

Home of Baha-ollah -
 Acca. Syria Nov 29th 1914

Dear friends!

This morning we were hailed into the Divine Presence of the Nightingale of Peace and Love. He was in a strange contemplative mood, looking out of the window into the open square below. Doubtless he was thinking over the sad and anomalous conditions of the world. Mirza Jalal was ^{sitting} behind the tea service. Suddenly he turned his face towards me and said, "speak! Hast thou anything to say?" As I was reading the Koran before going to the room of the Beloved one of its symbollic small chapters containing 8 verses came to my mind. I asked him to explain its spiritual significance. It is a most strange heading: "The Blow" and is as follows:-

"1. The Blow! What is the Blow? 2. Who shall teach thee what the Blow is? 3. The Day when men shall be like scattered moths, 4. And the mountains shall be like like like flocks of carded wool, 5. Then as to him whose balances are heavy - his shall be a life that shall please well; 6. And as to him whose ^{balances} are light - his dwelling-place shall be the pit, 7. And who shall teach thee what the pit is? 8. A raging fire"

The Blessed One said:- "Those who are endowed with spiritual insight see in this small chapter a typical portrayal of the present upheaval in all parts of the world for ^{it} demonstrates the depth of wisdom and divine perception of the founder of Islam. Many Koranic commentators have written pages after pages on the interpretation of this chapter referring their exegesis to the day of resurrection. We are now in the Cycle of resurrection and one of its manifold phases is this Universal War. The first and second verses mean that an unheard of general revolution and struggle shall occur in the world which will be a manifest calamity to all mankind. This catastrophe will bring in its train much sufferings and trials. The third verse signifies the utter confusion amongst the people, the snapping off of all social ties, the pulling down of the civilized structure and the "scattering" of individuals "like moths" - a most graphic picture indeed of the scenes of the present warfare and how the combatants are cut to thousands of pieces with deadly bullets. The fourth verse means the great politicians, statesmen, and leaders who were considered very

important - as firm as mountains - fall from their high pedestals in the estimation of mankind. They will become like flocks of carded wool, loose and shallow. Instead of being the cause of the honor of the world of humanity they will be the means of its debasement. Their politics shall collapse like a pack of cards. Their intellectual weakness and moral imbecility will be exposed. This is also manifest in today's affairs and how men at the helm of the state are trying through their ignorance and prejudice to wreck the ship of human happiness and prosperity. As to the fifth verse: When all these brutalities are committed, when governments and nations have had enough carnage, bloodshed, destruction, then the Balances of Divine justice will be set up. Those souls who have been kind and merciful, who have promoted peace and good-fellowship, who have joined the rank of the army of the Kingdom or in other words those "whose balances are heavy" that is, his good deeds outweighs his evil deeds - he shall attain to the good-pleasure of the Lord and receive ^{not only} the approbation of all mankind but of his Creator who watches over all things and who loveth a faithful steward. He shall be given the boon of immortality - 'a life that shall please him well. The sixth verse means: Those souls who have not acted according to the Commands of the Lord, who have been instrumental in sowing the seeds of discord and mistrust amongst their fellowmen, who have encouraged animalism by perfecting engines of hell, who have brought about the destruction of the fair fabric of human progress, who have forgotten God and religion - these souls (verse 7 and 8) will be dwell in 'a raging fire' - that is; - they will remain in a state of ignorance, heedlessness, ~~and~~ ^{and} advertence and deprivation from the Bestowals of the True One. These people will be bereft of the Graces of the Merciful, will be lost in the bottomless pit of remorse and wander in the darkness of regret. "

Then looking out of the window he saw an old man passing by whom he recognized and spoke as follows: - "There are many calculating people who believe when a man has reached at a fair old age and has not the whereuntoals to live it is better for him to die. Not only life becomes distasteful to him but he is a new recruit to the rank

of paupers. Unless the state is enlightened enough to build institutions for old men and women like America and Europe these people during the last few days of their lives will have to endure the pinch of hardships and many of them die for the lack of the simplest means of sustenance. For example yesterday I was walking in Fakhouri, I spied from far a very old man in a ruined room near the sea. He was literally dressed in rag and was trembling with cold. When I approached I recognized him. He was a Christian. He has five sons, Two have gone to America and three of them are engaged in fairly prosperous business. They are able quite easily able to support their poor father but they have left him to his own wit and never ask ^{what} is going to become of him. I beckoned him to myself and did for him what was necessary and proper. This will show you that when ^{man} is negligent of God he becomes estranged of all the most sacred emotions deposited in his heart by the Almighty."

Having given us these beautiful lessons he left the room and went out of the house to call on a number of poor families who had sent for him. On his return Sheikh Asad and three other government officers called on him and stayed for 45 minutes. Meanwhile Mirza Anayetullah and Miss Sanderson arrived from Haifa bringing with them the details of havoc wrought by the storm. Having no one in his room and being a glorious sunshiny day he came down into Fakhouri and was walking in front of the stormy sea. "This sea" pointing to it with his sweeping hand, he said "is similar to the Cause of God. These walls and seemingly impregnable fortifications are like ^{unto} those souls who desire to withstand and oppose the Cause like unto Nassereddin Shah and Abdul Hamid. Look at these walls how they are torn ^{to pieces} from their foundations by the slow but resistless work of the waves! Such is the undoubted fate of these opponents of the Mighty Cause of Baha Ollah. Mirza Anayetullah had on him a fine overcoat and was very becoming to him. Looking at him and smiting hard on his cheek he said: "Goodness! Where ^{did} you get this stylish overcoat? you look like a prime minister in it." He answered that it is the ~~coat~~ brought for him by the Master last year on his return from Paris.

At this time a cablegram was given to the Beloved. He opened it and turned it to me for translation. It was from Teheran and as follows; - "Honorable Abdul Baha American Consul in Beyruth pays Abdul Baha 200 pounds sterling to be drawn on imperial Bank of Persia. John Caldwell, American Minister". As there were some strangers present I did translated its contents to him till he returned home and was alone in his room. Afterwards he said; - "Because we are trying to help the needy and the poor, God does not leave us in strait circumstances. This is a gift on the part of the Almighty for the support of His children in this town. This very morning I was thinking what can I do to help a little the dire need amongst the indigent inhabitants. This war has made every one poor. These few days I had to divide fifty Pounds amongst the Orthodox and Catholics and Mohomedans. I had to give my very last cent. It was most urgent. I had to do it and I was wondering from what source will come the help of God. This will now alleviate the conditions. These people are my children and irrespective of their religious beliefs it is my bounden duty to come to their support."

Miss Sanderson ate with us at the table of our Lord and related to us the harrowing experiences of 6 English women who had escaped from Jaffa, leaving behind all their belongings and coming to Haifa with fear and trembling to leave Syria at their first chance with the Italian steamer.

In the afternoon we walked out of town and came across 300 soldiers with bare feet and old clothes trudging along their way towards the station to join the front. They were all in a despondent and discouraged mood. If these are the samples of the Turkish army they will do very poor fighting.

In the evening we were with the Beloved for more than one hour. Mirza Ezzed-din reported to him the news of today. In turn he made many inquiries to all of which he gave brief answers. Speaking again of Monsiear Bernard; - "He was a truthful, faithful, loyal man. He loved and was devoted to the Cause of Universal Peace. To Monsieir Dreyfus the government has given a railroad position. He desires that praise be to God he is assigned to a duty which is not connected with the shedding of blood."

Prayers were chanted and we came out of His inspiring presence.