

Contents

A Note from the Translator xiii

A Note from the Publisher xviii

Preface to the First Edition, 1952 xix

Foreword 1

Chapter 1

Journey to Baghdad 3

Through Russia to 'Akka 8

Arrival in Badkubih and leaving Russia 9

The life of the pilgrims in Akka 20

Visiting the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh 24

Feasts 29

Morale of the believers in the days of hardship 30

The schemes of the Covenant-breakers 33

The dwarfish old man 41

The Covenant-breakers' means of livelihood 42

Types of Covenant-breakers 44

My duties on this pilgrimage 45

'Abdu'l-Bahá's words 48

The suckling babe 58

The rebellion of Mirza Aqa Jan 60

The Covenant-breakers' planned rebellion through Mirza Aqa Jan and Tabur Aqasi
67

Events after Mirza Aqa Jan's rebellion 69

A story 74

The nature of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's cares in those few days 75

The story of Aqa Mirza Hasan 79

Dismissal 83

The story of the package and my mission 90

Tehran 92

The story continued 93

Allah'u'Abha / Allah'u'A'zam 95

The effect of the story of Aqa Mirza Hasan 96

Chapter 2

Departure from Tehran 103

Pilgrimage at 'Akka with an American, Mr. Hoar 104

My feelings during the first days in the Holy Land 106

Description of my duties in those days 109

Haifa in 1900 A.D. 110

The morale of the believers of Haifa and 'Akka in those days 113

Six months in Haifa 115

'Abdu'l-Bahá's visits from 'Akka to Haifa 116

Construction of the Shrine of the Bab 117

'Abdu'l-Bahá's words in those days in Haifa 121

Three pistol shots at 'Abdu'l-Bahá 122

The renewal of confinement 126

Chapter 3

Circumstances surrounding the renewal of confinement 132

Details of the renewal of confinement 134

Release of the Covenant-breakers from prison due to the Master's intercession
135

My return to 'Akka 135

"O Breakwell, O my dear one!" 138

The pilgrimage of Mr. Dodge's sons 142

Madame de Canavarro and Mr. Phelps 144

Mr. Dreyfus and Miss Sanderson 148

The late Dr. Arastu Khan 150

Mrs. Lua Getsinger 150

Arrival of a Covenant-breaker from Bombay, Husayn-'Ali Jahrumi, surnamed Fitrat
156

Establishment of an English class 158

News of the upheavals of Yazd and Isfahan 160

The realization of one of Abdu'l-Bahá's predictions: Mirza Badi'u'llah's story
concluded 163

The return of Mirza Badi'u'llah to the fold 166

Conduct, manners and attitude of Mirza Badi'u'llah 172

Mirza Badi'u'llah breaks his vows of repentance 173

Rapid progress of the Faith in East and West and the sending of the Arch-breaker of the Covenant's agent to America 174

Burdens, sorrows and labours of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 177

The effect of difficulties and sorrows on 'Abdu'l-Bahá 180

A story 183

One task does not distract Him from another 185

Kashkul or pumpkin bowl? 188

The effect on the pilgrims of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá 193

The manner of revealing verses 195

Fridays 202

Chapter 4

The Prison City again one year later 208

The arrival of certain Western believers wearing the fez in the Ottoman style 213

Mr. and Mrs. Winterburn 215

Mr. Frank 217

Further progress of the Faith in the East; Construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar in 'Ishqabad 222

