

VOL. VIII

DAILY ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE OF

ABDUL BAHA

AS RECORDED IN THE DIARY

OF MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

OCTOBER 10, 1914 to JANUARY 31, 1915

INTRODUCTION

In this Series there are eleven Volumes.

The first nine Volumes, containing the original letters written by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab recording the daily account of the life of Abdul Baha, begins with December 5, 1912 and ends June 25, 1915. These are the daily records of what was going on around Abdul Baha, his talks, remarks and description of the life of the Bahais in Europe and in the Near East.

1. The letters covering the first seven months were mailed day by day to Miss Harriet Magee in New York City. These were read in the Bahai Assembly and copies were made and distributed among the Bahais of the United States and Canada.

2. The second portion of the diary letters up to the beginning of the first World War were mailed to Mr. Joseph Hannen of Washington, D. C. Mr. and Mrs. Hannen and other volunteer workers made extensive copies of these diary letters and shared them with the Bahai Assemblies in the United States and Canada.

3. The last portion of these diary letters, which covered the early stages of the first World War, were kept in Palestine and have neither been copied nor published. From June 25, 1915 to the end of the first World War the diary letters were kept in the Persian language and can be found in another series of volumes of manuscripts.

These letters were very generally and widely distributed among the Bahais in the East and West. Some of the Bahais made collections of them in typewritten and mimeographed forms; extracts of these diary letters were published in the "Star of the West;" a Bahai, Mrs. Mary Rabb, of California made a collection of extracts which were published serially in the "Star of the West" and later in a book under the title "The Divine Art of Living." These diary letters exerted an influence on the thoughts and lives of the early Bahais and they form an inestimable document portraying the thoughts and the life of Abdul Baha toward the end of his life.

It is unavoidable that, in this vast collection of documents and in mailing them from Palestine to the United States and in having carried them from one place to another in the past many, many years, some copies have been lost.

(a) 8 pages of the letter of Jan. 21, 1913 are missing; (b) letters from Sept. 14th to Oct. 9, 1914 are missing; (c) letters from Jan. 17th to Jan. 27, 1915 are missing; (d) the letter of June 14, 1915 is incompleated; (e) from June 5th to June 21, 1915 the letters are missing; (f) the last letter dated June 25, 1915 starts with one line and then stops.

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Volume X contains samples of the typewritten and mimeographed copies of these diary letters as they were distributed in the early days. In the same volume there is a miscellaneous collection of various Bahai documents from 1901 to 1927.

Volume XI is a continuation of Volume X, giving more examples of typewritten and mimeographed copies of the diary letters.

M. A. Sohrab

Compiled October, 1940

Bahai Nest. Mount Carmel.¹
Syria. October 10th 1914

Dear friends:

The daily spiritual association with our two dear American brothers in Bemy and Mr Latimer confer upon us new joy and pleasure, for having visited practically all the Western Assemblies in the United States and Europe they have a great deal to tell us. They come also from the war-ridden Germany and their descriptions give us the assurance that although it may sound a paradox the cause of universal Peace is marching on and the silent and ere long protesting advocates against the present conditions are increasing. Mankind is being thrown in a melting pot of severe tests and catastrophes; the foundation of their political organizations is shaken; their time-honored treaties are torn and thrown into the scrap basket; their youths are taken from the shops and factories and sent into the battlefields to kill and be killed; their international trades and industries are completely ruined; their spiritual principles are set at naught; the range of their outlooks is crippled and the savage forces have for the time routed the ideal brotherly feelings. Those who have worked for years to establish the court of Arbitral justice are apparently discouraged, for they see their rosy visions are faded in night and darkness; the light of their glowing hope is little by little dying and their faith in the ultimate goodness of humanity is shaken; the blossoms of the trees of their altruism are drooping; the fountains of their noble objects and merciful aims are dried and their zeal and enthusiasm is dampened. They wonder whether ^{after all} their sacrifices and activities have brought forth any practical results? They are astounded at the magnitude of the present struggle and wholesale human slaughter. If the nations of Europe after two thousand years of Christian civilization have been so prone to arise and cut each others' throats with such brutality and cruelty, they may well excuse the poor African cannibals and ancient savages. The hands of Christ were as white as snow while their hands is blotted with gore and blood. The lips

