

World Order

SPRING 1977

TOBEY: IN MEMORIAM

THE DAYS WITH MARK TOBEY

Marzieh Gail

MARK, DEAR MARK

Bernard Leach

MEMORIES OF MARK TOBEY

Firuz Kazemzadeh

THE DOT AND THE CIRCLE

Mark Tobey

THE PEACOCK ROOM

Robert Hayden

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Through Chaos to Unity

THE ARMS RACE is continuing. New and more potent weapons systems come into being, constantly increasing man's capacity to kill, to maim, and to devastate. Occasional discussions among leading nations bring negligible results, or none at all. The maintenance of world peace seems no longer to be the chief purpose of the United Nations, and the very concept of collective security is virtually ignored by those who theorize on problems of international relations and world order.

The failure to embrace collective security as the main guarantee of peace and survival and to establish the unity of mankind as the goal toward which all nations must strive has had, and will continue to have, disastrous consequences for humanity. "The process of disintegration," Shoghi Effendi wrote at a time when the League of Nations seemed to offer great hope of peace, "must inexorably continue, and its corrosive influence must penetrate deeper and deeper into the very core of a crumbling age. Much suffering will still be required ere the contending nations, creeds, classes and races of mankind are fused in the crucible of universal affliction, and are forged by the fires of a fierce ordeal into one organic commonwealth, one vast, unified, and harmoniously functioning system. Adversities unimaginably appalling, undreamed of crises and upheavals, war, famine, and pestilence, might well combine to engrave in the soul of an unheeding generation those truths and principles which it has disdained to recognize and follow."

The alternative to world peace and world order is destruction and chaos. "Must humanity, tormented as she now is, be afflicted with still severer tribulations ere their purifying influence can prepare her to enter the heavenly Kingdom destined to be established upon the earth? Must the inauguration of so vast, so unique, so illumined an era in human history be ushered in by so great a catastrophe in human affairs as to recall, nay surpass, the appalling collapse of the Roman civilization . . . ?"



Interchange LETTERS FROM AND TO THE EDITOR

"UN DES ASPECTS les plus intrigants de la condition humaine est la relation anormale qui a existé entre l'homme et la femme tout au long de l'histoire."

"Desidero proporre alcune osservazioni sul dilemma che si pone all'intellettuale moderno quando affronta il problema della disponibilità morale nella nostra società in transizione."

"Lähes 2500 vuotta sitten eräs jalo mies kulki opetuslapsineen ja opetti pienessä valtiossa nimeltä Magadha, joka on osa nykyistä Nepalia."

One of the enduring pleasures of serving on the editorial board of a magazine is watching ideas take shape and emerge as essays. Yet another is following those same essays through the publishing process, from manuscripts marked up for the printers, to galley and page proofs, to silver prints, and, at last, to a bound and illustrated journal. Over the past several years the Editors of *WORLD ORDER* have found still another pleasure—that of seeing articles from our magazine translated into other languages and appear in our sister journals around the world.

Thus the paragraphs at the beginning of this column are not meant to confuse or puzzle. They are the opening portions of articles originally published in *WORLD ORDER* and now appearing in translation elsewhere. The first is from Constance Conrader's "Women: Attaining Their Birthright," which appeared in *WORLD ORDER*'s Summer 1972 issue. It was

translated into French for the December 1975 *La Pensée Bahá'ie*, a quarterly magazine published for many years in Switzerland.

The second is from Daniel Jordan's "The Dilemma of the Modern Intellectual," published in *WORLD ORDER* in Spring 1967. It was translated into Italian for the second issue (April 1977) of the newly established *Opinioni Bahá'í*, published by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Italy.

The third is from Daniel Conner's "Buddhism and the Bahá'í Faith," published in *WORLD ORDER* in Winter 1971-72. It was translated into Finnish for a 1976 issue of *Maailmankansalainen*, published by a group of Bahá'ís in Finland.

WORLD ORDER, in its first issue published in 1966, after an eighteen year lapse, stated among its goals the opening of a "dialogue among those, whether Bahá'í or not, whose efforts to understand and do something about the human condition have brought them to a point at which the exchange of ideas and insights will be of common benefit." At the outset the editors were concerned primarily with establishing a readership in the United States and among a few English-speaking friends abroad. Now it is gratifying to see that the pebble dropped so resolutely into the publishing pond more than ten years ago has found readers who carry on the conversation in a variety of languages.

To the Editor

MORE ON ISLÁM'S TAHRÍF

It is probably unusual for you to have the author of a WORLD ORDER article writing a letter to critique his own work. I have found that in writing about Bahá'í topics one's abilities are never adequate enough to produce a befitting and satisfactory treatment of them. I would, therefore, like to make some observations about my essay on "Islám's Tahríf" in the Fall 1976 issue.

First of all I want to correct my unconscionable omission of reference to the classic work by Thomas W. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam* (New York: Scribners, 1913), which provided some of the best general background on Islám's missionary endeavors among Jews and Christians.

Second, I have discovered that my statement on p. 24 regarding the "elimination of the phrase 'Apostle of God' from the early articles" of the Constitution of Medina is simply untrue. As a matter of fact, the very first passage of the Constitution refers to Muḥammad as a prophet. Both the text of the Medina Constitution and a discussion of the position of Muḥammad in that document appear in W. Montgomery Watt's *Muhammad at Medina* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 221-30.

Since the appearance of the article I have had discussions with believers who have indicated disagreement with my conclusions, or who have brought up certain difficult events in Bahá'í history which might undermine the argument I have set forth. It is to these questions that I wish to address myself.

The primary questions raised by those with whom I have discussed my article concern the conclusions. On pp. 29-30 of the essay, I state that the Bahá'í response to Bahá'u'lláh's definition of tahríf would involve the "acceptance of

the Scriptures of all the revealed religions." Without carefully reading the remainder of the paragraph, it would be very easy to conclude that I am suggesting that the Bahá'í Faith advocates an acceptance of the exact text of the previous Holy Scriptures. In correspondence with the WORLD ORDER editorial board about the first draft of the article, one of the members of the board addressed the difficulties of this question, to wit: acceptance of the actual text would require that Bahá'ís accept several different versions of the Bible, since so many are in use among the various branches of Christianity; there is a difference in the way Bahá'ís view the Gospels on one hand, and the Acts of the Apostles and Pauline epistles on the other; Bahá'u'lláh's questioning of the misinterpretation of the Holy Texts does not establish the authenticity of the specific texts as now written. I believe that these difficulties are addressed in the remaining section of my conclusions, in which I list the implications of any acceptance of previous Holy Books: 1) recognition of their divine inspiration; 2) acceptance of a multiplicity of understandings of their contents. This seems to me to be in accord with my summary of Bahá'u'lláh's reinterpretation of tahríf as "the misinterpretation of the sacred Books, the distortion of the spirit in which they were revealed, and the mistaken view that conscious forgery and interpolation had taken place." This does not mean that the Bahá'í position embodies the view that the texts of previous Scriptures underwent no change or modification. I intentionally referred to previous Holy Writ (particularly the Bible) as "collections of sacred oral traditions." Obviously, such oral tradition is transformed until it is set down in writing. Such modification in transmission does not presuppose conscious design to corrupt a divine Revelation, nor does it empty the sacred oral tradition of its divine authority and spiritual content. This, I think, allows us to appre-

hend the meaning of Bahá'u'lláh's reinterpretation of the *taḥríf* concept while at the same time allowing that texts of previous Holy Scriptures have been modified and evolved over many centuries. Also, it is obvious to students of the Bahá'í Faith that one of its claims to uniqueness rests in the emphasis upon its possession of authenticated originals of the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh.

An extremely sensitive question has been raised which is far more difficult to deal with. When Bahá'u'lláh announced His Mission, His half-brother Mírzá Yaḥyá Subḥ-i-Azal rebelled against Him. It is historically documented that Azal and his followers consciously and deliberately forged documents which they claimed to be the writings of the Báb. In some cases they are known to have falsified the actual Holy Texts of the Báb's Writings. What does this do to Bahá'u'lláh's discussion of *taḥríf* and to my conclusions? I believe they are still valid, provided that we understand that the situation of the Bábí Faith is unique in religious history, and that Bahá'u'lláh wrote the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* before the problems with Azal began. Since the Bábí Faith had only nineteen years of existence before Bahá'u'lláh revealed His Station, the believers did not have a chance to become thoroughly familiar with all the texts of the Báb's Writings,

nor was there time to settle those texts into an authorized canon of Scripture. Thus the challenge of Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in 1863 provided the perfect cause and chance for the ambitious to falsify Holy Texts. Previous Revelations had had their Scriptures in a generally accepted form a few centuries before a new Manifestation arrived. In such a case, there could be no impetus for a conscious forgery. In the case of the Azalís (Bábís who followed Azal), the opportunity provided itself for the first time in history, and they did not resist the temptation. This fact does not change the nature or application of Bahá'u'lláh's redefinition of *taḥríf* as the misuse and misinterpretation of Holy Scriptures, inasmuch as the Azalís did that too.

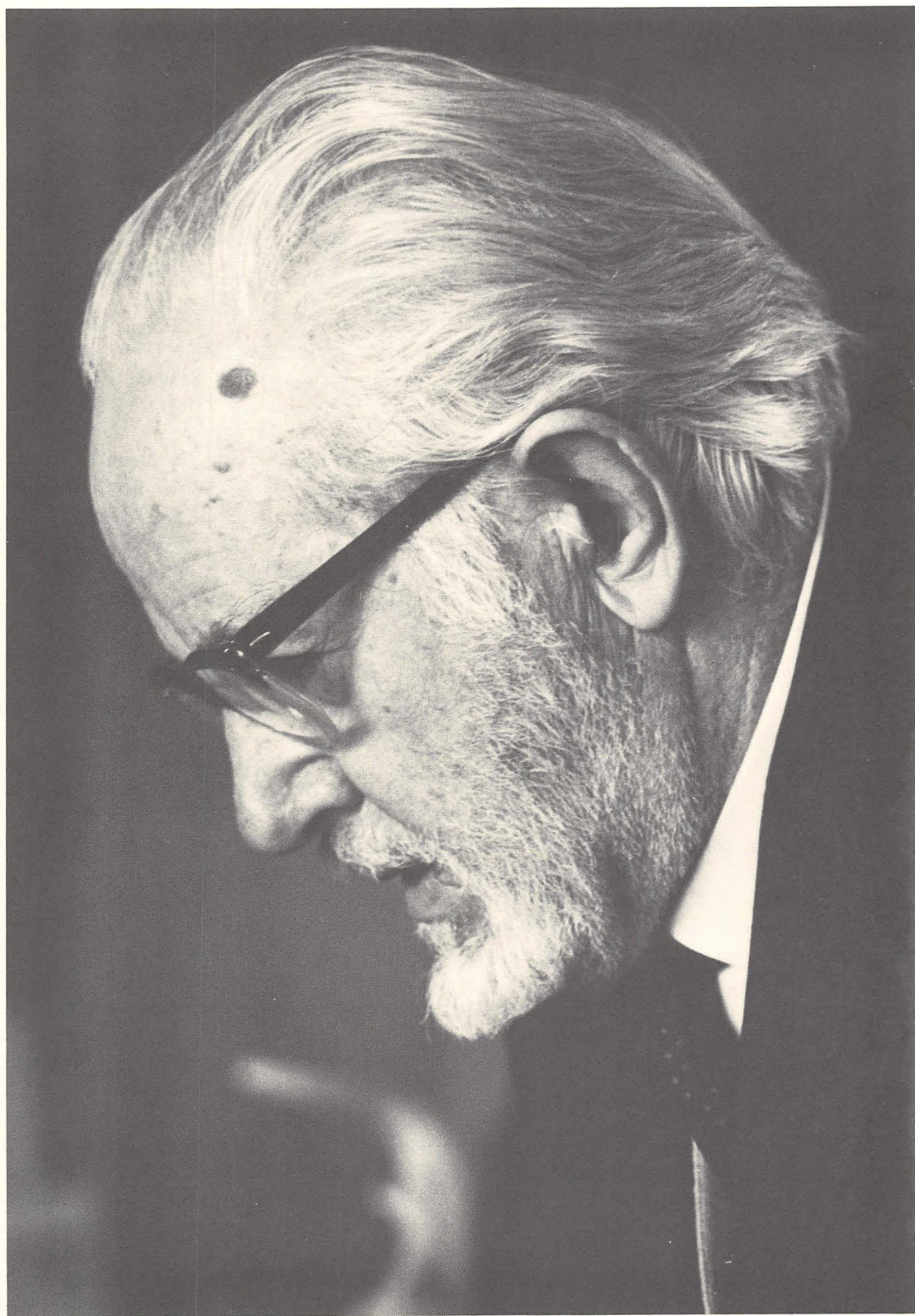
Each of these subjects will no doubt be the subject of much more erudite study by future Bahá'í historians and philosophers. My essay was an attempt to challenge all Bahá'ís to give some deep thought to the question of how we view Scriptures—our own and those of other religions—in the hope that we will understand them all better, and appreciate the immeasurable gift Bahá'u'lláh has left for us in His clarification of such complex issues.

WILLIAM P. COLLINS
Madison, Wisconsin





MARK TOBEY died on 24 April 1976 in Basel. He had lived a long and fruitful life—eighty-six years—achieving international recognition, winning honors, and seeing his paintings placed in the permanent collections of leading museums. A year after his death WORLD ORDER pays tribute to the man and the artist. The three sets of reminiscences presented below come from individuals who knew and admired Mark. "The Dot and the Circle," a talk by Mark published in WORLD ORDER in March 1949, completes the word portraits drawn in the reminiscences. We hope to publish at some future date a number of articles analyzing and evaluating his art.



The Days With Mark Tobey

BY MARZIEH GAIL

MARK always traveled first class, even when low on funds. I would have met him sooner, otherwise. We were on the same boat crossing the Mediterranean to Haifa, but I was down in third. Disembarking at Haifa, Howard Carpenter and I, although we recognized no one, were greeted by an official at the Customs with, "So you belong to Shoghi Effendi!" We had been in a state of some agitation: this pilgrimage was especially critical, because Shoghi Effendi had written me (I lived in San Francisco) to go and settle in Persia; it was a watershed time in our lives. Now we felt welcomed and had no trouble getting through.

Effie Baker and Fujita received us with exquisite tea at what was then the Western Pilgrim House on Persia Street, across from the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Effie was the frail looking but wiry Australian who had, not long before, armed with the Guardian's long and detailed list, traveled six months across Persia, often by truck over haphazard roads, making photographs to illustrate *The Dawn-Breakers*. Fujita, the tiny Japanese, had served in the Holy Land from the days of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He now sported a long beard because the Master, jokingly it seems, had suggested it, and for close companion he had an orange cat, two-thirds his size. The other pet I remember at the Pilgrim House was an ancient, rumpled parrot left from the days of the Master, a bird who could, on occasion, chant a line or so of prayer. It was evening then, and we knew we could not see Shoghi Effendi until the following day.