Rapid progress of the Cause of God in the West 227

The condition of the Covenant-breakers 231

Visits by non-Bahá'í Westerners 233

Account of the conversion of an American lady in 'Abdu'l-Bahá's presence 239

Servitude 242

A bitter-sweet story 246

Medicine 249

Trusting the road to the highwayman 253

Chapter 5: Various Miscellaneous Events

"The triumph of the Cause of God is in his hands" 257

The definitive date for the end of the Covenant-breaking period 260

Collapse of the domes 261

"Once I was embarrassed" 263

The sweet fragrance of some of the letters 264

You conquered my heart before I ever existed 266

The name of the first Japanese Bahá'í was Yamamoto 268

His gait and bearing defy words 270

A story to illustrate a point 272

The Master on health 273

Another illustrative story: "Six years of hard work did not go to waste!" 276

Charity devoid of hypocrisy 279

Infiltrating the Faith of God 282

The meaning of generosity 283

"Eat the bread, but don't drink the wine" 287

What sort of place was 'Akka? 291

One "effulgence" of the Prison, the thirty-day fast 294

"My well-being and its opposite are in the hands of the friends" 298

A grand feast 301

Love 303

Chapter 6

Again, never-ending tasks and severe hardships 308

'Abdu'l-Bahá's utterances in these days 310

My own circumstances at this time 311

The Persian Consulate building 313

Miss Barney and Some Answered Questions 314

A change in conditions: The arrival of biased officials 319

My journey to Europe 322

Arrival at Marseilles 324

Arrival in Paris 326

Return to 'Akka 328

A brief visit to Beirut 331

Abdu'l-Bahá's teachings on how to attract divine confirmations 332

Moving to Beirut 334

Chapter 7

Multiple investigators, both secret and open 345

Interpretation of Mirza Nuru'd-Din's dream 347

Intrigues of the Covenant-breakers 348

The situation in Akka as the Covenant-breakers awaited the impending chaos 353

The arrival of Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid's officials, and their departure due to the cannon blast of divine confirmation 354

This is the letter from Nuru'd-Din-i-Zayn 357

The fulfilment of the prophecies of Abdu'l-Bahá, now and in the future 366

Chapter 8

Arrival at Beirut 369

What sort of Place was Beirut? 373

The conditions of this servant in Beirut 375

That grenade that missed the breast of Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid struck the liver of the Covenant-breakers 379

Another look at Beirut 380

The everlasting disgrace of the Covenant-breakers was simultaneous with the removal of Sultan 'Abdu'l-Hamid 381

When did Satan ever give me a chance? 382

Manufacturing a dream with the intention of slandering the Faith of God 384

I consider such words to be meaningless 385

Conclusion of Chapter 8 386

Chapter 9

We believers were not without our faults 390

What is a homeland and who is a patriot? 394

What was happening on the moon? 396

By God, you're right! 399

What is fortune? 402

Return to Beirut 404

Three medical cases 406

News from Iran and the Ottoman States 412

The end of the Most Great Prison of 'Akka 414

Describing the indescribable 416

Return to Iran 419

Apology 425

Selected Biographical Notes 427

Bibliography 445

Notes and References 451

Index 483

[page xi]

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Between pages 44 and 45: 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master The house at the Cave of Elijah on Mount Carmel Driving from Haifa to Akka along the sands The land approach to Akka The pilgrims' first view of the Mansion and Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahji The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh The House of 'Abdu'llah Pasha from the street The garden in the courtyard of the House of 'Abdu'llah Pasha The Khan-i-'Avamid, the caravanserai where several Bahá'ís lived

Between pages 172 and 173: Haji Mirza Haydar-'ali of Isfahan Mishkin-Qalam, Mirza Husayn of Isfahan Zaynu'l-Muqarrabin, Mulla Zaynu'l-'Abidin Aqa Muhammad Riday-i-Qannad of Shiraz Aqa Husayn-i-Aschchi of Kashan The original building of the Shrine of the Bab on Mount Carmel The Shrine of the Bab, alleged by the Covenant-breakers to be "a strong fortress" Dr. Youness Khan and Dr. Arastu Khan

[page xii]

Between pages 268 and 269: Thomas Breakwell Hippolyte Dreyfus Lua Getsinger William Hoar Isabella Brittingham The Master's carriage, driven by his faithful servant Isfandiyar The Bahá'ís of 'Ishqabad, carrying materials for the construction of the Mashriqu'l-Adhkar The 'Ishqabad House of Worship under construction The streets of 'Akka: a view down Saladin Street Bahá'ís in front of Tell-i-Fakhkhar, with the Mansion of Bahji in the distance

