

Home of Baba-Allah

Acca. Syria

July 5th 1914

Dear friends!

A telegram from the Beloved to Mirza Jalel brought the wished-for news. "Tell Mirza Ahmad to present himself tomorrow with the carriage. Abbas." This telegram was handed to me last night and it imparted real joy and happiness, for, what greater blessing can one imagine in this world than to be near the Master as much and as long as possible. One may endure stoically the pain of separation but it is most difficult to get over it. Here and there you find people who suffer greatly because they are away from their loved ones, then how much more one must suffer if he is separated from his Divine Beloved One. After all that is written and said, the Love of God is the most precious object to possess in this world, because It soothes the pains and tortures and consoles the bruised and the broken-hearted. If one does not possess the Love of God, but possesseth the wealth of a Rockefeller or a Carnegie, it availeth him not. The results of the Love of God ought to be translated into the life of each individual. They are not mere glittering generalizations but concrete, practical, demonstrations of clean morality and honesty and righteousness and

Keeping one's promises and being kind to one's neighbor - which neighbor is fast becoming to be considered the world at large.

With the joyous elation beating at the door of my heart because I was going to meet the Beloved of my Life today, I got up very early this morning. A small handbag containing only my writing materials was all that I carried with myself. Descending the mountain I saw Isfandiyar has prepared his carriage, ready to start. But I was surprised and after a moment delighted to know that the Greatest Holy Leaf and the Blessed Mother (the wife of the Beloved) were also going to Acre in the same carriage. At first I felt a little awkward and more ill at ease, because I had never travelled with Persian ladies in a carriage and were it not for the command of the Master, the proper Oriental etiquette ^{how} to be followed, was to postpone my trip or go with the train. However I was inclined to do neither, 1st. the morning train had already left and had never responded to my imagination of the way one should travel in the Holyland; secondly, the Master had clearly stated in the telegram that I must go with the carriage; thirdly; since my arrival in Haifa I have always longed to go to Acre in a carriage - driving slowly on the curved golden shore. Fourthly, I may never find another chance in this wide world to be so near two of the most blessed women of the Bahai Cause. Would you not have blamed me if I had

followed the Oriental etiquette in refusing to go with them?
 However, beside myself, there was Mirza Moneer, the son of the
 brother of Baha-Allah. When the carriage started on its drive
 I looked back to the mountain and I saw the dim outline
 of Badi Effendi standing on the porch ^{of the nest} and holding a mirror
 into his hand which in turn reflected into space the rays
 of the sun - a revolving flash of strong light - a sign and
 symbol of farewell. I waved back my handkerchief to him,
 and as we turned around the street he disappeared from
 my view but the ~~beautiful~~ light of his loving farewell will
 ever remain in the chamber of my heart. At last the
 carriage was out of crooked, small streets and was driving on
 the firm sand of the horseshoe Bay of Acca. The white, dancing
 waves washed continually the wheels nearest the shore, on
 the other side the tall palm groves stretched as far as one's
 eyes could see, the many sand hills ^{were as} white as snow, long
 lines of camels and donkeys, laden with grain and vegetables
 and merchandises wended their way toward Acca and vice
 versa. Behind you the sacred Mount of God, projecting ^{out} of the
^{blue} sea was bathed in the sunlight of the glorious morning
 sun; at the end of the Bay, the city of Acca like a
 sleeping giant was protruding clear out of ocean. Momentarily
 my thought went back to the time when Baha-Allah, His

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Family and Companions were rowed over from Haifa to ~~Qena~~
over the same Bay that I was looking this morning. What did
He think that day as He looked at the forbidding fortress of Acre?
What were His ~~thoughts~~ as regard to the future of the Cause for
the propagation of which He had suffered persecution, exile after
exile and this last and worst of all ^{the} exiles in the history
of mankind? Then I thought of the long line ^{of the} sore-footed pilgrims
who travelled for months and months over mountains and
Saharas of Asia, ^{and} who walked on the shore of this sea, whose
very blessed feet touched this golden sand - to get a glimpse
of the Inspired Man of the 19th century and if possible to
listen to His Word of wisdom and Knowledge. What were their
aspirations? What was the motive force that compelled them
to wander willingly over vast stretches of Oriental Wild-
ernesses and deserts and come to Acre to behold the Face
of Baha - allah? You may call it "Faith," "Heavenly vision,"
"the Love of God," "the new birth", but in the last analysis it
remains a psychological mystery, - something of the nature
of the fourth dimension about which the mathematicians are
too prone to speculate but the truth of which they are
unable to fathom.

