

Bahai Nest

Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria

April 18th 1914

Dear friends!

"God has not created rest for me. How can I rest while so many ^{tasks} ~~works~~ surround me from all directions. While I am sitting here I am submerged in a sea of thought. When I walk I think. When I talk I think. When I sleep I think. I am enveloped ⁱⁿ with an atmosphere of thoughts—deep thoughts, unutterable thoughts, resistless thoughts, mighty thoughts. The ocean of thought ^{rolls} ~~bellows~~ on and on; its tides are rising higher and higher, its ebb and flow are continual and its waves ascending to the starry dome." Thus spoke our Beloved to Imams Mrs Holback this morning after a long talk on the spirit of the Bahai Movement and its reflection in the world of existence. When he came out of the house a large number of very poor people, men and women, almost in rags

were waiting in line to receive alms from his holy ⁴⁸ hands. A Bedouin Arab, most picturesquely dressed in his ^{long} white, ~~long~~ flowing robe had just arrived from the interior peninsula to meet him. ^{Abdul Baha} He asked Miza Hadi to entertain him till he ^{would} return from a few calls. On his return he took his giant looking Arab by the hand and while the air was dancing with the ripples of his laughter they entered the house!

About eleven o'clock he walked out of the house ^{fall} by our dear Shauqi Effendi and entered the luxuriant garden laden with the fragrance of lilacs. He sat on a sofa and dictated a number of beautiful Tablets - spiritual flowers with which the nostrils of far-away people are perfumed. Then he dictated a long Tablet for the believers in the United States concerning his own station, with the instruction to be published and distributed ^T amongst all the assemblies. In the afternoon there was a large tea party in the rose garden given by the two ^{believers} from Feireez and a photograph was taken

afterwards with the Beloved on the stairs of the house.
 The landau was made ready by Isfandeyar and ^{the man} he took
 a ride through the streets of the German Colony and
 out into the country. On his return a short visiting
 Tablet was revealed for Mrs Roeff in Stuttgart.
 It was written with his own hand. I may quote it
 herein: -

"O Almighty! Endear Thou this maid-servant of
 Thy Threshold, Mrs Roeff, in the Kingdom of Holiness
 and submerge her in the sea of lights. Forgive her
 shortcomings and confer upon her divine beauty.
 Grant Thou purity and impart upon her eternal life
 in the Court of the Paradise of Abha and suffer her
 to become the manifestor of the Favours of
 infinite Effulgence in the Meeting of Transfigu-
 ration. Verily Thou art the Generous, the For-
 giver, and the Compassionate!

(Signed) Abdul-Baha Abbas."

In the evening all the believers and the pilgrims
 found their way into the drawing room and

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were pleased to hear the voice of the Lord of servitude welcoming them. Mr N. R. Vakil asked a series of questions concerning the Holy- Writs of India and received satisfactory answers.

Are the Holy Books - the four Vedic sacred books - inspired from God ?

"They contain many inspired utterances, but through the lapse of time human ideas have crept in and afterwards men have come to believe that they are all, in their totality, the revealed words of God. Similarly the Christian theologians up to the last century believed that the Pentateuch was written by Moses, but modern criticism of ^{the} Bible by scholars and thinkers has shown us otherwise. ~~because~~ There are so many historical discrepancies in these books that ^{they} are simply bewildering. Only the decalogue and a few other utterances are ^{from} Moses, the rest is written by Ezra, the priest. With a critical, spiritual eye we can easily distinguish the heavenly words from the human ideas."

46 The question of the invention of writing characters was asked. ~~Abdul Baha said~~ "Compared with the ancient history of the world the invention of writing is of quite recent date - only a number of thousands of years. According to the theories held by the anthropologists and the students of ancient languages when the world of humanity was in its aboriginal state many wild, savage tribes roamed over vast stretches of desert without the instinct of habitation. When a member of these tribes died they buried him under the ground and planted a tree over ^{him} so that they ^{might} ~~may~~ recognize the place in the future. This ceremony was practiced of course only for their chiefs. This was ^{one of} the first steps in the formation of sign-language. Later on in order to find out their way ^{in the desert} they planted guide-posts at the end of every several miles. This and other concomittant ideas led the path for further progress. ^{Later} ~~Now~~ instead of planting trees over the tombs they placed ^{pieces} of carved woods. For example if the deceased was brave they would carve the crude

