just could not establish the same relationship.

A Prophet is not like other men, just as Bethhoven was different from most men. The Prophets have the unique station of bringing to man the knowledge and the will of God. They are the Mediators between the unknown world of God and man, just as Bethhoven was the mediator for bringing his compositions from the unknown world to ours. The symphonies he brought to us from the unknown did exist before, just as America did exist long before Columbus. Bethhoven's symphonies did not come from nothing nor from nowhere. Nothing, as Henri Bergson so clearly postulated, does not exist. There is no place, nor any period in time to which science could point and say; there is nothing. Einstein, by proving that time and space are relative concepts, shows that neither has a beginning nor an end. For if time would have an end, nothing would begin where time ends. Since nothing

does not exist, time has no beginning nor end. Physicists tell us that matter is indestructible, therefore it too has no beginning nor end, giving us another proof that the finite is a restricted characteristic of our phenomenal, known world.

Baha'u'llah said: "From the beginning that hath no beginning ... till the end that hath no end." Then again "The process of His creation hath had no beginning, and can have no end."¹ Why all this may appear obtruse it is simple, scientifically and philosophically clear and evident.

Insert 107
It is only in the empirical, known world that we speak and are conscious of limitations. When we listen to Beethoven what moves us is the consciousness of the infinite. His symphonies take us into the unknown world, where there is no time, nor space nor limitations. The Prophets of God do the same by relating the unknown world of God, its Laws and Will to our everyday needs in this world.

Here are some of the riches we acquire by accepting Baha'u'llah as the Mediator of God and the Founder of the Baha'i Faith:

1/. We get a satisfactory answer to the disturbing questions: what is the meaning and purpose of life? Where are we going? Our final destination certainly cannot be nowhere, since as we have seen, nowhere does not exist.

2/. It gives us a code of ethics not only for our personal life, but also for society, which, for the first time in our spiritual evolution, encompasses all of mankind.

1. Baha'i World Faith, p. 28 and 29.

Insert 107

Jorge Luis Borges describes in his work "The Book of Sand" a collector who discovers a precious book, bound in fine leather, entitled "Holy writ". The number of pages in this book is no more or less than infinite. None is the first page, none the last. He can never find the same place twice.

3/. It gives us a relationship through God with all men, making it possible to connect our fullest personal potential organically with mankind. Thus revealing the utter hopelessness of unrelated, personal or fragmented humanitarian group effort, so often displayed with the best of intentions, but giving no result.

4. It is for the first time in religious history that the original teachings of a Founder-Prophet are available in his own handwriting, or recorded by dictation and authenticated for accuracy. This together with its Administrative System assures its continuity and safeguards this Faith from divisions.

5. It assures us of personal immortality and makes the unknown world not only inviting, but brings it so close that we can actually see and feel it, figuratively speaking. By the reading of and meditating on Baha'u'llah's writings it is possible for us to "see" the unknown world with our inner eye.

THE SEVEN VALLEYS

Following are some of the writer's personal impressions journeying through the Seven Valleys, which together with the HIDDEN WORDS, and works of similar inspirational nature, are not subject to authoritative interpretation.

After wandering in solitude for two years in the mountains of Sulaymaniyyih, Iraq, Baha'u'llah returned to Bagdad in 1856 and wrote the Seven Valleys in answer to a request by a Sufi seeker. This is the reason for the many Sufi and Quoranic references.

The Seven Valleys describe the journey of the human soul to God, "Until the wayfarer taketh leave of self, and traversed these stages, he shall never reach the ocean of nearness or union."² A lifetime may not be enough to journey through all seven valleys, yet Baha'u'llah wrote: "Although these journeys have no visible termination in the world of time, yet, one can traverse these seven stages in only seven steps, nay, even in a single breath, if God so desires it."³

In my case the traversing ~~xxxx~~ is taking much longer. When years ago I read the Seven Valleys for the first time I could find meaning only in the first three. The others were beyond my comprehension. Having reached the evening of my life, I can now relate to my own experiences all seven valleys, however inadequately, and thus find a meaning and significance in all of them. The existentialist approach is, as far as I can see, the most effective way to discuss the Seven Valleys, basing all observations ^{on} actual, personal experiences.

