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■ SIGNS OF THE TIMES ■

THE WAR AND MISSIONS

THE present war in Europe is at least a conclusive answer to the argument that large armaments are a guaranty of peace. It seems almost impossible of belief that this war, with all its barbarities and brutalities, is devastating Europe, and is being waged by nations that bear the name of Christ, the Prince of Peace and Lord of Love. A prominent European statesman was recently asked if he thought it possible that the Christians of Europe would permit such barbarities. He replied, "There are no Christians in Europe." The present conflict would seem to bear out his statement, at least so far as the European rulers are concerned. Does any one now hold that this age in which we live is the Millennium? It seems more like the season during which the devil is let loose!

It is impossible to predict the changes in the map, not only of Europe, but of the world, that will result from the war, and none can as

yet foresee its duration or the consequences. It will influence and, for a time, will greatly hinder missionary work. First: the attention of men and women in Europe and America will be diverted from missionary effort, to follow the fortunes of the armies and navies. In the present disturbed state of the world, men will not devote their attention, even as much as formerly, to spiritual work. Second: Money will be difficult to obtain for home and foreign missions. The high prices, taxes, absence of wage-earners, depression of business, and many calls to relieve distress, will cause such financial stringency that the work of Christ faces a serious crisis. Deficits, retrenchments, and unmet needs stare the mission boards in the face. Third: There will be, as there is, especially in Europe, a diverting of men from spiritual Christian campaigns to fleshly, murderous warfare. Volunteers can not go, if they would, and many who might be our future officers of

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Bahaim and the Woman Question

BY REV. SAMUEL G. WILSON, D.D., TABRIZ, PERSIA
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ABBAS EFFENDI, sur-named Abdul Baha, the Persian head of the Bahai religion, while in Europe and America, had much to say about the relation of man and woman. In New York City, after referring the audience to various books of the Bahai religion, he said: "Similarly all the other tablets of Baha Ullah contain *new* teachings, which have not been revealed in any books of the past Prophets. The sixth new teaching is the equality between men and women. This is peculiar to the teachings of Baha Ullah, for all other religions placed men above women."¹ In the exposition of Bahai teachings at Clifton, England, he declared: "His Highness, Baha Ullah, established certain precepts or principles."² "The sixth principle of Baha Ullah regards the equality of the sexes. God has created the man and the woman equal. In the animal kingdom the male and the female enjoy suffrage (laughter); in the vegetable kingdom the plants all enjoy equal suffrage (laughter and applause). The male and the female of the human kingdom are equal before God. Divine justice demands that men and women have equal rights."

My first thought on reading these statements was one of surprize, for they contradict my observations during thirty years residence in Persia, in close touch with Bahais. I decided to make a thorough investigation of the teachings and practise of Baha Ullah bearing on the relation of the sexes, to determine definitely whether these claims of the "inspired interpreter" were valid or not. A considerable body of Bahai literature and "revelation" is accessible. Examination of the chief books, the Kitab-ul-Akdas, the Ikan and the Surat-ul-Haykal disclose no such teaching. Neither the 155 paragraphs of the "Hidden Words," nor the "Seven Valleys" have any such delectable thoughts for Oriental women. Neither the six "Ornaments"³ of the faith nor the four "Rays,"⁴ nor the nine "Effulgences,"⁵ nor the eleven "Leaves of the Words of Paradise," nor the nine precepts of the "Tablet of the World," nor the fifteen "Glad Tidings"—tho they announce many blessings, from freedom to cut the beard as you please to constitutional monarchy as the best form of government—give the teaching of the equality of woman with man. Neither Mirza Abul Fazl in his "Bahai Proofs," representing the new Bahais of Abdul Baha, nor Dr. Kheiralla in his ponderous vol-

¹ Star of the West (Bahai), December 12, 1913, p. 254.

² Star of the West (Bahai), March 21, 1913, p. 5.

³ Tablet of Tarazat.

⁴ Tablet of Tajalliyat.

⁵ Ishrakat.

ume on Baha Ullah, representing the old Behais, in this bitter and rancorous schism; nor Myron Phelps in his "Life of Abbas Effendi," nor Professor Browne of Cambridge University in his learned and impartial investigations regarding the religion makes the statement that Baha Ullah teaches the equality of man and woman. On the contrary, investigation confirmed my previous conviction that the position of woman under Bahai laws and customs is inferior to that she holds in Western lands and that her lot is far less desirable and less blest than in Christian civilization. I reached the conclusion that this doctrine as enunciated by the "Interpreter" is a late addition to Bahatism, intended to attract the attention and tickle the ears of audiences in Europe and America.

