

Home of Baha-Allah 31

(2) April 5th 1914

(1) Acca Syria

Dear friends!

A most busy day from before sunrise to midnight for the Beloved. He was out of the house long before I appeared on the scene. Often I wished I could follow him unnoticed at a distance and watch his divine deeds of charity and benevolence. When he returned it was about noon. As he entered the house he said: "I have called on more than a dozen people and also on a number of the believers who live in the Inn. In each case I had to ascend many flights of steps and thus I must rest for awhile and shake off this extreme fatigue." One of the believers who was fortunate enough to follow him told me how he dispensed charity and ~~aided~~ ^{aided} ~~succored~~ the many needy ones by giving financial assistance. Long they have been looking forward to this occasion, waiting for Abbas Effendi to come so that they may receive from his hand help and aid.

5th In the afternoon a number of prominent citizens called on the Beloved and the question of recent election of a representative from Acca for the Turkish parliament was discussed. There are two Candidates on the field and for the last few months they have been carrying a hot campaign in outlying districts to catch the votes of the people.

When they left the house the Master also went out again and payed calls on two learned Sheikhs who are ^{here} from Constantinople. It was quite late when he returned and while the believers had gathered in the room, chanting Tablets, speaking about the progress of the Cause he ascended the stairs and offered apologies for not being able to speak to them tonight. "Marhaba! Marhaba" he said "Praise be to God that you are the old companions of the Blessed Perfections. You have witnessed his glory and sang the anthems of his Truth. You have been submerged in the sea of his compassion and quaffed the water of Immortality."

from his hand." With these words he disappears⁵³
from our sight but his divine picture is engraved
on the Tablet of our hearts.

X⁰ The aqueduct bringing water into the city has a most
interesting history ^{the narration of which} ~~and an account of the same~~ ^{may}
not be out of ~~the~~ ^{here} place. Jazzar Pasha who was the
military governor of Acca about 120 yrs ago and
who defeated Napoleon's forces after a long siege of
the town is the original builder of the aqueduct. About
ten or twelve miles outside of Acca, right amidst the
encircling mountains there is a hill called "Kabri"
on the side of which there is a little village. From the
foot of this hill there issue forth three or four springs.
through two of which ^{*} the surrounding orchards and ^{valleys}
are irrigated and the third was directed by Jazzar
Pasha toward the town of Acca. Huge cisterns
were built wherein water was stored for the
time of emergency, especially under the mosque.
The aqueduct supplied water to the city for sometimes
and then suddenly Napoleon and his army ^{appeared}

Quote what is in the book page 53 here

behind the gate of Acca. The first thing that the investing
 army did was to cut ^{the} water ^{supply} from the town and fill
 the aqueduct with earth in order to force the besieged
^{Napoleon} into surrender. They did not dream that the town's
 cisterns and store-houses ^{were} filled to overflowing
 with water and provisions, so that they could stand
 the siege for many months. Jazzer Pasha always
 forced the farmers to pay their taxes in wheat and
 cereals and these were ^{in turn} stored in government's granaries
 for such rainy days. After several desperate attacks
^{on the town} Napoleon had to leave his futile attempt and ~~then~~
 Jazzer Pasha died. By this time the aqueduct was
 filled as far as Bahajee and the people were too ^{much}
^{with other things} occupied to start its repair. There were laid many
 orchards in and around Bahajee as well as all along
 the road and the owners received a share of the
 water. Thus the dreariness of the desert was relieved
 by these luxuriant and green oasis in the midst of
 the Sahara. In this manner we may assert

that a higher power was working toward the fulfillment^{of}
of the old prophecy; "the desert shall rejoice and blossom
as the rose."

Near "Kabry" Beha-Allah pitched his tents several
times and lived there peacefully for many a day. ~~You~~
~~may rest assured that the place is impregnated with his~~
~~all-pervading spirit.~~ * The fresh, cold water of the spring
bubbles out of the ground and flows into a reservoir
the top of which is covered. During the summer^{months}
it is extremely cold, while in winter season it is hot.
The reservoir being filled the water enters ~~in~~ the
aqueduct, now under the ground and again above
the ground, through a system of ^{Pipes} ~~tubes~~ running
over high arches built of strong masonry. ^{These}
covered and ivy-grown these arches are seen ^{through}
the plain for miles and miles.

When Jazzar Pasha died another man ~~Abdullah~~
Pasha, a near relative of his became the governor
of this semi-independent principality. Jazzar Pasha
although totally illiterate was still a powerful

man and defying the rules of the central government did set up for the time being a government of his own. Abdallah Pasha desiring to imitate his predecessor was more than anxious to hand down to posterity more than a mere name and strove to engrave his name ~~in~~ mortar and clay. Consequently aside from laying a number of large orchards and building a number of edifices he laid the corner-stone of two mansions. When they were finished the larger and more pretentious one was inhabited by himself and family and the smaller one which is no other than the present palace of Bahajee, was given to his mother. In his own Mansion he built a very big reservoir of water the bottom of which was decorated with wonderful mosaics and all around it there were most beautiful gardens with shady nooks and romantic surroundings. This great tank of water is seen even today but the mosaics are gone.

