

Ramleh, Egypt
Oct 25th 1913

Dear friends!

Today our Beloved was feeling well, happy and active. I was with him all day. Early in the morning I was up and in order to have an excuse to go and see the Master I ^{with myself} took several copies of the National Geographic Magazines. "What have you in your hands" he asked as I entered the room. His Countenance was radiant and was reading a newspaper. Tea was served and in the meanwhile Mrs Standard came in. Mirza galal was also present. The Master joked about slapping me and that while Mirza galal and myself were in good health and strong Mrs Standard was lean and tall. She must do something to get stouter. "The Arabs" he said "are a hardy race; their physical constitutions are like iron. The Arabs of the interior of the Peninsular still preserve their strong physiques and astonishing agility. Their sterling qualities of hospitality and faithfulness are proverbial. Although their principle of faithfulness is clanish yet their idea of hospitality is all-embracing. One may well wonder how these Arabs live in the Sahara with hardly any modern essential means of living, yet developing such sturdy personalities and genial characteristics. As soon as the Bedawin Arab hears the clatter of the hoofs of a horse he comes out of his tent, thinking that a guest is in sight. Then he welcomes him with a cheerful Countenance, brings out the only carpet he has, spreads it under his

fect orders his wife to prepare coffee and his servant to kill a mutton. Then he goes around and invites all his Bedouin friends to dinner, giving them the good news that he is honored in thus having a guest in his tent. Their conception of hospitality is so unique that if the guest either by accident or by purpose kills the son of host and takes refuge under the latter's tent he will be protected and his crime forgiven.

After this Mrs Stannard asked she is writing a letter to Germany. Has he any message for the believers. "Yes! Convey to them my heavenly Bahai greeting. Write to them that I am most pleased with them and ever pray that they may more than ever be confirmed in spreading the Glad-Tidings of the Kingdom of Abha."

About a quarter of nine he asked Mirza Jalal and myself to follow him out. He was going to call on a Persian believer whose family was going to leave for Cairo. On the way as it was found that the streets were too muddy we got into a cab and were driven to the house. The Master walked in, the men believers waiting in the front room welcoming him. Then he entered in the other room and met the women. There, no stranger has any right of way and we walked in the garden while the Master was speaking to them.

When he came out and got his seat in the cab he talked to us about "Contentment." "Man" he said "must live in accord with the exigencies of the time. He must not make himself the slave of any habit. He must eat a piece of stale bread with the same

relish and enjoyment as the most sumptuous dinner. Contentment is real wealth. If one develops within himself the quality of contentment he will become independent. Contentment is the creator of happiness. When one is contented one does care neither for riches nor poverty. He lives above the influences of them and is indifferent to them. When we were in Bagdad, often with one pound of meat we served dinner to fifteen or 20 people. We cooked with it Persian stew and filled the pot with water, so everyone could have a bowl of the thin soup. Notwithstanding this we were all very happy and thought that ours is the most delicious dinner.

Having arrived at the hotel he walked for a few minutes in the corridor and talked with the proprietor. He in turn brought his cook and introduced him to the Master. Of course he spoke with him about cooking and described to him the process of making a cutlet and some Turkish dish with such knowledge and precision that the cook stood there astonished and delighted.

Then he came up to his room and dictated many Tablets for the Persian and American believers. At this ^{time the} servant entered the room and arranged the bed. The Master arose from his seat and coming toward me slapped me hard on the face. The servant was just going out of the room; he called him back. "Did you hear the noise of the slap?" The man answered "No." "Well, then, come."

I will let you hear it this time and he slapped me again. The man laughed, the Master laughed, as to me, I assure you I laughed heartily. Then as though the servant was not rewarded by such a scene he was given some money and an orange ^{beside}.

Mrs. Hicocco told the Master about her going to the poor house in Alexandria which was visited by him some two years ago. "You have ~~well~~ ^{well} done. The poor are my trusts ~~away~~ ^{from} you. you must do everything to alleviate their burdens. I love the poor."

Mrs. Steward brought a bottle of orange perfume for the Master. He was walking to and fro from one end of corridor to the other. She pushed into his hands. He puts a few drops on her hair and anoints my head. Then he laughs. "Now I have anointed you."