It is well known that two or three thousand Americans are following the cult of Bahatism, and that most of these are women. Concerning this Abdul Baha says in a tablet: "To-day the women of the West lead the men in the service of the cause (Bahatism) and loosen their tongues in eloquent lectures."⁶ The editor adds, "Ninetenths of the active workers in the cause are women." Hence it is timely to enter upon the consideration of the teaching and practise of Baha Ullah with regard to women.

Education of Women

I. I will first take up the *subject of education*, for in regard to it the law of Bahatism justifies, theoretically, their boast of maintaining the equality of the sexes. In this it is, however, simply imitating the law of

enlightened Christian lands, nor does their practise at all keep pace with their precepts. In the seventh Ishrak (Effulgence) it is "enjoined upon all to instruct and educate their children." The Kitab-ul-Akdas decrees "that every father must educate his sons and daughters in learning and in writing" and also in the Bahai religion. Education is to be compulsory and if neglected by the parents must be attended to by the "House of Justice." But, notwithstanding this law, most Persian Bahais have allowed their girls to grow up in ignorance, while educating many of their boys. Even at Acca,⁸ Syria, the headquarters of the sect, where Baha Ullah had a school for boys, no opportunity was furnished to the girls for an education. The fact that modern schools for girls could not be opened in Persia is no adequate excuse, for private tutors could have been employed, as is the custom in many Persian Shiah families, or the fathers could at least have taught their daughters to read. Lately American Bahais have begun to stir them up. They have organized the Persian-American or Orient-Occident Educational Society. It raises funds in America for Bahai schools and hospitals. With exceeding lack of candor, it poses as simply a philanthropic enterprise and conceals its primary and ulterior object, which is the propagation of Bahatism. Its missionaries make their reports of their work in the *Bahai News* or *Star of the West*, of Chicago. They have one or more schools for girls in Persia and several scores of girls in attendance. The American

* *Bahai News*, August 20, 1911.

† Tablet of Ishrakat, p. 36.

‡ Phelps, p. 229, 110.

Bahai missionaries are residing in Teheran and Tabriz, directing the propaganda and working for the elevation of the girls and women through the Bahai religion.

Woman's Rights

II. I pass to the consideration of the *civil and domestic rights of woman under Bahatism*, and will review the customs and regulations regarding marriage—so fundamental in the constitution of human society.

(a) Marriage seems to be obligatory, according to the *Kitab-ul-Akdas*. It says: "A solitary life does not meet God's approval; adhere unto what the trustworthy Counsellor commands. Deprive not yourselves of that which is created for you."⁹ Monks and nuns are called upon to marry that they may have children "to celebrate the praise of God." A tablet says: "Nor must they refrain from marriage which causes procreation and multiplication of the servants of God."¹⁰ Mirza Abul Fazl, the learned philosopher of the dispensation, interprets the law to mean: "He has enjoined upon the people of Baha abstinence from monkhood as well as from ascetic discipline. He has commanded them to marry."¹¹ Professor Browne says: "Marriage is enjoined upon all." In like manner the Bayan of the Bab previously made marriage obligatory, but unlawful with an unbeliever.

(b) Marriage is declared to be conditioned on the consent of both parties and of the parents. But in practise the matter of consent is still one-sided. Take, for example, an incident in the life of Abbas Effendi.¹²

The mother and sister were very desirous that he should marry and looked about and found a girl of whom they approved. The sister narrates that "without consulting my brother, I invited the girl to visit us. After a wearisome journey, she and her brother reached Haifa. We commenced quietly to make preparations for the marriage without making known to my brother the arrival of the girl. My brother saw that there was something unusual afoot, so he demanded of us with considerable energy, 'What is this? What are all the people smiling about? Are you again planning to get me a wife? If you are, give it up; I will not marry.' We pleaded and reasoned with him. At length we said, 'She has come, what shall we do?' He hesitated and finally said: 'Well, since you have brought her here, she belongs to me, and I will give her in marriage to some one else.' At length my brother brought about her marriage to a husband of his own selection." The "consent" of the girl in this case seems to have been considered about as much as in ordinary Oriental usage.

(c) Baha Ullah advised against child-marriages, yet, strange to say, seems to have tolerated child-betrothals. Among Persians it is a common custom to betroth children. Abbas was after this manner betrothed to his cousin in infancy. When the household of Baha thought the time had come for the marriage, Abbas thought differently and refused to agree to it. This incident¹³ occurred before the one narrated above and is concerning a different girl. Curiously it was a girl named Moneera, who had been betrothed to

⁹ "Principles of the Bahai Movement," p. 16.