We shall divide the seven valleys into three parts. The first three valleys deal with the empirical or known world. The last three valleys belong to experiences in the unknown world. The fourth valley, the valley in-between, is situated on the border line between the known and the unknown world, having as function the connecting and balancing of the two worlds.

THE FIRST THREE VALLEYS.

The Valley of Search, being the first one, is usually the most painful and difficult valley to cross. In life

2. THE SEVEN VALLEYS p. 4, 1945, Villmuth 3. id. p.40

the beginning of most things is also difficult. In this valley we can feel lonely and dejected. We are uncertain of the meaning and purpose of life. Being in transition we feel shaky, uprooted, homeless. To traverse it, we require patience and a clean heart. We often feel disturbed, since joy/^{is} followed by sadness, achievement by frustration and enlightenment by contradictions. We are like seedlings with hardly any roots, which are often washed or blown away. That is why so many new Believers leave the Faith. Their roots did not go deep enough, and they could not take it. Others need long winters of germination and then, to everyone's surprise, arise and develop into a beautiful Baha'i. Others zigzag right and left, up and down, until they find an even course. The journey of each of us is tailored to our own needs. - It is not the time to go on pilgrimage.

How do we know when we have actually traversed this valley? We don't. There is a fluidity and timelessness about these valleys, which makes my arbitrary division into three parts questionable. Since in the spiritual world there is no beginning nor end, our journeys through none of the seven valleys has a specific beginning or end. This may not suit our orderly and logical mind, but then this journey is a preparation for the world of God, which our finite mind cannot grasp nor describe. Suffice it to say, that we may have experiences in any or all of the seven valleys, but this does not graduate us from any of them. We may find ourselves anytime back in the first valley. Whenever I am impatient I know to be back in the Valley of Search.

In the second valley we experience both joy and

pain, for it is the Valley of Love. It is a place of contrasts, for "one will be cool in fire and dry even in the sea." The pain of love burns away all doubts and clears the way for certainty. We feel closer to Baha'u'llah and His followers. Our reasoning is consumed by love. It is a pleasant state to be in, we like it, but are pushed on to the

VALLEY OF KNOWLEDGE.

This, the third valley, according to Baha'u'llah, is the last plane of limitations. Having experienced trials and difficulties, and then having been overwhelmed with love, now comes on the seeker the knowledge that this character is being transformed, and that through faith in Baha'u'llah his greatest potential develops. This knowledge strengthens his faith and dissolves all doubts.

Somewhere along the road the seeker will feel an irresistible urge to serve. He will want to express his gratitude to Baha'u'llah in service, knowing that work is worship. It is in serving that he will discover justice in injustice, faith in indifference, concern and affection where there was none before.

THE VALLEY IN-BETWEEN.

The Valley of Unity unites the first three valleys of limitation with the last three valleys, which take us into the uncharted depths of the unknown. The picture unfolds like that of an eagle whose two wings are essential for flight. In this valley we realize that "all is from God," and

that "the first is last, the last is first." This means that all differences are reflections of our own self, since the same sun is reflected from a mirror or a piece of coal.

Perhaps the description of an ideal physician would best reflect my conception of this valley. He gets his knowledge as a doctor from the known world, the world of limitations which is in the first three valleys. This acquired knowledge he combines with intuition as to the state of his patient^t, sympathy with which he inspires confidence and faith which helps to heal. The physician did not learn the latter in a university or from the known world. By reaching out to the unknown, non-phenomenal world, he obtained that balance between the material and spiritual, which made him into a famous and successful doctor.

Smart 112 By the time we reach this valley earthquakes, floods and hurricanes do not seem to bother us. There are many things around us we do not like, both in the Baha'i and non-Baha'i world, but it does not make us desperate or indifferent, or critical or cynical. Our roots are now like that of an old tree, impervious to storms, frost and even insects. How long this will last we may not know, but prayers are a good antidote.