At this time the Guardian would lunch with his Western guests at their Pilgrim House, while his afternoon walks and many evenings were primarily given over to pilgrims from the East. (Once or twice, as he walked over Mount Carmel, the Persians

out of respect following behind, I would hear his voice echoing down the mountain, like the Báb's at Máh-Kú.) Now, at noon, we waited for the Guardian to cross the road from the Master's house, listened for his footsteps on the path outside. Besides ourselves, the other three were the international Bahá'í lawyer, Mountfort Mills, tall, slender, white haired, one of the most distinguished men of his time. He was just back from a mission to Baghdad, connected with the question of the House of Bahá'u'lláh, a case he carried to the League of Nations. With him was the elegant Marjory Morten of New York, who had accompanied him on the mission (but had stayed, as directed, at a different hotel). And third was the tall, shy, brown-bearded young man, recently returned from a Zen Buddhist monastery, and with a name little known then, Mark Tobey.

This waiting, the anticipation of an advent, took me back to an earlier time at the Court in Tíhrán, waiting with the Crown Princess of that day for the visit of her husband—he, although we did not know it then, doomed to be the final *Sháh* of the Qájár dynasty, that dynasty which had killed the Báb and done everything in its power to destroy the Faith of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. About to greet his wife and her guests, the Prince would walk alone across the great courtyard to the women's palace, his boots ringing on the stones.

I could still see the Qájár before me, that now-forgotten Regent, with his fair skin, long eyelashes, and eyes the Persians called *khumár* (languishing and seemingly half-drunk), traces of which features can be found across Persia even yet. For the Qájárs, one of whom was credited with 1,000 wives and 105 offspring (and this

before computers), were fertile to the point where a proverb said: "Camels, fleas and princes exist everywhere." On an earlier pilgrimage, my parents had shown the Guardian this prince's photograph (the Guardian liked to see photographs; he was extremely interested in people), and Shoghi Effendi had pronounced the one word: "*Jilf*"—hard to translate but meaning in effect lightweight and frivolous.

Now we were about to meet one whose principedom was not of this world, one who shaped the Bahá'í Faith for all future time, whereas the other, his royal contemporary, has been reduced to the footnotes long ago. Suddenly he was with us, and we following him into the dining room.

People speak of the Guardian as not being a tall man. In those days many individuals, especially, say, Persians and Frenchmen, were shorter than now. When we first met him in Paris, on his way to Oxford, he seemed to us of medium height. He "sat tall," he carried himself well, his walk was dignified (truly royal, in contrast to the swagger of Persia's Crown Prince), and even then he wore, at the Master's request, a tall, black Persian hat. "Learn not the ways of Europe," we understood the Master had told him, in saying good-bye. This hat set him off from the crowds and of course drew stares and comments. "C'est le chah de Perse, non?" I heard a woman cry. I wanted to tell her—even in those days—that he was the *chah* of a far wider realm than *Perse*. For even in the Paris time, to us, and to Father, who was certainly a man of the world and, also, had lived over a year in the Master's Household, Shoghi Effendi was someone apart. After he became Guardian, we were told by a Persian friend: "'Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'There is one among us who

seems to be walking this earth, but actually he lives in the Kingdom.'"

It was his custom, at least when I saw him, to wear some outer garment, a short coat like the trench coat he wore in Paris, or a sort of redingote or frock-coat to his knees; a white shirt and conservative tie; European trousers (rather narrow at the time); and highly polished black shoes. Outside the Shrines on Mt. Carmel, where the pilgrims left their shoes any which way, you could recognize the Guardian's, because they were so well polished, and placed carefully side by side. His dress, although of fine quality and immaculate, was never luxurious. In fact, when Father wished to conduct him to the best shirtmaker in Paris—Charvet—he demurred, saying, "I might get to liking such things."

Now, although two tall men were in his presence, it was they who were overshadowed.

My American husband, a physician and hence of a scientific turn of mind, who had come here expecting to find an Eastern personality, commented later on how Western the Guardian was—like a young American executive, Howard said. Here was no robe, no turban, no prayer beads. The Guardian himself said in my hearing: "We are not Western nor Eastern. We are something new. We are Bahá'ís." It seemed to me that Shoghi Effendi was continually emphasizing that he was not in any way like 'Abdu'l-Bahá, that the Master, the "Mystery of God," was unique, that He was, "paradoxically . . . a perfect human being" and that one cannot *be* a perfect human being, to quote Shoghi Effendi again. Certainly the Guardian did not care for the adulation to which he was continually subjected. Howard told me how, at a men's meeting, an Easterner seized the glass Shoghi Effendi had used,

and risking his displeasure, drank what was left. Personally, I sympathized with the drinker; but what the Guardian obviously wanted was service to the Faith, not displays of emotion.

Thinking of the relative stations of the four great Persons, the two Founders and two first Inheritors of our Faith, I recalled how, on an earlier pilgrimage, my father had said to me: "Shoghi Effendi stopped at a certain spot in the road (I understood it was the road along the mountain), and told me that as to his rank and being he was in no sense like the Master. It was the same spot in the road where 'Abdu'l-Bahá had stopped, long years before, and told me he was in no sense equal to or the same as Bahá'u'lláh."

Each new pilgrim was welcomed by the Guardian and would shake his hand—that perfect hand which you felt had taken thousands of years of high lineage to form, that hand which could be traced straight back through the Prophet Muḥammad, and through ancient Persian kings, all the way back to Father Abraham. He welcomed us, overlooking, with what I considered British reserve, my nervousness and embarrassment. His handshake was a gift he gave you, a brief electric contact that you could hoard through the rest of your life.

The Guardian placed Marjory at the head of the long refectory table and sat at the side of it, on her right, his back to the windows. And there before me, at the Guardian's right, sat Mark Tobey, brown bearded, slender and timid, who made me think of a skittish deer that would pause to nibble a leaf from the Guardian's hand, before vanishing into the forest.

We could take notes at the table then, and all my attention was concentrated on the Guardian, so that I gave little thought to the pilgrims, all of whom I got to know better later on. Marjory told us afterward how the light would come over the Guardian's shoulder from the windows, and said she had never seen an eyeball so luminous. I, across from him, tried without staring to memorize his features. I noted the perfectly formed

nose; the sculpted mouth, neither loose, nor full, nor tight-lipped, nor anything else undesirable that most adults' mouths become. When he smiled, there was a vertical dimple, cut into his right cheek. He had a way of brushing the palm of his hand straight down over his face, and when he did this, his skin seemed to glow. Sometimes he had a pensive, withdrawn look in his eyes, as if he were briefly away from us. He never stared, the way today's men do—he had what nuns call the custody of the eyes. The color of his eyes was, it seemed to me, hazel, changeable—and this was how my father described the Master's eyes too. One sunlit day, when the Mediterranean was blue and the Guardian was standing under the bougainvillea vine at the gate of the Master's house, I saw his eyes bright blue.

He was young then. He smiled often, and there was laughter at table too, increased by a certain tendency on the part of Mountfort and Marjory to pull Mark's leg. Mark was just back from a monastery at Kyoto (he became one of the first in the United States to spread the philosophy of Zen). He was also artist in residence at Dartington Hall, a kind of Utopia for creative people established by Mrs. Elmhurst, an American benefactress, in Devonshire. Always a capable Bahá'í teacher, Mark gave us to understand that he had converted a number of residents to the Bahá'í Faith. "I would like to send you a group photograph of the Devonshire Bahá'ís," he told the Guardian. This was too good an opening for Mountfort. "Why don't you go downtown and have it taken here, Mark?" he said.

At one point the Guardian, who was very frank about the characteristics of different nationals and nations, which he knew well from innumerable contacts, said that Bahá'ís must always set an example, including, for instance, when they go through Customs. He spoke about the bribery and corruption which was, in Lord Curzon's words, "a cherished national institution in Persia," and asked if we had not read the introduction to *The Dawn-Breakers*, where he had quoted Cur-

zon's definition of *madákhil* as "that balance of personal advantage . . . which can be squeezed out of any and every transaction." He indicated the delicacy we were having for dessert, a round pastry floating in honey, and told us it was called "the Judge's morsel" (*luqmatu'l-Qádi*). This was long years before bribery and corruption, which most Americans then thought "Oriental," would become common practice in the United States. Although he minced no words, the Guardian's attitude, far from that of a thundering reformer or denouncer, was one of amused observation, as if he were telling of childish games which a mature humanity would disavow. The only time I saw him angry was when, addressing Marjory, and sending a message through her to a Western believer, he stated categorically that Bahá'ís must not participate in political affairs.

This detached, observing attitude of Shoghi Effendi's was further illustrated for me on a later pilgrimage when he spoke of how the youth at Bahá'í summer schools must set an example. He said then that people, being weak, should always avoid temptation. Someone told him that at the German summer school the boys and girls shared the same dormitory. "Oh," said the Guardian with interest, "so they are even worse than the non-Bahá'ís!" "It's all right," the person added, "Mrs. Braun is there." "Yes," said the Guardian, "but at the hour of temptation Mrs. Braun might not always be there." We all laughed, including Fujita who was serving. "Fudge" loved to laugh, and nearly dropped a plate.

The Guardian would share some of his incoming or outgoing mail with us. He pointed to a letter he was addressing to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, regarding nonparticipation by Bahá'ís in military service. He said many books would be written about that letter in future. Sometimes he would ask our opinion. As the Báb's title, did we prefer First Point or Primal Point? We opted for the alliteration.

(I heard from Emogene Hoagg, who worked closely with the Guardian when she typed the entire manuscript of *The Dawn-Breakers*, that on occasion she would tell him: "But we can't say it that way, Shoghi Effendi!" and sometimes he would change the expression, sometimes not. His consulting with us was remarkable in one whose English so far exceeded our own. In translation we should give the equivalent, he said. He praised the King James Bible, "not the revised." He spoke of translating the Bahá'í marriage verses, which differ only in being masculine for the groom, feminine for the bride. "It is more than 'We are all content with the Will of God,'" he said. "It is like, 'We will all abide by the Will of God.'" Then he turned to me, smiling, with, "Perhaps we should say, 'We are all resigned to . . .'" His English speech was a phenomenon, the distinguished accent unforgettable. It was far from that missionary American so widespread in the Middle East, nor was it that flutey, plummy British perhaps insufficiently appreciated on this side of the Atlantic. Years later, when as a standee in a New York theater I listened to Paul Robeson's *Othello*, I thought to myself, "Here is one other besides the Guardian who makes the English language sound right." Not that Robeson's English was similar, but it too was of high rank. As for his Arabic and Persian, no earthly sounds could equal the Guardian's chanting in the Holy Shrines—reverent, solemn, but unsentimental.

Shoghi Effendi told Mark that he could paint the Dawn-Breakers, the early heroes of our Faith, but not the Báb or Bahá'u'lláh. He also said to him: "Art must inspire. Personal satisfaction is not enough." Beyond these comments, the Guardian at one time wrote a letter stating that there will be no Bahá'í music as such—there will be a world music. This greatly pleased Mark. "He has freed the artist," Mark said: the creative person was not to be the instrument of an ideology.

After a little while the pilgrimage was

ending, and we were to be dropped back again into the unreadable, frightening world. I went with Mountfort to the travel bureau where he was booking passage home, or somewhere, and they said something about having a cabin available for three. "Mountfort," I said, "why don't you marry Marjory and adopt Mark?" "Barkis is willin'," Mountfort said.

Sonoma County

I WENT BY Mark's bedroom door that morning, and there were his shoes where he had kicked them off, one pointing due north, the other due south. Geyserville Summer School was over, the dormitories empty, and Mark, Harold Gail, and I had been invited to stay on a bit, so I could write my articles on Sonoma County (they were published in the *Santa Rosa Press-Democrat* under my grandmother's name—she was Alice Ives Breed, and I wrote as V. Ives).

Mark was in his permanent condition of stress: should he go north to Seattle and paint, or south to San Francisco and visit? So long as there were points to the compass, Mark would always be pulled this way and that. Postponing decision, he came along with us that day, for the ride.

Nothing in that far off, not yet spoiled time, could have been better than Sonoma County, or lovelier, or emptier, at that season and hour. Looking through that pearly light, you could see for mile on mile over ripened vineyards to the hazy blue mountains—which were, Mark said, "like blue and violet tears."

We drove through parched, corn-colored hills, speckled here and there with oaks, and came to a small white school house that was up for sale. "Just the place for a studio," Mark said—but he always said that, made his decision to settle, and then started toting up the disadvantages. Hurrying by, we stopped at an ancient mill, its great wheel, three stories high, stilled forever now, and no water in sight. It had become a monument, preserved, a sign told us, by the "Native Sons of the Golden West." Mark wanted to set up an easel, start painting, buy

the mill, turn it into a studio, and directly thereafter disappear to parts unknown.

By then he was already hungry, and led us, in Healdsburg, to a magnificent apple pie, made fresh that morning. (Forget about truck drivers, I thought, if you want good food, ask an artist, or a poet, or a musician.) We sat there a long while, chiefly discussing how Mark's harem would have looked if he had been born a Muslim. It would have had mother-of-pearl walls for the moonlight to shine on, and woodwork the color of old red manzanita, and lapis lazuli floors entwined with gold grapevines. He got so interested in the decorations he forgot to tell us anything about the inmates, and when we asked, he said they were only background anyhow.

Having heard rumors of a mysterious "Lotus Pond," we drove on, and finally discovered it, lost in cattails and willows, with great, carved pink flowers floating on its quiet surface. These flowers close around noon, and Mark said why hadn't we come at early dawn. (One reason could have been that he never got up till eleven.) The seed pods of the lotus were like shower sprays, seemingly punched full of holes. "I never saw a flower that looked more like plumbing," said Mark. There were no signs in that deserted place, "and best of all, nothing to say 'Don't pick the flowers,'" Mark exulted. We did not, anyhow, except for one suede leaf, which Mark gave me to wear as a hat, and one cattail, which we picked because Harold said it looked like a frankfurter with fur.

Later we passed a solitary roadside fruit stand, and Mark felt called upon to get out and sample the honey. Poking with a straw, he tried the manzanita, the lilac, the wild-flower—and finally, after long deliberation, bought the orange. We also spoke briefly to a frail, bearded tramp in a cowboy hat who was on his way along the road. The tramp held out a finger and showed us his ring, given him by his lady friend, he said. "An old, delicate Buffalo Bill," Mark commented.

After a while we went wading in the

Russian River, where early autumn leaves were adrift on the brown and gold water. Mark's feet, well shaped and in proportion to his tall figure, were as beautiful as his long, tapering artist's hands. We talked, as we dried, about the Russian impact on northern California, still present in the place names: Fort Ross, Sebastopol, the Russian River, and also Mount Saint Helena, named for a lady who was niece to the Czarina, and looked upon as a saint.