After his modest lunch of "Abgausht" he takes his nap. Mirza Jalal leaves for Port Said to attend to an errand and I come to the hotel to take his place for the night, because he will return to morrow evening.

In the afternoon the Beloved goes to Mirza Abdul Fazel and while Waji Mirza and Mirza Momen are present he speaks to them about the Cause in Bagdad and Teheran in contrast with its present standing and its world recognition as a mighty force for all that which is noblest and best in the world of humanity.

When he returned to the hotel Mrs. Steward was present to greet him and we followed him to his room. Here we had a delightful quiet hour, the Master looking over the pictures of the National

Geographic Magazine and was pleased especially with the tall structures of Siam, ^{elephant} hunting of Africa, Ancient architecture of China, the colored pictures of the Russian emigrants to Siberia, the costumes of the Serbian people, the marvellous ingenuity of the auto in building their homes and storing away provisions etc. Surely our brother Wilhelm who has been so kind to send me these excellent magazines was doubly and spiritually rewarded. Besides, all our Persian young men are reading the articles contained therein with much profit.

Mrs Stannard asked about the power of — and whether it will be transferred from — to —. The Master answered:— This power is not verbal. It must be actual, demonstrative, dynamic. This power has gone out of the body of Islam. The Islamic world cannot grasp the political principles of the modern time and is devoid of the spiritual potency. If they desire tremendous progress in as short time as possible they must get hold of this spiritual potency, thus reforming and changing all the various branches of their institutional life. The Western nations for the last five centuries have been steadily going forward and with a superhuman energy pushing further and further the frontiers of ignorance and illiteracy they have attained to their present unassailable position. Now if the Islamic people start on this path with the same determination and constancy it will take them at least five centuries before they could reach the

up-to-date level of Western civilization. This is of course a slow process and as I told you, they must get hold of this Celestial Power. Then you will observe their magical advancement. Mrs. Stander, then spoke about her voyage to India: "I believe" she said "that the only way for the salvation of the Zoroastrian people and their glorification is to accept this Cause. There are many generous hearted people amongst them and are anxious to serve Persia but they do not know through what channel." The Master said: "I hope they will become convinced to render a great service in India and guide these people to the Shore of Reality."

In the evening all of us gathered in the Beloved's room. He was looking fine. The race question was touched. Then he talked longer than one hour, repeating the contents of his addresses before the Colored meetings and Churches of the United States showing how untenable and ^{un}reasonable is race prejudice; giving us illustrations from the animal and vegetable Kingdoms and their varieties of colors and shades, yet these things are not made the causes of misunderstandings. "When I was in America and Europe" he said "I went through some of the Zoological gardens. There I saw ^{great} polar bears, savage-looking, black and white. The white bear did not say to the black bear, 'thou art of another race. I dislike thy association. Get thee behind me.' Nor the black ever grudged the whiteness of its fellow. They lived in one cage without molesting each other."

Now can we confess with shame that man, notwithstanding his godlike intelligence is even inferior to these ferocious bears?"

Then he spoke with much love about Mr and Mrs Gregory of Washington and the progress of the Cause amongst the colored people of America. "Mr Gregory" he said "is a true, devoted Bahai. He has a gentle spirit and is continually serving the Cause. I love him very much. He is my son."

Toward the end of his talk he related the story of Esfandeyar, the colored attendant of Baha-Allah. "In his palace my grandfather," ~~he commenced~~ "had many colored maids and servants. When the Blessed ^{Perfection} became the head of the family, he liberated all of them and gave them his permission to leave or stay, but if they desired to remain it will be of course in a different manner. However, all of them revelling in their new found freedom preferred to leave except Esfandeyar. He remained in the household and continued to serve us with proverbial faithfulness and chastity. Then when Baha-Allah became known as a Balast and he was teaching the people right and left, the populace arose against him and with ^{the} tacit consent of the government, our home was pillaged and ransacked. My father was put in the prison and we were persecuted on all sides. For days the rabble in their ^{fanatical} fury and rage threw stones into our homes, broke the windows and damaged everything. At that time I was