¹⁰ Mirza Abul Fazl's "Bahai Proofs," p. 105.

¹¹ "Idem," pp. 95-96.

¹² Phelps, *id.*, pp. 86-87.

¹³ *Id.*, p. 85.

another in infancy who finally became the wife of Abbas Effendi. She had been promised to her cousin Mohammed Tagi, and after she had reached the age of maturity, the youth urged on the marriage. The wedding was celebrated and the bride brought to the groom's house. Then, so the story goes, the husband refused to see his bride and continued in stubborn neglect and denial of marital rights till his death—six months afterward. Later Baha Ullah persuaded Abbas to take the "sweet and amiable" virgin-widow for his wife and he is said to have attained to "a warm affection and regard" for the woman he was asked to marry.¹⁴ Did I wish to assume the role of higher critic, I might suggest that the latter incident, like that in "When Knighthood was in Flower," is apocryphal, and intended to create a legend of her virginity up to the time she became the "leaf" of the "Greatest Branch of God."

Another account I have gathered from a Syrian disciple of Baha. He reports that Abbas Effendi would not marry the girl his parents had betrothed him to, because he had a love affair with Moneera, the wife of Mohammed Tagi. The speedy demise of the husband was attributed to poison administered by his wife, who thereupon became the wife of Abbas Effendi. Her title among Bahais is "Holy Mother." They have four living daughters.

(d) Another part of the marriage law gives directions as to the number of wives a man may take. The Kitab-ul-Akdas says: "God hath decreed you to marry. Beware of marrying more than two, and who-

¹⁴ Id., pp. 88-90.

soever is content with one, attaineth peace for himself and her."¹⁵

Mr. Phelps¹⁶ calls attention to this fact that the Book of Laws permits of taking two wives. This limitation of the man to bigamy is deemed an improvement on the law of Islam allowing polygamy.

But Bahai law does not permit a wife to have two husbands. This absolutely invalidates the claim and declaration of Bahatism concerning the equality of the sexes. It proclaims the woman the inferior, not the equal. No equality can exist in a household under such a license. Where is the boast of progress and superiority, when the most essential unit of human society is nullified? "Twain shall be one," says the Gospel of Christ. Can we believe that the "Incarnated Father of all" has revealed a new "Most Holy Book" in which bigamy is permitted? *Akstag fur Allah!* God forbid!

I will now give some details from the history of the Babi and Bahai "Manifestations" to show their practise in regard to marriage.

After the execution of the Bab, 1850, the rival claimants to prophethood were Mirza Yahya, surnamed Subh-i-Azal, and Mirza Husain Ali, surnamed Baha Ullah. They were sons of Mirza Abbas of Nur,¹⁷ called Mirza Buzurk. He had a wife and a concubine. Yahya was the son of the wife and Husain Ali of the concubine. This was under the law of Islam. The subsequent enmity of the half-brothers exhibits one of the evil results of polygamy.

Subh-i-Azal was appointed his

¹⁵ See also Professor Browne in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1892.

¹⁶ "Life of Abbas Effendi," p. 139.

¹⁷ "New History," translated by Professor Browne, pp. 374-5.

successor by the Bab and occupied the place without dispute till 1863 or 1867. After that he was head of the minority sect of the Azalis and lived in banishment at Famagusta, Cyprus. He was the "Lord of two wives," whose names and condition are recorded in the pension records¹⁸ of the Turkish and British Governments in Cyprus. The first was named Fatima and her companion wife was Rukayya. They had fourteen children. Besides the two, who were with Azal in Cyprus, it seems there were two others. Of the third wife he says¹⁹ in his personal narrative: "My wife, who was taken captive and was released, has now grown old in Persia without an interview being possible." The fourth quarreled with her lord and accompanied the Bahais to Acca.²⁰ After several of the Azalis, with whom she was living, were murdered by the Bahais,²¹ she was sent on to Constantinople with a surviving Azali.²²