It cost you fifty cents to get into the Petrified Forest, a respectable sum (children twenty cents; dogs could not get in at all). Once inside, the primeval stillness alone was worth it. "Like Japan," breathed Mark. We followed a sawdust trail under ancient oaks, and manzanitas, and came to a sign that read: "This forest was buried millions of years ago by volcanic action, turning the trees to stone." Each petrified exhibit was back of barbed wire in its own enclosure—the place was a kind of silent zoo. You almost expected another sign reading: "Do not feed or annoy the trees." The biggest, with a new oak tree sprouting from its trunk, buried a million years and titled "The Queen of the Forest," was a petrified monster thirty-six feet around. Tourists, unable to carve their names on the tree, had industriously identified themselves on scraps of paper and pushed these through the wire onto the great trunk. Appreciating the tourists' frustration, kindly authorities had provided a special building, three walled and roofed over, where you could nail up your business card or scrap of paper to your heart's content. Another helpful provision, which had, that far, kept the tourists from driving off with the forest, was indicated by another sign: "Free specimens of petrification given away at the office." Noting from Mark's expression that he was planning to set up a studio in the Forest, we pulled him away and drove on. Soon we passed two red temples in a hillside field: huge stone bases, with upper stories and double towers of wood. "They're just kilns for drying

hops," a young girl told us, "but no longer in use. We sit around and think, 'What can we do with all that beautiful stone work?' and then we just leave them there."

"A deep pomegranate color," said Mark, grabbing my fountain pen and writing paper and making off up the hill. We entered the higher kiln, and found that the sunset, coming through the cracks, was turning the woodwork blood red. Outside the kiln was an echo, and while Mark was at work, we shouted to that for a while, waking up some turkeys that had retired for the night in a nearby tree. Mark made several sketches with the colors all written in, and he planned to paint the kilns from memory, only what he really wanted was to establish two studios, one in each kiln.

I seem to remember at least two pictures that Mark created from what we saw that day; one had to do with the two kilns, and the other was called "Western Town." But who knows how many impressions of that time remained in his memory and were later scattered through his work.

Seattle

HIS SEATTLE HOUSE of those days was an ordinary-looking frame dwelling catercorner from a small market. The door had a little see-through mirror set in it—it was what is called in some areas a go-to-hell door—and every effort was made to keep the place looking deserted. Once you were accepted inside you found stacks of paintings leaning haphazardly against the walls. Most of these paintings were later very valuable. One we saw there and thought of buying hangs now in the Metropolitan; at that time we chose "Archaic Satire" instead. There was bareness, almost no furniture, nothing on the floors; yards of paper curing in some dubious liquid in the bathtub, a battered, rusty carrot grater and a magenta eucalyptus leaf nailed up somewhere for decoration, a priceless, splintery polychrome wood Christup propped up on the newel post in the downstairs hall. Mark usually camped out in his homes, doubtless feeling freer, more tentative that

way, so that fate would not get his address. We would eat with him in the kitchen. He was an excellent cook, and wanted almonds on his veal and shrimp on his whitefish. After meals, in those days, he would linger at the table and play—do Japanese tricks with a paper bag, or sing fake Chinese and German songs. He could mimic anything. When he told us about the three dogs that met on the Champs-Élysées, his voice varied from a shrill piping for the French poodles to a subterranean bass for the English bulldog:

First poodle: "My name is Fifi: f-i, f-i."

Second poodle: "My name is Mimi: m-i, m-i. What's *your* name?"

Bulldog: "My name is Fido: f-i-d-e-a-u-x."

Anyone might appear there. I remember once when a young, gold-bearded artist, carrying a single pink rose, wafted in from the night, left his rose in a golden vase, and wafted out. Another time (I was not present) came Leopold Stokowski. "I paint too," said Stokowski, once inside the door. And Mark answered: "I compose." He did, too. We often heard him improvising on the piano, and still have a recording of his "Homage to Guillaume Apollinaire." Music was his *violon d'Ingres*.

He always had disciples around him, learning both the Bahá'í Faith and his art, and forever after, to some extent, they all reflected Mark—even to the point of murmuring "*Strange, fantastic,*" in italics, and suddenly drawing in their breath with a slight rasp and shaking their heads if something was beautiful. He enhanced life. He communicated his own verve. Juliet Thompson, the artist who taught him the Bahá'í Faith in 1918, told me that in the early days he would have his pupils dance up to the canvas, apply a dot of paint to it, and dance back again. Another expert said that when Mark loaded paint on his brush he always knew the exact, right amount he wanted, ahead of time. And apparently, even from the time when, as a youth, he earned his living by wrapping up packages, he was an artist. To him, the artist was the eyes of the

community, his function being to teach the others to see.

Everyone in Mark's ambience was expected to improve. The case of Swedish intellectual Pehr Hallsten is in point. Rumor was that during the, or a Depression, Pehr was picking up trash in the park by day, using a nail on a stick for the purpose, and attending an art class by night, which happened to be taught by Mark. Under Mark's impact, and with his help, Pehr had to return to the University in his fifties, acquire a B.A., then an M.A. (with a thesis on Strindberg), and after all that become an artist. One time when Mark put on a meeting for me to address on the Bahá'í Faith in Seattle—large audience, elegant hall, Beethoven—Pehr was recruited for chairman.

One of Pehr's strongest holds on Mark was his diabetes—he was chronically sick, and Mark was partly a nurse; but above this he held Mark's close attention because let alone improbable, he was impossible. Mark had a great liking for people's quirks, and Pehr was an eccentric's eccentric. Once, in the early days of teaching him the Faith, Mark commented, "If this Cause is universal, it has room in it for Pehr." And indeed, he gradually became a devoted Bahá'í and translated the Hidden Words into Swedish. As the years passed, a number of Mark's friends, like the Gails, and Tom and Helen Sousa, became Pehr-sitters as a matter of course. For all his continental background, his five languages and erudition, he had the purity and translucence of a four year old, and after a while you grew to love him in spite of yourself. "It is the extreme variability of human beings which makes everything so interestingly difficult," said Mark.

He often lamented the changes in Seattle, the freeways and how they were spoiling that city and many other places, including, way to the south, the Bahá'í School we loved at Geyserville. He felt that many people were being turned into machines. Once, observing Seattle's prosperous crowds, he said, "Mr. and Mrs. Automata. Miss Auto-

mata. Master Automata." As Bahá'u'lláh had forewarned, our civilization, "so often vaunted," had been "allowed to overleap the bounds of moderation," and would "bring great evil upon men." He made a great effort to help save the Farmers' Market, where he would draw the old transients, seeing them as shabby birds, nestless and blown along the wind.

Of one ancient character, who habitually wore a pith helmet with a small unpainted duck on top, Mark said he had never been able to best him in conversation. "Will you pose for me?" he asked the old man. "You're an artist. Take an impression," was the answer. "See those buildings the Government is putting up?" the duck man asked Mark, another day. "You can't buy them. Is that democracy?" Once, home from a journey half way around the world, Mark came across him again. "Where've you been?" asked the ancient. "Oh," said Mark, casually, "Japan—the Holy Land—Great Britain . . ." "Well," said the man, "one has to be somewhere."

Mark was already being made the target of well meaning fans, and someone or other was forever pursuing him with kindly attentions. Of one anxious hostess he confided to me, "Wants me to go out in the garden and admire her *tuberous begonias*." He hissed the italics as if referring to a loathsome disease.

Nice

YESTERDAY, refugeeing at the Scotch Tea House (we refugee from shelter to shelter, out of the Mistral, out of the rains, out of the crowds, out of the blare of Carnival music), Mark said, "Arithmetic—I flunked it. I had to go through the seventh grade twice. Then the next year we had algebra, and I cheated over the shoulder of the girl in front: she held up the answers for me. I passed, but then we had geometry and—flunk-dunk. The only thing that saved me was that we moved to Hammond, Indiana. Otherwise, I would have been one of those inside-out people in the town; you know, no skin."

After two years of high school, Mark's formal education stopped. We used to wonder how he could be so articulate, so literary, especially when we would think over the titles of his paintings: "The Return of Persephone"—"The Edge of August"—"The Void Devouring the Gadget Era"—"Threading Light."

Sara Kenny (wife of a former Attorney General of California) and her mother, Mrs. Duffield, were the first Bahá'í pioneers to Nice. They asked Harold and me to stay and help, and after a while down came Mark, and stayed five weeks to help, too. I know exactly how long he was there because of my diary reference to "his five-week hellish visit to Nice last winter . . ." We learned then that geniuses are the price we have to pay for art.

Like all chronically irritated people, Mark attracted noise. First, although he had performed the miracle of finding a hotel bedroom in Nice during the Carnival, that bedroom was next to the hall toilet. From 7:00 A.M. on he lay exasperatedly listening to a long procession of guests: "Some trip in, some bang in, some glide in, some swish," he told us. "And if that weren't enough, there's the elevator." Here he reproduced the whine of an elevator interminably ascending. At last his landlady, proprietor of the small hotel, moved him elsewhere. In the new location, however, he was kept fumingly awake "for hours" listening to "Il Trovatore" from the next room. Finally he summoned the porter, who pushed in and discovered a radio at full blast and a teenage opera buff peacefully asleep. No wonder each new environment was approached by Mark stiff legged and with the hair on his neck bristling; he was asking himself what unguessed, intolerable annoyance would be next on the list.

Sometimes I would jot down his comments at random. Mark: "To be mature really means to know what you've missed in life." On marriage: "There are two hells: marriage and celibacy. Take your choice." On the English: "Every Englishman has

two wishes: that the sun will shine; that he can get to the Continent for a meal." On life: "Sometimes I think life is exactly what those American traveling salesmen think it is." Again, on life: "We have to be *moved* by something." And once he said: "People don't understand the truth, but they'll accept an untruth." Once, along the rue de Verdun, we met a tall man and woman striding, with white, tufty hair streaming from each head, the man's white tufts like horns, his face a pale oblong, his body a black oblong in its straight wool cloak. "That face," said Mark, ecstatic. "That man is *somebody*." "He knows it, too," said I uncharitably; "I guess a man always knows who he is." "There are always plenty of women around to tell him," replied Mark. In the crowded and fashionable Place Masséna, a nurse held a little girl bottom out over the gutter. I made some noise or gesture. Mark laughed. "After all," he said, "that is the essence of art: revealing the concealed."

In line with this were his sober, technical artist conversations with Leon (Leon Applebaum, an artist then awaiting his American bride in Nice), as he showed him walls—stained walls, mottled, crumbling walls, walls with old dripped paint from former signs fading down them. "I especially wanted you to see *these*," he would say confidentially, rounding some favorite corner.

When Harold, Mark, and I arrived in Marseilles to conduct a Bahá'í meeting, the cab driver took one look at Mark's substantial form and groaned: with their tiny cars, they judged all passengers by bulk. He ended up with Mark beside him and one of the local believers on Mark's lap—so that the man was almost squeezed outside and the car driving itself. At the public hall (freezing) Mark spoke very eloquently in English, and they called him "cher Maître." I then came on in French, and between us something must have been accomplished, since the local friend told me afterward: "Bombe atomique!" and said that a newcomer, a French-

man in the audience, had accepted our Faith.

Inevitably, back at the hotel, it was Mark who got the room with the cockroaches.

The next day, as we sat in one of those restaurants with the glassed-in fronts, Mark was enchanted, surveying the incredible variety of faces passing in the crowds. We walked, so that he could look at walls. Coming to a ruined wall along the waterfront he pointed out the patterns he saw, the interrelationships and contrasts. "I want to paint what nobody else sees," he told us. "The ignored and forgotten things. The unregarded."

On the train returning to Nice, conversation went on in the usual way, if not to each other, at least past and around each other. I happened to speak admiringly of Mabel Dodge Luhan, who brought D. H. Lawrence to America. "She attracted a lot of celebrities," I said. "Oh," said Mark, "she had a lot of money, and she offered those poor apes a place to sit down." The train did not escape its share of blame in the new and of course hostile environment: "French trains never know where they want to go," he said, "unless they're actually going there. They back and fill, back and fill." Rocky hill towns slipped by. Mark commented, "A rock is a long time ago." I mentioned some land we owned in California, and said, "A deed is a friend indeed." This led him to the opposite coast: "Long Island," he said, "that gentle, used-up landscape that doesn't mean anything to me. That's why I like the Northwest—except Portland, which is an old dried pea in a pod. I always feel so *little* in Portland." "This is more beautiful than America," I said. "There is more total beauty here," Mark answered. "The trouble is, America is a part of you—and this you look at." I recalled him speaking then, back in Seattle, of "the voltage of beauty." Once, when we were almost home, he sang out, "O, Half Moon of my delight . . ."

On February 10, 1955, four of us—Sara and Mark, Harold and I—made a long-awaited expedition to the Matisse chapel



at Vence. We three laymen wanted to see the chapel, not as simple tourists, but through an artist's eyes.

We met with ceremony at the Scotch Tea House at high noon. Mark had consumed one meal while waiting, and as we had our own bacon and eggs, buttered toast and scones, he consumed two more. Afterward there was quite a delay while Mark figured out his bill: the system there was, instead of being billed, you went to the proprietor at the cash register and recited the list of whatever you'd eaten, but no one could remember exactly what Mark had had.

On our way to the bus terminal, Mark admired the huge illuminated Carnival cutouts decorating the sky over the Place Masséna—only he pointed out the empty backs, whereas it was the decorated fronts that you were expected to admire. We caught the 1:30 bus, and wound up and up, mile after mile, through the spring-maddened hills, saw the wind in the white fruit trees, the air blue, the earth softening, only glimpses here and there from the bus, no way to be alone with it. Up and up the bus labored into the hills, going the long way round because the Nazis had dynamited the great bridge, leaving huge, dizzy ruined shards in the chasm. We finally reached Vence and looked for a conveyance to the chapel, about a mile out from the center of the town. We fitted ourselves into a taxi, or the taxi, and at last arrived at our world-famous, and long anticipated, goal.

We found a little white building with black line drawings on it, jammed between two other structures. Pushing inside with the crowd, we came to a nun with a plate for money, and then we were in the little chapel itself. I had an impression of blond woodwork and white walls, black line drawings scrawled, and sunlight throwing bright green shadows on the floor. Mark stood and looked. The three of us stood and looked at Mark. Then suddenly he was not there any more, and we pressed out through the crowds and caught up with him. With an

air of finality, he was purchasing postcards from another nun. We three lined up behind him, and followed him back to the still-warm taxi. Total time elapsed: four minutes.