THE LAST THREE VALLEYS.

We now enter the mystical world, the unknown, about which Baha'u'llah writes: "Tongue failed to describe these three valleys." and "The ink leaveth only a blot."⁴ Therefore, what follows are only fragmented impressions, and should not be taken for more than that.

4. id. p. 30

Thomas Aquinas wrote: "The slenderest knowledge that may be obtained of the highest things is more desirable than the most certain knowledge of lesser things."

Abdu'l-Baha often greeted people by asking:

"Are you happy?" He could have meant: ~~xxx~~ "Are you in the Valley of Contentment?" He did not really need to ask, for when Abdu'l-Baha looked into the eyes of a visitor He knew in which Valley he was in. Contentment in this the fifth valley does not mean physical or sensate satisfaction. It is not of the kind that is self-consuming and transitory. It is not a passing joy that captures our fancy and then we forget it. If we have once entered the Valley of Contentment, we cannot mistake it ~~with~~ ^{for} anything else, nor can we blot it from our memory, nor find words to recreate the experience for those who have not been there.

My own first experience was in Beaulac, at our first Canadian, week-long, winter session. There were twenty of us, snowbound, short of water, cramped in primitive quarters. One young man, who afterwards became a Baha'i, did not want to come when he was told that we are going to celebrate New Year without alcohol. He never heard of nor could conceive a New Year celebration without liquor. Afterwards he had to admit that it was his best New Year yet, and the week was the most fateful turning point in his life. Several others had similar experiences. But this is not the point of the story.

Baha'u'llah describing this valley writes: "one feelth the winds of contentment blowing from the plane of the spirit," and again "one beholds the beauty of the Friend in everything," and again "The mystery of inner meaning may be whispered only from heart to heart."⁵ We experienced the meaning of these words in Beaulac, we felt it in the air and in each other.

It became part of us. But how can we tell this to others? We can't. Those of us who were there and had a glimpse of the Valley of Contentment, were indescribably enriched and out of gratitude to Baha'u'llah feel the urge to do all we can that others may have a similar experience.

THE VALLEY OF ASTONISHMENT.

I was always very sceptical of suprarational and extrasensory experiences, since they cannot be proven scientifically and, therefore, belong to the unknown world. We also know of charlatans and crackpots who have been exploiting for gain the gullibility of people. Yet we know of trustworthy, responsible persons, including serious scientists, who have had extrasensory, non-empirical experiences, which are as difficult to explain as the colour green to a man who was born blind.

All the mystics, saints and prophets have been in contact with the unknown world and brought us messages which when heeded, were found very beneficial. Those who have had genuine experiences in this valley are fortunate, for it gives them an extra dimension of knowledge, strengthens their faith in God and immortality.

When I had my first experience I was still a sceptic. Having been sick for almost a year, I consulted all kinds of doctors of many categories, but none could help me nor diagnose the disease. Before entering a hospital for observation, we went into the country for a rest. Somehow, unpremeditated, we arrived in Green Acre. There one night I dreamt that a friendly though powerful personage was slowly approaching my dark window, closed by shutters. As he came nearer a grey light increased

gradually in intensity through the shuttered window. By the time this invisible person was behind the window the healing power of these rays went all over my body. Sitting up, now fully awake and conscious I extended my arm to my wife's shoulder so that she too should benefit from this healing power, and then I fell asleep. Next morning I told this experience to my wife with reservation, though I knew it was not like any other dream. Stubbornly I remained sceptical and told myself that only if I am healed will I accept it as a spiritual experience, otherwise it was all imagination. The same afternoon I knew that I was healed. My sceptic mind had to surrender finally to the fact of a complete cure.

Since then I have had two other experiences in the Valley of Astonishment, but to speak about them to friends who have had no similar experiences would be just as difficult as to explain the taste of a mango to somebody who never savoured one.