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form of a lion, if crafty that of a fox and if blood-
thirsty that of a dragon. Another monumental ad-
vancement was achieved when they started to carve
these pictures with some improvements and more
artistic taste on the bark of the trees and placing
them in the grave with the dead. As humanity slowly
forged ahead, gaining mastery step by step over nature,
~~he started to build~~ ^{more built} monuments of triumphs over
the tombs, describing in ^{the then} his limited ^{own} knowledge, the victories
wrested from the enemies by the heroes and the
braves. Probably many generations rolled on and the
savage tribes continually expanded and outgrew their
former barbaric conditions, and new ideas for the
perpetuation of the records of the race germinated in
the minds. The world was populated, the people increased
in number and resources, and many species of cattle
were domesticated. Thus they carved the figures of these
animals on woods and stones, each animal representing
an idea. In order to increase ^{dissected} their vocabulary they
anatomized the animal, making each part or organ

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represent a sentence. Out of this wonderfully complicated system grew the ^{hieroglyphic} ~~hierographic~~ writings of Ancient Egyptians so well preserved on papyruses and tablets of stones. The Egyptians were so clever in this science that they made every kind to stand for an idea. The eye of the cow, the horn of the deer, the head of the monkey, the beak of the sparrow, conveyed to the reader distinct meaning and thoughts. All these mysterious writings are now easily translated in modern languages through the indefatigable labors of European scholars and archaeologists. The Cuneiform letters as represented in the old ruins of Persia and other parts of Asia has ^{rather} interesting development. When Alphabetic letters were invented by the Phoenicians they were soon ^{adopted} by other nations, and thus the very greatest miracle was performed on the stage of the then known world. This ~~was~~ ^{more} only a very short outline of the march of human intelligence through the land of darkness and ignorance towards the light - the light being no other than the miracle of self-expression."

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Many, many more questions were asked about the ancient history of India, mythology, evolution of religion, progress of civilization etc, to all of which the Báb gave most illuminating answers; I may wind up this letter by the translation of his ^{rather} significant remarks concerning the "House of Justice", "Generally the people of the past have forgotten the foundation of their religions and have clung to some superficial doctrines, causing differences and quarrels and creating unraugles. But the Blessed Perfection, praise be to God, has shut all the doors to these probable differences, for he has said ^{that} whenever two parties in the Bahai Cause differ on any subject both of them are wrong; although the first party may be ^{correct} right. Because the result of their discussion and controversy has been inharmony neither is right. God willing, such occurrences will not transpire in this Dispensation. He has caused the revelation of such ^{spiritual} teachings ^{that} ^{as} ^{well} ~~would~~ be conducive to the illumination, spirituality and exaltation of the world of humanity. All the ~~civil~~ ^{divine} affairs

50 and the legislation of material laws for the increasing needs of the enlightened humanity belong to the House of Justice. Thus the House of Justice will not be ^{only} a body for the legislation of laws according to the spirit and requirement of the time, but a board of arbitration for the settlement of all the disputes arising ^{between} peoples. When the Universal House of Justice is organized the members will do their utmost for the realization of greater cordiality and comity among the nations. The laws of Baha-Allah are the unchangeable, organic laws of the Universal House of Justice. They are the very foundation upon which the structure of additional legislation is built. If the Universal House of Justice was in existence the first person that would have obeyed its laws would have been myself. As regards the place for the convening of such a general body, it ^{will} be decided by the members. The Universal House of Justice has only the legislative function; the executive power belongs to the

administrative department of government. At firstst
National Houses of Justice will be established in
every country and then they will elect in turn
members to the Universal House of Justice. Again
I repeat the House of Justice, whether national or
Universal, has only legislative power and not executive^{power}.
For example in Europe and America the Parliament
or Congress enact laws, while the government executes
those laws. The House of Justice cannot fulfill two
functions at the same time - legislative and executive.
In short, the Blessed Perfection has shut all the doors
of differences. The clear texts are revealed by him,
with the provision that additional laws be enacted
by the House of Justice. . . . These
days are the days of teaching the Cause of God, days
of the promotion of the Word of God. Any other
thought is fruitless. We must lay aside all
extraneous ideas which are not of immediate
benefit. All these plans will appear in the
most perfect form in their proper season.
This is the day of the diffusing of the Fragrance of God,
the day of Universal Love, the day
of good fellowship, the day of severance,
the day of self-sacrifice, the day of
abstraction, the day of embodiment,
the day of service and the day of
brotherhood.