

Moonbeam Bahai Cabin
Ahsan Senam. Area. Syria
January 11th 1915

Dear friends!

You have not seen Abdul Baha on horseback but probably you have seen him in America and Europe travelling in Express train driving in automobiles or carriages, walking along your avenues and parks, going through your stores and museums, riding in subways, elevated and surface cars, speaking before meetings and conventions, talking with and caressing the children, discoursing abstrusely with the philosophers and scientists, simply with the laymen, metaphysically with the divines and clergy and interestingly with the reporters. You may have been more fortunate in having one or many private interviews with him, the memory of which is still clinging and in all probability will cling to your tenacious memory as long as life lasts. But you have not seen him on horseback and this you have missed. Let me hasten to assure you that it was not your fault but let us put it at the door of your mechanical civilization, your ultra-modern age, the preference of automobiles and cars over the faithful, spirited chargers and the discarding of ^{the} old ways of locomotions for ^{the} new innovations, full of the smell of coal and gasoline, soot and smoke. The bewildered horse is looking with distrust and misgivings over all these invasions on his patented rights. He does not think much of them and all things being equal. He considers they are fraught with innumerable risks and dangers. Here in Syria although you may find a few hundred miles of (Hedjaz) railroad yet the horse is still ^{the} king over all the ^{other} animals and reigns with the undisputed right of antiquity. Everybody admires and loves a splendid Arabian horse displaying the great qualities of strength, speed, docility and courage. No hoofed quadruped commands so much attention and care. A horse fancier will sell his house, field and garden to buy the animal on which he has settled his heart and will bring it ^{into} and show it to his friends with ^a rising pride. He will talk with you to the point of distraction about its beauty, mane, eyes, forehead and the power of ^{its} endurance and you must listen and was enthusiastic over his minute descriptions, otherwise he will consider you a bore.

Now to come back to the point: you have not seen Abdul Baka in cheval. Well I must tell you he looks simply majestic, Kingly, imperial. This morning he went to Amghah, riding on the finest horse in the stable of ^{the Sheikh} Sheikh Saleh. He went also with him. The village is about one hour from Abou Senan. The Master was going to take me with him but there were no other animals to ride ^{and} and he would not allow me to walk beside him. He sat straight on his horse and rode away with the grandeur of his character and the glad smiles on his countenance. We stood there and watched him till the horse turned into a back way and disappeared from our eyes. When I could see him no longer I took back and went into the green hills and valleys and roamed and sat wherever and whenever my heart lead me. Alone I soared on the pinions of thought and communed with you ^{my friends in America} who are so far away and yet seemed to be very near. I did not mind the hours that slipped by. I was ^{so} wrapped in the consciousness of your presence that I forgot all my surroundings and was so happy to yield myself to this unutterable and holy experience. What roseate world was I living? Was it real or only an ideal picture which could disappear by the return of the sense of materiality? Oh 'No' It was too real to be a dream. The mountain, the hills, the valleys and the grass ^{green} which I was ^{unconsciously} walking were dreams and stuffs of fancies. I was living and moving in a real world of shining ideals, radiant truths and brilliant personalities. There I found the treasures of happiness, the mystery of youth, the stars of unchanging love, the fragrant flowers of eternal creation and the soft, gentle rays of the orbes of precious attachment. Hast thou not been there? Didst thou not fly upward to that bright realm of perennial bliss? Hast thou ever knocked and the door was not opened? Didst thou ever seek and the object of search eluded thee? Hast thou ever cried and heard no answer? Didst thou ever walk and reached not thy goal? Hast thou ever thirsty and found a mirage instead of the cooling river? I know only this: If we are ^{genuine} sincere, if our conviction is contagious, if our hearts are set on fire, the God of Mercy shall not ^{hide} ~~this face~~ from us, He will guide us into His straight way, He will inspire us with the ideals of His goodness and reveal to us the workings of His will.

When the Beloved returned it was about sunset and all the believers having gathered in the reception room awaited his arrival. After sitting down he said: - "Today we called on Sheikh Ibrahim Atki. As you know his two merchant-steamers are sunk by the Russian warship in Beirut harbor. Notwithstanding this I found him joyous and did not care for the loss. He spoke and laughed as though nothing had happened. This was very known of him, because usually he is a close-fisted person. Man must never ^{brood} over inevitable misfortunes nor let his soul be afflicted with misery. Not a long time ago I knew a merchant who exported a great deal of wheat. Once he had a cargo on the sea with 6000 pounds sterling wheat in it. One morning while he was sitting in his office, busy with his mercantile affairs he received a cable to the effect that a storm had arisen, sinking his valuable cargo of wheat. He did not manifest the least trace of worry or perturbation in his face. In his calm, most matter of fact tone he turned to his clerk and handing him the cable he said: 'Note this on the debit of loss and contingencies' and resumed his work. But when this very merchant went to the market to buy daily provision for his home he would haggle with the vegetable vendor for a quarter of Mataluk and tried to save one or two cents in the whole bargain. He was not really a parsimonious fellow but a careful, household economist. He would say the loss of a cargo of wheat is not a thing that will happen often, but if one does not watch over his daily expenses sooner or later he will be drained to the bottom and will then have to weep over his own carelessness." X

Murza Sayad Hossein Afnan arrived tonight from Haifa and brought the word that the Italian steamer will come tomorrow. Mrs. Slomderson will leave in order to sail for Europe.

In the evening the Beloved came down and spoke for more than two hours, relating for a number of newly-arrived Sheikhs the stirring events of the Investigating Committee sent several years ago by the Sultan Abdul Hamid. At the end of his talk he became entirely unconscious of his hearers and a torrent of clear words flowed from his tongue. "I was prepared to go to whatever wilderness they intended to exile me. Would I have shirked the load of their persecutions when the blessed neck of Baba Allah supported the weight of heavy chains for many a long month! No by the splendor of God!" he declared with flushed eyes, inspired face and loud voice, as he arose from his seat and left the room.