

GOLDZIHNER'S "BAHÁ'Í CORRESPONDENCE"

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The thesis of the eminent American Bahá'í missionary, Martha Root,¹ is difficult to prove, though cannot be excluded. According to it, Ignaz Goldziher was waiting at 2 p. m. on Wednesday, 9th April 1913, at the Budapest Western Railway Station for ʿAbdu'l-Bahá ʿAbbás Effendi, honored by the Bahá'ís as the "True Exemplar", the "Most Mighty Branch"², the "Center of the Covenant", or simply as the "Master". Even if Goldziher was there, it is doubtful whether they met on the same day, since the train arrived at the Eastern Station.³ Two days later, the great orientalist noted the following in his Tagebuch. "ʿAbdelbehā ist hier. Der Prophet stattete mir in Begleitung seines sekretärs einen Besuch in meiner Wohnung ab und wir unterhielten uns über behaistische Dinge. Er kommt aus Stuttgart, wo er die dort bestehende deutsche Behā-Gemeinde (etwa 110 Personen), von denen ihn der eine, W. Herrigel, bisher begleitete, zu besuchen. Ich konnte dem Propheten in meiner Stube die Überraschung bereiten, ihm einen Band Rasā'il seines göttlichen Vaters zu zeigen, das er nicht kannte. Ich war auch bei seinen hiesigen Vorträgen anwesend."⁶

Not counting His intimate meditations in the company of the local theologians, the Master gave two lectures in Budapest: one on the 14th in the National Museum at the invitation of the Turanian Society, and another in the building of the Old Parliament in the evening of the 11th, as the guest of the Peace Society, the Association of Esperantists and the Ladies' Club. The latter lecture ended as follows: ". . . when Dr. Giesswein⁷ was standing at the left of ʿAbdu'l-Bahá, the celebrated venerable Orientalist, Professor Goldziher ascended the pulpit and stood at his right hand side. When they both stood hand in hand with ʿAbdu'l-Bahá before the audience, they were tremendously applauded. It was a touching moment to see these three representatives of the great religions standing side by side, the high Catholic priest, the famous Jewish professor and ʿAbdu'l-Bahá (on the platform)."⁸

Presumably, Goldziher's respect for the Master was partly due to the noble thoughts the latter preached in the Hungarian capital and which resounded widely. The "True Exemplar" Himself must have esteemed the

excellent scholar highly, partly because of what he had written about the Bábí-Bahá'í Faith.⁹

This is what Goldziher noted in his Diary on April 17th:

"Heute vormittag hat mir ^cAbdelbehā seinen Abschiedsbesuch gemacht, wobei er in überschwenglichen Worten der Freude über seine Begegnung mit mir Ausdruck gab. انساكم أبداً sagt er. Er lud mich dringend ein, sein Gast in Palaestina zu sein."

Next day, the "Center of the Covenant" left for Vienna, and Goldziher moved to his summer residence in Zugliget a few weeks later.

Tagebuch:

„15. Juli.

Ich erhalte von ^cAbdelbehā ein sehr schmeichelhaftes arabisches Schreiben aus Port Said, in dem er seine Sehnsucht nach mir ausdrückt. Er sendet mir zugleich einen persischen Teppich als Erinnerung an unseren Verkehr.

13. August.

Arabisches Antwortschreiben an ^cAbbas Efendi."¹⁰

The two letters were dated July 2nd and August 17th. Enclosed in the first was an English version of disputable exactness, prepared by the Master's secretary, Mirzá Ahmad Suhráb.¹¹ It is not clear why this was necessary. We know that Suhráb served as ^cAbdu'l-Bahá's English interpreter in the United States and in Europe, but it was not because of translation errors that he was excommunicated from the Movement (seventeen years later) by ^cAbbás Effendi's grandson and also infallible successor, Shoghi Rabbání.

Translation of Goldziher's answer:¹² My Honorable Lord, the Most Mighty Branch, ^cAbbás Effendi ^cAbdu'l-Bahá from His lowly and poor slave, Professor Ignaz Goldziher, the Hungarian. A thousand greetings and a thousand peaces upon our Lord, the Most Mighty Branch ^cAbbás Effendi ^cAbdu'l-Bahá, may His power and radiance persist.