Mark's explosion took place in the cab: "It ain't worth the trip. The whole feeling is awful. Such bad, weak drawings on the wall. It's a pain in the neck. I always thought it would be. I knew he couldn't do it—a man with that past couldn't paint naked women and flowers all his life and then at the very end, draw a religious thing. I knew it, but I had to see for myself." Between snorts, wails, and roars, as the taxi rocked, he continued, "It makes me all sick. And those money bags in there—I hate any money mixed up in it. Such bad drawing! The only thing I like is when the color comes in there on the floor—it's the only thing that inspires me . . . I didn't come to see the chapel anyhow," he now decided, "I really came to get out in the sun."

We sat quiet, out of the battle. After all, we simple laymen had gotten what *we* came for—an artist's appreciation of an artist.

Eventually we managed to board a bus for the long, long ride, via Grasse, back to Nice. The trip was marred only by our not being able to get seats, and having to jerk and sway a couple of hours in the crowded aisle, holding on to whatever offered. Mark broke his silence only once: he was jostled, going over a bump, by a fellow hanger-on, a respectable, gray-haired matron, wearing a gray-and-white dress—at which time he informed us and the other passengers, with perfect clarity, that she was a *blanquette de veau*.

Our Villa Christiane, just off the Grande Corniche, was probably not the last word in comfort. The high-ceilinged, minuscule living room had a Renaissance tiled floor (cold) and a minute fireplace that smoked. It also boasted a small electric heater that offered no warmth but scorched you on contact, its plugs and fittings given to spitting and throwing sparks. The bathroom con-

tained a theoretical water heater, called a *Vésugaz*, that exploded when you turned on the hot water, hence its name. With luck, if the room got warm, drops condensed on the ceiling and spotted you with yellow paint. In the kitchen, electric wires were looped here and there like entrails at a bullfight. As for the two-burner gas stove, it was hard for an onlooker to tell whether you were making a suicide attempt or just cooking dinner. "Do you ever smell escaping gas?" the gas man had inquired. "Invariably," I replied. "Then we must look into it," he advised (we never saw him again); "gas attacks the liver and the bile, you get a dry cough and you vomit, you wonder what you have, only the doctor benefits. Then one day you set a match to your stove, and it explodes in your face."

Hoping this would not be the day, we asked Mark up to visit, because there was one thing about the Villa Christiane that no one could disapprove of: its "*vue*," even as the ad had promised, was "*imprenable*." Down over orange roofs it looked, and way, way out over the Baie des Anges. When the season was right, lemon trees bloomed in the sun under the high windows.

"I knew you two would be on a hill," he grumbled, as we toiled up the Grande Corniche. He sat at the table, saying as a preface to the food (neither Harold nor I can really cook, as he was well aware): "Gather ye tastebuds while ye may." To which I, shivering in the kitchen, could only reply: "Cold hands I loved beside the Vésubie..."

London, Frankfurt, Salzburg

MARK deviates unerringly to some secret goal, which usually turns out to be Seattle. Once he has made his decision to return there, he loudly condemns both the trip and that city: he dreads the ocean, but is afraid to fly; his Seattle agent is "gloomy"; two of his best friends have died; he hates the way they page people in the Coffee Shop at the Hotel Meany; the freeway is ruining

all; he cannot bear to think of the atomic bomb. (We ourselves had come from Portland, Oregon, with its weekly bomb warnings, to Nice, a city apparently bomb free; Europe never thought of the bomb; such a relief.) He has temporarily forgotten the all-time worst, and we dare not remind him: the Seattle woman, a disturbed artist, who used to haunt his porch, slip up his stairs, stick notes in his mirror. From half across the planet, she would mail him bulging letters and packets with hearts pasted on them, sprawlily addressed via places and people like New York's Museum of Modern Art or even c/o Picasso in Paris. (I saw a number of them, returned for more postage.) She did not fail to approach the media with news of the phantom relationship, and even produced two imaginary children by Mark—Markinita and Markolino—before he was at last rescued by the authorities. Once he sat down and wrote her a very long letter citing all the sober and logical reasons why she must stop, and go out into the world and lead her life, how he did not love her, never had, never could, how she had created something out of nothing. On receiving it she sat down and scribbled her thousandth letter to him. It said, "Write me again."

On one visit, in the days before he was rich, I asked him, "Why don't you get married, Mark?" "Why should I?" he replied indignantly. "I've supported myself all winter."

We understood, from a source we trusted, that Mark actually had been married at one time, that the lady was of a well-known New York family, and things had gone so badly between them that he had to sneak back for his clothes. We could not find out much about this, being afraid to ask. He had an equally difficult experience, trying to learn to drive a car.

In London—Mark virtually the only man in that city to be wearing a beret—in those years, the mid-1950s, correct London men all looked to us like Howard Chandler

Christy illustrations for 1910: tall and tight suited, gloved hands clasped on a furled umbrella, bowler hat, moustache, stiff collar—he took us to his show at the Institute of Contemporary Arts. Here we noted Mark's reactions to compliments from his fans: A red-headed man in a French woolen coat with cowl said to him, "It's been a long time since I've seen anything like this." "And when," asked Mark, "have you seen anything like this before?" A handsome woman said, "This is exciting. I hadn't seen any of your work—hardly any." Mark brushed her off by turning to us and saying, "Well, we must be going now."

After thinking it all over I decided that the endless compliments from laymen made him suffer because what they took for pictures on the wall were pieces of Mark himself. And somehow it called to mind an old verse from a Persian poet: "Do not mock the wine. It is bitter only because it is my life."

He came to the big Bahá'í Intercontinental Conference that was held in Frankfurt in 1958, and here, too, we seemed to be gathered with him around a table, this time out at a restaurant in their beautiful zoological gardens. Because of their constant altercations at table over Pehr's slipping off his diabetic diet, the meal as usual was a special event. (Of another occasion when Pehr was absent, I complained in my diary: "The atmosphere was almost normal.")

"What's it like to be famous, Mark?" I asked him. "I only know it when I go somewhere, and all the doors open," he said. "It's a pain in the neck. Fame is for your friends." An eminent European had told him that his work didn't look happy. This infuriated Mark. He returned again and again to that comment: "Are you 'oppy?" Hearing of a statement made by the Guardian that it was the presence of Mr. Banání in Africa that was responsible for the great advances there, Mark said, "I can readily accept that. I believe in *sieves*." I knew he meant that some, like sieves, let the divine light through.

This was the day when Mark announced that he was not an Abstract Expressionist. "What are you, Mark?" I asked him. He sat up straighter and answered testily, "I *hope* I am an artist."

I remember that Mark stopped by to see us in Salzburg, where we lived six years as Bahá'í pioneers. Salzburg, he said, was not for artists; it was a music town. We pondered this, knowing that artists crowd to that city from the ends of the earth. We decided, finally, that Salzburg already was a work of art (was before highrises, anyway), and Mark felt it left him with nothing to do.

He was fresh from winning first prize at the Venice Biennale—the first American to win it since Whistler. It took me back to a dream he told me about once, a dream he had after becoming a Bahá'í. He was in the presence of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the Master showed him some kind of tablet or scroll bearing a long list of names. "Here you are, way down here," said 'Abdu'l-Bahá, pointing to the bottom of the list. "But look," the Master went on, showing another scroll of names, "here you are, in the future—" and Mark saw his name, heading the list. His fame was late in coming, but did not surprise him. "I painted just as well thirty years ago," he said.

As usual, Mark was looking for a center, a place to be and stay. "During the four days I was with him in Venice," Otto Seligman confided, "I nearly went crazy. He's looking all over Europe for a house. He's even got it planned—Swiss or Austrian; cement downstairs, for car and storage, living upstairs. However," his agent went on gloomily, "I know it will all end in Seattle again."

As usual, Mark surveyed our Tobey collection, especially "The Void Devouring the Gadget Era," which we owned for many years and finally sold back to him. "My wife's sewing basket," "The town dump," "The product of a deranged mind" had been typical evaluations of "The Void" by our nonartistic friends—but it was one of the sanest commentaries that has ever been

made on our times: that great, advancing, eating Dark—and its hot breath blowing our “civilization” to rubbish. “That’s a top Tobey,” Mark said of “The Void.” He told us the two central drips had simply happened, but he liked them and let them stay. He also showed us the symbolic mouth, vomiting. Mark never, in our opinion, sold a painting—he warehoused them here and there, with nominal owners, but so far as he was concerned, they always remained his.

For some reason, he liked to pose for me, so we repaired to the terrace of our apartment, outside the bedroom window, and I snapped him in shirtsleeves—getting a portrait which has been reproduced several times: it appears as a full page in *Arts* (September 1959), and again in the April 1976 *Atlantic*. Another photograph, which I took of him in the gardens at Eze, and think of as “Plato’s Cave,” was also a favorite of Mark’s. Since he had even rejected *Life* magazine’s first portraits of him, and made them photograph him all over again for their September 28, 1953, issue, I was proud of my achievement, however accidental.

Basel

“I JUDGE all art critics by whether or not they like Pehr’s painting,” said Mark. “If they don’t like Pehr’s painting, they don’t know anything about art.”

Pehr in old age, the way we found him the last time, in Basel, 1964. He had grown outwardly calm, his face round, white and soft, like the faces in a Klee. His function seemed to be to lie on a chaise longue under a fluffy orange blanket, read three Swedish newspapers a day, and bait Mark. Across the round table, sideways from Pehr, sat Mark in a high-backed, dark upholstered chair with stool to match. The two would pass books and cups of tea across the table. Sample conversation:

“An American came here. Visited. I would have taught him to be an artist. I sent him to Spain, to the Louvre. Did everything. A

European would have given his eyeteeth for it—and then he left. Spoiled.” “He left because he said you were so unreasonable, Mark,” said Pehr calmly from his chaise longue; then continued with deadly aim, “Unreasonable *to me*.” “When I’m painting, Pehr,” said Mark in a fury, but dangling an obvious red herring, “I can’t be being considerate to a guest. Consider, consider, consider—” I remembered complimenting Mark one time on how kindly and thoughtful he had become, in view of all he had to go through. “It’s all made ground,” he told me.

“Why,” asks Pehr, screwing up his face as if biting into a lemon, “would anyone buy this house in a place where he doesn’t live?” The house was perfect for Mark, the kind of jewel most of us can only dream of, built in early Renaissance days as the administration building of a monastery. You let yourself into a red carpeted hall, filled with high, neat stacks of fragrant firewood. A polished wood staircase wound into a great, bare chamber, shadowy, with a large fireplace—and one corner an oasis serving as the main sitting room, its decoration an orange-patterned rug from Morocco. There was no modern city outside these walls, no twentieth century; you looked out on wide gardens, trees, steps, you heard only a bird note or the licking of a fountain. Basel was the town favored by Erasmus, Luther’s friend, and where he died. This house probably went up before he was born (1466?); he himself was raised in a monastery and hated them.

Of many who drifted here to see Mark, staying for various lengths of time, Mark mentioned a special one, and added, “But he has *visitors*.” Alerted by the italics, I asked, “You mean, imaginary?” “Yes,” said Mark. “They crawl up his arms.” “What are they exactly, Mark?” “He doesn’t know for sure. They’re little animals. He fights them all night, and dozes all day. It’s no pleasure for me, just when I’m telling him something, to have him doze off.” (Mark, the insomniac, was always looking for someone to stay awake with him.) “Sometimes he thinks

they're mice. Once we put out a plate of nuts for them. Didn't help. Nothing was taken, as he could see." Somehow in that tall, ancient house, the guest with his furred, pululating entities was not too ill matched with those drifting ghosts of monks and abbots past.

Mark took us all over the house: the dull red dining room, furnished with an encroaching rubber plant, Otto's gift, and a kind of armoire, black, with a piece of Staffordshire on top: a lover in long white socks, and a billow-skirted lovee, the two in a china arbor. The prize bit of decor, however, was a tall cardboard box, half of it daubed with blue paint, serving as a pedestal for a Victorian fruit bowl which Mark had bought for two Swiss francs. Then there were long rooms where he painted; and the upstairs, where many rooms were almost empty, each with an island of bed, beautiful blanket, and rug. One, obviously unused, had no furniture at all, except that right in the center, and sporting a wooden cover, was an antique bidet. There was also a studio for Mark, with a north light, but of course he never painted there.

"What made him take this house?" complained Pehr to anyone who would listen. "The house took him," I said. What Pehr himself would approve of, we did not know, since he volunteered no information. But certainly if you asked him a direct question, you got a wonderfully surprising answer. "Pehr," I said, "do you paint from the inside or the outside?" "From the inside," he said like lightning.

My mind went back to Salzburg, when Pehr visited, alone and trying as usual to catch up with Mark. Mark invented "white writing" but plain writing was beyond him, and I seemed to be the only one who could read his letter of instructions to Pehr. It was postmarked Biarritz and included many remember-the-time-when touches: "That snapshot of us two in Venice is before me as I write. The one feeding the pigeons in front of St. Mark's." (Who has been able to miss

this photograph—millions of tourists have been taken in front of the same St. Mark's, feeding the same pigeons.) "Why does he talk about the pigeons," Pehr snarled. "Everybody knows about pigeons! I want to hear about *plans*: Come here on such a date, go there. Mark is always writing comments about people he meets, and ideas. Who cares about that!" What he wanted was a timetable of Mark's comings and goings, and such a timetable existed nowhere on earth. Mark could not make plans. His preferred trick, which he actually carried out at least once, was to book passage on an ocean liner, say his farewells, go down the day of the sailing, stare morosely at the ship, turn around, and go back to his last base. (Later he was chagrined when the ship didn't founder.)

It was clear from what I could decipher of the letter, shared by Pehr with all comers, that Mark—no matter what his current geography—with the punctuality of the swallows returning to Capistrano, was on his way back to Seattle. Time after time he had left that city, only to home back again. "He hates it there," Pehr explained.

"Joseph will go back to New York and work the elevator," the letter went on, "and you and I can return to Seattle and paint." Joseph, a Spanish elevator man who savored R  m  , was on a visit to his family in Spain. Mark was always looking for an attendant who could be of some use; most of them offered all aid short of help. In Joseph he thought for a time that he had found the answer: "He can not only drive a car, but he has a license," Mark had told us, with admiration.

"I have landed in Biarritz!" quoted Pehr. "Landed from where? He must have left Paris for London, gone to St. Ives and then gone to Biarritz." "Write me at once," Mark continued, giving no address. "I will go to Spain, if I do, on Thursday, or Friday; if we don't go, Joseph will ask them to forward it to where I am. So write me there." "I don't quite understand that in any language," I told Pehr. "You're like being tied

to the tail of a kite."

In the end we had sent Pehr off to the long-suffering American Express. He left for Spain, and we tried unsuccessfully to intercept him at Geneva with an urgent letter, bearing a Paris address, which reached him in Salzburg, from Mark. ("We've opened a blasted branch Post Office," Harold groaned.) Besides his gifts of being chronically ill, and also impossible, Pehr remained important to Mark all through the long years. He afforded Mark a witnessed past, and continuity. To Mark, he was a kind of human Seattle.

