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"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens."—Bahá'u'lláh.

THE CAUSE OF UNITY

"In the world of existence there are various bonds which unite the hearts, but none of these bonds is efficient. For instance, the first and foremost bond is the family bond, but this bond is not effective, for how often it happens that in some families divergence and difference obtains. A patriotic bond may be the means of amity and fellowship; but the oneness of nativity will not suffice, for if we examine history we shall find that the inhabitants of the same fatherland have often waged war against each other. In civil strife how often they have shed each other's blood; how often they have pillaged each other's property! Hence, it becomes evident that oneness of nativity is not sufficient. Another means of amity is the racial oneness. How often have we seen that men of the same race have engaged in the severest strife. They have spilled each other's blood; they have laid their country waste—which proves that the oneness of race is not oneness in reality. Among the bonds of unity is the political bond. How often do we find that certain governments have been politically bound together, amongst them obtaining a political intercourse and oneness which afterwards was subject to change and these governments arose against each other on the field of battle. Thus the oneness of politics is not sufficient.

"That which is the cause of perfect unity and amity in the world of existence is the oneness of Reality. If Reality enters the arena, the fundamental reality can conserve the states, and that Reality—the *oneness of humanity*—is a oneness which can only come into being through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, for the efficacy of the Holy Spirit is like unto the spirit in the body; it dispels all differences and ushers all beneath the same solid-

arity and unity. Regard how numerous are the parts and members of the human organism, but the oneness of the spirit animating it keeps its various parts and elements together in perfect co-ordination and solidarity. It brings such a unity into the organism that were each member to be subjected to any injury or were it to become diseased, all the other members would sympathetically suffer, due to the existence of their perfect unity. Hence, it becomes evident that the oneness of Reality—perfect amity amongst mankind—cannot be accomplished save through the power of the Holy Spirit, for the world of humanity is likened to the body and the Holy Spirit is likened to the animating power of the body; just as the human spirit is the cause of the cohesion of the various parts of the human organism, likewise the Holy Spirit is the cause of the unity and amity of all mankind.

"Hence we must strive in order that the power of the Holy Spirit may become effective throughout all humanity, in order that it may confer a new life upon the body politic, that all of the body politic may be ushered beneath the shelter of the same Word. Then the world of humanity shall become the angelic world, the ethereal darkness shall pass away and celestial illumination shall take its place; the defects of the human world shall be erased and the Divine Virtues shall become resplendent; and this is unobtainable save through the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, the greatest need of the world of humanity to-day is to receive the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. Until the Holy Spirit becomes effective, interpenetrating the hearts and spirits, and until perfect reasonable faith shall obtain in the minds of men, it is impossible for the social body to be inspired with security and confidence."
'Abdu'l-Bahá.

"Peace, Peace, the lips of potentates and peoples unceasingly proclaim, whereas the fire of unquenched hatreds still smoulders in their hearts." 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

We believe that the greatest need to-day is a clear and satisfying outlook on the elemental problems of life. What is its purpose? Why are we here? Unless some good reason can be given, we cannot know for what we are striving. Men want peace, want victory, prosperity. But why? What is the value of peace unless we know the purpose of life?

To the modern man the answer to this question cannot be so simple as it was to the man of the middle ages who lived trustingly in the shelter of the Church. Our little learning has debarred us from simplicity, and until we can perceive a "scheme of things entire" which accepts the newly disclosed facts about the universe—material and psychological—we shall flounder in the morass of theories, creeds, dogmas and traditions which threaten to engulf us.

Such a scheme of things must be neither so strict in detail as to be rigid, nor so vague in outline as to have no practical application. It must show us the way to peace both among ourselves, and within ourselves. It must give us a reason for moral effort (which raises us above the brute), and also move us to make such effort. Perhaps when we find such a reason it will be as simple as "the love of God." But let us not accept any clichés, but prove all things.

It is in this spirit that we shall, during the coming year, present in a series of articles the answer of the Bahá'í Faith to such problems as the purpose of life, the nature of man, his place in the universe, the rise and fall of civilization, the riddle of the present day. With this in mind we begin Volume II with a brief account of the origin, history, and present condition of the Bahá'í Faith, so that readers, knowing this background, may more easily follow the argument.

The interest of this plan will be greatly enhanced by questions and discussions, and for this purpose we gladly open our columns.