Since the raven of separation cawed and Thou decided to depart from our country, proximity has been followed by remoteness, and withdrawal has replaced the fragrance of our togetherness. I have not ceased to remember the meeting with Thy Excellency which God in His charity had destined for me. I do not forget, I have not forgotten, the discussions and conversations that took place between us, nor how much I have borrowed from Thy radiance, drawn from Thy greatness, nor what was granted me as benefit from the manifest essences of Thy expressions concealed in the course of your

brilliant words. The desire to shake your blessed hands has long prevailed in my heart. While I plunged into the depths of this desire, Thy noble letter reached me, taking the place of the remembrance. I thank Thy Excellency for the sign of Thy affection, the testimony of Thy love borne by the letters of Thy precious epistle; while reading it, Aṣ-Ṣāhib Ismā^cīl ibn ^cAbbād's words to a friend of his came to my mind:

"By God, tell me if this is a paper one writes on, or by God, if you have dressed it in the mantle of your speech flowing of honey, or have poured honey onto your speech".

And (I) especially (thank) for the splendid present with which Thou hast honoured my lowly house. By God, this carpet continues to reflect Thy love, as it talks of Thy sentiments in the tongue of reality, of the conjunction of hearts after the separation of bodies, it is a sensual mediator informing about a spiritual state, a testimony of the present about the absent. I am repeatedly and permanently grateful to Thee. The reason for the delay of this letter of mine is no other than my absence from my domicile for a couple of days. I ask God — Praised and Exalted be He — to renew for me the days of salvation by meeting Thee, by the connection of unity between friends.

Peace and God's mercy and His blessings

Budapest, 14 Ramadán of the months of 1331

Thy poor slave

Dr. I. Goldziher

I found no other "Bahá'í letters" among the correspondence of Goldziher, except a not very exciting one in Arabic, dated August 19th, 1913, the signature being hard to decipher. The author of this letter — who is probably identical with that of another one written in French, dated the 18th July 1913 and also presented here, is the Master's agent and son-in-law, Ahmad Yazdí of Port Said (1866–1943). This letter thanked Goldziher for the card he sent and informed him that ^cAbdu'l-Bahá was staying in Alexandria at the moment. It seems the relationship had, in a formal sense, broken off. In a report fifty years later, Renée Szántó-Felbermann, the secretary of the only Bahá'í "Local Spiritual Assembly" that ever existed in Hungary, asserted that Ignaz Goldziher's son Karl had received a carpet as a wedding gift from the Master¹³, but unfortunately, what she wrote was not always the exact truth.¹⁴ It is very likely that she was talking about the previously mentioned rug.

NOTES

1. *Martha Root, Herald of the Kingdom*, compiled by K. Zinky, New Delhi, Bahá'í Publication Trust, 1983, p. 361.
2. The term originates from the Founder of the Faith, Bahá'u'lláh Himself, and means that ʿAbbás Effendi is His eldest son and His successor at the head of the Movement.
3. A detailed review of ʿAbdu'l-Bahá's busy programme in Budapest and of the history of the Bahá'í activities in Hungary in general is soon to be published.
4. Wilhelm Herrigel was one of the first Bahá'ís in Stuttgart. He circulated and translated into German the Bahá'í literature. The "Guardian of the Cause of God", Shoghi Rabbáni called him "our indefatigable and self-sacrificing brother" in 1925, then a few years later He excommunicated him along with others for having questioned His authority. — I found Herrigel's card among Goldziher's papers, on the back of it is written that ʿAbdu'l-Bahá has caught a cold and cannot therefore visit Goldziher. Although there is no date on it, judging by the history of the Masters's sojourn, this must have happened on 15th or 16th April.
5. Twenty years later, Martha Root related it as follows: "ʿAbdu'l-Bahá visited Professor Ignatius Goldziher in his home, and he was pleasantly surprised when he saw in his library His Father Bahá'u'lláh's book, the '*Kitábu'l-Aqdas*' in Persian." (J. E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh és az új korszak*, Budapest, Gergely, 1933. XXI.) — Two observations: 1. It is improbable that the Master was not familiar with the Persian version of the *Aqdas*, most certainly something else was shown to him. 2. When the Bahá'ís recently published Martha Root's selected writings, this part concerning Goldziher and the *Aqdas* had simply been left out of her report on the Master's visit to Budapest, we do not know why. — *Martha Root pp.* 367–368.
6. I. Goldziher, *Tagebuch*, Leiden, Brill, 1978. 11 April 1913; — H. M. Balyuzi - ʿAbdu'l-Bahá, Oxford, George Ronald, 1971, pp. 385–386 puts the date of the meeting at the afternoon of the 11th. The source is not given, it cannot be the *Tagebuch*. It can hardly be Zarfání or the *Sonne der Wahrheit* (see note 8.) We cannot exclude all doubt concerning

