

Bahai Nest. Mount Carmel
Haifa, Syria

August 23d 1914

Dear friends!

Last night we had a spiritual meeting. The believers and the students were happy. The hearts were illumined by beholding the Countenance of the Covenant. The eyes were turned toward the Focal point of the Testament. They could see in him the Supreme Product of the race. The ears were attuned to the melodious notes of his voice. The heaven of revelation was covered with the Clouds of Bestowals and the rain of Grace poured down without intermission. The stars of Love and Union were shining forth in the horizon of the souls. The trees of human ^{existence} were green and fruitful. The highest hope of every one was the establishment of Universal Peace and the solidarity of the human race. In the holy Threshold each person was a self-sacrificing soul. The signs of the Merciful appeared from their deeds and behavior. The hearts were captives to the Presses of the Heavenly Beloved. The lips were laughing like unto an hundred-petalled rose. The object of everyone

was humility and meekness at the Court of the Blessed Perfection
 and the desire of all was no other than heartfelt service to
 the believers of God. Therefore, His Holiness the Lord of mankind
 looked into the radiant faces of the friends with the utmost
 benevolence and tenderness and delivered the following spiritual
 utterances:- " Every meeting which is held for the purpose of
 teaching the Cause of God and the people are gathered there to
 listen to the explanation of the Word and strive to live
 and act in accord with the advice and exhortation of the
 Blessed Perfection - that meeting is heavenly and its
 Cup-bearer is His Holiness Baha-ollah. The lights of that
 meeting are the Confirmations of the Kingdom. Time and
 place have no control over this. That meeting is attributed
 to the Blessed Perfection and its results are proportionately
 great. Therefore, precedence and priority must not appear
 in a meeting which is organized in the name of the
 Blessed Perfection. Every part of the hall or the room is
 equally important. During the first Days of a Divine
 Dispensation such considerations are not at all
 entertained. These preferences are not harbored. These
 views are completely broken and these ideas are not
 cherished. But afterwards this question of precedence

will assume superlative importance in the estimation of men which will lead to quarrel and acrimonious thrusts. Why this change? Because those sweet Fragrances of the Days of the Manifestation are withheld; the hearts become cold and negligent; the eyes become blind; the ears deaf; pride, haughtiness, superciliousness and arrogance grip fast the souls of men; they lose their way to the radiant goal of heavenly Glory and every one exerts himself to attain to high position and honor. He leaves behind the servitude at the Holy Threshold which is identical with the Throne of Sovereignty and closes his eyes totally to this eternal majesty, ~~and~~ ^{and} hungers for the position of leadership, superiority and fame and working to win public opinion. He sets aside the most great Thralldom in order to lord over a limited number of souls. He is like unto a man who throws down upon the dust of the earth a brilliant Crown studded with shining, precious gems and takes hold of the one made of showy, counterfeit, imitation jewels. What substantial benefit will be accrued to a man if a number of souls follow him as their leader and master? Nothing.

What profit will come to him from this self-assumed lordship? But if he drinks one drop from the sea of the Servitude of the Holy Threshold, he has attained to everlasting Sovereignty. Thus the heedless souls neglect the Eternal Sovereignty of the Kingdom for an illusion of the brain. Consider carefully how during the Islamic Dispensation many vainglorious men appeared who ~~did~~ claimed the station of Divinity! What did they gain? There was a man by the name of Bayazeed who said: - 'There is no God, beside, therefore, worship me.' Again he said: 'Under my garment there is naught else save God.' Mansour Hallaj appeared and cried out: - 'I am the True One.' Every one of these leading Sufis claimed the station of Divinity, either in private or in public. What did these presumptuous pretenders gain? On the other hand those persons who arose in the Servitude of the Holy Cause are now established upon the Throne of ^{eternal} Sovereignty in the Kingdom of God: even in this material world they have attained to the highest summit of Glory. People see all these things and still are they negligent, ignorant and heedless."

This was the feast of the month of Ramazan. For one month the Islamic world was fasting and praying and now having accomplished their religious duty and the month having come to an end they are feasting. In a way I cannot say they are really feasting. The stage of the world catastrophe now set in Europe, the black clouds of war gathering over the horizon of the Turkish Empire, the rigorous, universal conscription going on, have imprinted their sad, heart-rendering effects on every face. Each new Trade from the Sublime Porte prefigures a great, approaching disaster. People are harassed and kept in continual alarm. In comparison with 3 or 4 months ago Haifa is a dead town. No ^{being} business is done; half the stores are closed; there is no money in circulation; all the banks are closed and were they kept open they would ^{not} have ^{even} the cheque of a King. Many people have drafts but they are not worth their paper; others have deposits of thousands of pounds in the Banks but they cannot draw one penny. There is so much sufferings everywhere, dire wants to be relieved, poverty is stalking abroad and great distress is witnessed.

This morning, because of the Feast we descended the Mountain and in half an hour time we were received by the Beloved. After giving a short talk on the significance of Fasting and its spiritual effect on the physical constitution, ^{candies} and tea were served around and we were given permission to retire. Then the different Consuls called, German, Russian, English, French, but they were so timed as not to collide with each other. Then the heads of various Christian sects, Sheiks, Mullahs, government officials, laymen etc; each group staying ^{only for} a few minutes. The Master spoke with them gently and kindly and in every instance tried to cast away the gloom of fear and agitation through his spiritual discourses. He was inwardly more sad that every one else, ^{because} people are so ignorant as to prefer the laws of their own making to the Divine law. All day groups of men representing the various classes and guilds called to pay their homage and respect to Abbas Effendi.

It was about sunset when he came out of the house to take his customary walk and we looked at him as he passed on, followed by no one.