How short-sighted is man! Here I was day-dreaming while
the actual reality - the Greatest Holy-Leaf the one who has

shared the Blessed Perfection's exiles and sufferings was sitting
 so near me. Why shouldn't I ask a few questions ^{from her} about
 their trip from Haifa to Acca? But I felt ashamed and diffi-
 dent. I could not ask her in a direct manner. What Can
 I do? The carriage was rolling on, the time was flying and I
 must speak with her. Then I remembered Mirza Moneer
 sitting beside me and I ~~whispered~~ to him my question; he
 repeated it in turn to the Greatest Holy Leaf and in this
^{indirect} way communication was established. The unwritten etiquette
 demands that I should appear as though not listening, nor
 must I be bold enough to look toward her. According to
 the rule she is talking with Mirza Moneer and not to me
 and were we in a place where I could not hear her sweet,
 slow voice, he was the one to repeat to me what she said.
 I could not hear all she said but this is what I gathered
 from her interesting recital: - "It was to all probability the
 second month of the summer ^{one early morning} when the steamer anchored
 off the shore of Haifa. Altogether we were 77 persons. After
 sunrise we landed at Haifa and hardly 3 or 4 hours had
 passed before a large sailing boat was brought into com-
 mission by the authorities in which they were going to
 carry us over to Acca. The baggage was taken on board
 and immediately afterward all of us were taken in.

It was about 4pm when we reached Acca. As there was no landing
 pier the boat went as near the shore as possible. Some of the
 believers waded through the water to the beach, others were ^{carried}
 on the backs of the Araks. Toward the last they brought a
 chair in which the Blessed Perfection sat ^{on it} and the believers
 conveyed it to the shore. Soon we were surrounded by ^{numerous}
 soldiers and commanded to march to the Barrack. The ^{weather}
 was extremely hot, the water was bad, the prison ration coarse
 black bread that in those very days many of us fell sick
 and it was not long afterward when everyone became ill
 except the Master and another believer and these two nursed
 them through. I remember one night we procured with much
 difficulty a little rice. When it was prepared we did not ^{know}
 how to divide ^{it} amongst so many believers and ^{so} we became
 very hilarious over it and laughed aloud. Then one of our
 fellow-prisoners reminded us that we must not laugh ^{so}
 loud, because the jailers may hear and wonder what kind
 of prisoners are these people that while they are in jail they
 appear to be so happy. In the first month two of us died and
 we had no money to pay for their funeral expenses, so we
 sold one remaining rug. This money was also pocketed by
 the officials and the two bodies thrown together in a hole ^{outside}
 of the town. In the beginning no one was allowed

to leave the Barrack without being accompanied with two or four ~~guards~~. But after six months and a year when they saw that ~~not~~ a soul ever tried to escape, they gave us greater freedom and the friends could go out in the Bazaar, ^{to buy things} either followed by one soldier or none. " Unconsciously once or twice I looked up and saw her heavenly face - the sweetest, (the finest and the gentlest face of a woman that has drunk the bitter poison of sufferings and sorrows but leaving behind no mark of its bitterness. Calm, serene, gracious, soft, peaceable, merciful, it was the ^{noble} Countenance of a Madonna. Her most ^{pronounced} characteristics are mildness, meekness and a quiet tender love for all the Bahais. Her love for all mankind is pure, unassuming and sincere, manifesting itself always in the form of actual service. Her eyes - I think they were brown - spoke sympathy and compassion. As I looked into her eyes I saw they were alive with the fire of interest and glowing faith. I caught the gleam and felt so strange, so deliciously happy to be in the same carriage with the daughter of Baha-Allah. The gentle tone of her voice was associated in my thought with the loveliest, most charming music. She continued to talk but very low, that I could not catch ^{all} ^{at} her words clearly. Now that is all passed I cannot believe that it was real!