THE VALLEY OF TRUE POVERTY AND ABSOLUTE NOTHINGNESS.

We came across this seventh valley by coincidence. In the beginning of the Fifties through some strange turn of events my wife and I were privileged to say farewell ^{shortly before} ~~on their deathbed~~ to three outstanding Bahá'is; Mountford Mills, Louis Gregory and Sutherland Maxwell. Two of them were Hands of the Cause, all three have had behind them many years of distinguished and self-effacing service for the Cause. We saw them hours before they passed away, though at intervals of about a year between them, hundreds of miles apart. Nevertheless, we had in each case, the same strange and unique experience which we dearly treasure. We both felt in their presence something rare and precious, which we could not understand nor describe.

Two decades later, rereading the seventh valley, which previously meant nothing to me, I realized that what struck and fascinated us when looking into the eyes of these three dying men was the rare privilege of a glimpse into the Valley of True Poverty and Absolute Nothingness.

They were lying helpless, physically broken and spent, some in pain, their earthly strength gone, all desires, possessions and opinions having become meaningless, with no will to live; and yet there was a serenity and lightness about them which put any inkling of despair or hopelessness to shame. Their complete detachment was their true poverty. They were ready and eager for the flight beyond. In each case when my wife and I said good bye and left them, we felt enriched and elevated. We pray that when our time comes, as it must, we may be as prepared for this valley as they were.

Baha'u'llah writes: "God is as visible as the sun, yet the heedless hunt after tinsel and base metal." "Until the wayfarer taketh leave of self, and traversed these stages, he shall never reach the ocean of nearness and union."⁶

6. id. p. 39 and 4.

CHAPTER IXA WORLD FAITH WITH A WORLD PLAN

A notebook, written in an awkward hand, was found in the pocket of a dead American soldier. It contained these eloquent thoughts: "This is the time for a new revelation. People don't think much about religion nowadays. But we need a voice from on High, brother, and I don't mean maybe. This thing has got out of human ability to run. I am no religious fanatic. But we are in a situation where something better than human brains has got to give us advise."

Modern men cannot help but agree with this soldier. We cannot get out of this mess depending solely upon our own resources. That much seems certain. We need help urgently, and we need it "from on High." For we cannot get it from here below as the animals do. That perhaps is the difference between man and the beast. Animals can get all they need and all they can hope for, from their own surroundings. The earth and its possessions can satisfy a cow, a horse, or any other animal, but not man. Man wants more than the earth can give. Its treasures will not satisfy him. Therefore, unlike the animals, he must reach above himself. And only if he reaches hard and long enough, can he find peace within himself and the means to peace with his fellows.

Our contemporaries have forgotten this, relying instead on their own resources and their own brains. So do our leaders now. The soldier who is now dead knew this was all wrong. So do some people now alive. Among them are the Baha'is who cannot be overlooked, for their teaching "from on High" is up-to-date.

That is what we need now, and that is what the dead soldier meant. Advice from above now, and not advice that was given thousands of years ago.

This conviction explains the confidence of the followers of Baha'u'llah, that what He has to offer to the world now is better than what the human brain can produce. This gives them a sense of security without losing touch with the world. Baha'is move forward undisturbed on a welltried path, towards a fully defined goal. They know they cannot fail, though they may be delayed.

Baha'u'llah has told them: "The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land; nothing short of His wholesome medicine can ever restore it. The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society; what else but the Elixir of His potent Revelation can cleanse and revive it? Is it within human power ... to effect in the constituent elements of any of the minute and indivisible particles of matter so complete a transformation as to transmute it into poorest gold? Perplexing and difficult as this may appear, the still greater task of converting satanic strength into heavenly power is one that we have been empowered to accomplish. The Force capable of such a transformation transcendeth the potency of the Elixir itself. The word of God, alone, can claim the distinction of being endowed with the capacity required for so great and farreaching a change."¹

A NEW RACE OF MEN

It is not easy to attain to the standard of a Baha'i. Therequirements are threefold, namely: a high sense of

1. GLEANINGS FROM THE WRITINGS OF BAHU'U'LLAH, p.200.

moral rectitude, chastity in private life, and no discrimination of any form against people of a different race, color, class, or creed.

