

Home of Baha Ollah
 Acca Syria. December 9th 1914
 9th

Dear friends!

Day after day conditions grow worse in these parts and people are completely kept in the dark of what is going on behind the political scene of the world. The fear of Russian advance towards Erze'room and Aleppo is gaining by leap and bound and the inhabitants of Syria are restless and desperate under the military yoke. Already in some of the important cities the dread of famine is hanging over the minds like a black cloud. The members of some of the wealthy and important families are so impoverished that they are begging for their daily bread. The government has proclaimed a law that no food-stuffs of any kind must be transported from one city to another and any person informing the authorities that this law is violated will receive one Turkish pound. The prices of all the ^{imported} goods have soared up to a prohibitive point. They have arisen to 600 per cent and still many things cannot be found, because the small stocks are either finished or fast disappearing. For example if you have bought the sugar before the war for ten cents a pound, it has arisen now to 60 cents. Petroleum has arisen 400 per cents; rice cannot be found in Acca; matches are hard to get, quinine is most difficult to procure at any price. I have decided to give up tea, many people are determined to face a hard winter, in Beirut there was a famine of wheat for several days and its present price is something terrific. So far as Acca is concerned the few stores left open will have to close their doors and join the ranks of unemployed. The doors to all imports are locked and the hands of the poverty-stricken merchants are tied. One of the Italian steamers had brought a cargo of rice for the Syrian ports but England prevented its unloading and the steamer had to divert its course Alexandria-wards. During the last week the traders and the people generally have felt more acutely the pinch of war and misery. They are praying to God for salvation and are looking to Him for release. No one knows what will be in store for us during the next few months. The path will be not a rosy one, I assure you.

This morning the Beloved called us into his room. Esmael, the Jew was also present. The Master was in a jovial mood and asked Esmael whether bread, tea and olive are 'Kasher'? He said they are Kasher. "Art thou thyself Kasher or Taref?" the Beloved asked him pleasantly. "I hope I am Kasher I wish good for every one. I am not seeking to harm any soul. If some one curse me or beat me I still like him. I am living according to the religion of my father. If these constitute the conditions of being Kasher, then I am so." "Well said. I know thou art sincere in the profession of thy religion, and that is the reason why I love thee so much." "I know one thing. Any moment I am ready to sacrifice my life for the Master. For the last forty two years you have ever been kind to me and on several occasions have saved my life. This has nothing to do with Faith. This is Love. I declare by Jehovah if you ask me at this very moment I will die for you gladly, knowing well that I have won the good-pleasure of Abraham, Jacob and Moses." "Let me tell you a story about a Mohammedan judge in Feherias," the Master said. "This judge had two rooms which communicated to each other by the means of a ladder and through a hole in the roof. As he was not married he had a Jewish mistress in the second room and almost no one knew anything about his liason. One day it so happened that the woman had come to the front room and the judge was speaking to her when to his astonishment he saw Gaemmagam (the governor) coming towards his abode. He was so perplexed that he did not know what to do, because if the governor came to know about this he would be dis-graced and his position taken away from him. He had not even time to say to the woman: Ascend quickly the ladder and go to thy room, so he approached the window and saw a man walking in the street. With his hand waving backward he cried out: 'Taref, Taref, Taref,' to make his Jewish mistress understand that an "unclean" man is coming to his room. By this time Gaemmagam had stepped in, looking in the faces of terrified woman and the judge. "Whom were you calling after?" asked the governor. "Oh," replied the judge, "That man who passed through the street was my old friend and I joked with him." "You joked with him. Ha!" and he walked towards the woman and taking her by the ^{the} wrist made her stand

in the middle of the room. 'O thou son of a dog, according to thy estimation this dirty Jewish woman is 'Kashei' and I, a Mohamadan, thy co-religionist, and the governor of this town am 'Taref!' "

Then the Master asked him: "How old was Moses?" "Hundred and twenty years, but the Patriarchs such as Noah and others lived many hundred years." "The ages of those ancient prophets as recorded in the old Testament is symbolic. It has a spiritual interpretation. Wast thou informed with the science of anatomy thou wouldst have realized that this human mechanism and these material organs cannot last more than 120 years."

Esmael asked: "Where is the seat of thought?" The Master replied: "It is generally understood that that the seat of thought, consciousness and volition is the brain, it is the organ of intellection and understanding. The heart also displays a part through the Central Nervous system - thus the activities of the brain and the heart by the means of afferent and efferent nerve fibers are connected together. Figuratively speaking the brain is like a mirror. When it is turned toward any direction whether in the East or in the West immediately that picture will be reflected on its surface and consciousness is realized. In the world of dream consciousness is awake and works uninterruptedly."

We were permitted to retire but after an hour I was sent for by the Master. He dictated a telegram for Teheran and later on a short Talilet for the Persian Consul in Haifa recommending Esmael. He left at noon and I wished him a hearty good-bye. Last night Jarass at 3 am and as he slept in a room below mine I heard his voice praying in Hebrew. I loved him more for this. Whosoever has not in his constitution the element of worship, the feeling of prayer and adoration, the consciousness of communion, something surely is lacking in his moral constitution.

In the afternoon a travelling Sayad called on the Master and received money enough to continue his voyage. In the evening the Commander Ibrahim Akki and four other gentlemen called on him and were with him till very late. Their coming prevented us to meet him like many other nights.