

Abdu'l-Bahá's Travels to the West

Washington, D.C.

20-28 April 1912

Race Unity

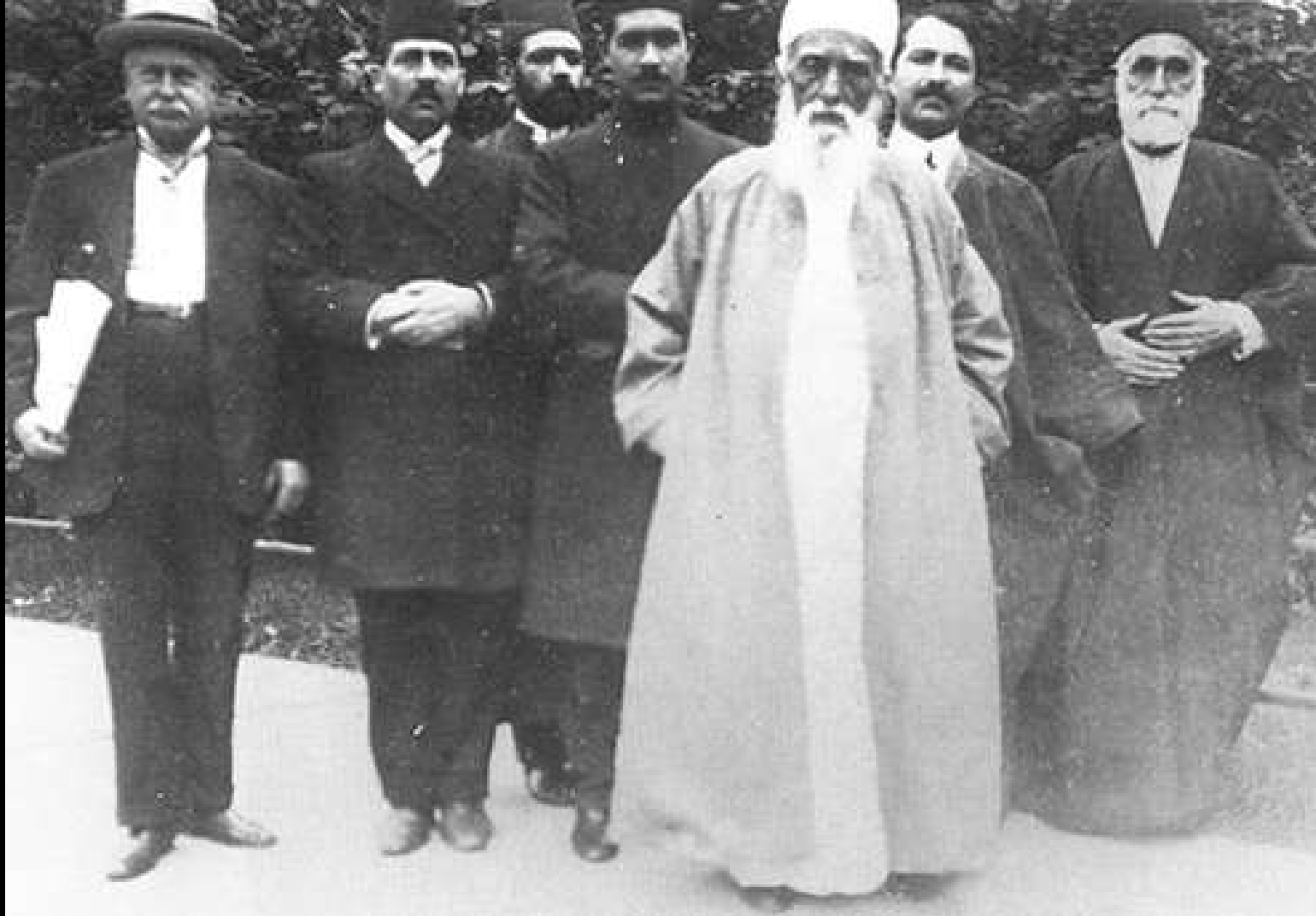
Travels of 'Abdu'l-Bahá 13

Arrival in Washington, D.C.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, with Dr Fareed, Dr Getsinger and two Persians, arrived by train in Washington, D.C., the capital of the United States, on 20 April 1912.

Arrival in Washington, D.C.

He was met at the station by Agnes Parsons, Hippolyte Dreyfus-Barney, Mason Remey, and Florence and Ali-Kuli Khan and their children, and went to stay at the Parson's home. Agnes Parsons was a wealthy socialite who introduced 'Abdu'l-Bahá to many important people.



'Abdu'l-Bahá in Washington, D.C.

Ali-Kuli Khan

Ali-Kuli Khan had been one of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretaries in Haifa before going to America, marrying Florence Breed in 1904 in the first marriage between East and West, with three children, Rahim, Marzieh and Hamideh.

