



“The Supreme Psychiatrist”

By Caitlin Shayda Jones

Published: September 29, 2012 | Last modified: June 24, 2013

Permalink: <http://239days.com/2012/09/29/the-supreme-psychiatrist/>

THE COCKROACHES SCUTTLED AS she approached, fleeing the sugary drops that had hardened on the countertop under the soda fountain. Feny E. Paulson had traveled to Salt Lake City all the way from Missoula, Montana — an approximately twenty-four hour journey. She lodged at the Young Women’s Christian Association. Feny noted that she found a dead fly in her German fries, and the chicken wings she ate still wore most of their feathers. But she was not there to be entertained; she had come to see ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had its own logistical complications. A telegram had been sent to Ms. Paulson, informing her of the date of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s arrival. But it failed to mention what railroad he would be arriving on. “Hence I spent most of my second day making the streetcar circuit,” Feny wrote in her diary, “station to station, reading schedules of train arrivals.”

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá finally arrived in Salt Lake City at 2 p.m. on September 29, 1912, on the Grand Central R.R., Feny was there to greet him. “It was an oriental picture in an occidental setting,” she wrote of the scene. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had arrived with his retinue of companions, including a young Japanese man, Saichiro Fujita.

Two days later, Ms. Paulson received the phone call she had been hoping for — an invitation for a personal meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She met him in a reception room he had rented at the Kenyon Hotel, on the corner of 200 South and Main Street. He had moved here from the more expensive Salt Lake City Hotel shortly after his arrival in the city. As she entered the room, Feny noticed the roll-top desk and chairs lined against the walls. She later wrote in her diary for any future readers to see: “Recall my mentioning the dirty hall at the Y.W.C.A. and the battle I had with food?” As their meeting began, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá announced: “Luxury and comfort are not the all-important things in this life.” He later sat her down and served her tea, saying: “This is the Lord’s Supper you are having with Me.”

Ms. Paulson’s diary doesn’t relate all the details of her meeting with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, but it seems the encounter moved her deeply. Feny had never known her own father, and this troubled her. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, she wrote, told her he was her

spiritual father. He quietly whispered a prayer for her, and gave her a locket as a gift. She wrote of the encounter: “Incidents forgotten and hidden in the recesses of one’s being, in His presence, are in a flash perceived and unobtrusively aired. . . .” Near the end of her diary entry, she adds: “Abdu’l-Bahá was the Supreme Psychiatrist.”

How to Cite this Article

The formatting below is from the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th Edition. For other academic citation styles, please adapt accordingly. Since the **239 Days** site and its contents may be updated from time to time, we recommend you include a “last modified” date, which is provided at the top of both the web and PDF versions of this article.

FOOTNOTE / ENDNOTE:

Caitlin Shayda Jones, “ ‘The Supreme Psychiatrist,’ ” *239 Days in America*, ed. Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett, September 29, 2012, <http://239days.com/2012/09/29/the-supreme-psychiatrist/>.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jones, Caitlin Shayda. “ ‘The Supreme Psychiatrist,’ ” *239 Days in America*. Edited by Jonathan Menon and Robert Sockett. September 29, 2012. <http://239days.com/2012/09/29/the-supreme-psychiatrist/>.

HOW TO CITE THE *239 Days in America* WEBSITE IN A BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Menon, Jonathan, and Robert Sockett, eds. *239 Days in America*. <http://239days.com/>.

Terms of Use

239 Days in America™ and the 239Days.com website is licensed under a Creative Commons 3.0 License as specified at this link: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. **This PDF file** is shared with you with the following additional terms:

YOU MAY quote from this PDF file with proper attribution. Your citation must include the author's name and the **239 Days in America** project's name. You may download and print this PDF file, and you may share individual PDF files in print or electronic form.

Although we want to make our work easy to share, we also wish to maintain the unity and integrity of **239 Days in America** as a whole. Therefore,

YOU MAY NOT republish or rebroadcast our PDF files in a public forum—such as by uploading them to a blog, app, or other web property, publishing them in print form, or distributing them widely using electronic means—without our prior written consent. We invite you to discuss such opportunities with us by contacting the Editor-In-Chief at editor@239Days.com. Otherwise, please share the permalinks displayed at the top of each file.

YOU MAY NOT extract pages from this file, recombine this PDF file with other documents, assemble its contents into any free or paid product, app, ebook, collection, compilation, or archive, nor remove this page of Terms. The **Adobe PDF**™ security features employed in this document have been selected to prevent such use. You may not circumvent these security features in any way.