

Home of Baba Ollah
 Acca Syria
 January 8th 1915

Dear friends:

This afternoon the ruby goblet of divine Conversation overflowed and allayed our thirsty hearts. The day was serene and clear and the sparrow flew and twittered in and around the windows of the holy room, wherein the Beloved was walking to and fro, while a limpid stream of historical exposition flowed from his blessed Tongue. "In the year 622 A.D." he began "Mohamad, after several years of preaching and teaching his Islamic doctrine in his own native city Mecca and receiving all manner of rebuffs and persecutions, he decided to migrate to Medina. From that memorable year begins the Arabian Calendar and it is named by them the year of Hegira or Migration. But another remarkable migration took place in the fifth year of the mission of Mohamad, not by himself but by his persecuted disciples, not to Medina but to Abyssinia. In the first few years of his mission, although he taught his faith in the One God, secretly and made very slow progress, yet the animosity of the Korashites became more pronounced day after day. Their enmity became so virulent that they enacted a law banishing any one who should become a convert to the strange religion of the 'sorcerer'. Finally realizing that the lives of all his new disciples were threatened with destruction and his opponents were assailing him even in the Casba, he advised them to leave Mecca as soon as possible and take refuge in Abyssinia. Mohamad knew that the Abyssinians were Nestorian Christians and their King, known under the title of Najashee was broad, tolerant and very hospitable. The members of this small band of voluntary exiles consisted of eleven men and four ~~women~~ women, including his daughter Rokaiya and his son-in-law Othman Ibn Affan who acted as the leader of the party. They reached their destination safely and were kindly and benevolently received by the Nestorians. The toleration and hospitality experienced by them encouraged other harassed Moslems of Mecca to follow in their wake, until little by little, the number of Moslem refugees in Abyssinia was raised

to 83 men and 18 women, besides children. Quite a long time elapsed and the people lived and worshipped the Lord of Mercy according to the dictates of their hearts and in the simplicity of their faith. No one interfered with their worship or religion. They associated with their Christian brothers with joy and fragrance. There existed between them no ignorant prejudices and hatred. Everywhere they were received with honor and love because they honored and loved others. The Christians and Mahomedans of today must look up centuries back to Abyssinia and learn at least from those true and pious souls the secret of toleration and brotherly association. While these Moslems were thriving in their exile, Mahomed migrated to Medina and the faith of Allah was spread far and wide. The members of the Koreish tribes who constituted the most powerful enemies of His Holiness the prophet conceived about this time a plan, which was nothing less than to get possession of the persons of the relatives and the disciples who were living so peacefully in Abyssinia. Consequently they thought it wise to send an embassy to Najashee with accusations of heresy and invocation against those God-fearing men and women. There were two men amongst the ambassadors who were known for their sagacity and bravery. One was Abdollah Ibn Rabia and another Amru Ibn Al-As. The latter was an eloquent poet and a courageous soldier who in the beginning of the prophetic mission of Mahomed satirized him with lampoons and light verses but later on became an earnest champion of Islam. When the embassy was presented to the just King of Abyssinia, they showed him first their presents and then accused their compatriots with falsehoods. The King listened patiently to their long story and then sent for the Moslems to come before him and state their side. With them came also Jafar the son of Abou Taleb and brother of Ali. Jafar was a man of true faith and possessed a native eloquence and confident heart. When he listened to the charges of the Koreichites he stood forth and with fervor and enthusiasm expounded the teaching of Islam. "O King" he said "we were idolaters, we worshipped many gods, we were not faithful to our words, we practiced many

evil deeds, we did not believe in the prophets of the past, we were unloyal; then God in His Mercy sent to us a prophet from amongst our own people. He admonished us to worship the one true God, to leave behind polytheism, to keep our words, to practice piety and chastity, to believe in the divine mission of Moses, Jesus Christ, and other prophets and bear the Lord of Hosts." This was the purport of his words. Najashee was very much impressed by this simple presentation and asked Jafar whether he has on himself any of the writings of the prophet. He told the King he can recite one of the chapters of the Koran. The permission was granted and Jafar, inspired by God, started to chant in a moving voice the Sura of Mary, wherein the miraculous conception of the mother of Christ, his birth and how he spoke in the cradle and the establishment of the spiritual mission of other Israelitish prophets are clearly revealed. [Here the Beloved started reciting the first part of this Sura which is one of the fullest and earliest Gospel histories recorded in the Koran] "A recital of thy Lord's mercy to his servant Zachariah; when he called upon his Lord with secret calling, And said: 'O Lord, verify my bones are weakened, and the hair glisten on my head, and never Lord have I prayed to thee with ill success. And We will make him [Jesus Christ] a sign to mankind, and a mercy from Us. For it is a thing decreed.' By the time Jafar had come to the end of the chapter the Abyssinian potentate was moved to the core of his heart and his admiration and love for these lovers of God was doubled. Then he dismissed the Korishite embassy with their presents and kept the Moslems under his protection. In this manner these early pioneers worked for the then pure, democratic religion of Islam, but now it is enveloped with heavy and gross incrustations of dogmas and dead rites. Only the Bahai revelation will purify and cleanse it from these accumulated debris of past generations."

In the morning the Beloved took his seat in front of the door and several government officials called on him. He inquired from them the prospect of the country and they gave gloomy answers and disappointing replies.