Between pages 396 and 397: Shoghi Effendi in childhood The first Persian edition of *Some Answered Questions* Laura Barney Ethel Rosenberg Kanichi Yamamoto, the first Japanese Bahá'í Believers in Paris in the early 1900s 'Abdu'l-Bahá's tent in the courtyard of the House of 'Abdu'llah Pasha Dr. Youness Afroukhteh Dr. Youness Afroukhteh with his wife Zarintaj and daughters Nirvana and Farzaneh in about 1926 Doctors at the Sehat Hospital, Tehran "The Holy One walks"

[page xiii]

A NOTE FROM THE TRANSLATOR

"Jinab-i-Khan", the title by which Dr. Youness Afroukhteh (Yunis Afrukhtih) was honoured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was a writer, an interpreter, a wonderful poet, a

magnificent orator, a brilliant physician and an indefatigable teacher of the Faith of God. He was also a first class humourist. And it is this heavenly quality of wit and humour that infuses this volume with a mood rarely seen in similar literature and thus makes reading these pages such an interesting and delightful experience.

My father had been a patient of this beloved servant of Abdu'l-Bahá and used to tell me, in my youth, about him and the wonderful stories of his famous memoirs. Once, gazing at a portrait of the beloved Jinab-i-Khan which my father kept in his study, I remarked that he looked so radiant that it was almost as if the picture emitted light. The observation seemed to transport my father to another place and time. His eyes glazed over and remained fixed on a far-off point in space, as a wistful smile found play on his lips. After what seemed like a long pause he said, "That is the light of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Jinab-i-Khan was at that Threshold for nine years. That is why the light is so intense." All this made my first reading of these memoirs much more meaningful. It was "light" writing about the "Sun"; a physician describing the true Healer; it was the utterly devoted lover writing about Love personified. Over those nine years (1900-1909), Jinab-i-Khan served Abdu'l-Bahá as secretary, translator, envoy and physician. His account of some of the most significant events of the period, his graphic and stirring depictions of the various attributes

[page xiv]

and moods of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the description of his own emotions-all expressed in a lively and at times mischievous language of humour and wit, and made ever more meaningful by the addition of the verses of poetry (including some of his own) interspersed throughout the book, make this volume uniquely memorable. On his return to Persia, as he began his brilliant career in medicine, Jinab-i-Khan continued to serve the Cause of God with ever-increasing passion. He describes in his memoirs in some detail the teaching firesides he held at his home in Tehran in times when such activities could have spelled doom. In 1925 he travelled to the United States where he spoke at large gatherings and imparted to the friends in that region the light of faith and certitude he had absorbed from the Master. A few years later he embarked on an extensive European tour where he not only introduced the life-giving principles of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh to many a gathering, but also was a living demonstration to the friends of the spirit of love and fellowship which flows from the practice of those principles.

In a moving passage from his wonderful memoirs he recounts that once as he made his report to Abdu'l-Bahá of his visit to Paris, where he had been sent by the Master, he made mention of the fact that his appearance among the French believers and his words to them seemed to have a deeply profound effect on them.

Suddenly Abdu'l-Bahá halted, and turning His blessed face to me asked, "How many years have you been with us?" "Four years," I replied. "In these four years you don't know what I have given you; you have no idea what you have

absorbed from Me!"

In addition to his international teaching services, Jinab-i-Khan was also active in Bahá'í administration. He served on the National Spiritual Assembly of Persia as well as the Spiritual Assembly of Tehran for many years, until advanced age and the onset of a chronic illness deprived him of the energy

[page xv]

to continue. His health deteriorated over time until on 28 November 1948 he left this earthly abode for his heavenly home, so that once again he might gain admittance to the heavenly threshold of his Beloved Master. His "In Memoriam" may be found in *The Bahá'í World*, volume 12, pages 679-681.