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The Bahá'í Faith

During the early part of the nineteenth century, there was widespread expectation of the coming of a new message from God. In the West, as contemporary records show, this took the form of expecting the "second coming of Christ," and in the East different terms were used, according to the religious system, to express the same theme.

Religion has always come to mankind from the East, and the Bahá'í Faith is no exception, for it was born in the ancient land of Irán, at a time when that once proud country was in the depths of decay and corruption.

The Forerunner.

On May 23rd, 1844, a young merchant of Shiráz announced to His first disciple that He was the One looked for by people of the Muhammadan Faith, the Mahdí. In addition to this great claim He announced Himself as the Herald of a World Messenger, Who would be the Promised One of all religions, and Who would establish that great day in human history which is spoken of in all the holy books, and which the Christian world has designated "the Kingdom of God on earth."

The young prophet was called the Báb, which means "Gate" or "Door," for was He not opening the way to "He Whom God shall make manifest," the Promised One of all ages? One of the proofs of His mission is the fierce opposition with which the orthodox clergy greeted Him. The story of Jesus was repeated, and after but six years of ministry He was executed by a firing squad in the barrack square of Tabriz.

The Author.

The followers of the Báb were persecuted and done to death in a savage effort to stamp out this "heresy" which threatened to give new life to the people. Twenty thousand of them were martyred in circumstances of horrible cruelty. But the Bábís remembered the promise that "He Whom God shall make manifest" would shortly appear, and they were not disappointed.

Mirzá Husayn 'Alí, a nobleman of Núr, known for His generosity and passionate sense of justice, had espoused the cause of the Báb. He was imprisoned, stripped of all His great wealth, tortured with the bastinado, imprisoned in a vile underground dungeon, and exiled to Baghdad. There He went into voluntary seclusion, for a period of two years, in the mountainous wilderness of Sulaymáníyyih. Shortly after His return, on the eve of a further banishment to Constantinople, He

spoke to the company of Bábís who had followed Him into exile.

"He was calm, serene, and unruffled. The hour had struck. To that company Bahá'u'lláh revealed Himself—He was the Promised One in Whose path the Báb had sacrificed His life, 'Him Whom God shall manifest,' the Sháh Bahrá'm, the Fifth Buddha, the Lord of Hosts, the Return of Christ, the Master of the Day of Judgment."

The Bábís joyously acclaimed the One for Whom they had suffered so greatly. He was known thereafter as Bahá'u'lláh, and His followers as Bahá'ís. This was April 21st, 1863.

Even at this distance from His native land, Bahá'u'lláh was still surrounded by the watchful hatred of His enemies and plotted against by His treacherous half-brother. He was exiled again to Adrianople, and yet again to 'Akká in the Holy Land. Here He was imprisoned in the grim penal barracks, which was used to house the worst criminals of the Turkish Empire. And what was His crime? He had always upheld the down-trodden and oppressed, had continually exhorted His followers to saintliness of character, forbidden sedition, and called all men to unity and brotherhood. So might this same question have been asked almost two thousand years before.

Here in 'Akká, which, according to the Bible, was to be a "door of hope" to mankind, Bahá'u'lláh was held prisoner. But no prisoner was surely ever held in such awe. The governor of the prison would seek an interview, and on being refused would submit to the will of Bahá'u'lláh. Pilgrims came from Irán on foot, to stand beyond the third moat and see Him wave from behind the prison bars. Pilgrims from the West were to come later. After some years, Bahá'u'lláh moved out of the prison without obstruction, and lived at Bahjí, by the slopes of Mount Carmel.

During His enforced exiles, and in the Holy Land, Bahá'u'lláh revealed those teachings which are the "New Jerusalem" and the source of inspiration for the new world order which is slowly but steadily being built amidst the crumbling institutions and social theories of the present day. His Letters to the Kings contain the core of His Message. He summons them to the "Divine Unity," to the comity of nations, to a world Parliament, to the practical establishment of human brotherhood, and to the founding of Justice. He wrote to the crowned heads of Europe, to the Pope, the President of the United States, the Czar of Russia, the Sultán of Turkey, the Shah, and the various religious communities. In His Tablet to Queen Victoria, He outlined a plan of collective security which He

promised would bring the "Lesser Peace," and which has yet to be put into practice. His Writings are authentic, and not dependent on hearsay, or memory.

Professor Edward Granville Browne, the famous Orientalist of Cambridge, has left us the only description of Bahá'u'lláh by a westerner. "In the corner, where the divan met the wall, sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *táj* by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!"