Each Baha'i is eligible to, and therefore a potential member of the House of Justice. By the casting of his vote, each Baha'i becomes an organic and inseparable part of the City of God on earth. He becomes^s one with the world conscience, a supporting pillar for the guidance of the world. He knows that good thoughts and good deeds will affect not only his children and neighbors, but also society as a whole. For a Baha'i belongs to the world at large. He has removed the barriers which separate white from yellow, rich from poor, and Jew from Gentile. His sense of moral responsibility includes all. His conscience demands that he identify the problems of others with his own, and understand their point of view as his own. His religion demands instant and uninterrupted action, and His Book tells him how.

"The companions of God are in this day," writes Baha'u'llah, "the lump that must leaven the peoples of the world. They must show forth such trustworthiness, such truthfulness and perseverance, such deeds and character that all mankind may profit by their example ... The light of a good character surpasseth the light of the sun and the radiance thereof." And in another passage Baha'u'llah promises that "One righteous act ... can tear every bond asunder, and hath the power to restore the force that hath spent itself and vanished ... It is through your deeds that ye can distinguish yourselves from others."²

As to the second requirement, a chaste and clean life, Baha'i conduct, especially that of youth, stands out in a

materialistic society whose moral fibre seems to peter out. It is not easy to resist the enervating influence of irreligion, for a Baha'i does not withdraw from society. He mixes with people and enjoys life. He remains, nevertheless, moderate in a surrounding which has lost all restraint. His mind must remain clean, his attitude humble, and his intentions sincere. Opium, alcohol, and other habit-forming drugs are forbidden by Baha'u'llah. No Baha'i will share the excesses of a decadent age. The reason for this is not fear of hell but a rational faith in the ultimate decency and spiritual purpose of life. Baha'u'llah said: "The world is but a show, vain and empty, a mere nothing, bearing the semblance of reality. Set not your affections upon it. Break not the bond that united you with your Creator, and be not of those that have erred and strayed from His ways. Verily I say, the world is like the vapor in a desert, which the thirsty dreameth to be water and striveth after it ^{with} all his might, until when he cometh unto it, he findeth it to be mere illusion."³

The high moral standard set by Baha'u'llah should not be confused with the life of an ascetic or a bigoted puritan. Baha'is do not deprive themselves of the good things on earth. They do not underestimate the needs or the importance of the human body. All that is good and beautiful has been created for man to use and enjoy. "Should a man," Baha'u'llah assures us, "wish to adorn himself with the ornaments of the earth, to wear its apparels, or partake of the benefits it can bestow, no harm can befall him, if he alloweth nothing ^a whatever to intervene between him and God ... Eat ye, O people, of the good things which God had allowed you, and deprive not yourselves from His wondrous

3. BAHAI WORLD FAITH, p. 68.

bounties. Render thanks and praise unto Him, and be of them that are truly thankful."⁴

The third requirement for men of the new age, the total elimination of racial, religious, and social prejudice, becomes easier when we follow Abdu'l-Baha's comparison of the human family with a garden of flowers. "Though differing in kind, color, form and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruit, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color!"

WORLD FAITH WISE A WORLD PLAN

A characteristic of our modern age is the problem of getting along with people. We have to face people not merely as individuals, but also as nations, races, ethnical groups, trade union. We are dealing less with individuals, and more with collective groups.

Good manners and moral behavior, as taught at home and in Sunday schools, have helped in our relationships as individuals, but have little to offer to our collective problems. As a consequence religion is fading out, since it is geared to the individual and his personal needs, lacking a plan for the world community. Modern man can find neither comfort nor strength in a personal faith, without a faith in the future of the world.