At each reading of Jinab-i-Khan's memoirs one tends to come away with a new impression, a fresh realization, a deeper understanding of the words of that heavenly Reality, Abdu'l-Bahá. In the course of my last reading of the book and as I replaced Persian words and concepts with their English equivalents, I caught something significant that had escaped me in previous readings. Absorbed and captivated by the warmth that radiated from these pages I began to visualize myself as a player in the story, an observer of the events, a resident of the pilgrim house. So I too began to experience, in a daydream state, the joy and thrill of nearness to the beloved Master, and as I pounded the computer keys I too basked in the sunshine of His love. Along with the rest of the friends, we seemed to be in the midst of Paradise while living in the Most Great Prison. No one wished for anything but to be near Him and to live out his life in a sort of spiritual ecstasy, as if there was nothing else to life.

Then one day quite suddenly, just after the dismantling of the Most Great Prison, the Master voiced his long-cherished desire: "I have to spread the teachings of God around the world." Before His re-incarceration in the city of 'Akka He had repeatedly mentioned the fact that, "Were it not for the safeguarding of the Most Holy Shrine, I would travel and teach the Faith." And now that He felt that the Shrines were safe He was making plans to do exactly that. For me, reading those words, came a sudden awakening-as if He seemed to be telling me that we have a duty in this world to perform. We are not here to simply enjoy each other's company and the comforts of life. It is not enough to remain good Bahá'ís and simply lead a passive life. We must follow Him and win the hearts of men by our conduct, actions and words.

[page xvi]

Jinab-i-Khan distinguished himself in following the Master's exhortations for the remaining days of his life. He himself became an unforgettable example of devotion, service and sacrifice for all the lovers of Abdu'l-Bahá the world over.

I began the translation of the 124 B.E. (1968), revised edition of the book in the summer of 1996 and gave to it my utmost effort, although there always remains room for improvement. I have translated much of the poetry and ha"

tried to keep intact the weight of the original verse and the beauty of the rhyme which are such indispensable features classical Persian poetry. My English translations of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unpublished Tablets and prayers, whether from Arabic or Persian, remain provisional and are so annotated (There is so much here that despite my best endeavours this translation can never hope to match the beauty and zest of the original. My hope is that English-speaking believers, no unlike myself, may take this spiritual journey with Jinab-i-Khan and in doing so enrich their lives, strengthen their resolve in service to the Cause and, God willing, share with him, in whatever may be their portion, the extraordinary joy of experiencing nearness to the magical presence of the Centre of the Covenant, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I wish to thank my dear friend Mr. Adel Shafipour for his help in translating some of the Arabic Tablets and deciphering certain Arabic passages which escaped my level of competency but not his. I am indebted to Dr. Houshang Sharifi for his assistance with translation of further Arabic text. Mrs. May Hofman's editing of the manuscript was truly a service of love. With the precision and skill of a surgeon she performed the invaluable service of sorting out words, sentences and paragraphs and making sure that the outcome was an "English" document.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to my dear friend and colleague Dr. Ahang Rabbani, through whose suggestion I began the project and whose constant encouragement and invaluable assistance in reviewing and refining of the text enabled me to complete it.

[page xvii]

This translation is dedicated to my beloved wife Nazli Masrour, whose all-consuming devotion and constant care and attention spurred me on from beginning to end. I know of no other handmaiden of 'Abdu'l-Bahá who has happily accepted so many of the household burdens and responsibilities, given more of her time and industry, and generally fussed over her husband more intently and with more vigour and love in support of his pursuit of a goal. Without it this translation would have carried the name of another of Abdu'l-Bahá's servants than mine, and in recognition of her support my heart is filled with humility and gratitude.

