

Home of Abdul Baha
 Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
 February 1st 1915

Dear friends!

Into the flower-garden of the spirit doth Abdul Baha invite thee. Art thou ready? Into the empyrean of heavenly presence doth the Beloved call thee. Art thou prepared? Into the imperial Court of the King of Kings doth the Herald of the Kingdom summon thee. Hast thou heard? Toward the infinitude of Everlasting Glory hath the Messenger of the Covenant beckoned thee. Are thy wings strong? Into the verdant Paradise of Abha doth the inspired Interpreter of the Book lead thee. Art thou awake? Toward the summit of the Mount of Transfiguration he direct thee. Art thou conscious? Into the depth of the blue sea of divine afflatus he causes thee to dive. Hast thou girded up the loins of endeavor? Towards the highest altitude of universal intelligence he urges thee to rise. Art thou free? To the height of spiritual thinking he wishes thee to attain. Dost thou heed? In the spacious arena of self-sacrifice he desires thee to enter. Art thou willing? Over and beyond the material conditions of the world he bids thee to ascend. Wilt thou do it? Through the beautiful avenues of the garden of Roses he requests thee to walk. Wilt thou answer? At the spiritual banquet of the celestial inspiration he begs thee to be seated. Wilt thou accept? For the service of the oneness of the world of humanity he hath chosen thee. Wilt thou pitch in and work? A brilliant crown of immortal honor he hath fashioned for thee. Wilt thou receive? Out of the texture of heaven he hath woven for thee a glorious robe of dazzling brightness. Wilt thou be dressed in it? From the Graces of the Lord of lords he desires thee to partake a goodly portion. Wilt thou avail thyself? Through the delectable elysium of the Love of God he wishes thee to wander. Wilt thou yield? Great is the wonders of Thy Master! Most inexpressible is His affection for thee. Thou art indeed unworthy but the Favors of thy Lord hath encircled thee. Thou art like a dried plant but the rain of His Generosity hath caused thee to sprout. Thou hast been less than a drop but the Bestowals of Abdul Baha hath given thee the importance of an fountain.

How well Sadi expresses this idea in a short poem which is most exquisite. The original is very beautiful and its translation loses much of its charm and originality. It is something like this:-

"Twas in the bath, a piece of perfumed clay
Came from my loved one's hands to mine, one day.
"Art thou then musk or ambergris?" I said;
"That by thy scent my soul is ravished?"
"Not so," it answered, "worthless earth was I,
But long I kept the rose's company;
Thus near, its perfect fragrance to me came,
Else I'm but earth, the worthless and the same."

From morning till noon the ^{Beloved} Abdul Baha came out of the house several times and walking through the garden spoke with the friends, giving them glimpses of the life of spirit and the joy of the Kingdom. In the afternoon while I was writing I heard his melodious voice calling aloud my name. I hurried out and saw him standing in the passage leading to the street. He asked Esfandiyar to have the landeau ready for he wished to have a ride. Just at this juncture a big, stout Arab entered the garden and engaged him in conversation for a few minutes. When the landeau was prepared the Master invited both of us to accompany him and we were driven through the streets of the Colony and out into the green country. Because our Arab friend lives among the Druises, their religion and beliefs became the matter of discussion. The Master said: "We are indeed most thankful to Sheik Saleh and his sons in Akkon Seman. They have treated our friends with courtesy and kindness. We could not possibly find for them a safer place than with these Druises. They have done everything to make our ^{possible} sojourn very pleasant amongst them. We are thus kept away from the zones of danger for the present." He answered "It is most natural that wherever His Excellency the Master goes, people will arise spontaneously to serve him and those who are attached to him. They have simply performed their duty."

On our return, in the middle of the road, the landeau was surrounded by about 100 children - boys and girls - some carrying in their arms their baby brothers and sisters. The fathers of most of these children are taken into

the army and thus are they left in utter want. A wave of tender emotion and pity, mingled with sadness passed over the face of the Master as he emptied his pocket of Matalucks and filled my two hands with them. "They are all my dear children. How I wish I could train and educate them! Go and distribute amongst them. With the help of Esfandeyar I ranged them into a long line at the crossing of the country lane and each child receiving a piece of money ^{went} on his way. Now I wished I had taken the photographs of some of them, because I had my little Kodak with me, but in the excitement of the novel scene I forgot all about it! The Master was watching the ~~scattered~~ ^{scattered} crowd of the children from the window of the landau and his divine face was the embodied expression of love and affection! All the way back home he was silent and at last he moaned feelingly: "What wretched condition! What great poverty exists amongst all the Classes! What can one do to relieve these patent sufferings! They are so numerous. To whichever directions I turn my face, there are applications from necessitous families." At the gate of the house he asked Esfandeyar to take his Arab guest to his residence and bidding him an revoir entered the garden. The friends were waiting his return and reading their expectation in their faces he invited them to go in. In a few minutes he also joined them in the reception and they saluted him by rising from their seats. "We were speaking today" he said informally "about the religion of the Druises. All along they have been most kind to us and how appropriate it would have been if the Fragrance of the Merciful reached ^{also} their nostrils! The Blessed Perfection visited Abou Senan and stayed a short time in the same house in which we are now living. When one speaks on the subject of religion with the Druises they never express their doubts and hesitations - so that the speaker may clear them away. Outwardly they acquiesce to all that one says, although they may not believe one thing. On the other hand if one speaks to them from their own standpoint and in their own terminologies they are startled and alarmed - wondering who has given them away and disclosed the secrets of their peculiar faith. One day I spoke on one of their basic beliefs with the sons of Sheik Saleh and they were at a loss how to account for my knowledge. They were not a little confused. They thought I have perused their books which was not true. Soon I convinced them

of their wrong conclusion. Similarly their terminologies are so dark and obscure ^{that} should a person read their books he will not comprehend their real meanings. Yes, one may know that they believe in metempsychosis and transmigration, that they look with divine worship on Elhakem Billah, Shoahib and Salman but the ulterior significations of their doctrines are not understood by the outsiders, even should they read their books a hundred times. Years ago a number of the Druises of Mount Lebanon asked me several questions. In order that they may comprehend ^{more} easily my answers, I wrote in their own 'terminologies' without pre arrangement. They were dumbfounded and thought no one could write in that style unless perfectly familiar with their ^{writing}. Later on I wanted to make a copy of that epistle and sent for it. No, they would not give it back. They were afraid I will publish it,..... They have many fantastic dogmas, wild in their improbabilities and impossible in their applications. For example, ^{it is said that} they believe that in the uttermost part of China there are many cities, each one of which are inhabited by ^{many} millions of people. These cities are covered with vast revolving domes etc etc. The Jews also have a belief as regard the city of Sabbath which is very large and inhabited only by the children and the ^{descendants} of Moses. This city is surrounded by a broad river of moving sand, which defies all entrance therein. The constant flow of the sand is stopped on Saturday and that day being Sabbath and sacred the Jews are forbidden to cross it, even should they reach behind the gate. These beliefs find credence by the credulous and ignorant, because they have not learned geography and know not that all the crannies and crevices of this small earth are discovered and measured by the navigators, explorers and travellers. It is also to the profit of the religious leaders to foster and uphold these spurious imitations because they keep their rule and sway intact. We hope that the future generations of humanity will become freed from ^{these} imaginations and superstitions and will walk on the terra firma of scientific certainty and spiritual truths.

The Beloved continued his talk till late and devoted many interesting subjects and then after chanting a Commune by a believer we retired from presence.