

Home of Baha O'llah 11  
Acca. Syria  
January 6th 1915

Dear friends!

The poor people of Acca have almost reached to the verge of starvation and the Beloved, ever prompt to relieve their necessary wants has set on foot a relief plan. This afternoon about one hundred gathered in front of the house - men and women - young and old, Christians, Mohamodans and a few Jews. The news of the relief was not given proper publicity, otherwise their number would have been from two to five times as large. This morning he had sent for Haji Ali, an Arab flour seller and had arranged with him that whosoever takes to him a note with his handwriting he should give him one "Ratl" of flour. I do not know exactly how many lbs a "Ratl" amounts to, but it is a good deal. Thus the Master sat on a chair and each person stopped before him and gave him his name. He wrote the name on a piece of paper with the amount of flour to be received from Haji Ali and gave it to him, then recorded the same in a small booklet kept in his blessed hands. I was standing beside or behind him, giving him small slips of paper when his supply was exhausted and two policemen kept the crowd in order. Soon all the poor in Acca knew about it and they crowded around the home of the Beloved, clamoring for flour, but they were sent away to return in two days until we have worked out proper the relief plan. In the evening the believers were given the privilege of meeting their beloved Master. He was sad over the miserable conditions of the poor and wished the friends to do everything in their power to assist them. "Today" he said "so many people referred to me for bread that I became sick over their conditions. We must do something for them. What is your idea in this regard? I was very tired over the exertion. A easier <sup>method</sup> must be found out." I suggested that a seal be engraved and the same be imprinted on numbered slips of paper, <sup>all</sup> the poor be gathered in the inner, then the door be shut and let them go out one by one, while to each a paper be given - to get their equal share of flour from the merchant. This plan was adopted and the Master asked Aga Abdor-Rasoul to engrave the following suggestive Koranic verse on the seal: "They shall feed the poor



out of that which we have bestowed upon them". This brought to my mind some of the authentic traditional sayings of Mohamad, treasured by his early devout disciples and which I would like to share them with you. The first one is quite similar to the words of Christ recorded in Matthew XXV. - 35-45. He says: - "Verily God will say at the day of resurrection, 'O sons of Adam' I was sick and ye did not visit me.' Then they will say, 'How could we visit thee? for Thou art the Lord of the universe and art free from sickness. And God will reply, 'Knew ye not that such a one of my servants was sick, and ye did not visit him? Had ye visited that servant, it would have been counted to you as righteousness. And God will say, 'O sons of Adam! I asked you for food and ye gave it me not.' And the sons of Adam will say, 'How could we give Thee food, seeing Thou art the sustainer of the universe, and art free from hunger?' And God will say, 'Such a one of my servants asked you for ~~food~~ bread, and ye refused it. Had you given him to eat, ye would have received your reward from me.' And God will say, 'O sons of Adam! I asked you for water, and ye gave it me not.' They will reply, 'O our supporter! How could we give Thee water, seeing Thou art the sustainer of the universe and not subject to thirst?' And God will say, 'Such a one of my servants asked you for water and ye did not give it to him. Had ye done so, ye would have received your reward from me.'"

In another traditional talk transmitted by one of his followers the following beautiful and suggestive apologue on the subject of charity is recorded: - "When God created the earth it shook and trembled, until he put mountains upon it to make it firm. Then the angels asked, 'Oh God! Is there anything of Thy creation stronger than these mountains?' And God replied, 'Iron is stronger than the mountains; for it breaks them.' And is there anything of Thy creation stronger than iron?' 'Yes; fire is stronger than iron, for it melts it.' 'Is there anything of Thy creation stronger than fire?' 'Yes; water, for it quenches fire.' 'O Lord, is there anything of Thy creation stronger than water?' 'Yes; wind, for it overcomes water and puts it in motion.' 'Oh, our sustainer! Is there anything of Thy creation stronger than wind?' 'Yes, a good man giving alms; if he give it with his right hand and conceal it from his left, he overcomes all things.'"

On another occasion he said: -



"A man's true wealth hereafter is the good he does in this world to his fellow men. When he dies, people will say, 'What property has he left behind him?' But the angels, who examine him in the grave, will ask, 'What good deeds hast thou sent before thee?'"

Towards the end of his days while he was confined to bed and stricken with sickness a rumor was circulated that the prophet is dead. Exerting his remaining strength, he made his way into the mosque, where his appearance spread joy throughout the congregation. "I have heard" said he, "that a rumor of the death of your prophet filled you with alarm, but has any prophet before me lived forever that ye think I would never leave you? Every thing happens according to the will of God, and has his appointed time, which is not to be hastened nor avoided. I return to him who sent me; and my last command to you is, that ye remain united; that ye love, honor, and uphold each other; that ye exhort each other to faith and constancy in belief and to the performance of pious deeds. By these alone men prosper; all else leads to destruction. I do but go before you; you will soon follow me. Death awaits us all; let no one then seek to turn it aside from me. My life has been for your good; so will be my death."

This morning another warship appeared from the North and this time it entered directly into the harbor of Haifa, staying there for one hour, facing the German Colony and then returning by the same route it came. The Captain did not try to communicate with the authorities and so his mission could not be guessed.

In the afternoon Abdul Aziz Tcharvouch gave another patriotic speech in the Inn. The galleries were filled with veiled women and the lower floor with men. He based his talk on the saying of Kipling, "the East is the East, and the West is the West and twain shall never meet." He tried to convince his audience with historical proofs that the Western nations are shorn of the ideals of justice and equity and that their so-called civilization is based upon greed and the assumption of arrogance and the pride of racial superiority and that their whole aim is <sup>to</sup> divest all the Eastern countries from the God-given gifts of freedom and the enjoyment of their national integrity.