The late psychiatrist, C.G. Jung, made this obser-
4. THE ADVENTS OF DIVINE JUSTICE, p. 28.

vation about modern man: "We are living undeniably in a period of the greatest restlessness, nervous tension, confusion, and disorientation of outlook. Among my patients from many countries, all of them educated persons, there is a considerable number who came to see me, not because they were suffering from a neurosis, but because they could find no meaning in life or were torturing themselves with questions which neither present-day philosophy nor religion could answer. Some of them perhaps thought that I knew of a magic formula, but I was soon forced to tell them that I too, had no answer to give."⁵

The interest in psychology confirms the restlessness of modern man in his search for a soul. It is noteworthy that, as the influence of religion declined, cases of neuroses grew noticeably more frequent. Jung goes on to make a remarkably interesting statement: "Among all my patients in the second half of life - that is to say, over thirty-five - there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he has lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook."⁶

We know that not only modern man but also modern society is in search of a soul. Society is turning to the economist and the sociologist with the same desperation as the modern individual turns to the psychologist. The answer in both cases is essentially the same: Forget yourself, find interest in others, and work for the whole world. Unless we have faith in God, we lose

5. C.G. Jung, MODERN MAN IN SEARCH OF A SOUL, pp. 266, 267.

6. Ibid, p. 264.

faith in our fellowmen. The self-sufficient, self-centered nation suffers the same consequences as the egotist who believes himself superior to his kind. A nation surrounded by high protective tariffs, buying its own goods and eating its own food, must feel as does an egocentric individual who, surrounding himself by walls of mirrors, sees only himself.

A friend once wrote to Turgenev: "It seems to me that to put oneself in the second place is the whole significance of life," which is a keen diagnosis of our problems. But Turgenev, searching for the remedy, replied: "It seems to me that to discover what to put before oneself, in the first place, is the whole problem of life." In what or in whom can we place enough faith to put before ourselves? And we must find this faith not only for the individual but also for the nation. For unless we have a common faith, we cannot agree on a common remedy for our common problems.

We need a reorientation of values; for this we need a new faith. Faith in God and in ourselves is not enough. We must also have faith in society. Our reliance on knowledge as opposed to faith is of comparatively recent date. Civilization has been shaped by faith in one of its many forms: Hindu, Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Hebrew, Christian, or Muslim. It was faith rather than knowledge that gave each of them vision and shaped their destiny. We forget that, until about two hundred years ago, religious instruction everywhere dominated education. It is only since the beginning of the intellectual revolution that faith was displaced by knowledge as a controlling influence. We need faith again, faith in ourselves and in mankind.

Such a faith cannot be obtained from books. There is no prescribed formula for all to follow. And yet, it is the most sustaining and enduring force we know. The way to faith, as to all worthwhile things, is not easy. It requires effort, perseverance, and courage. No human knowledge was ever a substitute for faith in the founders of religion. The Prophet has always been the link between the known and the unknown, between man and God. His religion gave stability, it built character. We need it again, but this time for the whole world. Humanity is yearning for faith, a world plan, and a world conscience.

The great unknown to be conquered in this century is in the realm of social experience. A new pattern-value has to be discovered for the establishment of a representative world government, a planetary economy serving all the people, and a supranational world court to administer justice.

Human knowledge alone cannot take us beyond the present limits of the known world. But faith can, and that is why it supersedes reason. A man of faith has a greater vision than a man of knowledge. Experience has shown that a man of faith has not only a greater creative power than two men who do not share his faith, but than all men who lack his faith.

Through faith in Baha'u'llah, the Mediator of God for our time, his followers have faith in a supranational world commonwealth: a world parliament representing all the peoples of the world, a world tribunal with sufficient power to maintain

peace, equitable distribution of the resources of the world, a world language, one currency, a world citizenship, and one common faith in one common God. This is the vision of a Prophet of God and his people, and as their number increases, the vision approaches reality.

Faith, today, without a world plan is of little more avail than a plan without faith. We need both: a World Faith and a World Plan to bring the two worlds together, the Baha'i and the non-Baha'i world.