Riaz Masrour
August 2003

[page xviii]

A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Many people have assisted in making possible at last the full English translation of *Khatirat-i-Nuh-Saliy-i-'Akka*. In addition to those already mentioned by the translator, the publisher would like to thank the following: Nirvana Fahoumand Afroukhteh and Farzaneh Yazdani Afroukhteh, daughters of the author, and Minerva Douglas, his grand-daughter, for their interest and support; Saeed Khadivian, whose unpublished translation of these memoirs in the

early 1980s provided a useful point of reference to the non-Persian speaking editor of the present translation; Mr. Ali Nakhjavani for his continued encouragement; and the following for their technical help in providing information and materials: Laura Barnes, Arthur Lyon Dahl, Roger Dahl, Iraj Khodadoost, Diana Kitanova-Samii, Erica Leith, Minou Moarefi, Mahmud Samandari, Shapur Rassekh, Robert Stockman, and Mina Yazdani. We wish also to thank the staff at the Bahá'í World Centre who read and revised the provisional translations of writings by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The writing of 'Akka was finished in the year 99 B.E. (1942), but its first publication did not take place until ten years later in 109 B.E. (1952). A revised edition appeared in 124 B.E. (1967), and that edition, reprinted in 1983 by Kalimat Press, is the version used in this translation. The most recent Persian edition was published in Germany in 2003. To assist the reader, the publisher has added explanatory endnotes and a section of biographical notes on many of the people mentioned in the book. These do not form part of the original text.

[page xix]

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION, 1952

In the Name of God, the All-Glorious!

Memories of Years in 'Akka, written by Dr. Youness Afroukhteh, is a remarkable book. Using delightful expressions and in the sweetest choice of words, the author records those momentous and horrifying events related to the uprising of the breakers of the Covenant and the sorrow and anguish of the Centre of the Covenant.

Among those works dealing with the history of Covenant-breaking, this book is pre-eminent in its clear establishment of truth from falsehood. It has been honoured by the approval and praise of the beloved Guardian and his explicit instruction, to this Assembly, that it should be published and disseminated. Its author was favoured after his passing by the following cable from the beloved Guardian, words of infinite bounty from the heaven of mercy and generosity:

HEARTS GRIEF-STRICKEN PASSING BELOVED YUNIS AFRUKHTIH DISTINGUISHED PROMOTER HOLY FAITH HERALD COVENANT TRUSTED SECRETARY BELOVED MASTER STAUNCH SUPPORT HIS TESTAMENT. HIS SERVICES ENRICH ANNALS BOTH HEROIC FORMATIVE AGES FAITH. INSTRUCT ASSEMBLIES ALL PROVINCES HOLD BEFITTING MEMORIAL GATHERINGS. INFORM VARQA ERECT MY BEHALF MONUMENT HIS GRAVE. ARDENTLY PRAYING ALMIGHTY'S INESTIMABLE BLESSING HIS SOUL.

Signature of the Guardian

[page xx]

These words of the Guardian serve as a true indicator of the character of the esteemed author and eliminate the need for any further description of his praiseworthy qualities and virtues, or of the record of his services.

The publication of this book will no doubt bear many fruits. It will bring increased awareness to the friends of God of the significance of the divine Covenant, the necessity of eschewing Covenant-breakers, and the deceit and treachery of this loathsome group. Further, it will familiarize young Bahá'ís who have not personally witnessed the upheaval of Covenant-breaking and have not encountered the seditious and corrupting deeds of these destroyers of the foundation of the Faith of God, with their malicious actions. This Assembly recommends to all the friends the in-depth perusal of this wonderful book.

'Ali-Akbar Furutan

Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly of Iran

[page 1]

FOREWORD

Some thirty-seven years have passed since the occasion of my first pilgrimage to the threshold of the incomparable beloved, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is my purpose, therefore, to record for posterity the recollections of my three-month residence in the Most Great Prison city of 'AWL, and then to continue these reminiscences and share with the reader my memories of the nine years of my second pilgrimage, which took place thirty-four years ago.

It seems now as though I had a dream lasting three months some thirty-eight years ago, and another, nine years in duration, which began thirty-four years past and ended twenty-five years ago. I shall, therefore, set out to record under the title of *Memories of Nine Years in 'Akka* an account of my spiritual discoveries during those dream-like journeys. In so doing, I shall attempt to refrain from relating unsubstantiated tales and hearsay traditions, and shall leave the interpretation of these dreams to posterity. My hope is that future generations of believers may become acquainted with past events and, unlike the followers of other religions who have largely remained incognizant of the traits and attributes of past Manifestations, obtain an understanding of the character, personality, and manners of one such divinely-inspired Personage.