We tried, on our trip with the two of them to Winterthur, to keep everything peaceful between them. We lay low, made them do all the choosing, where and when to go, what to eat, so that nothing that went wrong could be pinned on us. Our restaurant lunch went like this: "Pehr, make up your mind, will you, for God's sake! No! That drink is *too sweet!* You take iced coffee—don't be silly—take ginger ale! Why don't you ever relax? You know, a cow's tail relaxes more than you do! *Pehr, don't lay down the law!*" Pehr to Mark, re dessert: "Give me some of yours." Mark: "I'm sorry—you can't have the sweet stuff!" Mark's comment on Swiss food: "I don't like it. It's all edible, and there's something the matter with it."

"When do you work best?" I asked him. "Is it better when you're full of food and happy, or when you're miserable?"

"When I'm stimulated," he said.

His real goal that day was to visit the Museum at Winterthur, to see just how they had hung his two pictures. The museum was closed, but once the visitor made himself known, the doors opened, and the Director, busy hanging a show, came down and escorted us around for an hour. Mark said both his pictures—a large Sumi and a little one of white lines with brown margins—were untitled, but the Director told him no, the little one was called "Channels." We followed Mark around, listening for crumbs from the Master's table. He admired the Museum's three Vuillards. Said their Pis-

saro was the best he'd ever seen—"So free." He apparently meant not so defined.

"How much of criticism is subjective, Mark?" I asked him.

"All of it," he answered.

Of a representative turn-of-the-century landscape he said they were out of fashion, but he liked this one. He would not even glance at the two small Renoir bronzes, or the Renoir painting. I told the Director, introducing Pehr, that Pehr was a fine painter, and Mark said, "One of the best of the naïfs," so we learned Pehr's category. Afterward, I asked Pehr which was his favorite of all we had seen. "The Renoir," he said.

Somewhere along the line, when I was alone with Mark, he said, "Pehr's changed. He's so negative. So irritable. You can't contradict him. He won't budge. He has hardening of the arteries of the brain."

A bit later, when I was alone with Pehr, he said, "Mark's changed. Doesn't like anything. So irritable. You can't oppose him in any way. I've learned that in this life, you've got to be *flexible*."

There were none of what the books call untoward incidents during the long drive back from Winterthur. We tried hard to keep everything smoothed over. All gushers stayed capped. As Mark got out of the car, he laid a tentative hand on Pehr's sleeve and said gently, "Pehr and I are getting old, aren't we, Pehr?"

Back at the house in Basel I asked him about another famous modern. "He's an alley man," said Mark. "He goes down the alley picking things up, and then he makes a collage. A baby art for baby adults." Of another celebrity he told me: "A collector came into a Basel gallery, saw one of his paintings and said: 'Moon Over Cow Dung.'" Mark did not say dung. I asked about Henry Moore. Of Henry and his kind, Mark had this: "They make me sick to my stomach. They leave enough to make the body recognizable, but they don't love the body. He's a surgeon. He makes some kind of a gosh damned operation. Those figures—they will all die be-

cause they don't breathe. Older I grow, the more I like Rodin."

Again, he said: "The artist has to exaggerate. He has to de-form in order to make form move."

Me: "Aren't we going away from abstract to representative?"

Mark: "Yes. We need intimacy in art. We can't get so far away—it's no use." Then he carried on against what he called "impersonalism," his arch foe.

Me (I admit it was stupid): "Are you planning to do something *new*?" I remembered those things he painted in Seattle: one perfect dripping drop, for example. Or those old men, the tattered birds with ruined nests.

Mark: "Gosh. I'd certainly like to." He said we were lucky to own paintings of his done in the 1940s. Of our "Archaic Satire," all bang-bang, black calligraphy, and verve, he smiled indulgently, and said it was "naughty." One of his and our favorites we owned was "The Night of the Prince," a flat Persian house, in its segments a Prince, his executioner with sword, and Bahá'í martyrs proudly going forth, their straight backs to the world, walking to meet their death for the oneness of mankind. Over all the darkened scene, a black raven brooding, a concentrate of the evil being done.

Now he was at work on a gorgeous mural for the Seattle Opera, a painting which was to have a back on it and be transported rolled up. It looked like music, and included some great egg or football forms that seemed to float out of the picture. I wondered if these were Pehr: Mark took Harold into the painting room and consulted him about the work in progress. The mural had great black bar-like lines toward the bottom. I wanted these to reach up higher and not all sink to

the bottom, and was surprised to find he had already planned to make the change. There was much collage in the painting, bits of amusing newspaper, and whenever he wanted color, pieces done by Pehr.

He spoke of his Bahá'í work, and said he had his usual problem: how much time to allot to the Faith, how much to his art. He preferred, he said, to teach in other Swiss cities, and work here.

I decided he had chosen to live in Basel because it reminded him some of Seattle. "That strange virgin promise," he said of Seattle. "This thing (Europe) has been breathed into too long."

A day or two—Mark put us up overnight in a nearby hotel—and we had to leave them, and the old monastery office, and Basel. We had no way of knowing that we would never see him, not in this world, ever again. "There are no ends," Mark had said, meaning terminations. We left, continuing our long drive down to Peñíscola, and Mark got ready to receive his next visitor, Lord Snowdon.

Mark hated death. He hated funerals. He did not so much die as slowly withdraw from this world's life. A year or so ago I had a letter from the famous potter, Bernard Leach, whose book, *Drawings Verse & Belief* is dedicated "to my friend Mark Tobey . . . who introduced me to the Bahá'í Faith." "I visited him," Bernard Leach wrote me, "and he was doing some of his best paintings, although not always certain which continent he was living on. His painting . . . had in it I think a world message redolent of his faith . . ."

When Mark was still young enough to talk about it, I happened to ask him about his future dying. His answer was: "I'm going to throw myself on the mercy of God."



Mark, Dear Mark

BY BERNARD LEACH

MARK TOBEY was the profoundest influence in my life. It was through him I became a Bahá'í.

I was first introduced to him at Dartington Hall in Devonshire, in 1932. He was the resident artist; I came as a potter. There was an immediate exchange between us. He talked to me about the Bahá'í Faith, sharing with me his books. I was most moved by Nabíl's narrative and its immediacy, but it took eight years for me to reach acceptance. The chief attraction was the absence of egotism in the three Central Figures of the Faith.*

Mark's work as a painter about the time when we first met was mainly representative of what the eye sees—man, landscape, house, or tree, or even still life. Much of his work was what I might describe as "intestinal" in its stylization, and this I did not like, but gradually recognized that it was only one of many attempts toward inward rather than outward expression. He told me he started as a realist portrait painter in New York, but as the years passed over our heads he weaned himself away from appearances and wove into his work a representation of inner meanings and significations which most people would describe as abstract. He disliked this word. Despite their completely different temperaments, I have sometimes compared his evolution with

that of Picasso, in the wide domain of exploration. All through, his stylization is individual, by which his character can be read, but as he grew older and wiser, the clothing of the mere personality became translucent, and the spirit appeared.

That Mark was a marvelous teacher was apparent at Dartington Hall. Twenty or thirty chose to come to his free drawing classes once a week—artists, dancers, musicians, housewives, servants, and gardeners—the elite and the simpler minded. Those who came never forgot. Mark did not teach by any ordinary standards, yet he taught everything, even by silence. In particular, I recall a summer evening when he did not appear during the first hour. Everyone set to work at a long table with a board, ink, pens, or chalk, privately seeking expression. The fine weather had kept a few away. Suddenly Mark entered quietly and stood in the open doorway. He paused, then burst out, "Oh you English—you let yourselves go in your games—why not here? Ah, you from the Jooss Ballet—for God's sake play dance music! Now dance—*dance*—right round the great table. That's better! Now put your boards against the walls and dance on them with your chalk."

The following is quoted from a paper by Mark, read at his first drawing class at Dartington in 1930:

First of all I want the *desire* to create; for therein lies the will to continue to live in a new way—to add to your house more vistas of being. For I be-

*Bahá'ís refer to Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá as the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith.

lieve that back of all great achievement is a richness of being.

There will be for all of us in this class—and myself not excluded—periods of disintegration and of integration. Many avenues will open up, all at once. Perhaps there will appear too many before the bewilderment of our astonishment will cause us to integrate in a new way.

What I am seeking in you, and endeavoring to help as much as I can, is the furthering towards the realm or identity of being; so that we may be better equipped to know of what a real unity is composed—not uniformity, but unity of related parts.

In the autumn of 1933 I received an invitation from the craftsmen of Japan to revisit them in the following year. A day or two later Dorothy and Leonard Elmhurst, the founders of Dartington, asked me to come and have a talk with them in his study. Over a cup of tea Dorothy looked at me and said, "Bernard, you and Mark are great friends, aren't you?" I replied, "Yes, we are." "Would you like him to go out with you?" Surprised, I answered, "Very much." As we left the room Leonard took me to one side and added a warning: "If you do travel on the same ship, have cabins at opposite ends." I thought this unlikely, and in fact there was just one double cabin available.

We crossed from Dover to Calais in the spring of 1934, spent a few days in Paris, and went on slowly down to Rome.

Eventually we reached Port Said. Sharing the same cabin meant getting to know Mark more intimately. I found that he was fully awake by midnight: I hoped to be asleep by eleven p.m. Mark would get impatient, want to talk to somebody, turn all the lights on, and smoke furiously until the place was in a fog: finally he would give me a poke in the ribs with whatever was at hand and say, "Bernard, wake up, wake up! Come on, I want to talk—wake up—don't be so selfish!" I put up with this until the middle of the Red Sea, and then one morning after a disturbed night's sleep, I shouted, "Mark, will you get up? I want to talk to you where we can be quiet—right in the bows of the ship." Growling, he proceeded to follow me, and, clean out of earshot of anybody we told each other off in no uncertain terms—no holds barred—we were both very angry. Then suddenly he went quiet, and looking at me straight in the eyes said, "Bernard, do we want to do this?" I answered, "No Mark." We never did again.

In Hong Kong—where I was born—we were very happy. I remember Mark being so interested in the people—mainly Chinese. There were a million when I was a child: they had increased to about four million—packed very close, not only horizontally, but vertically as well. For lack of flat land perhaps two hundred twenty story buildings had been erected. We looked at everything: he observed the hanging signboards of the shops—black on white, red on white, red on black,

red on gold, and sometimes a touch of emerald green; he was fascinated by the Chinese characters originally derived from objects—for example, two joined diagonal strokes a “man,” three vertical for “mountains.” Mark’s first paintings which became famous as “white writing” were a further abstraction from this Chinese calligraphy, and when his “white writing” became too famous he changed it to “black writing”—black on white. He did not like being tied to a style which limited his creativity. He wanted to go on expanding and saying more significantly what was in him to say as long as he lived.

We drew and we drew. I recall our journey to the peak about 1,300 feet above sea level, where I was visiting a friend. I said, “Let’s go up by the funicular railway.” He replied, “Oh no, I can’t do that, it scares me.” “All right then, let’s walk up the zigzag road,” I suggested. “No, no, not that either.” I was quite amazed. So we took a taxi and drove twelve miles round to get to the top, and then he wouldn’t let it go as he thought we might not be able to get another! I pointed to the hotel where he could telephone. Still he said we might not be able to get one, then we would have to walk down, and that would be awful! So I gave in.

Mark was full of surprises: not a conventional man, but one who thought for himself—such a man risks self-exposure. He told me about himself—he said for example: “Hotels often frighten me. I

have walked several times round a block in my own country before being able to enter.” This astounded me because he was a man of the world—he had only to walk into a hotel, and everyone would rush to shine his shoes or press his trousers or see he got what he wanted at the right time!

From Hong Kong we went on by another steamer to Shanghai, but Mark couldn’t make up his mind whether to go on with me to Japan or stay put with his friend Ten Kuei, a Chinese artist whom he had come to know years before—in America I think—who sometimes used his two-inch-long little fingernail instead of a brush, which he dipped in ink and with it painted on Chinese absorbent paper. This is something practiced in China, but in no other countries that I’ve heard of.

Mark taught me to make a thing as well as it is possible to make, for human service is the equivalent of prayer—‘Abdu’l-Bahá was very clear about this. The meditative continuance of such prayer in an artist’s life may take much of his time and energy.

Mark was more frank about himself than almost anybody I have known. Although I sometimes laugh at my old friend, now departed, it is with kindness, for I loved him very much, and respected him deeply. You are still with me Mark. After your passing I saw your face in its maturity—aged about forty, full of life and happiness.

Mark, dear Mark.

Memories of Mark Tobey

BY FIRUZ KAZEMZADEH

I MET Mark Tobey in San Francisco in 1944 or 1945. Dr. Mildred Nichols, a dentist who collected modern art, invited the two of us to lunch. The name Tobey meant nothing to me, but Dr. Nichols explained that he was a patient of hers, an artist with a growing reputation, and a dedicated Bahá'í. I was eager to meet a Bahá'í artist, having never encountered one before.

We ate lunch at a small, crowded restaurant in Maiden Lane, off Union Square. The day was bright, the atmosphere cheerful, but Mark Tobey seemed ill at ease. On that occasion I did not find him particularly interesting, though his appearance was impressive: a stocky, strong body, a large head, a handsome face with rather small eyes, and a trim beard. Dr. Nichols tried to turn the conversation to art, but Mark was unresponsive, and we ended up chatting about the city, a subject of which naturalized San Franciscans never tire.

It was several weeks later, when we met for the second time, that our conversation touched on the arts. Mark wanted to know about the Bahá'ís in Persia. Were they still persecuted? Had I met older ones who remembered the Heroic Age of suffering and martyrdom? I wanted answers to questions about abstract art—a subject unfamiliar to me. Having grown up in Moscow in the 1930s, I had never been exposed to nonrepresentational art. I dimly remembered paintings in some art gallery—geometric figures, dots, lines, dogs that looked like centipedes, women with teeth on their foreheads—that provoked much hilarity among spectators. Modern art was a canvas with blue and yellow horizontal stripes—sunrise in the desert. Turned upside down it became sunset on the ocean. Mark was tolerant. "You have to look," he said. "Perhaps you will learn to see."

To help me see, Mark took me to a museum. I no longer remember whether it was the DeYoung or the Palace of the Legion of Honor. He walked briskly from painting to painting, barely glancing at most. I sensed his disapproval. Only a few made him stop. He invited me to look. I expected a lecture, an explanation. Instead Mark gestured with his hands as if touching up the painting. Somehow his enjoyment was contagious. I experienced no revelations. Abstract painting continued to be a mystifying realm, but not so strange and sterile as before.

Still later Mark used my love of music to build a bridge to abstract art. Music, of course, is the ultimate abstraction. Its greatest works evoke emotions without imitating nature. The cuckoo in Beethoven's Sixth is a blemish, and no tone poem conveys a sunset or a sunrise, program notes to the contrary notwithstanding. Why should not visual arts be like music? Why should not intersecting lines, planes, volumes, and color create feelings in the beholder without representing concrete physical things? I was willing to go along, to look.