Baha Ullah, like Mohammed, surpassed his own law. He had three wives, or two wives and a concubine. Bahai writers generally omit this information in describing his life and character. Kheiralla has a chapter on his household and gives the names and titles of his children, twelve in all, but fails to mention the fact that he had two wives, tho he says: "Like Abraham, by establishing his household, Baha Ullah perfected the laws of man, and fulfilled the prophecies of scripture."²³ C. M. Remy

passes over the subject with the remark: "As a man he lived a life in harmony with his Oriental environment."²⁴ Abbas Effendi in his "Travelers' Narrative," Abdul Fazl, Dreyfus, Sprague, Thornton and others fail to inform their readers of the truth and this omission is evidently with definite purpose. Phelps is more candid. He says that "Baha Ullah had two wives; that the Book of Laws permits it."²⁵ Professor Browne refers to the three, giving the honorary titles conferred upon two of them. He makes a quotation²⁶ from Hasht Behasht which reads: "Among the titles conferred by Baha Ullah are the following:—on his wives, Madh-i-Ulya, "the Supreme Cradle," and Varaka-i-Ulya, "the Supreme Leaf." And in the New History he says: "The title of Varaka-i-Ulya was conferred by Baha Ullah on one of his wives."²⁷ The name of the first wife was Aseyeh or Nowab. She was the mother of Abbas Effendi and six other children.²⁸ According to Subh-i-Azal's narrative²⁹ she was a niece of the Shah's vizier. She survived Baha and suffered much from the children of the other wife, according to Abbas Effendi.³⁰ The first marriage was in Teheran in 1835. He took a "companion for her" in 1850. Her title was Madh-Ulya. She was the mother of Mirza Mohammed Ali, Mirza Badi Ullah and other sons and daughters. The manuscript, *Life of Baha Ullah* continues: "In the last year at Bagdad (1867-68) before the

¹⁸ "Traveler's Narrative," translated by Professor Browne, p. 384.

¹⁹ "New History," p. 415.

²⁰ Phelps, p. 73.

²¹ "New History," p. xxiii; "Traveler's Narrative," p. 361. Compare "A Year Among the Persians."

²² Phelps, p. 79.

²³ "Baha Ullah," by Kheiralla, pp. 491-2.

²⁴ "The Bahai Movement," by C. M. Remy, p. 24.

²⁵ Phelps, p. 139.

²⁶ "Traveler's Narrative," p. 361.

²⁷ "New History," p. 273, Note 2.

²⁸ "Tablets of Abdul Baha," Vol. I, pp. 209, 218.

²⁹ "New History," p. 415 and Note 1.

³⁰ "Tablets," Vol. I, p. 107.

exiling of our Lord to Constantinople, the sister of Mirza Mehdi of Kashan was honored to be His wife." It appears that she was sent by a rich believer from Persia to be a maid-servant in Baha's household. The Persian Consul in Bagdad, Mirza Buzurk Khau Kasvini³¹ desired to take her as his wife or concubine. Baha himself took her as a concubine. Because he was thwarted, the Consul showed special enmity to Baha and his followers. The only child of this wife, a girl, was born at Acca in 1873. The three wives survived Baha. After his death one of them suffered gross indignities at the hands of Abbas Effendi, being furiously attacked by him in his own house, so that she fled precipitately. This, at least, is the report of Khadin Ullah, the life-long amanuensis of Baha Ullah.³²

It should be noted that all of Baha's wives had children, and that the first wife had a living son (Abbas) when he took the second wife, so that the usual excuses can not be pleaded in palliation. For it is common for Bahais in Persia to quote their law, in speaking to a Christian, as meaning that a man may take an additional wife if the first one is childless. Mr. Phelps pleads³³ in extenuation for Baha Ullah that "his second marriage occurred early in his life and under peculiar circumstances, the exact nature of which I do not know." Such an excuse might be accepted for a man like Mullah Mohammed Ali, the Babi leader of the Zenjan insurrection, for, as far as is known, he entered upon his polygamous life

while he was a Mohammedan. Two of his wives³⁴ were shot by a cannon ball and were buried with him in a room of his house, while his third wife, with children, escaped and lived at Shiraz. But for Baha Ullah the excuse of Mr. Phelps is inadmissible, for he was no longer a Moslem when he took the second wife, and was thirty-three years old, and he was fifty when he took the third wife in Bagdad, having been born in 1817. At that time Baha had been for many years a leader in the Babi religion, had written the *Ikan*, and announced himself privately to his disciples as the Manifestation of God. Nor was this polygamous union a passing phase of his life, but one continued through thirty or forty years. It would have concerned us little to know the private life of Baha Ullah so long as the religion presented itself merely as aiming at a reformation of Islam, for it may readily be admitted that it is somewhat less of an evil to have two wives and one concubine than the four wives and unlimited concubines that the Koran allows, or the nine to thirteen wives that Mohammed took, and that if Bahatism should cut off the temporary concubines, which disgrace Islam, it would be doing a good thing—so far forth—but when the "Interpreter, the center of the Covenant," Abdul Baha, comes and stands in Christian churches in London and New York and proclaims Bahatism as a new and superior gospel, it is expedient that Baha's real life should be made known to the women of Christian lands.