of Christ uttered blessings even for his enemies, whereas the lips of these wolf-
 like people speak hatred and detestation for each other. Christ made this
 world a rose-garden, these so-called christians have changed it into a
 charnel-house. Christ through his words and deeds taught love, these people
 are inculcating animosity. Christ unfurled the banner of Peace, they have
 upraised the standard of war. Christ forgave his enemies, they are filled with
 bitter retaliation. Christ was of the world of light, they belong to the realm
 of darkness. As Abdul Baha has often remarked, what relation exists
 between the present day christians and the heavenly life and Teachings
 of Christ! None whatever. Those divine precepts are forgotten; those
 spiritual doctrines are relegated into the corner of oblivion; those ex-
 hortations and commandments are thought no more of; those celestial
 lessons are negated. The statesmen and politicians are crying at the top
 of their voices: This is the age of carnage! This is the century of bloodshed! This
 is the time of patriotism! This is the era of destruction! This is the period
 of darkness. Oh men! Oh compatriots! Let us spread the wings of gloom over
 all the regions! Let us establish hell on the face of the earth! Let us unsheath
 the swords of dire vengeance! Let us set free the dogs of war. Let us fill
 the ears with the moanings and lamentations of motherless sons and
 fatherless children. Let us whoop the rattle-cry of the nations; Let us
 unchain the Furies of enmity and hostility between the Powers. Let us
 afflict the world of humanity with the plague of death. We must
 declare the last arguments of the kings. We must protect our national
 rights. If we do not kill our neighbors now, we will never have
 another opportunity. Let us go forth with swords in hands, armed to teeth
 and win the glory of war. For if other nations are wiped away, our
 prestige and grandeur will become a hundred fold, our territories
 will be enlarged and our fame as the guardians of truth and

righteous war handed down to posterity. Peace! Pash! What is peace
but the profession of the pure lambs and the coward! Right or wrong
let us throw ourselves whole-heartedly into the debacle of slaughter, whoever
ever talks to us about the victories of Peace or the international arbitra-
tion let us make him understand that he is not wanted, let us close
his mouth, we shall not listen to him. Oh what joy, to ruin this world
with a "European conflagration" what ecstasy to extinguish the light of faith
what freedom to do away with the laws of religion! Tie on such things! We
will have none of them. Let us mock ^{at} amity, scorn ^{and} friendship; deride ^{at} truth
and pull down the structure of universal confidence. Truth! Indeed! Let
her show her face and we will knife her. We must put her out of our
community. She is a disturber of our consciences, we must depose the
king of truth and enthrone the Prince of lies, we must publish falsehoods
to arouse the dormant powers of vice and evils. Are we not clever to fool
mankind and pour on their heads the rain of fire and demolition? Ha
ha! Ours is military force! the gods of war shall protect us; the lords of
privileges will come to our rescue. We will make powder and shells
enough to blow out the brains of all men. What is the use for all these
human parasites. The world is overpopulated. They are clamoring for cons-
titutional rights; we are threatened with internal revolutions; they demand
the establishment of Parliaments and Congresses. Then what can we do to get rid
of these undesirable elements in our empires; how should we manage to make
them forget these democratic principles? Oh yes! let us have a foreign war,
let us arouse their hatred and cupidity for other people and their possessions,
let us appeal to their patriotic sentiments. They will arise en masse
against their "enemies" and probably instead of murdering them will be
murdered. This is a fine ruse! It will work like wild-fire and our
troubles and dynasties and bureaucracies and despotisms will be saved.

and we will have another long lease of power and glory to reign the world and enjoy the fruits of human folly and ignorance!

Such are the thoughts of the rulers and their Cabinets but there are some people in the world who think that this is the last appearance of egoists, kings and pietistic Emperors. The people will be too horrified with their duplicity to allow them such unbridled, unlimited authority. Their power will be curbed, their privileges will be curtailed and their insatiable ambitions will be checked. Instead of lording over the people they will be their servants, devoting all their time to the advancement of progress and the amelioration of their conditions.

Today I did not feel well and could not move around with the same alacrity. Our brother Mr Latimer was also in bed at the hotel Carmel but Mr Remey came up in the morning and in the afternoon. The Beloved called him into his presence and gave him a talk on the question of the Covenant. He read to him also numerous quotations from the writings of Baha - Ollah on this important subject and gave him the command that on his return to America he may take another trip throughout the States, visit all the assemblies and associate with all the friends. "Rest thou assured" he said "that all thy hopes and wishes will be realized. Thy aim is no other but to serve the Cause of God and in this thou hast been and will be confirmed in the future". After this short informal meeting, the Master came out, walked majestically in the lovely garden and then entered the holy Tomb, chanting the visiting Tablet with much ringing clearness and beauty of spirit. In this holy-spot we are all happy and long for no other worldly pleasure. Daily we pray at the Blessed Tomb and send our thoughts of Peace to the scenes of war, longing for the day when nations shall learn war no more and walk in the paths of goodfellowship.