Most of the time abstract painting remained for me not only abstract but remote as well. I noticed that Mark himself had doubts about much of it. He was quite willing to admit that thousands of mediocrities, if not outright charlatans, made a racket out of an art form which was too difficult for the general public to comprehend and which was, therefore, open to abuse. Years later, at the home of Rafi and Mildred Mottahedeh in Stamford, Connecticut, I came back to the issue of discrimination in modern art. How does one tell the work of a master from the daubings of an amateur or of a faker? "You can feel it," Mark said. What if one did not feel? Was there some objective criterion? "Ask the artist to draw a human figure,"

Mark replied. Speaking rapidly and excitedly, he stated his belief that no art can exist without a base in craft. To be an artist one must be a craftsman first. Only he who has mastered a technique is free to change or discard it. Only he who can represent faithfully may distort. Involuntary distortion which results from incapacity cannot be artistic. Though I have never been able to ask the authors of all the paintings cluttering the walls of art galleries, homes, offices, schools, and even hotels, to draw the human figure, I did see Mark's point.

My first encounter with Mark's work occurred in Seattle. I do not recall the date and would not remember the time of year had it happened in California. But Seattle was cold. It was lucky that my friend and schoolmate, Nasrollah Rassekh, lent me his winter coat. Snow was on the ground when my plane landed at the Seattle airport. Mrs. Hazel Mori took me to the University of Washington campus where I was to speak to some students on the Bahá'í Faith. The next day she drove me to Mark's house, a sparsely furnished place full of paintings.

They were everywhere; hanging on the walls, leaning against chairs, singly and in stacks, on easels, and on the floor. Many were unfinished. Several can be seen today in museums. Some are in private collections. One painting that struck me with its power I have never seen again, nor do I know its subsequent fate. It was a large canvas. Against a dark background one perceived three vague figures. The central one was suffused with light. The two who framed it were dark and cruel, though no features could be distinguished. One knew what this was. "The path of a martyr," Mark said. His eyes were riveted to the painting; he seemed to live in it, to be present at the martyrdom.

Was this Bahá'í art? Mark and I discussed the question over the years. He did not believe there was Bahá'í art. Taking our clue from Shoghi Effendi, we agreed that a religion must be the inspirer, the motive force, of a civilization. Over several centuries of so-

cial and artistic unfoldment a civilization develops its style. One recognizes at once Christ in Byzantine icons or Romanesque churches. Islám is palpable in the tiled domes and minarets of its mosques, in the calligraphy and illumination of its manuscripts. The art of the catacombs was produced by pagans converted to Christianity, but it was not yet Christian art. Mark's own paintings showed the influence of the Bahá'í Faith but were not Bahá'í art. Neither the Bahá'í Temple in Wilmette, Illinois, the magnificent achievement of Louis Bourgeois, nor the poetry of Na'im, not even the calligraphy of *Mishkín-Qalam*, that summit of Persian penmanship, qualified as Bahá'í art. An art of a civilization, like a full-fledged philosophical system, can only be the fruit of that civilization, a summation of preceding achievement.

Mark resisted classification. To avoid an argument he would acquiesce in labels, but he did not enjoy being confined to this or that school. Sudden turns in his work seemed to proclaim his determination not to freeze. Capacity to feel the art of many peoples and eras saved Mark from the suffocating provincialism of artistic circles of New York or Paris. He believed in the excellence of his work yet had no illusions that it represented a summit in the artistic history of mankind. In Mark confidence coexisted with humility.

I cannot claim to have known Mark well. We met several dozen times over a period of thirty years. There were long postprandial conversations at Mildred Nichols', where several Tobey's hung on the walls. There were bright hot summer days at Geyserville, where Mark loved to sit in the shade of the "Big Tree" talking about everything but art. There were Bahá'í meetings in San Francisco and New York at which Mark talked about the unity of mankind, or listened, perhaps for the hundredth time, to the exposition of the basic principles of the Faith. We had many mutual friends: Leroy and Sylvia Ioas, Mildred Nichols, Charles and Helen Bishop, John and Louise Bosch, Rafi and



Mildred Mottahedeh. Still he remained elusive.

Somewhere at the core of his person Mark carried an unresolved conflict. The serenity that he acquired through prayer and meditation, through his participation in the life of the Bahá'í community, and through his art, was incomplete. I never ventured to talk to him about this. Mark was a private person. Moments of self-revelation were rare.

We met for the last time on June 2, 1975. *WORLD ORDER* had planned a bicentennial issue which was to include conversations with several outstanding American Bahá'ís, among them the artist David Villaseñor and the poet Robert Hayden. I saw Mark, but the conversation never took place. That night at the hotel I wrote a letter to the editors of *WORLD ORDER*. Let it speak for itself.

June 2, 1975

Dear Fellow-editors:

Yesterday I saw my mission fail.* We were a year too late. Mark Tobey is no longer capable of sustaining even a simple conversation. He has forgotten much of his life. The names of his closest friends evoke in him only the feeling that he had heard of them somewhere before.

On arriving in Basel, I immediately told Mr. and Mrs. Ruhullah Khamsi, a Persian couple who have resided here for the last eighteen years, that I wished to see Mark. Mrs. Khamsi (she is the younger sister of Mrs. Khadem) called him and set up a time for our visit.

At 3:30 we entered a four hundred year old house in a narrow street. A flight of dark wooden stairs led to a large living room on the first floor (second floor for America). In the middle of the wall opposite the staircase was a brick fireplace. A couple of logs were burning brightly, radiating an orange glow and much heat.

The room was cluttered with pick-me-up furniture: an office chair, a contour chair, a dining room chair, a coffee table, picture frames, some with and others without paintings, a few boxes, and a few vases—one with flowers which kept catching Mark's attention.

Mark met us in the middle of the room. He wore a pair of baggy pants and a wine-red cardigan. I was surprised how well he looked. His face was fresh, his eyes clear, his beard and hair carefully trimmed.

He recognized the Khamsis, whom he sees every week, but showed no sign of knowing me. Mrs. Khamsi explained to him who I was. In vain. "Where did I meet you last?" he asked. I told him it was at the Mottahedeh's in Stamford, Connecticut. The name Mottahedeh, his friends for close to fifty years, meant nothing.

I tried to talk about the West, his studio in Seattle which I visited thirty years earlier and where he showed me some paintings which later hung in museums. That seemed to strike a familiar note. "Seattle. Seattle," he repeated a few times. He lowered himself down on a small sofa upholstered in red velvet and covered his face with his hands. He complained about rain and his need for the sun. "Have you brought some sunshine with you?" he asked. I told him that it had just stopped raining and that if he looked out the window, he would see a patch of blue sky.

Suddenly he rose and walked through an open door to the next room—his studio. He returned a minute later, carrying two paintings. One of them I recognized, having seen it at a show in Washington, D.C. Mark was surprised that I should know the painting and pleased that I liked it. He began to bring out others. Obviously he delighted in showing them. Years ago when he showed his work to his friends, he pretended indifference, never asking for comment, never seeming to seek approval. Externally Mark's manner was the same now. Yet he could not conceal his need for approval of his work.

*Firuz Kazemzadeh had gone to Basel to interview Mark Tobey for *WORLD ORDER* magazine.

This gave me an idea. Perhaps he would remember his paintings better than people. I mentioned his "Spanish Christ," a suffering face, that hung in Dr. Mildred Nichols' living room in San Francisco. The expression on his face suddenly changed. He was straining to remember. "Yes," he said after a long pause, "there was such a person." (Dr. Nichols was for many years his dentist and a close personal friend. She was a lover of art and a champion of Mark's work.) I am not certain that he fully remembered her, but the name did stir up something within.

Pursuing the same tactic, I mentioned some of Mark's paintings in the hands of Arthur Dahl. Surprisingly enough, Mark remembered him, but the memory evoked no pleasure. I dropped the subject.

Trying once more to rekindle some memories, I mentioned to Mark a painting of his that Helen Bishop had given to the National Spiritual Assembly. "Who was that?" he asked. "Helen Bishop in Portland, Oregon," I explained. "Very nice," he commented without showing any recognition of the name. The word Wilmette produced no reaction either.

Both Beth McKenty and Khamsi told me that Mark had forgotten 'Abdu'l-Bahá's name. He lovingly refers to the Master as "the Big Man," and sometimes shows a picture to Khamsi and asks what the name of the Big One is.

The logs in the fireplace were burning, and the room grew hot. Mark complained of heat, took off his cardigan, and sat down on a straight-back chair. He explained that a low soft chair was bad—"Hard to get up from." He passed his hand across his lower belly and made a pained face. Indeed, last year he had had an operation for a hernia. It was after anesthesia administered during that operation that he lost his memory and turned senile.

When Mark again left the room to look for another painting he wanted to show me, I started a conversation with Mark Ritter, an old man who has been Tobey's companion

for the last eighteen years or so. Ritter is thin. He has a prominent nose, grey eyes, and a pale complexion. He wore a tweed jacket and grey flannel pants. Both seemed a size too large for his slightly bent body.

Soon after we arrived, Ritter went downstairs, the floorboards creaking loudly under his feet. I remarked that the four hundred year old house was a perfect place for ghosts. Ritter chuckled. "I could never sneak out of here without Mr. Tobey knowing it," he said. I noticed how dependent Mark was on Ritter. When Ritter went downstairs, disappearing for a few minutes, Mark asked where he was. I had heard the sound of cups and spoons, and told Mark that his friend was probably fixing some tea. Mark was reassured.

Ritter told me that Mark had moments of relative lucidity, but after the operation "doors were closed in his mind." He may remember an episode or a person one moment and not remember that same episode or person a few minutes later. Ritter seemed very devoted to Mark.

Mrs. Khamsi said that at first she did not particularly like Ritter. However, during Mark's illness last year, especially after the operation, she saw every day the truly maternal care Ritter gave Mark. She changed her mind about Ritter, seeing him in a new light.

I gave Mark the brushes Beth McKenty sent. He did not remember her. "Who? Death MacKenzie? What is that?" Ritter tried to tell him it was a woman who visited him recently. He could not remember. However, he was grateful for the brushes.

"I went for a walk this morning," he announced. "A long walk." I reminded him of a visit he and I made, I believe, to the Palace of the Legion of Honor in the late forties to see an exhibit of modern art of which I knew nothing. He had tried to acquaint me with some of its basic principles. In fact, Dr. Nichols and he were to a considerable extent responsible for my education in the visual arts which, unlike music and poetry,

were not an important part of my childhood experience. Mark was pleased, but it was obvious that he remembered nothing.

The Khamsis asked him whether he would like to come to dinner. "Not tonight," he replied. Would he like to come to a meeting tomorrow night? "I'll call you," he said. The Khamsis offered to pick him up if he wished to come.

"Where do you live?" Mark suddenly asked me. I told him I lived in New Haven and taught at Yale. Strange to say, but he remembered Yale. "Ah," he exclaimed, "a very fine place." A large nineteenth century English landscape in a heavy frame, standing on the floor, reminded me of the Mellon collection. I told Mark and Ritter about it. Reynolds, Turner—the names did not seem to evoke any recognition in Mark. Ritter said that he had met Mrs. Andrew Mellon some forty years ago.

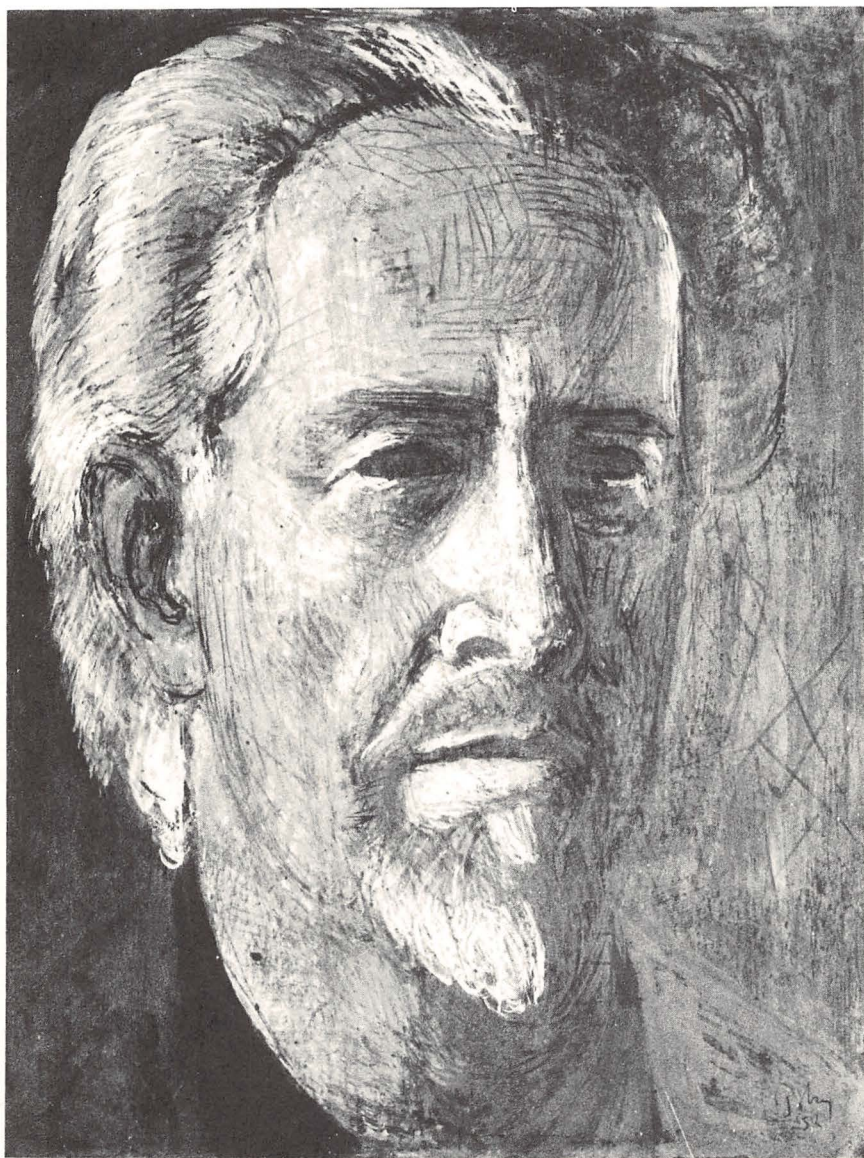
After a few more minutes, the Khamsis and I rose to leave. It was clear that there was no way to interview Mark for *WORLD ORDER's* bicentennial issue. He would not even understand what we were trying to do. The only interest still alive in him is for shape and color. He noticed, for instance, Mrs. Khamsi's purse made of multicolored patches of suede. He passed his finger lovingly over it. "This is not a painting," Mrs. Khamsi said. "It could be. It could be," Mark repeated with great concentration. When his eye fell on a long-stemmed flower in a vase, his face showed animation and his eyes grew intense. A few seconds later he lapsed into

senility, the second childhood that is so painful to observe.