The True Exemplar.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, from childhood a voluntary sharer in the persecutions of His Father, was appointed in Bahá'u'lláh's Will and Testament, Interpreter of the Teachings and Centre of His Covenant. After forty years' imprisonment He was released in 1908 by the successful Young Turks, and immediately He set out to carry the Bahá'í message to Europe and America. From 1892, when Bahá'u'lláh ascended, until 1921 when He Himself passed on, He served the Faith as its appointed leader, tirelessly and devotedly, and by His unique wisdom and Christlike life, succeeded in establishing it in all five continents. During the difficult days of the Great War He looked after the people in the district of 'Akká and Haifa, to whom He was "The Father of the poor." Later He accepted a knighthood of the British Empire "as a courtesy to a just king." He was known as the Master.

(To be continued.)

"That all nations should become one in Faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled—what harm is there in this? . . . Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the Most Great Peace shall come . . ." Bahá'u'lláh.

Lone-Star

*(Tribute to Martha Root—international pioneer
of the Bahá'í Faith, who passed away recently in
Honolulu)*

by

BEATRICE IRWIN.

Star-soul upon your further voyage bent
You have our orbit gladdened by your light!
Through years, the purpose of your high intent
Was but to cleanse and uplift human sight
To Bahá'u'lláh's Sun of Truth!
To give the world a youth
Of hopes and dreams born of His Kingly Word
Whose lucent power makes space a womb of
wealth.

Rich with a freedom forged in spirit's fire
Upon that anvil, you laid down desire
For the companioned ways of human love,
And in lone beauty shone o'er many lands,
Your chart of hope surrendered to His hands.
The world was but a bead upon the thread
Of your life's harvesting of faith and toil,
Anointing nations' wounds with wisdom's oil!
You moved so silken through the weight of night,
Cupping your heart to catch the Love, the Light
That leads this age to a transcendent morn!
Who knows what mysteries shall there be born?

A World Commonwealth

"The unity of the human race, as envisaged by Bahá'u'lláh, implies the establishment of a world commonwealth in which all nations, races, creeds and classes are closely and permanently united, and in which the autonomy of its state members and the personal freedom and initiative of the individuals that compose them are definitely and completely safeguarded. This commonwealth must, as far as we can visualise it, consist of 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. A world executive, backed by an international Force, will carry out the decisions arrived at, and apply the laws enacted by, this world legislature, and will safeguard the organic unity of the whole commonwealth. A world tribunal will adjudicate and deliver the compulsory and final verdict in all and any disputes that may arise between the various elements constituting the universal system.

"A mechanism of world intercommunication will be devised, embracing the whole planet, freed from national hindrance and restrictions, and functioning with marvellous swiftness and perfect regularity. A world metropolis will serve as the nerve centre of a world civilization, the focus towards which the unifying forces of life will converge and from which its energising influences will radiate. A world language will either be invented or chosen from among the existing languages and will be taught in the schools of all the federated nations as an auxiliary to their mother tongue. A world script, a world literature, a uniform and universal system of currency, of weights and measures, will simplify and facilitate intercourse and understanding among the nations and races of mankind.

"In such a world society, science and religion, the two most potent forces in human life, will be reconciled, will co-operate, and will harmoniously develop. The press will, under such a system, while giving full scope to the expression of the diversified views and convictions of mankind, cease to be mischievously manipulated by vested interests, whether private or public, and will be liberated from the influence of contending governments and peoples. The economic resources of the world will be organised, its sources of raw materials will be tapped and fully utilised, its markets will be co-ordinated and developed, and the distribution of its products equitably regulated.

"National rivalries, hatreds and intrigues will cease, and racial animosity and prejudice will be replaced by racial amity, understanding and co-operation. The causes of religious strife will be permanently removed, economic barriers and restrictions will be completely abolished, and the inordinate distinction between classes will be obliterated. Destitution on the one hand, and gross accumulation of ownership on the other, will disappear. The enormous energy dissipated and wasted on war, whether economic or political, will be consecrated to such ends as will extend the range of human inventions and technical development, to the increase of the productivity of mankind, to the extermination of disease, to the extension of scientific research, to the raising of the standards of physical health, to the sharpening and refinement of the human brain, to the exploitation of the unused and unsuspected resources of the planet, to the prolongation of human life, and to the furtherance of any other agency that can stimulate the intellectual, the moral, and spiritual life of the entire human race." *Shoghi Effendi* in "The Unfoldment of World Civilization."