This account covers certain historically significant events, for the largest portion of these memoirs relates to the activities of the Covenant-breakers in the time of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

[page 2]

Since Baghdad was the initial site of their rebellion, I shall begin the story with my journey to that city.

I should state at the outset that to remember events that took place a quarter of a century ago is no easy task, especially in my case, for I have always suffered from a pronounced frailty in this faculty. However, highlights of these events have left such an indelible impression on my mind that even if after thousands of years the minute particles of my remains-having since been cast into limitless space by the hand of nature-were to be recovered and analysed, the memories of those past events might yet be detected by any

attentive observer. It is this hidden power, residing in the recesses of my memory, which encourages and propels me to recount the events of the past for the generations of the future.

Having said this, in relating this story I still find myself unable to depend solely on those brain cells that house the record of my lifelong memories. Moreover, I do not intend to depend on any assistance from those unidentified microscopic beings. Instead I shall place my hope and trust in the divine assistance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My prayer is that His spirit may shine forth from the Concourse on High with the luminous light of His bounty and generosity, and aid the hosts of feeble and unlettered ones such as this servant. And so it is in that heavenly and holy Being that I place my wholehearted reliance, as I take up the pen and begin the story.

single page

chapter 1

METADATA

Views147042 views since posted 2014-03-14; last edit 2025-09-22 07:49 UTC;

previous at archive.org.../afroukhteh_nine_years_akka

ISBN

0853984778 / 978-0853984771

Inventory #

MNYA.028-029 [BH02288], MNYA.039 [ABU3682], MNYA.057 [AB08428], MNYA.087x [AB03474], MNYA.096 [AB06709], MNYA.101-102 [AB07042], MNYA.170-171 [ABU2070], MNYA.176x [AB01501], MNYA.176x [AB03058], MNYA.180 [ABU3742], MNYA.184 [ABU2047], MNYA.185 [AB08597], MNYA.186-187 [ABU2344], MNYA.206-207x [AB01578], MNYA.221-222 [ABU1265], MNYA.260 [AB10248], MNYA.269-270 [AB03175], MNYA.273 [ABU2328], MNYA.274 [ABU3299], MNYA.276-279 [ABU0311], MNYA.279-280 [ABU1168], MNYA.281-282 [ABU1368], MNYA.283 [ABU1268], MNYA.300 [ABU2069], MNYA.306-307 [AB01214], MNYA.309 [AB07071], MNYA.323x [AB06709], MNYA.340 [AB06211], MNYA.358 [ABU3141], MNYA.378x [AB08487], MNYA.388-389 [AB03292], MNYA.398x [BH02288], MNYA.404 [ABU1361]

Language

English

Permission

offsite link to document

History

Formatted 2014-03 by Jonah Winters.

Share

Shortlink: bahai-library.com/4341

Citation: ris/4341

select Collection:

Archives

Articles

Articles-unpublished

Audio
Bibliographies
BIC
Biographies
Books
Chronologies
Compilations
Compilations-NSA
Compilations-personal
Documents
East-asia
Encyclopedia
Essays
Etc
Excerpts
Fiction
Glossaries
Guardian
Histories
Introductory
Letters
Maps
Music
Newspapers
NSA-documents
NSA-letters
Personal
Pilgrims
Poetry
Presentations
Resources
Reviews
Scripts
Software
Statistics
Study
Talks
Theses
Transcripts
Translations
UHJ-documents
UHJ-letters
Video
Visual
Writings
home

[sitemap](#)

[series](#)

[chronology](#)

[search:](#)

[author](#)

[title](#)

[date](#)

[tags](#)

[adv. search](#)

[languages](#)

[inventory](#)

[bibliography](#)

[abbreviations](#)

[links](#)

[about](#)

[contact](#)

[RSS](#)

[new](#)

— Memories of Nine Years in Akka (Used by permission of the curator)