Balyuzi's statement that "CAbdu'l-Bahá returned the visits of Professor Ignaz Goldziher . . ." There might not have been anything to return on the 11 th.

7. Alexander Giesswein (1856–1923): Canon, leading personality of the Hungarian Christian Socialist Movement, feminist, esperantist, president of the Peace Society and of the St. Steven Academy.
8. A. Schwarz-Solivo, "CAbdu'l-Bahá in Budapest", *Sonne der Wahrheit*, Organ des deutschen Bahá'í-Bundes (Stuttgart), 1–5 (March–July), 1924, p. 26+27, M. M. Zarfání, *Kitáb-i-Badáyí'u'l-Áthár*, vol. 2., Bombay, 1921, reprint Hofheim-Langenhain, Bahá'í-Verlag, 1982, p. 233.
Martha Root op. cit., p. 365.
9. *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, Heidelberg, Carl Winter, 1963, 271–282; "Verhältnis des Bab zu früheren Sufi-Lehrern", *Der Islam*, vol. XI., 1921, 252–254; "Die Religion des Islams", in: *Die Religionen des Orients*, Leipzig-Berlin, Teubner, 1913, pp. 138–141; Note also in the *Tagebuch* Goldziher's friendship with E. G. Browne, so respected by the Bahá'ís: K. Beveridge, *Professor Edward Granville Browne, Bahá'í-Briefe*, 51, April 1986, pp. 169–182.
10. The English translation of the three passages runs as follows:
" – This morning CAbdelbehā paid me his farewell visit. He exposed his joy at our meeting with exaggerated words. لا انساكم أبدا – he said. He urged me to come and be his guest in Palestine."
" – I received a very friendly Arabic letter from CAbdelbeha from Port Said in which he craves my company. At the same time, he sent me a Persian carpet as a souvenir of our relationship."
" – Arabic reply to Abbas Effendi."
11. M. A. Suhráb (1891–1958): Born of a Bahá'í family in Isfahán, he was educated in Teheran and Egypt, was a missionary in America, and later CAbdu'l-Bahá's immediate colleague. He spread the Faith in California at the beginning of the 1920's and was excommunicated by Shoghi Rabbání in 1930 "for having broken the Covenant". From then on, he was on bad terms with the Movement and later involved in a lawsuit with it in the U. S. A. for the use of the "Bahá'í" trade-mark.

12. The copy of the Arabic original is from the *Research Department of the Bahá'í World Centre: BWC RD*. All the other documents presented here are from the *Oriental Collection of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences*, except the "Bahá'í group photo" which was taken in front of the Hotel Ritz of Budapest on the 9th April 1913, and appeared in *Pesti Tükör*, 11. 4. 1913, p. 6. and *Tolnai Világlapja*, 20. 4. 1913, p. 8.
13. R. Szántó-Felbermann, *The Bahá'í Faith in Hungary* (manuscript: *BWC RD*), p. 3.
14. This is especially true for her *Rebirth*, London, Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1980, which is unfortunately considered the only source, the only printed volume about the Bahá'í activities in Hungary.

