

Home of Baha Allah
Acca, Syria Nov. 22nd 1914

Dear friends!

The last few days I was reading the translation of the Koran by Rev. G. M. Rodwell with an introduction by Rev. Geo. Margoliouth. This morning I related some of the erroneous statements in the Preface to the Beloved. When Sheik-or-Rais entered the room he asked me to repeat what I told him. Mirza Hadi was serving tea, Khosro brought in the tray of breakfast and we were all immersed in the sea of the bounty of Our Lord. He said:- "Much that is written or said about Mohamad is pure fabrication. The reality is not stated, because it is misunderstood. The origin of the current opinion held about his mission and character ^{in the West} is based upon false assumptions and prejudiced statements propagated by Christian authors and missionaries. When Mohamad travelled with his uncle Abou Talib, as far as Bostra and met the Christian Monk Sergius, or as the Mohamadans name him Boheira, he was only eleven years old and stayed one night ^{in the} monastery. It is evident that he could not learn in one night "the general outlines of Oriental Christian doctrine and perhaps of witnessing the ceremonial of their worship." Even a great deal of what the Arabian historians have written about this meeting is an all together exaggerated description. All that is quite certain is that Sergius on looking in the face of Mohamad said to his uncle. The future of this youth is very bright. From his face it is evident that he will become an important personage. Protect him'

amongst the Christians of Adrianople there is widely current a most peculiar story about the conversation of Mohamad and Sergius. Many honest Christians relate it and believe in it as an historical occurrence. However, it is nothing but a wild and faniful fabrication of a diseased heart and prejudiced mind, contrary to all historical events and with not one iota of truth to sustain or uphold it. I will tell it to you only because during my years of stay in Adrianople I found it is generally quoted and believed by intelligent Christians with no attempt on their part to investigate whether it is really a fact or a "tale of the Ancients." It is as follows:-

'When Sergius met Mohamad he was so impressed by his general bearing and coupled with an intuitive knowledge he was convinced

that later in life this youth will become a King. Hence he took him aside and said:-
 'What wilt thou give me if I made thee a King, a ruler over many nations and tribes?'
 Mohamad: 'I cannot believe it, still because thou art insisting on the matter I hope it will be.'
 Sergius: 'I know it will. But if I made thee a King thou must promise me one thing.'
 M. 'I will do anything within the bound of possibility.'
 S. Promise me that having been made a King, thou wilt propagate the religion of Christ.

M. Is that all? Of course I promise thee in good faith that I will carry out thy desire.
 S. Very well then. Together we will travel to Mecca. There, thou wilt claim to be a prophet. Naturally the people shall ask thee to perform a miracle to substantiate thy claim. Then thou wilt tell them 'let us go to such and such a well and inquire about it'. When all the inhabitants are gathered around the well, one may write on a piece of parchment. 'Is Mohamad a true prophet?' and putting the writing in a bucket, send it down with a rope. The answer will be given up and thy authority will be established.

M. This is very good. I agree to it.

S. Then when the people are assured of thy divine mission, they will obey thee and thou wilt become a King. Then wilt thou establish the Christian faith.

M. I will pledge myself to carry out thy fondest dream and shall convert all Arabia into Christianity.

After this conversation they travelled together and on their way discussed further on the subject and developed other plans for the speedy realization of their hopes and ambitions. Having reached Mecca and going carefully over the ground and preparing plans against all contingencies, Mohamad launched forth his claim of prophethood - thus hurling the Meccans into great consternation and confusion. However, when their fury was calmed down they asked him miracles and he boldly asserted that they can go to such and such a well and ask about it. On the other hand Sergius left the house at midnight and descended to the bottom of the well, waiting patiently for the accomplishment of his work. Next day Mohamad led all the people to the well and writing the question on a piece of parchment and sent it down in a bucket. After a few minutes they

carried up the bucket and lo! behold, it contained a book which turned out to be the Koran, all written by Sergius. When Mohamad realized what it is he faced the people and cried out: - 'Are ye now convinced of my divine mission, yes, yes.' They all answered him back. 'Then let each person throw five pieces of stones in this well as a sign of his conversion,' he asked them. Immediately they started to carry out the command of their new prophet and poor Sergius never survived to tell the tale nor Mohamad ever fulfilled his promise. To the travellers, even today is pointed out this historic well and it is the religious duty of every Pilgrim going to Mecca annually to throw on that exact spot five stones which by this time it has become almost a hill."

"Such fables and false stories render no other service but to intensify the religious prejudice and hatred amongst the ignorant people, injuring the spirit of fraternity and retarding the coming of the day of spiritual brotherhood."

He continued to speak more on the subject of Mohamad and then started on the theme of the Cause and for more than one hour reviewed the various thrilling events of Teheran, Bagdad and the memorable journey of Baha Ollah to Constantinople. He related many minor incidents to which he has been a participant. It is ^{always} interesting to hear him relate these charming little incidents in his own life. He alone knows how to invest them with vividness and significance and clothe them with flesh and skin. Although they wonderfully reveal the personal side of his life, yet he is able to abstract all the 'personal' elements from them and entirely recast them in a mould of general application.

After this rare spiritual feast he went out and on his return many officers called on him till noon. Then lunch was served and as this was the last day that Shik-or-Rais was going to be with us the Beloved related the beautiful story of the life of Haji Hashem of Bagdad, which I shall translate it in some future date. About 2 Pm. the carriage was ready and the Master, his guest and a few other believers rode in it and were driven to Bahay. As we were speeding along the road the Master began to speak: - "In these days the most important affair is to render a worthy service at the Holy Divine Threshold and this is no other but the

guidance of the people of the earth. All else save this is fruitless, even lordship over all the inhabitants of the world will yield no result. The attributes of Divinity are assigned to the idols of India and today the likeness of Blidha is worshipped by several hundred millions of human souls. What benefit does he draw from this adoration? Nothing. That which will be conducive to the progress of human soul is servitude at the Divine Threshold. However much man may magnify himself he will not become even as big as an idol which is continually worshipped throughout ages and cycles as a channel for the intercession of heavenly Graces. When a person is engaged in the service of the Kingdom of God he will obtain an indescribable spirituality and illumination. Here in Syria I consider myself a useless organism, not having a chance to teach the Cause of God but it was far different in Europe and America. When I entered a convention or a meeting I saw with my own eyes the confirmations of the Holy Spirit hovering like white-plumaged birds over my head and the Kingdom of existence with all its mighty forces coming to my assistance. All the days and nights were spent for the Cause and all the conversations and talks revolved around the Cause. While you travel from town to town till you reach Persia I will pray for you at the Threshold of the Blessed Perfection and the Holy Tomb of the Bab to aid you and will supplicate God that you may ^{become} confirmed under all circumstances to teach the religion of Baha to awaken the souls with the trumpet of utterances and spiritualize them with the power of Truth."

When we reached Bahajee, because it was Sunday all the believers had come over from Abou Senan to visit the Tomb and meet the Beloved. Here also he gave lengthy talks on the early history of Druses, the teachings of Baha-ollah etc. After reciting the visiting Tablets in silence we came out of the sacred spot. The friends rode on their animals, going back to Abou Senan and because there were some old Baha'is I asked the Master to let them ride with him and I walked to Acca. When I arrived I heard this clear voice talking with ^{I walked} Shikr - or Rais out for supper again we sat around his hountains table,