It is consoling to know that Mark is not suffering. The loss of memory does not seem to cause him pain. He is well taken care of. He no longer paints but lives amidst his paintings. His financial affairs may be in disorder but he certainly is not in need. Mr. Khamsi told me that recently Mark asked to borrow 50,000 Swiss Francs. Mr. Khamsi promised to look for the money. Next day he came back to discuss the question. Mark seemed surprised. He said that he did not need any money. He led Mr. Khamsi to his desk. There, in the drawer, was 250,000 francs in bills (more than \$100,000).

His physical health being good, Mark may live many more years. It is extremely unlikely that his senility could be reversed or his memory restored. However, I did not feel grief for Mark. He is eighty-five and has lived a useful, artistically fruitful life. How far he has progressed as a Bahá'í no one can truly judge, but his contribution to the progress of the Bahá'í community both in the United States and in Europe has been considerable. It was hard to talk to him in his condition, as if he were not really Mark Tobey. One could not reconcile oneself to the fact that he did not remember his old friends John and Louise Bosch. He did not remember the several portraits of John he lovingly executed years ago. He did not recall Geyserville, where he spent many a summer. Leroy Ioas, Marzieh Gail . . . at best, as with Dr. Nichols, he would say: "Yes, there was such a person."





The Dot and the Circle

BY MARK TOBEY

JUST WHEN the individual enters the universal is a little difficult to know. I'm going to go back quite a way in my life tonight; I would go into any other life here if I knew it the way I know my own—but I don't.

It isn't so terribly long ago, in Wisconsin where I lived as a boy, that people had never seen an automobile. No one talked of diets. If people got ill they took Peruna. They always said they felt much better after it. Later on we found that its alcohol content was rather high.

We had two trains a day. The Milwaukee came in in the morning and the Burlington came in at night and the two stations were a full mile apart. Then we had the river boats. One time a storm wrecked a sidewheeler and I was very happy; it was a big event in my life.

There were three churches. There were no societies like Anthroposophy or New Thought. I was baptized in the Methodist Church and went regularly to the Congregational. Occasionally on summer days I'd go up and peek in the Catholic Church. It was very *verboten* but I wanted to see those colored pictures on the wall. I'd take a look and run down the road.

There was a shelf of books in the high school. I remember one title: *Sentimental Journey*. We paid \$4 a month for an eleven room house. Of course my father complained of the rising cost of living.

Nobody ever heard of lipstick and cigarettes for women and when a woman walked you only saw the tip of her shoe. You never saw her foot. A red silk petti-

coat was—well, you can imagine what it was.

Then I went to Chicago and saw the tall buildings, only they weren't so tall as I expected. I could go to the Chicago library and take out a book by George Barr McCutcheon every day. Once I took two. But the librarian said no, you can't read two books in one day; you can only read one book.

There were Billiken gods and everybody had a den in their house; there were singing societies. In school I made my first contact with Latin and German.

I saw an ostrich egg and a Zulu; they were decorations along my path, which came with the Chicago Exposition. Later on in Chicago there was free lunch and a glass of beer. Everyone hummed the *Merry Widow*; and every little Movement had a Meaning of its own. Everyone was happy.

I began to be really interested in art. I read the Russians, especially *Crime and Punishment*. I was so impressed with it I had to hide the butcher knife from myself.

Then came New York, my Mecca in a way. There was much talk about poetry. People spent hours discussing who would write the Great American Novel. It was the beginning of the superlatives which the movies took up and expanded as you know. There was *joie de vivre*. There was Irene Castle. Everybody was dancing. There were *thés dansants*. We went to Mouquin's or the St. Regis. The men were drinking out of silver slippers. If you had a mandarin coat, that was fine, even if you didn't know anything about a mandarin.

People would come to my studio on 16th Street and have tea and listen to a

singer singing classical Italian songs. But then the war broke out; the traffic changed its tune; it got so heavy they couldn't get home in time to dress for dinner if they came down for tea. Then tea was not enough; only a cocktail would relax them. The French tradition began to disappear; people talked a great deal about being American. All my crowd went to Childs'. It wasn't Viennese; it wasn't Russian or French; it was all white tiles and American. Mr. Childs' became an American *salon*.

Then we had the rise of advertising. I felt a terrible revulsion to the sudden plaster of advertisements. I wrote this poem:

Pegasus may carry you into the starry
skies,
But Babbitt tells you how to clean from
cellar to attic.

I've often thought that perhaps those lines were prophetic.

Everyone voted for Wilson because he kept us out of war and everyone was saying, I didn't raise my boy to be a soldier, I brought him up to be my pride and joy. Then we made the world safe for democracy. Not many cities were ruined. Big Bertha hit Paris a few times. Then the Armistice came and World Peace at last. It happened about eleven o'clock one morning; at two A.M. the next morning I found myself dancing in the streets; it was the one time I was completely integrated with the mass spirit.

Many strange things took place. Greenwich Village had been a closed section of New York, where only artists really were. There were no stores to speak of. I remember making a sign for "The Village Store." I never should have done it. Pretty soon we had all the materialists of Broadway coming down and opening up "Purple Puppies" and "Green Ostriches." Then there were a hundred Village Balls instead

of just one, that people formerly used to prepare for over a period of months. The days of the Village were over.

People were intermingling. Societies were breaking up. There was a great migration of intellectuals to France. There came the rise of the Babbitt type. I saw my first social satire: *The Hairy Ape*.

Meanwhile there were many things which had not entered my orbit. At the Chicago Fair in 1893 a man mentioned a new religion which was to unite all peoples. I knew nothing of this; I was around four at the time and I saw a horse made entirely of oats which impressed me much more. I was also taken to see a representation of the Johnstown Flood; I caught my feet in the iron fretwork of the chair and that frightened me more than the Flood because I had been conditioned for a calamity.

In 1912 the papers were mentioning a Man, 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This I knew nothing about. The consciousness of such a Person entering the West did not come into my orbit.

By 1918 I was suddenly confronted by what can happen to anything that lives or grows—a sort of climax in my life. I suddenly tried to find out if there was any truth in life.

I was asked to a dinner; there sat a woman who was a portrait painter, a woman named Juliet Thompson. She had, some way in her life, met this Persian philosopher and He had lighted her mind to the unity of all religions. I escorted her home; I hoped she wouldn't want the bus as I didn't have a dime. She said, "Let's walk." We talked of Socialism, because in those days everyone was talking of Socialism. That grew into her idea of painting my portrait and later we talked of the Faith.

It was a strange and flaming beauty which entered into me and of which I

could speak. You saw it in the faces of the people who had caught this light. The Holy Spirit can illumine countless minds upon the earth, just as many lights can be lit from one taper. That which I had passed by caught up with me.

This is only a feeble statement of the expanding of individual life toward the universal. Many things are changed in such a process: we have new concepts, relationships, above all new values. The beginning of any new time perhaps is a very simple time in a way; probably like childhood. It was a great new happiness; we could have said: "This is the renewal of happiness; this is a very beautiful religion and it makes people happy."

I was still living in this world. I was moving in this world. A sort of atmosphere was dying out. The idea that the poem was important, that art was a great adventure. The "restaurant personality" was missing: the man or woman who made the restaurant their life, instead of getting money out of their restaurant to make a life elsewhere.

It wasn't long before there were strange happenings in Europe. The clash of ideologies; as you know, another war; before that, a strange sign: a world depression. There were new instruments, even more terrifying than Big Bertha. No longer any safety for women and children; no more sparing of monuments. Anything that lived was wiped out.

There were no strange faraway places any more; everything became involved in the world conflict. This all meant that the new religion would have to offer a reconsideration of former teachings. Religion was being challenged as never before—to come out of an edifice into the light; and that light would have to filter through all the classes, races, colors—through everything, to clear away these divisive, destructive ideas in the world.

There was a very interesting line in the *Chronicle* this afternoon: that Berlin has made an appeal *to the entire world*. I don't think we have ever read anything before in which people cried out to the entire world.

More and more, I had to struggle. Much was given me through other Bahá'ís to help me understand this universal message. I don't think it's a teaching which we can get without effort.

As an artist, I'm used mostly to other artists; to shop-talk, and the long consideration of techniques. But something seems to have died out of the art world—the spirit. I believe it has died out of every world. I would wager it doesn't exist even in the plumber's world.

This universal Cause of Bahá'u'lláh which brings the fruition of man's development, challenges him and attracts him to see the light of this day as the unity of all life; dislodges him from a great deal of automatic and environmental inheritance; seeks to create in him a vision which is absolutely necessary for his existence. The teachings of Bahá'u'lláh are themselves the light with which we can see how to move forward on the road of evolution.

It is not possible to comprehend their scope; a man can know them only through his life, and the way he moves and tries to classify the fact that God has called today for the great assemblage of all mankind.

This "all mankind" does not mean a Christian Bahá'í supremacy—or a Muslim or Jewish or Buddhist Bahá'í supremacy—it means seeing by that one light that we are one, religions are one, all that exists in the world is one. It implies that religion is progressive and not final; this is a very challenging and disruptive concept to most religious minds today—we accept the idea of the advance of science, we won't

go back to the pump on the back porch, but when it comes to religion we want it to stop.

We must come to understand religion because today we must come to understand the entire world. All things far have

been brought near and they will be brought nearer. This is a very challenging time and we need a very great Teacher to show us how to move in these days. It is the belief of the Bahá'ís that this Teacher has come.

The Peacock Room

(in memory of Betsy Graves Reyneau)

Ars Longa Which is crueller

Vita Brevis life or art?

Thoughts in the Peacock Room,
where briefly I shelter. As in the glow
(remembered or imagined?)

of the lamp shaped like a rose

my mother would light

for me some nights to keep

Raw-Head-And-Bloody-Bones away.

Exotic, fin de siècle, unreal
and beautiful the Peacock Room.

Triste metaphor.

Hiroshima Watts My Lai.

Thus history scorns

the vision chambered in gold

and Spanish leather, lyric space;

rebukes, yet cannot give the lie

to what is havened here.

Environment as ornament.

Whistler with arrogant art designed

it, mocking a connoisseur

with satiric arabesque of gold

peacocks on a wall peacock blue

in fury trampling coins of gold.

Such vengeful harmonies drove

a rival mad. As in a dream

I see the crazed young man.

He shudders in a corner, shields

his face in terror of

the perfect malice of those claws.

She too is here—ghost

of the happy child she was that day.

When I turned twelve,

they gave me for a birthday gift

a party in the Peacock Room.

With shadow cries

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the peacocks flutter down,
 their spread tails concealing her,
 then folding, drooping to reveal
 her eyeless, old—Med School
 cadaver, flesh-object
 pickled in formaldehyde,
 who was artist, compassionate,
 clear-eyed. Who was beloved friend.
 No more. No more.

The birds resume their splended pose.
 And Whistler's portrait of
 a tycoon's daughter gleams
 like imagined flowers. What is art?
 What is life?
 What the Peacock Room?
 Rose-leaves and ashes drift
 its portals, gently spinning toward
 a bronze Bodhisattva's ancient smile.
 —Robert Hayden



Christianity in Crisis

A REVIEW OF HUSCHMAND SABET'S *The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder* (OXFORD: GEORGE RONALD, 1975), 138 PAGES, CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE, REFERENCES

BY WILLIAM S. HATCHER

HUSCHMAND SABET'S *The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder* is a basic introduction to the Bahá'í Faith directed primarily to those of Christian background in the European milieu. With regard to scope and content it is most naturally compared with the works of Canon George Townshend, and in particular to his last work *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh*. Indeed, both Sabet's book and *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* contain (1) a discussion of the condition of Christianity, historical and contemporary; (2) an account of the contributions of Islám to European culture coupled with a defense of the Prophethood of Muhammad; (3) a basic treatment of the history and teachings of the Bahá'í Faith; and (4) a presentation of Bahá'u'lláh as the fulfillment of the Expectation of the Return of Christ. While George Townshend was a Bahá'í from a Western Christian background who subsequently familiarized himself with Islám, Huschmand Sabet is a Bahá'í from an Eastern Muslim culture who has studied religion in a Western university (the University of Tübingen in Germany). This difference in background offers a potentially interesting contrast in the points of view of the authors in their respective discussions of similar themes. For example, Sabet's account of Muslim influences on Europe differs from Townshend's and his treatment of Islám's relationship to Christianity contains a dis-

cussion of Qur'anic passages dealing with the nature of Christ (that is, Christology).

Sabet's style is informal, chatty, and journalistic rather than literary. He draws from scholarly works but also quotes just as freely from magazine and newspaper articles and even from radio broadcasts. The overall plan of the book is also quite informal, and there is sometimes a considerable jumping back and forth from one subject to another within a given short portion of the book. Generally, this informal style makes for pleasant, relaxed reading. However, occasionally ideas are introduced without being very fully developed, and the transitions are sometimes difficult to follow.

Throughout the book, the author maintains an objective and unaggressive tone, even showing his compassion for the difficulties and struggles a sincere Christian might experience in an attempt to come to grips with the Bahá'í Faith. He never mocks or disdains, however subtly. This commendable spirit has earned him well-deserved accolades from several European Christian theologians and thinkers (notably Bultmann and Toynbee), whose favorable comments on the book are quoted on the dust jacket.

One characteristic feature of this book is the author's attempt to deal, as a Bahá'í, with some of the results of higher Biblical criticism and liberal Christian theology and to assess their implications for the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity.¹ Unfortunately, his treatment of these very delicate questions is not systematic or fully developed but is brought in sporadically in the course of his discussion of various dif-

1. Passing reference to a few of these points is made by John Ferraby in *All Things Made New: A Comprehensive Outline of the Bahá'í Faith*, rev. ed. (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1975).

ferent Christian doctrines throughout the book. As a result, the reader is left with a somewhat unclear picture of just what the Bahá'í position on some of these questions may be.

Because these points are so crucial to any attempt to understand the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and contemporary forms of Christianity, I feel they warrant a somewhat extended discussion here. This discussion may serve to some extent as useful background for readers of Sabet's book, as well as affording them a deeper appreciation of the difficulty of the task which Sabet has set himself. We shall begin with a few general comments and lead gradually to the point of contact with Sabet's treatment.

Since about the middle of the nineteenth century, thus in roughly the same time span as that of the Bahá'í Faith itself, there has grown up within the Christian theological milieu a body of scholarship which is essentially different from that of traditional Christian theology. The sources of this new scholarship involve at least the following elements: (1) The discovery of manuscripts of the New Testament which are older and more authoritative than those on which the King James and other traditional versions of the Bible are based. For example, the oldest known manuscript of the New Testament was only discovered in 1931.² (2) An increasing insistence by Christian theologians and philosophers on applying the rigorous criteria of scientific method to the study of Christian thought, tradition, history, and practice. (3) An increasing concern on the part of Christian theologians to relate Christianity and its message to those aspects of modern life which are so new that they do not seem to receive adequate answers with the framework of traditional beliefs (the question of "relevancy").