It was a golden page out of the emerald book of the Time. As I am writing it now I feel the ecstasy of its glory and am transfused with the sweetness of its memory. This celestial experience will be an inspiration in all my future career and when I want to think of the Ideal Woman I will think and dream of her.

When I stood in the presence of the Beloved he asked about the health of the believers. I told him that three pilgrims have arrived in his absence, two Arabs from Egypt and a Persian Turk from Van, near ~~Taheriz~~. He told me because he expected to stay only two days in Acca he did not take me with himself, but no sooner he found out that he is going to stay longer he sent for me. Then several strangers called on the Beloved and conversed with him on the latest local news.

Every Sunday afternoon all the Acca believers go to Bahajee to visit the Tomb of the Blessed Perfection. The Master had ordered Isfandeyar to take first the believers in his carriage and then come for him. About 3 pm he came down and sat in the reception room absorbed in thought. After a few minutes he said: I must go ^{to the Barrack} to pay back a visit to the Commander. Yesterday he and his five adjutants called on me. He is very talkative. After an hour he returned and ^{with} four other believers he rode in the carriage. On the road to Bahajee several detachments of soldiers were being drilled by the officers. The Master

looking at them said: 'Military rules are far worse than prison rules. These soldiers are in reality prisoners. They are restricted in all their affairs. They cannot deviate one hair's breadth from the prescribed rules. They are circumscribed in their eating, sleeping and walking. They are not at all free. Imagination rules over the world of humanity. These men are prisoners in everything save the name. Because they are called soldiers and are ^{summoned} ~~called~~ upon to defend what the demagogues call 'fatherland' they willingly go through all these hardships. If some one tells them that they are prisoners they will not be able to stand it one month. It is said that a man did not leave his house for many years. His friends often insisted that he should leave the house for one day but they did not succeed. Then some one amongst them said: 'I will do something and he will leave the house most willingly.' The others thought this is quite impossible. All right 'he said 'wait and see.' Next day he called on the old man. After the preliminary inquiries about his health he said: 'My friend! I am very sorry to impart to you a very sad news. I have just heard that a Persian is received from the Sublime Porte instructing the governor that under no circumstances you must be allowed to leave Syria.' The old man became very agitated and rising from his seat cried indignantly: 'I have done nothing to

merit this punishment. I may like to go to Egypt or other places.
I will go now and see the governor about it.' And immediately
he was out in the street. Then his friends surrounded him and
explained to him the joke played upon him. How
ignorant are the people! They are willing to forfeit their possession,
honor, wealth, property and even life in the path of their country
but unwilling to do any sacrifice in the path of God. The battle-
fields of the world have been crimsoned with the blood of millions
of soldiers, all to no purpose. Today no one knows their names.
But when one soul sacrifices his life in the Path of God his
name become eternal. Consider how precious it is the blood of the
martyrs! " He spoke about other subjects till we reached
the rest house. Here all the believers had gathered, but the Beloved
alighting from the carriage continued his walk to the Blessed
Tomb. The rest-house is a mass of luxuriant vegetable and green
flowers. The tall trellis contains hundreds of bunches of
grapes hanging down over one's head and which will be
ripened in a few days. After drinking tea all the believers
resorted to the Tomb and the Master chanted the Visiting Table,
in a very slow voice hardly above the whisper. It was a most
delightful, spiritual experience. From the Tomb, the carriage took
us to the beautiful Brijwan. Abdul Gaseem was then before hand to
greet the Beloved. He visited the room in which the Blessed Perfection
lived and stood most reverently before the Chair on which He sat.
Then walking around the garden, he came out where we met a
number of Zoroastrian believers with trays of grapes in their hands. For the
first time we ate the grapes of the season.