

Home of Baha Ollah
 Acca Syria
 December 29th 1914

Dear friends!

Economists assert that the wants of men are satiable through the successive consumption of total or marginal utilities. Basing their arguments upon the foundation that man is an intelligent animal they divide his "wants" into two classes - "existence wants" and "culture wants." The first class includes the necessities of life such as food, clothing, ^{and} shelter while culture wants lead to the refinement and ennobling of the intellectual nature of man. Those who have made the above materialistic division, probably never thought that man is a moral creature and as such they must make some provision for his spiritual satisfaction or include a third chapter in their literature under the head of "spirit wants." It is the discarding of the right principles of soul culture that has brought all these untold miseries upon humanity and has caused the tottering collapse of the European civilization whose passion and dominating rule was the total disregard of "spirit wants" and a whole-hearted devotion to the production and multiplication of existence wants and culture wants. All the resources of the world, man, nature and capital had become subservient to this all-absorbing machine. Professors and teachers under the cloak of Progress and Enlightenment had crammed the minds of the students of all grades and classes with the materialistic standards of success and prosperity. Every thing was to be judged by the measure of dollars and cents. God and religion and the training of the soul could find no place in their system of education. A boy studied for years Arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, medicine etc but could not give a few minutes a day to the discipline of his soul and spirit. This extreme emphasis on the material plane of education and the enumeration of advantages accruing from it to the exclusion of all moral and spiritual lessons paved the way for the triumphal procession of the brute forces of men, ^{on the continent of Europe} the clashing sound of which has deafened the ears of all the inhabitants of the earth and the destructive results of which will be beyond the power of human calculation.

Man is a composite being - matter, mind and spirit. The first two parts are well taken care of by our social^{physical} economists and the third part is totally brushed aside to take care of itself, which strange to say, it does in some unaccountable manner, just as our physical body is alive through bread etc, our intellectual faculties are developed through sciences, our spiritual side or consciousness is sustained on the Word of God, on the utterance of the Merciful. The trouble with us in this scientific age ^{has been} that we have been very careless about the regularity of our spiritual food. We have either overfed ~~it~~ or underfed it bringing it to the threshold of starvation. The Word of God is the food of the spirit, it must be found in every home, on every board. Do not deprive your home ^{of} it. The Word of God is the light of the Spirit, let it ^{not} languish in the darkness of materialism. The Word of God is the heat of the sun of reality, let thy spirit step out of the cold refrigerator of agnosticism and walk in the daylight. The Word of God is the path of salvation, it will guide you to your glorious destination. Just as we have cultivated our appetite for other material dishes we must train day by day our ^{spiritual} taste to partake of the Celestial food. We must not be over-hasty, Over-indulgence in material foods leads man to indigestion, so likewise, when a soul is fed too much on the Word of God it will give him spiritual dyspepsia. The soul must be fed daily but regularly, not by fits and starts. Often in our eagerness for the spiritual welfare of those whom we meet we rather compel them to partake too much of the ideal food and then express surprise that it did not work good but rather harm - it created in their hearts no responsiveness and acceptance but combativeness and negation. Then if we are uncharitable we blame them inwardly for their obtuseness and stupidity. We never care to investigate the ^{underlying} mistake lying peacefully at our own door. We do not learn by our first blunder and go on committing it over and over again. In our zeal for the conveying of the Message we lose sight of all the proportions - of the fitness of things of the place and of the occasion. A Bahai teacher must be by all means a spiritual dietician. He must know rather by intuition and inspiration the rules and art of the spirit and first diagnosing the ailment, then go on treating it trusting in God for healing.

At this morning tea I discussed this subject with the Beloved and he said: "The friends must be the wise physicians of the world of humanity but they must be graduated from the University of the Manifestations of God. They must first master the science of the spiritual materia-medica, then go out to heal the sick and the ailing ones. The door of this University is today open to all mankind and is free to all those who are willing to enter therein with a sincere and conscientious heart. No tuition fee is charged. In this divine institution we study divine principles. Herein we learn that man is a representative of the physical, intellectual and spiritual world, just as in his physical environment he is in need of material things; in his spiritual environment he requires celestial things. Just as the perfection and amelioration of the world of humanity is dependent upon the progress of sciences and art, so also the refinement of the spirit and the cultivation of the highest ideals of morality is made possible through celestial sciences and arts. Just as the physical world predicates education, the spiritual world necessitates greater emphasis of education. Just as there exists a vast difference between a civilized nation and a savage nation, similarly there is a pronounced distinction between a "spiritual nation" and a civilized nation. If a person is not given the advantages of material education he will remain ignorant, illiterate, deaf, blind and dumb; equally this is true ^{in the case of} ~~in the case of~~ a civilized soul not receiving divine education. He is deprived of the Bestowals of the Almighty and unadorned with the graces of the spirit. He is an uneducated savage with his ungovernable passions right at his command to be evoked at will. The physical world in comparison to the spiritual world is dark, for the physical world is ruled by the brute, blind forces of nature. The destructive forces are the struggle for existence, hatred, oppression, pride, cruelty, rancor, despotism and arbitrary power. ^{Now} If a soul has not taken a share of the Bestowals of the Merciful nor nurtured on ^{the} divine sustenance he is similar unto a brute, a captive of the cruel laws of nature; he is a ferocious beast and a bloodthirsty wolf. But if he be imbued with spiritual qualities, be educated in accord with

celestial standard and receive a goodly portion of the ideal Graces - he will be freed from the captivity of the rules of nature, step out of the environment of darkness into the world of light, be released from the defects of matter and endowed with the perfections and virtues of the Kingdom of God. Hence the prophets have been sent forth and the holy Scriptures revealed - so that they may provide an ample provision for the "spiritual wants" of men, nurture them in the school of lofty idealism and enable them to extricate themselves from the capricious, bending laws of nature and give them the power to soar toward the realm of sanctity and spirituality. Without this ideal bread the human spirit will be famished. The Blessed Perfection has spread before the world a luscious table and they are invited to sit around it and help themselves from the various dishes, each according to his taste and appetite."

This afternoon the weather turned out to be very clear and beautiful, so Bahadur was ordered to prepare the carriage and the Beloved accompanied by Ahmad ^{were} driven to Bahajee. Half way he alighted and walked majestically over the green grass. A few wonderful, white cup-shaped tulips had sprung up to welcome him and when he saw one he stopped before it and admired the delicacy of its color and the beauty of its form. In the Holy Tomb of Baha-Ollah he sat for three quarters of an hour and then stood up for another fifteen minutes - all the time praying silently. When he came out he sent the carriage to Abou Seman, because some members of the Holy Family wanted to come to Haifa tomorrow and from here go to Haifa. Again on his return he walked half way, pointing to us the different places blessed by the Feet of Baha Ollah and the spots over which His tent was raised during His lifetime. Then he rode on the little black ass and asked in a humorous way from Aga Mehdi: "Why an ass brays when another ass comes in sight?" He promptly answered: "Because it is ^{associating} and we all laughed over his queer answer. Again the subject reverted to the days of Baha Ollah and the Beloved waxed eloquent in the half glimmering glow of the sunset. With peace in our mind, with happiness in our heart, with satisfaction in our soul we entered the Palace of the King of Peace and drank deeply of the nectar of Peace."