It is well to note the sentiment of Oriental Bahais with regard to plural

³¹ "Traveler's Narrative," p. 84.

³² "Facts for Behaists," p. 59.

³³ Phelps, p. 139.

³⁴ "New History," pp. 160-162, 164.

marriage. The opinion of those at Acca can be understood from Mr. Phelps' narrative.³⁵ Abbas Effendi (Abdul Baha) had two sons and six daughters. The sons died. After this, as his sister Behiah Khanum narrates, "Many influences and those of the very strongest character have been brought to induce my brother (Abdul Baha) to take another wife. Believers have urged it strongly for several reasons. *Very many of them wish to take a second wife themselves.* Then there is a general wish that the Master might have a son to succeed him. The pressure brought to bear upon him has been very great, greater than you can imagine." Baha desired that Abbas should take a second wife, but he refused to do so unless Baha should command it. There is deep pathos in the words of Abbas³⁶ welling from his sorrow-stricken heart. "If it had been God's will that I should have a son, the two that were born to me would not have been taken away." Albeit he was forgetful of his theology which proclaims Baha as "God the Father incarnate." Why did not Baha preserve alive one of the sons rather than wish him to marry a companion-wife in order to have another? Mr. Phelps³⁷ attributes Abbas Effendi's refusal to adopt polygamy, notwith-

³⁵ "Life of Abbas Effendi," p. 92.

³⁶ Phelps, p. 94.

³⁷ Phelps, p. 105.

standing these "very powerful influences which have urged him to do so" to "his appreciation of the sufferings and discontent which it causes among women."³⁸ Certainly the animosity and bitter quarrelings between the wives of Baha and their respective children, resulting in a permanent split in the family and a schism³⁹ in the Bahai community, were sufficient to impress Abbas and his followers with the evil effects of plural marriage. The narrative shows, however, that public sentiment among the believers at Acca strongly favored taking more than one wife. They evidently had no desire to give up the license granted to them by the Kitabul-Akdas. They inclined to follow it and the example of Baha Ullah rather than the example of Abdul Baha.

In conclusion, it is evident that the law and example of Baha Ullah both sanction polygamy. By this the social *inequality* of the sexes is fixed. Any claim that Bahatism teaches and establishes equal rights for man and woman is vain and groundless boasting.

(To be concluded)

³⁸ A Chicago Bahai told me that Baha took several wives, that his experience of the evils of polygamy, the quarrels of his wives and children might be a warning to us not to follow his example!

³⁹ See Professor Browne's Introduction to Mirza Jani's "History." Also Abdul Fazl's "Bahai Proofs," pp. 113-119, and Kheiralla's "Facts for Behaists."

"Moslem children are completely accessible for ordinary intercourse, but whenever one begins to teach Christianity a barrier is raised by parents or teachers, and the child is removed." Nevertheless, there are indications everywhere that this spirit of opposition and fanaticism is waning.

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A JEWISH "CONVERSION EPIDEMIC"

WHEN those who are opposed to Christ and His teachings become disturbed by the number of men and women who visit Christian missions, Christians have good reason to believe that their labors are not in vain. The article by Rev. S. B. Rohold, found on another page, is a clear and forceful presentation of the facts in regard to Jewish conversions. It is stimulating reading.

Another indication of Jewish uneasiness is found in the long article that appeared in the *Toronto Hebrew Journal* of July 23, 1914. This paper sought to explain why the number of "converts in Toronto are on the increase," and advised a movement to limit the operation of the missions. The chief objection of the *Hebrew Journal* to the missionary, Mr. Rohold, was not from personal reasons, but because of the success of his methods. The Christian Synagog includes a religious headquarters and home for Hebrews. There are more efforts made to reach the adults than the children, and the method adopted is to befriend the afflicted and preach

the Gospel, following the example of Jesus Christ, the Jewish Messiah."

The *Hebrew Journal* laments the fact that "the frequenters are not from one class. You can find there Jews with beards and without beards; Jews who tremble for the 'Fearful days,' and indifferent Jews. There are a great number of young men and women who were previously engrossed in Jewish national and progressive movements and also some who were not long ago strict 'Sabbath observers.' All become united in one congregation, who seek protection under the 'wings of the Messiah.'"

The *Journal* also complains that baptismal services are not so seldom as they used to be—nor are they only for individuals. "Almost every Sunday there are some thus baptized, and the influence of the missionary over them is enormous."

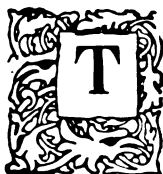
The reading-room attracts many immigrants and others, who are friendless and alone. These visitors are taught English, invited to entertainments, helped to secure a position, and given medicine and care in time of sickness.