Comparative studies based on the various

Bible manuscripts are known as "higher criticism" of the Bible—that is, criticism and analysis of the historical accuracy of the Bible text itself, independent of any question of its moral truth, its religious meaning, or its spiritual content. Most scholars who have engaged in this research seem to emerge from it with their faith in the historicity of the events recorded in the Bible somewhat shaken and, in a few instances, totally destroyed. Some were even led to doubt whether Jesus ever lived.

These findings, together with the increasing application of scientific criteria to them, have led to a body of analytical theological scholarship. This new theology does not reach any one conclusion but rather leads to many different points of view, each of which can be plausibly defended on purely rational grounds. Though the conclusions reached by analytical theologians may be quite different, they all have one point in common—namely, their difference from traditional belief. In virtually no instance does analytical theology support a conclusion of traditional Christian belief, without at least some modification.

Sabet expresses this situation in the following dramatic summary (p. 4):

Authoritative theologians deny the Virgin Birth, declare Christ's miracles to be myth or legend, and dispute the divine inspiration of the Gospel texts. Even the Sermon on the Mount, it is claimed, does not originate from Jesus except for a few maxims. Whether it is a matter of his death on the cross, the resurrection, eternal life, his divinity and omniscience, or any other basic point of faith, there are always at least two diametrically opposed opinions. In these confrontations, one may often doubt the true belief and real Christianity of those involved in the dispute.

Concerning in particular the eschatological content of the New Testament, there are a number of different schools of thought. One school, initiated by Albert Schweitzer, holds that Jesus believed that the events associated with his life and death were themselves ful-

2. Preface, *The Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version (New York: Thomas Nelson), p. vii.

fillments of the Jewish eschatological and messianic hope, as expressed, for example, in the book of Isaiah. According to this view, the primitive Christian Church was mistaken in expecting a "Return" of Christ and a future apocalyptic crisis because it had misunderstood Jesus' words concerning these questions.³

Others hold that Jesus Himself was mistaken in expecting a cosmic catastrophe during His lifetime. Bultmann is a contemporary exponent of this point of view, and he is quoted indirectly in this opinion by Sabet (cf. Sabet, p. 121). Still others have adopted the view that there is no eschatological content to the New Testament whatever and that the "Return" of Christ as well as the various events "prophesied" in the New Testament all have purely symbolic meaning (if any). This view is also alluded to by Sabet (p. 127).

All of this graphically illustrates how fundamentally different points of view on a given issue can be reasonably defended.

Let us stress an important fact here. The nature of the conclusions of analytic theology—indeed the very existence of this body of scholarship—is generally unknown to the public. Thus, while the Church has continued to present a certain unified front to the public, intense controversies have been going on within the higher circles of this same institution. Sabet describes this situation in the following terms (p. 4):

In Germany, for instance, the country of Luther, national socialism had a paralysing effect on the Protestant Church, from which it has still not recovered. There is now danger of a split which could shake it to its foundations, arising from the discrepancy between the results of recent theological research and the

preaching of the Gospel in congregations. In fact, if the Church can survive it will be partly because the results produced by scholarly research on the life of Jesus are not made public.

And further on (p. 4):

The Church hierarchy is silent, trying to postpone as long as possible the imminent split. The would-be priest in his theological examination must convincingly qualify much of the testimony in the Gospels or declare it legendary, so that he can be ordained and preach it afterwards to his congregation, often as an article of faith.

One further difference between analytic theology and traditional theology warrants mention here. It is a difference in the *way* in which beliefs are held and in the attitudes of those who hold them. An analytic theologian, if challenged in his beliefs, will discuss, listen to objections, and may become convinced that his previous position is wrong and should be abandoned. He freely admits that new empirical findings and deeper rational insights can influence his beliefs. His position is thus quite like that of a scientist who also must remain continually open to the possibility of changing his understanding in the light of new knowledge.

The methods of analytic theology are thus *nondogmatic* in contrast to the *dogmatic* methods of traditional scholarship. A traditional theologian does not feel that the methods of science are even *in principle* applicable to his belief system. Even if he discusses his beliefs with others, he does not feel that new facts or new trains of reasoning (even those showing logical contradictions in his thought) oblige him to change his point of view.

Now, given this admirable (and, indeed, Bahá'í-like) openness and intellectual integrity of analytic theologians generally, it is natural that a Bahá'í would feel more spiritually akin to them. I believe it is this feeling of spiritual kinship which may have led Mr. Sabet to assess the relationship of the Bahá'í

3. See Albert Schweitzer, *Le secret historique de la vie de Jésus* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1961). So far as I know, there is no English translation of this early work of Schweitzer.

Faith to Christianity in the following terms (p. 110):

The Christology of the Church and the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh about Christ's mission are on essential questions irreconcilable. But if we follow analytical theological research over the last decades, we may register the amazing fact that on many questions it is bringing results irreconcilable with the Church's teaching positions but remarkably in accord with the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith.

I feel that this statement as it stands is misleading, possibly oversimplifying the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity.

Sabet illustrates the above-quoted statement with a discussion of the notion of original sin. He shows how the analytic theologians have come to a view quite close to that expressed by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. In particular, it is seen that the doctrine of original sin is not a Biblical doctrine at all but rather a dogma formulated some years later, the definite form being decisively influenced by St. Augustine (Sabet, p. 111).

However, on other points of belief, analytic theology differs from Bahá'í belief quite as much as it differs from the traditional Christian belief. For example, Bahá'ís definitely believe (as Sabet explains clearly in another portion of the book) that the knowledge of a Manifestation such as Jesus is superhuman and that Jesus was thus in no way mistaken in any of his prophetic or eschatologically oriented statements. Nor do Bahá'ís believe that all eschatological statements are purely symbolic, for Bahá'u'lláh clearly teaches that the "Return" spoken of by Jesus is an historical event and that there is prophetic content to the New Testament.

This latter point is also clearly explained by Sabet (cf. Chapter IX, p. 120 and following). Thus it is not the particular explanations given by Sabet which I find misleading but rather the résumé statement quoted above which can give the impression of a global endorsement of the findings of

analytical theology, as well as that of a fundamental opposition to Church doctrines on the part of the Bahá'í teachings. I feel that neither of these impressions represents a correct portrayal of the Bahá'í position. Indeed, earlier in the book, Mr. Sabet himself has expressed strong reservations about analytical theology in these terms: "Personally I find it open to question whether the efforts to provide a new theology in fact preserve Christianity or rather betray it" (p. 13).

Moreover, in reading Shoghi Effendi's statement of Christian beliefs accepted by Bahá'ís (*The Promised Day Is Come*, rev. ed. [Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1961], pp. 113-14), and quoted only in part by Sabet (p. 110), one could certainly say that on "essential questions" there is more agreement than difference between Bahá'í teachings and traditional Christian beliefs. However, when one compares the undogmatic method and open spirit of analytical theology with the dogmatism and exclusive narrowness of much of traditional Christian theological thinking, it seems indisputable that there is much greater affinity with the Bahá'í Faith and the former than with the latter. I believe that it is this affinity which Mr. Sabet seeks to portray to his readers.

A particularly sensitive point in the whole understanding of the relationship between the Bahá'í Faith and Christianity is, as indicated by Mr. Sabet, Christology—that is, doctrines about the nature of Christ. Mr. Sabet rightly points out the traditional Christian error of the deification of the human personality of Jesus. It is, in fact, this basic error which has given rise to much intolerant exclusiveness in Christianity, preventing many Christians from being able to accept the basic oneness of the Manifestations. Mr. Sabet's discussion (Chapter VIII) gives a careful treatment of these questions, quoting both from Muḥammad and from Bahá'u'lláh concerning the nature of the Manifestation.

However, no matter how misguided the traditional deification of Jesus may be in its

purely *logical* form, it is probably *intuitively* closer to the truth than is the total humanization of Jesus which is now so universal in contemporary liberal Christian thought. The Jews and Muslims emphasized the humanity of the Prophet, whereas the early Christians were struck by His transcendence. I think it is fair to say that it is only with the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh that mankind can now begin to obtain a more mature grasp of the nature of a Manifestation of God.

Viewed in this light, traditional Christology appears not so much as an erroneous doctrine but rather as a *one-sided* doctrine or a limited doctrine. Christians and Muslims were basically looking at the same phenomenon from two different points of view. The cogent and incisive article "The Christian and Muslim Dialogue" by Juan Ricardo Cole to be published in a forthcoming issue of *WORLD ORDER* is an instructive elaboration of this theme.

Looking over the complexities of these various theological issues, one can begin to appreciate the knowledge and skill which have enabled Mr. Sabet to bring them all into focus in so short a space.

Reading Huschmand Sabet's book has been not only an intellectual experience for me, but an emotional one, and I cannot close this review without trying to convey some of its savor to the reader. I found myself reliving the deep feelings associated with one of the most intense periods of my life when I was a student at Vanderbilt University in the decade between 1950 and 1960. My fellow students and I were mostly from the Deep South, raised in a tradition of Christian piety, but intellectually at odds with traditional Christian theology and practice. We felt and hoped that perhaps, through the potent influence of the leading Christian

thinkers of that day, Christianity would be reborn by being cleared, once and for all, of the corrupt and superstitious theology which had (so we felt) been the cause of its decline.

The spirit of scientific discovery was at last being felt within the confines of dogmatic religion! How exciting it was, for example, to discover that the earliest Gospel was Mark's, not Matthew's, and that the resurrection story of Christ did not appear in the original version of Mark's Gospel but was later added on.⁴ Stimulated by the discovery of new manuscripts of the Gospels and the more recently uncovered Dead Sea Scrolls, scholars were now engaged in a radical dissection and analysis of the entire New Testament.

At the same time, the insights of psychology, sociology, and even theoretical physics were being fearlessly applied to Christian thought. We were dazzled by a galaxy of thinkers and scholars: Karl Barth, Rudolph Bultmann, Reinhold Niebuhr, Nels Ferré, Paul Tillich, to name but a few. The ecumenical movement had produced the World Council of Churches. Christian unity was surely just around the corner.

How quickly the end came. What we had thought to be a new beginning proved to be the end of a process that had been a long time coming. For ahead of us was the "Death of God" and Christian atheism, the "situational (non-) ethic," the rise of the civil rights movement and the consequent dramatization of the Church's latent racism, and the rise and proliferation of sect after sect based on mindless emotionalism and ersatz spirituality occasionally induced by schizoprogenic "mind-expanding" drugs.

In retrospect, the signs that should have warned us were there. Primarily there was the total breach between the in-group coziness of the young theology students and the masses of traditional believers they were destined to shepherd. Some of these students saw themselves as playing the role of Dostoevski's Grand Inquisitor—of protecting

4. *Holy Bible*, Revised Standard Version, New Testament, p. 61. The interpolated verses—Mark 16:9-20—are footnoted and are not incorporated into the text, in order to confirm to the earliest and most valid manuscript.

the masses from the knowledge that would surely destroy their simple, pious faith. There was complicity coupled with the camaraderie of those who share a deep secret. "My God, I told a layman!" was the jesting self-mockery of this heroic stance. The theologians would infuse new meaning into the Christian symbols, gradually discarding the superstitions until people would suddenly awake to find that the millennium had come without their even knowing it.

But now the seminaries are emptying, even closing, and one can wonder in total speculative objectivity whether the institution of the Christian Church will even exist in another generation.

Thus, woven into the fabric of *The Heavens Are Cleft Asunder* is a story, the story of how a generation of brilliant and devoted thinkers sought to restore to their beloved faith something of its lost purity and moral force. And it is a tragedy, for it is the story of men who refused to recognize Him Who would have given them the salvation

they sought not only for themselves, but for their fellow Christians as well. For Bahá'u'lláh is the One through Whom their Faith is destined "not to die, but to be reborn."⁵

The compassion which Huschmand Sabet shows for these men, some of whom he knows personally, can only spring from a realization of their suffering and of the basic sincerity of their efforts. As did George Townshend twenty years ago, Huschmand Sabet lovingly shows to the sincere Christian the way out of the despair and disillusionment into which Christendom seems daily to be sinking. For once again we find here a careful exposition of the harmony between Bahá'í belief and the very essence of Christianity.

Thus Mr. Sabet's book is both basic and timely. Perhaps the suffering of Christians who have not only witnessed but endured the continued deterioration of their Faith during the last twenty years will have prepared them now to respond with an even deeper joy and gratitude to the clarion call of Bahá'u'lláh. It is with the profound hope that this may be so that I commend to the readers of *WORLD ORDER* this work of Huschmand Sabet.

5. Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh: Selected Letters*, 2d rev. ed. (Wilmette, Ill.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 114.

Authors & Artists

MARZIEH GAIL—translator, poet, novelist, biographer, historian—makes an eighth appearance in *World Order*. Mrs. Gail has written several books including *Persia and the Victorians*, *Avignon in Flower*, *The Three Popes*, and *Dawn Over Mount Hira*.

WILLIAM S. HATCHER, a professor of mathematics at Laval University, graduated from Vanderbilt University, planning to study theology and become a minister. After reading George Townshend's *Christ and Bahá'u'lláh* when it was first published in 1957, he abandoned his original intention and pursued instead a career in mathematics.

ROBERT HAYDEN is serving, for a second year, as consultant in poetry to the Library of Congress. He is a professor of English at the University of Michigan and will be this fall poet-in-residence at Howard University. In 1971 he was awarded the Russell Loines Award for poetry by the National Institute of Arts and Letters and in 1975 received an award from the Academy of American Poets. Mr. Hayden's works of poetry include *Angle of Ascent*, *The Night-Blooming Cereus*, *Words in the Mourning Time*, *Kaleidoscope*, *Heart-Shape in the Dust*, *Figure of Time*, and *A Ballad of Remembrance*, which won the grand prize at the first World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar, Senegal, in 1962.

FIRUZ KAZEMZADEH is a professor of history at Yale University and editor of *World Order*.

BERNARD LEACH, world-famous potter and artist, studied art at the Slade School in England and pottery in Japan, where he

lived for many years. A world traveler, he has held exhibits in London and Tokyo, and in the 1950s and 1960s gave lecture tours in the United States. Mr. Leach initiated the First International Conference of Potters and Weavers and began pottery schools in St. Ives, Cornwall, and at Dartington Hall, Devon. He has received an award from the Honorary Association of the Manchester College of Art and is the author of several books, including *The Potter's Book*, *The Potter's Portfolio*, and *Drawings, Verse & Belief*. Mr. Leach's "My Religious Faith," a letter explaining to his friends why he became a Bahá'í, appeared in the Fall 1966 issue of *World Order*.



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