The aqueduct fallen into a dilapidated condition, 57
Abdallah Pasha repaired it, but only as far as Bahjeer
and no further. The inhabitants of Acre by this time
had quite forgotten that years ago the aqueduct extended
as far as ~~the~~ town. Hence while this cool ^{fresh} water
was irrigating the orchards 2 miles outside of the
gate, the people ^{of Acre} drank the salty sea water sifted
through the sand or the brackish, tasteless water drawn
from the wells and sold at high ^a ~~cost~~ ^{price}. As a result
of this their forms became most grotesque, ~~and~~
~~their bellies abnormally swollen~~ and their faces
most dreadful to look at. The streets being very
narrow the ^{rays} ~~beams~~ of the sun hardly reached the
ground. They were not paved with stones ~~and~~ they
are nowadays and when it rained they became
so ~~turbulently~~ ^{covered with filth} muddy that as an old ^{Bahari} ~~believer~~ told
me "I had to take off my shoes and stockings to
wade through a stream of mud, refuse and
rubbish, ankle-deep, nay deeper." Then as now
the streets were infested with dogs with no one

58 to feed them save the occasional bones and crumbs
of bread thrown to them by the inhabitants. These
dogs making their homes in the cramped streets
added to the general filthiness, grovelling equality,
misery and uncleanness. No wonder the Turkish
authorities thoroughly believed that Baha-Allah, his
family and companions, would surely die after
three months stay in this rayless, melancholy
chamber-house of death - the Siberia of Turkey. The
town was so proverbial for its pestilential weather that
they said if a bird flew over it, its wings would be
scorched and drop down dead. Such were the
dark and gloomy conditions when Baha-Allah
and his 72 followers were imprisoned in the
Military Barrack about 47 years ago. The guards did not
permit anyone to go out and bring fresh water and
thus they had no other choice but to drink the
tasteless, bitter water of the wells. Later on a grocer
in the Bazar by the name Osman became interested
in these exiles and once in a long while would

very cautiously send a jar of water ^{from Bologna} for the ~~Reverend~~ ^{Canon} 59
Baba Allah ~~Perfection~~. Three years afterwards a Matosarraf comes
to Acre and desiring to make himself popular offers
the suggestion of rebuilding ^{the} of the forgotten aqueduct to
relieve the ills of the town. Hence definite steps were
taken up, a large sum of money was subscribed
by all the inhabitants and the cash was made available
to start the work of reconstruction, A small portion
of this fund was expended over the preparation of ^{building} ma-
terials, and the rest pocketed by the greedy officials. Thus
the plan was abandoned and nothing was accomplished.
After a year or two another Matosarraf by the name
Feyzi Pasha was sent to Acre. He was a man very high
in the official life of ^{the} Ottoman Empire, accredited
with executive ability and rare administrative
power. No sooner he arrived than he started to
introduce reforms in the local prison, building
a wharf in Haifa, another in Acre, creating a
municipal commission, adding to the efficiency
of the teachers in the Mosque and ^{increased}

60 the revenue. He was Motoserraf only for two months, yet he obliged the town's people to contribute again toward a public fund for the building of the aqueduct. The work of the laborers was supervised by himself and pushed forward at a feverish haste. Thus in an incredible short time it was completed. Three or four public fountains were built in the various parts of the town, so that the people ~~may~~^{have} carry the water without any cost or price to their houses.

Then a day was set aside for the celebration of this beneficent undertaking, the inhabitants poured out of the town, in their gala-dress and the cannons boomed forth the salute.

I have learned that this Motoserraf called on Abdul Baha many times but Baha-ollah did not meet him. It is however, related that He ^{praised} ~~advised~~ much his practical reforms and ~~praised~~ his resourcefulness and ability.

A few more words and I come to the end of this ^{story}

The palace of Bahajee after changing many hands⁶¹
came at last into the possession of Oudj Khammar.
He introduced many changes and practically ^{renovated}
the mansion. He and his family lived there till
the time ^{when} Abdul Baha rented it from him for five
years. At present two shares belong to Abbas ^{Gali},
the guardian of the tomb of the Bab and one share
to a stranger.

Abbas the then owner of this Home facing the
~~sea~~ was the vice-consul of Russia and a very prominent
merchant. Oudj Khammar being his partner built
another house next to it ^{but now} ~~and thus~~ the two houses
have become ^{one} belonging to the ^{Bahar} Cause. Abbas
often came into the Presence of Baha-allah and
while glorious Tablets were revealed he would
listen with rapt attention. One day ^{Baha Allah} that Blessed
Perfection ~~told~~ him: "Abbas! Thou art now in
a position to rebuild this aqueduct and bring the
water into the town." But he did not do it and
missed this golden opportunity. Hence it

62 came to pass that the public contributed toward its construction. When the water was brought to the city, then Abbaud at the suggestion of Baha-Allah laid a line and brought it to this house which line exists up to the present day. However, before the water was brought to the town there was a Persian Bahai by the name Azem who went once a day to Bahajee, filled two big jars and brought them on the back of a donkey.

A few years passed and another Motasarrif came to Acre. This man seeing the filth and dirt of the ~~streets~~ asked the inhabitants to subscribe toward a fund for the paving of the ~~streets~~. An estimate was made that each person ~~may~~ contribute according to the space in front of his home. This work was done quite creditably. Today the narrow streets of Acre are comparatively clean. The water is quite pure and sanitary, the weather is not as bad as in former times. There are three men who sweep the streets daily and are paid ten dollars a month, here and there ~~of~~ oil lamps dispel the darkness of the night. The world is changing, even the Acre of today is busier and cleaner than the Acre of 60 yrs ago.