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Bahaism and the Woman Question—II

BY THE REV. SAMUEL G. WILSON, D.D., TABRIZ, PERSIA
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Marriage and Divorce



THE regulation of divorce is another matter that vitally affects the relation of man and woman. The divorce law of Baha, as prescribed in the *Kitab-ul-Akdas*, is a loose one. I again quote from Professor Browne's translation.⁴⁰ It will be noticed that the conditions of the law are set forth from the standpoint of the man. "If quarrels arise between a man and his wife, he may put her away. He may not give her absolute divorce at once, but must wait a year that perhaps he may become reconciled to her. At the end of this period, if he still wishes to put her away, he is at liberty to do so. Even after this he may take her back at the end of any month so long as she has not become the wife of another man." "The practise of requiring a divorced woman to cohabit with another man before her former husband can take her back is prohibited." (This abolishes one of the vile laws of Mohammedanism). "If a man is traveling with his wife and they quarrel, he must give her a sufficient sum of money to take her back to the place they started from and send her with a trustworthy escort." From these quotations it is evident that the wife is dependent on the good pleasure and whim of the man. He may

put away; he may take back. The law says nothing of her right to divorce him. It does not appear that she has the right to divorce her husband even in case he is guilty of adultery. The penalty for adultery is slight. A fine of nineteen miscals of gold, equal to fifty to sixty dollars, is imposed for the first offense and this is doubled for the second offense. The fines are to be paid to the "House of Justice." According to the *Beyan* of the Bab the husband must pay the divorced wife a dowry of ninety-five miscals of gold (\$300) if they are city folks, and ninety-five miscals of silver (\$10) if they are villagers. These are paltry sums even on the basis of Persian poverty. I may say, in passing, that the Laws of Inheritance give to the father a greater portion than to a mother, to a brother greater than to a sister, and gives the family residence to a male heir.

Freedom from the marriage bond is made easy by desertion. "Married men who travel must fix a definite time for their return and endeavor to return at that time. If their wives have no news from them for nine months, after the fixt period, they can go to another husband. But if they are patient it is better, since *God loves those who are patient.*"

How the husband, who is away from his wife can act, we may judge by the example of a celebrated Ba-

⁴⁰ *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1892.

hai,⁴¹ Maskin Kalam, who was agent for Baha to watch over and spy upon Azal and the Azalis in Cyprus. His wife was in Persia; he simply took another in Cyprus.

The ease with which desertion may be practised under Bahai law is seen in the conduct of Dr. Kheiralla, one of the first apostles of Bahaism to America, and founder of the Chicago Assembly. Dr. H. H. Jessup wrote: "A cousin of Dr. Kheiralla, who is clerk in the American Press in Beirut, gave me the following statement. 'Dr. Kheiralla, after the death of his first wife in Egypt, in 1882, married first a coptic widow in El Fayum, whom he abandoned, and then married a Greek girl, whom he also abandoned, and who was still living in 1897 in Cairo. He then married an English wife, who abandoned him when his matrimonial relations became known to her.'⁴²

According to the claims of Bahais, these loose and imperfect divorce and marriage laws are to be accepted and administered universally under the future kingdom of Baha in its world-wide triumph!

It may be remarked in passing that Bahaism encourages the mixture of races by marriage. Already several American Bahais have married Persian women, and Persian men American women. One American Bahai woman has married a Japanese. Abdul Baha illustrates the relation of the races by a reference to animals. "Consider the kingdom of the animals. A pigeon of white plumage would not shun one of black or brown." In a tablet sent to America,

⁴¹ "Traveler's Narrative," pp. 378-9.

⁴² *Outlook*, of New York, quoted in THE MISSIONARY REVIEW, October, 1902, p. 773.

he directs: "Gather together these two races, black and white, into one assembly and put such love into their hearts that they shall even *intermarry*." (A Heavenly Vista by L. G. Gregory, p. 31). Again he says (page 15): "The colored people must attend all the unity meetings. There must be no distinctions. All are equal. If you have any influence to get the races to intermarry, it will be very valuable. Such unions will beget very strong and beautiful children." Mr. Gregory, an American negro, followed this advice by marrying an English woman, Miss L. A. M. Mathew.