probably 6 or seven years. Everybody had left us and our family, then consisted of my mother, my sister (~~the greatest holy lady~~) and Aga Amman. Fearing that the stones thrown into the house may hit one of us, my mother went out and rented a ^{small} house in ^{an} entirely another quarter of the city and for fear of recognition, she carried us safely to our new humble quarter by night. On the other hand, the enemies of my Father who had poisoned the mind of the ~~Shah~~ that he harbors secret plans against the throne were convinced that Esfandiyar is the guardian of all the secret plans of Baha-Allah. Therefore they imagined that once they lay their hands on Esfandiyar they will force out of him everything and then ^{be able} to substantiate their vague accusations with these solid facts. Hence they commissioned one hundred and fifty policemen to find him and bring him before them. Esfandiyar had a chum with whom he passed most of his time. At first they tried to get hold of his chum, thus he may divulge the hiding-place of Esfandiyar but they failed in their purpose. One midnight we arose out of our sleep by the loud knocking at the door. It was opened and lo! and behold it was Esfandiyar. My mother told him with anxiety: "How is it that thou art yet in the city? Dost thou not know that there are 150 policemen after thee? Fly as quickly as thou canst. If they get hold of thee thy life will be in danger." But he smiled and answered:—"No. I will not

leave Teheran ^{even} if a thousand policemen are
 after me. I am not afraid. I have much
 debts in ^{the} Bazaar. I owe money to many shop-
 keepers and before I leave this city I must pay
 off all the debts. I do not want the people
 say afterward that the Negro-servant of
 Baha-Allah escaped without paying his
 debts." Then he left us and for one month
 and half he was walking in broad daylight
 in the streets and Bazaars and finally
 succeeded to clear off all his financial
 obligations. All this time the policemen
 were after him but could not catch him.
 Then one night he appeared again and
 said: "I am now free. I have payed actually
 all my debts and will leave the city with
 a clear conscience." He went to Mazandran and
 the governor who was not a Bahai engaged him
 in his service, made him the chief of his ^{army}
 and protected him from the pursuit of his ^{enemies}
 years lapsed and the governor being a religious
 man desired to make a pilgrimage to the
 Holy city of Karbala. Naturally he took
 Esfandiyar with himself who by this time
 had grown very much in his favor and could
 not separate from him. When they reached
 the city of Bagdad, Esfandiyar was overjoyed to
 stand again in the Presence of ^{the} Blessed
 Perfection because he loved him ^{Baha-Allah} most
 intensely. He requested Baha-Allah to keep
 him with himself; that he rather leave
 the governor and serve his old Master.
 But Baha-Allah told him: "you must
 act in this matter in accord with the

wish of the governor. You owe him a debt of deep
 gratitude. Because at a time that your life
 was in danger and no one would have received
 you he gave you position and stopped the
 persecutions of your enemies. Now if he is
 willing for you to remain with us, we
 will accept you, otherwise you must
 continue to serve him with the same zeal
 and sincerity that you have served us in the
 past." Esfandeyar went to the governor and
 explained his case. He answered: - "It is im-
 possible. I cannot find in this wide world
 a nother man as honest and faithful as
 thyself. Thou must continue to stay
 with ~~the~~ ^{me}. I have grown to love thee
 and will do everything to add to thy comfort
 and happiness." Of course Esfandeyar was
 heart-broken over this decision but he
 had to abide by the wish of the ~~Blessed~~ ^{governor}
 Perfection. He in turn consoled him
 and showered upon him his blessings. Es-
 fandeyar returned to Mazandran with the
 governor and stayed with him till his
 last day. Such was the sterling faith-
 fulness of Esfandeyar that whenever I think
 of him my eyes grow dim with tears.
 He was a King among men, a glorious star
 in the heaven of humanity. Although his
 face was black his heart was as white
 as the snow. He was peerless and had
 no equal. I cannot sufficiently praise
 him. I loved him. He was a glory
 and a jewel on the crown of the colored
 race. For his life was a noble record of
 grand achievement and the whole world
 may learn a lesson from it.