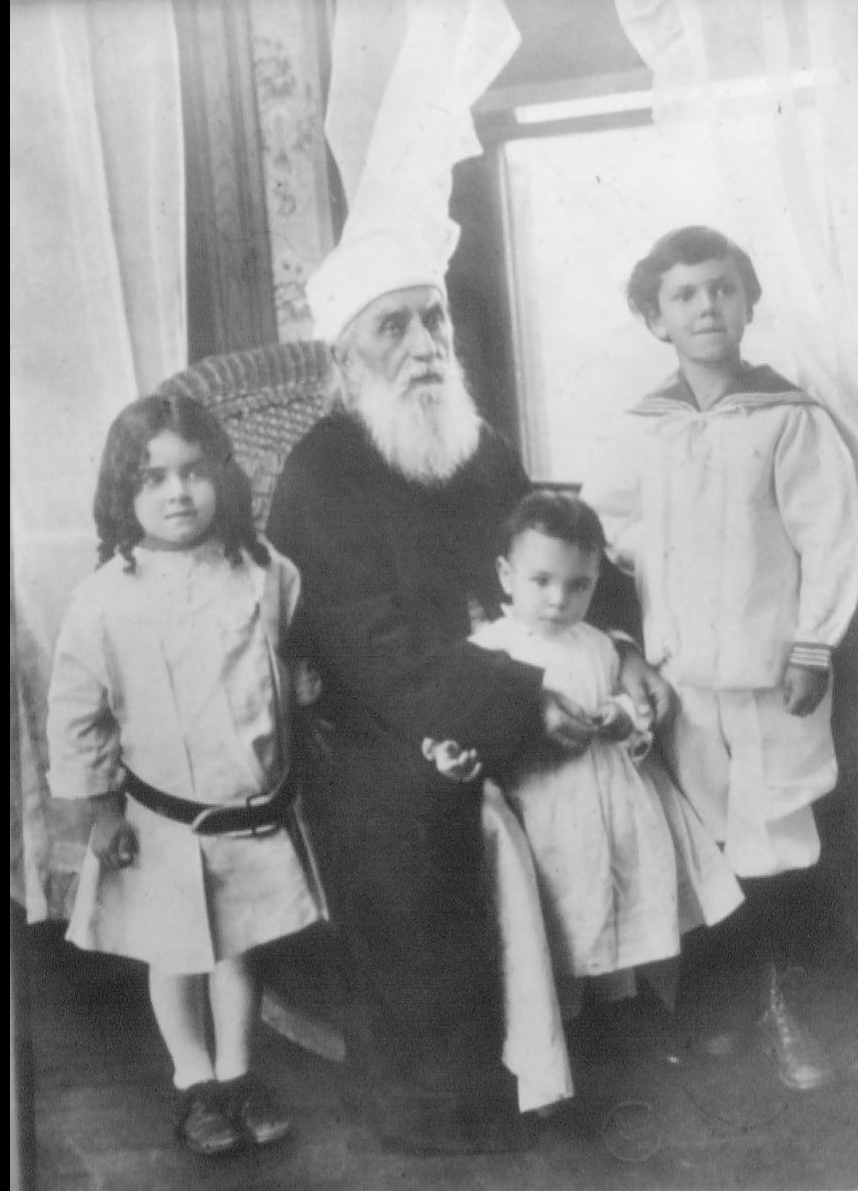
Ali-Kuli Khan

He became the Persian Chargé d'Affaires (diplomat) in Washington. He translated the *Kitab-i-Iqan*, the *Seven Valleys*, and the *Glad Tidings* into English, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's correspondence with American Bahá'ís.



Ali-Kuli
Khan,
Florence
Khan

and
children
Rahim
Marzieh
and
Hamideh



Ali-Kuli Khan

Ali-Kuli Khan arranged a luncheon at the Persian Legation for important people in the capital, 'Abdu'l-Bahá made a point of inviting Louis Gregory, a black Bahá'í and later named a Hand of the Cause, and seating him in the place of honour to His right.

Louis Gregory



Ali-Kuli Khan

At a reception after the luncheon, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was introduced to Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone, and Admiral Robert Perry, discoverer of the North Pole.

Howard University

On 23 April 1912 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke at **Howard University**, a black school, to over 1000 students and faculty, where he was welcomed by music from a band.

Howard University

At that time, Washington, D.C., the nation's capital between the northern and southern states which had fought in the Civil War, was racially segregated. The whites considered the blacks, their former slaves, as inferior. 'Abdu'l-Bahá made race unity the main theme of his visit to Washington, D.C.

Howard University

Howard University was for black students, so 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke about unity between the races.

Today I am most happy, for I see here a gathering of the servants of God. I see white and black sitting together. There are no whites and blacks before God. All colors are one, and that is the color of servitude to God.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 18)

Howard University

Scent and color are not important. The heart is important. If the heart is pure, white or black or any color makes no difference. God does not look at colors; He looks at the hearts. He whose heart is pure is better. He whose character is better is more pleasing. He who turns more to the Abhá Kingdom is more advanced.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 18)

Howard University

In the realm of existence colors are of no importance. Observe in the mineral kingdom colors are not the cause of discord. In the vegetable kingdom the colors of multicolored flowers are not the cause of discord. Rather, colors are the cause of the adornment of the garden because a single color has no appeal; but when you observe many-colored flowers, there is charm and display.

Howard University

The world of humanity, too, is like a garden, and humankind are like the many-colored flowers. Therefore, different colors constitute an adornment. In the same way, there are many colors in the realm of animals.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 18)

Howard University

Doves are of many colors; nevertheless, they live in utmost harmony. They never look at color; instead, they look at the species. How often white doves fly with black ones. In the same way, other birds and varicolored animals never look at color; they look at the species.

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, [The Promulgation of Universal Peace](#), 18)