IV. *The social position of women under Bahaism*, Professor Browne says: "Their (the Bahais) efforts to improve the social position of women have been much exaggerated."⁴³ It may be added that the success of their efforts has been small. It is plain that the Bab recognized the deplorable condition of women under Islam and desired to improve it. His laws gave woman some liberties. She was permitted to put off the veil. The Bab interpreted the prohibition of the Koran to mean that "only the wives of the prophet had received the order to hide the face,"⁴⁴ so "he relieved believers from the painful restraint of the veil." Women might appear in society, hold conversation with men,* and go to the mosques at night. Baha renewed these rules of the Bab. Still he seems to have some distrust, for the Kitab-ul-Akdas says that "men are forbidden to enter any man's house without his permission or in his absence." Thus

⁴³ "Encyclopedia Britannica" article, "Bahaism."

⁴⁴ Dreyfus, Id., p. 128.

*But if they limit themselves to twenty-eight words, it was better for them, says the Bayan.

Bahai precepts tend in some degree to the liberation of woman, tho they fall much behind high Christian ideals and customs.

There is observable a widespread and influential movement among Moslems for the amelioration of the condition of woman. This movement does not have its source and inspiration in, nor is it peculiar to nor confined to Bahaism. On the contrary, an oriental writer in a review of this remarkable tendency says: "Its birth in Moslem lands undoubtedly is due to the impact of the Occident upon the Orient, the missionary influence playing a large part in it."⁴⁵ The new Moslems of India, under the leadership of Justice Sayid Ali, as well as the Young Turks, Egyptians and others, advocate freedom and education for women and have gone much beyond the Bahais in practise. The Turkish women in Constantinople, who aided in the establishment of the constitution and are aspiring to enlarged liberty under its aegis, know Bahaism, if at all, simply as a Persian heretical sect. The Persian women, described so graphically by Mr. Shuster in "The Strangling of Persia,"⁴⁶ who formed clubs and took such an active and heroic part in the constitutional agitation, were not Bahai women. The Bahai women, as well as the men, were forbidden by Abdul Baha to take part in the struggle for constitutional liberty.⁴⁷ Professor Browne laments the lack of patriotism shown in their conduct. Still the Bahais deserve some credit for

the movement for the uplift of Persian womanhood. They might have done much more, notwithstanding the limitations to their liberty of action, had they followed out the first ideals of the Bab. These were exemplified in the celebrated Kurrat-ul-Ayn. This beautiful woman of genius—poet, scholar and theologian, was a pupil at Kerbela, of Haji Kazim, the chief of the Sheikhs. On his death she accepted the Bab, so that tho a product of the Sheikhi sect, her fame accrues to the honor of the Babis. At Kerbela, she gave lectures on theology to the people from behind a curtain, and at times, borne away by her enthusiasm and eloquence, would allow her veil to slip off in the presence of men. Her preaching and freedom of conduct was objected to even by Babis, but the Bab answered them, commending her and giving her the title of Janab-i-Tahira, "Her Excellency the Pure," and made her one of his nineteen "Letters of the Living," or apostles. She is said to have claimed to be a remanifestation of Fatima, the daughter of Mahommed. The Turkish government at Bagdad began prosecution against her. She returned to Persia and taught Babism even from the pulpit, at Kasvin, and also by means of poetry. What were the social results of her breaking through the restrictions of Islam? Her husband was Mullah Mohammed of Kasvin, who was opposed to the Bab. On account of this she refused to live with him. "In reply to all proposals of reconciliation, she answered: 'He, in that he rejects God's religion is unclean, while I am 'Pure'; between us there can be nothing in common.' So she refused to be reconciled to

⁴⁵ *American Review of Reviews*, 1912, p. 719.

⁴⁶ Pp. 191-198.

⁴⁷ "Observations of a Bahai Traveler," by Remy, pp. 53, 67; also Dreyfus, Id., p. 172.

her husband,"⁴⁸ and regarded herself as divorced. Afterward "she set out secretly to join herself to Hazret-i-Kuddus (Lord, the Most Holy)," that is, Mullah Mohammed Ali of Barfurush. Together they attended, with Baha Allah also, the celebrated conference at Badasht, at which "the abrogation of the laws of the previous dispensation was announced." There a sermon was preached by Hazret-i-Kuddus, which, says Professor Browne, lends some color to the accusation that the Babis advocated communism and community of wives.⁴⁹ This learned investigator further says: "The extraordinary proceedings at Badasht seem to have scandalized not only the Mohammedans but even a section of the Babis."⁵⁰ Mirza Jani, their first historian and a martyr, avers that not all "have understood the secret of what passed between Hazret-i-Kuddus and Kurrat-ul-Ayn at Badasht, and their real nature and what they meant."⁵¹ The Mohammedan historians openly accuse them of immorality. The Sheikh of Kum, a Bahai, told Professor Browne, "After the Bab had declared the law of Islam abrogated and before he had promulgated new ordinances, there ensued a period of transition which we call *fitrat* (the interval), during which all things were lawful. So long as this continued, Kurrat-ul-Ayn may very possibly have consorted, for example, with Hazret-i-Kuddus, as tho he had been her husband."⁵²