وَاللَّهُ
مُتَعَدِّدٌ
لِأَعْيُنِ
الرَّءِيفِ

آيها العاض الجليل حسب الاحترام من يوم نوسم حمم ذوق
وتعمرنا بالاحراق بين الضلع والاشاء انا اسير الشوق
للعطف برة مرة اخرى ان انسك وعلاوة اليه
ولازالت في ذوق ومحركة لشوق الى اعاك وشاهد
وتسوة من حياك واتي بواسطة هذا الخطاب
لذلك الجواب وتظر الجواب بشرا برناه الحال
با عظم الآمال وانا بهذا الاشاء وصلت الى بور سعيدة
البعيد وساكت فيها لكن استريح من التعب اقدم
سجادة ايرانية نذكارا لما مضى وارجوكم قبولها
وعليك التحية والثناء

بوداپت پروفیسر یوسیف گلدزیر علیہ التحیة والثناء

فصبر جميل من الله
والله المستعان

أيها الفاضل الجليل الواجب الاحترام من يوم بؤس هم الفراق
وتسعر نار الاحتراق بين الضلوع والاحشاء أنا اسير الاشواق
للمشاهدة مرة أخرى ان أنس لك وحلاوة المسامرة معك
ولا زالت في ذوقي ومحركة لشوقي الى لقاءك ومشاهدة محياك
والنشوة من جمياك وانّي بواسطة هذا الخطاب ابث ممنونيتي
لذلك الجناب وانتظر الجواب مبشرا برفاه الحال والتمتع
باعظم الامال وانا بهذا الاثناء وصلت الى بورتسعيد بعدالغياب
البعيد وسأمكن فيها لكي استريح من التعب واقدم
سجادة ايرانية تذكارا لما مضى وارجو قبولها
وعليك التحية والشناء

بودابست بروفسر موسيو گلدزئر عليه التحية والشناء

and my understanding of it (2)



To Professor Goldziber

Upon him be greeting and praise!
He is God!

O thou learned scholar worthy of
every respect!

From the day that the fever of
separation attained to a high degree
and the fire of remembrance ^{between veils and absciss} blazed forth,
I have experienced the greatest longing
to meet thee another time - so that
I may associate with thee. Verily
the sweetness of thy conversation
is always in my taste and excites
my yearning to behold thy face,
to look in thy countenance and
to be intoxicated with thy wine.
Therefore through this letter I
express my gratefulness to you
and ever expect to receive your
letters conveying the good news
of your happiness and attainment.

2

to your most great desire. After
a long absence, during these days
I have reached Port Said, I shall
live here for awhile till I am
rested from the fatigue of the
journey.

I forward to you a Persian
rug as a keepsake of our past
friendship and I beg of you to
accept it.

Upon thee be greeting and peace!
(Sig) Abdul Baha Abbas

Trans by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab
July 2^d 1913 Port Said, Egypt

Address:-

Abdul Baha Abbas
40 Ahmad Yaghi
Port Said
Egypt



احمد یزدی

Ahmed Yazdi

عنوان تلغرافیائی یزدی

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE (J.M.E.D.I.)
A. S. G. CODE USED 417 50

Paris le 18 Juillet 1913

پورے جمعہ

Professeur Goldziher
Budapest

Monsieur

Suivant ordre de Mon Seigneur
Aboliel Bahar Abbas j'ai l'honneur de vous remettre
sous ce pli connaissance de la (2^o) de Lloyd Autrichien à
l'effet, concernant un Exposé de Perso, expédié aujourd'hui
par le bateau "Austria" à Trieste à votre adresse,
frais payés d'avance ici, jusqu'à Trieste, dont veuillez
prendre livraison et m'accuser réception.

Dans l'attente à vous lire veuillez
agress Monsieur mes civilités empressees

Ahmad Yazdi's letter in French about the rug (4)



Abbul Bahá Abbász, a perzsa vallásos bábista-szekta apostola (a padon ülő aggastyán), aki európai körútjában Budapestre érkezett és itt pénteken előadást tartott. Az örök békét, a emberszeretetet hirdeti körútjában. Több perzsa hive is velő jött. Jelenleg hetvenhárom éves.