It may be that the scandals that followed Kurrat-ul-Ayn's venture

into public life and her tragic death in the cruel reprisals that followed the attempt of several Babis to assassinate the Shah, gave a setback to the efforts to liberate women in Persia. Certain it is that during the sixty years succeeding she has had no imitator or successor. Bahai women have continued to wear the veil and have remained secluded from the society of men, not only in Persia but at Acca, the headquarters of Bahatism. The force of the new faith was not strong enough to free the women. Rather they have compromised with their environment. Only in the Caucasus and Trans-Caspia under Russian protection, have they partly unveiled. Not even their women of the second and third generation have been trained to act up to their precepts, but in Acca, as in Persia, they are secluded from the society of even brethren in the faith. They are more backward than some other sects and races of Moslems. I have been entertained in the households of Kurds and Ali Allahis and have dined and conversed with the host and his wife. I have, of course, conversed with the families of Christian converts from Islam, but the wife of a Bahai has never been introduced to me, even tho I have known the husband intimately and visited him at his home a score of times in the course of as many years. In a few instances I have heard of Bahai women, in company of their husbands, receiving gentlemen visitors, but these wives had resided in Russia. An Osmanli official, at times, receives and makes visits in company with his wife. But the ladies of the household of Baha Ullah and Abdul Baha at Acca do not receive gentle-

⁴⁸ "New History," p. 274.

⁴⁹ Id., p. 357.

⁵⁰ Mirza Jani's "History," Introduction, p. xlii.

⁵¹ "New History," p. 365.

⁵² "A Year Among the Persians," p. 523.

men as visitors even when they are faithful and honored American believers. Mr. Myron Phelps when preparing materials for his "Life of Abbas Effendi," spent a month at Acca. He wished to embody in his book the interesting narrative of Behiah Khanum, the sister of Abbas. She, tho more than half a century had passed over her head, did not grant him personal interviews.⁵³ Instead she told her narrative in instalments day by day to Madame Canavaro, who then came out and repeated what she had heard to Mr. Phelps, who recorded it. He says: "Social custom prevented me from meeting this lady," and again, "Social custom prevented me from meeting the women."⁵⁴

Now that the way is opened by the Revolution and by the Constitutionals (who were not Bahais), liberal-minded men of all sects in Persia, Sufis, Sheikhis, Arifs, and even Muta-sharis, as well as Bahais, are showing considerable zeal for the elevation of women, and for female education.

V. What does Bahaim teach as to the *political equality of man and woman*. The future Bahai State and community is to be under the administration of Boards—called Houses of Justice, local, national, and universal. These are to be "divine agents," "representatives of God." They are to have absolute authority and to be infallible in their decisions. They will adjudicate questions of property, tithes, inheritance, divorce, and of war and peace. They will have charge of schools and of wives, children and servants as well as of religion. The number of members in

⁵³ Phelps, xxxix.

⁵⁴ "Idem," p. 109.

each Board is to be at least nine, "according to the number of Baha."⁵⁵ The members are to be all *men*. No women are to be admitted to these Boards or "Houses of Justice." This law evidently did not suit the notion of some of the American Bahai sisters, so they made bold to inquire about it. The "Infallible Interpreter," Abdul Baha, laid down the law plainly—which can not be altered for 1000 years at least. "From a *spiritual* point of view, there is no difference between women and men. The House of Justice, however, according to the positive commandments of the Doctrine of God, has been specialized to the *men* for a specific reason or exercise of wisdom on the part of God."⁵⁶ "As to you other maid-servants, give up your will and choose that of God." "The maid-servants of the merciful should not interfere with the affairs which have regard to the Board of Consultation, or House of Justice."⁵⁷

To sum up, it has been demonstrated that Bahaim does not, by its laws, give woman equality with the man, either in the family or the state, either as to domestic rights or political rights; that in the matter of education it has not tried to give equal opportunities to girls; that it conforms to the social life of its environment without transforming it; that the claims of Abdul Baha before his audiences in Europe and America were without foundation, disproved both by the teaching and by the practise by Baha Ullah.

⁵⁵ B=2, a=1, h=5, a=1, total 9 in Persian Abjad counting.

⁵⁶ "Tablets of Abdul Baha," Vol. I, p. 50.

⁵⁷ "Idem," p. 27.