The "True Exemplar" and His escort in Budapest: Siyyid Asadu'lláh-i-Qúmí, Siyyid Ahmad Khamsí Baqiroff (?), Mirzá Ahmad Suhráb and Mirzá Mahmúd Zarqání (left to right) (5)

جناب سیدی الغصن الاعظم

عباس افندی عبد البهاء

من عبده الحقیر الفقیر

الأستاذ اغناص غولد صیهر

المجری

الف تحية والف سلام الى سيدنا الغصن الاعظم
عباس افندي عبد البهاء دام عزه ونوره
اما بعد السلام فنحن صاح غراب البين فعزتم
الرحيل من بلدنا

واضحى التنائى بديلا من تدانينا

وناب عن طيب لقلنا تجمانينا

ما نزلت انذكر ملاقة سعادتكم التي كان قد رجا
لى الله بلطفه وما أنسى لم أنسى المحاورات
والمذاكرات التي وقعت بيننا وكثيرا ما اقتبست
من نوركم واستغفرت من بحوركم وما من
لى ان استفيدة من الحقائق الظاهرة في
الفاظكم والمضمرة في غيبوت عباراتكم
البارقة فطالما غلب على فؤادى الاشواق
لمصافحة ايديكم المباركة فينما انا مستغرق
في لجة الاشواق اذ بلغنى رسالتكم الشريفة
قائمة مقام المذاكرة فانشكر لسعادتكم على
علامة مودتكم وشهادة محبتكم المضمونة في

أرف مرقومكم الكريم الذي عينت قراءتي بلغ
في ذمني قول الصاحب اسمعيل بن عباد الى

بعض اختلافه
بالله قل لي اقرطاس بخطابه * قوام البسته حللا
بالله لفظك هذا سال من غسل * ام قد صيبت
على الفاظك العسل *

ولا سيما على الهدية الجليلة التي شرفتم بها منزلي
الحقير والله ان تلك السجادة لم تبرح معبرتي
عن محبتكم ناطقة بلسان الحال عن عواطفكم
 واجتماع القلوب بعد افتراق الابدان وفي
كوسيطه عسيّة تنبئ عن احوال معنوية
شهادة الحاضر على الغائب فلکم تکریر التشرک
متى مستمرا واما اسنبطاء مكنوبى هذا
فصيه غيبتي عن مستقرى بضع ايام لا غير
فادعو الله سبحانه وتعالى ان يمدد لي ايام
التطاني ببقائكم وجمع الشمل بين الاحباب
والسلام ورحمة الله وبركاته

العبد الفقير

Dr. J. Goldziher

بودابست ١٤ رمضان

ت شهر ١٣٣١

بورسجید فی ۱۹ اگست ۱۹۱۷ء
جناب الفاضل الوجہ بہرہ جہانگیر
ادام اسم وجودہ الی
الہ الی بوراہنہ

بہرہ اہلوار الخیرہ والنار
شکر کم علی کارکم اللطیف

الذی تجرون عن وصول مکتوبی والامانہ
اما اردکینک و مولای کا حصول اضعاف عینک
فیقولن بوکطنی آقا سہتر میرضی الان باریط الاکثر
مظہر مظہر

بورسعيد في ١٩ اغسطس سنة ١٩١٣

الى بودابست جناب الفاضل الوجيه بروفيسور جولدزيهر المحترم
ادام الله وجوده العالـي

بعد ابداء التحية والشناء اشكركم علي كارتكم اللطيف
الذي تخبرون عن وصول مكتوبي والامانة

اما ادرس سيدى ومولاي سماحتلو افندم عبدالبهاء عباس افندي الافخم
فيكون بواسطتي انما سمachte مشرف الان بالرمل الاسكندريية
محطة مظلوم باشا

هذا واتبلوا احتراماتي الفائقة ودمتم

الداعي

and my understanding of it (8)