

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
February 9th 1915

Dear friends!

Abdul Baha was today surrounded with more than twenty generals, majors, captains, Colonels and lieutenants of the Turkish empire. They were all dressed in full uniforms with dangling swords and shining epaulettes and made a most dazzling picture as they sat all around the reception room, in an attitude of the utmost respect and deference, listening to the heavenly words falling from the lips of the Beloved. Never in the world there has lived a Manifestation with such a glory and majesty. What innate, mysterious connection exists between these high officers of the empire and the King of Kings! In his presence they are most submissive and humble and this one thing strikes the beholder most forcibly. They were invited to dinner and before twelve o'clock every one was present. Amongst them was the Commander, a regular giant in appearance. The subject nearest to the hearts of these men of war would be naturally the history of the rise of the Ottoman dynasty and the Master narrated for them the obscure, ^{and} almost forgotten events in this connection with a wealth of details, warmth and color that startled and at the same time pleased their fancy. Through his resuscitating power he quickened and brought to life the dead leaders and founders of ages ago and recounted with animation the peculiar circumstances which helped and contributed toward the vast conquests of the Sons of Osmanli. While they were entranced with the eloquence and beauty of his story, because their imaginations assisted them to remind the events, all imperceptibly, he changed the current and the majestic flow of his talk into ^{the} higher and broader channels of the wonderful golden age of the Islamic civilization which effloresced in Cordova, Andalusia, Bagdad and other Eastern and Western cities. He then enumerated some of the conspicuous services rendered to the world of science by the Arabian ^{and Persian} philosophers in the realm of Astronomy, medicine, music and Arithmetics. The fame of the Arabian thinkers in Spain became ^{so world wide} that European schoolmen and Popes resorted to their Universities and attended their lectures. The ^{beauty of} Arabian Architecture was insisted upon by the beautiful

Alhambra. This magic name brought to the mind of the Master his visit to Germany and while his military guests were sitting around the long table in the central hall of the house, partaking of the delicious dinner prepared for them, he recounted his experiences and impressions in Stuttgart and told them of his visit to a palace built by one of the Kings of Wurtemberg on the exact pattern of Alhambra. After dinner they walked in the reception room, tea and coffee were served and a number of stories related for their entertainment. Altogether it was a pleasant and unique event and the guests left the house in many carriages lined in the street. I would have liked to take a photograph of the Master with these men - the Prince of Peace amongst these leaders of war but the day was rainy and I knew he would not have permitted it. However, I tried to inform you by writing about it, but writing and describing anything is so unsatisfactory, isn't it? Often a picture or a photograph conveys the story more accurately and more interestingly than a thousand pages of description. It typifies and gives life, illustrates and exhibits the passing events.

In the afternoon Mirza Anayetullah, ^{from about Benan} and two of the believers from Acca arrived and brought us the news of the Holy family and the friends. In the evening we were received by the Beloved. He was in a happy mood and laughed and made us laugh all through his talk. He said in part: - "Mirza Anayetullah has brought us some very interesting news from Acca. He says Mirza Badi-o-llah has circulated a wild report that I am going to be arrested, made a prisoner and sent to Damascus. The people, especially the friends have become very agitated and have made many inquiries from the civil authorities in regard to the authenticity of this report. Very well. For the sake of argument, let us suppose that they are going to arrest and send me to Damascus. What will happen? The Cause will be spread amongst those who are still unaware of this Manifestation. On the other hand, it has been a long time that I wished to visit that ancient city which according to Josephus is older than Abraham and his Steward 'Eliizer' was from Damascus (Gen XV. 2). Now if the means of my journey is brought about, I will be made most happy. People do not seem to appreciate that in my estimation this is not a disgrace but a glory. For the Cause of God no greater victory can

one conceive than my exile and no higher bounty can one imagine than my banishment.
 Is it not more wonderful and truly imperial to give up one's life in the Path of God,
 high, high, upon the cross than to die in bed with a lingering sickness and slow
 disease? I declare by Baha Ollah that this is my loftiest desire and heavenly-
 soaring yearning. In this Cause this is my glorious Crown and everlasting Life!
 I long to shed my blood in the Cause of the Blessed Perfection, I am to fly
 towards His Supreme horizon with the red wings of Martyrdom. I desire to
 seal the Tablet of my faithfulness with the sacrifice of my life. Ah me!
 my friends! What is life but to be immolated on the Altar of His Love!
 what is life but to be thrown in the dust of the feet of the beloved ones,
 what is this worthless will but to be surrendered into the hands of the
 Almighty Father, what is the soul but to be offered in the arena of
 Truth, what is the spirit but to be given up for the progress of divine
 Civilization and universal Peace, and what is rest and comfort but to
 be thrown away for the establishment of brotherhood and the spiri-
 tualization of mankind! God in His Mercy has not created any degradation
 for this Servant. Whatever happens will be for the good of the Cause.
 Not that what they have reported in Acca is in the least true but
 I say unto you, that I am ready, always ready to drink the cup of this
 Divine Bestowal! I love it, I long for it, I am anticipating it and when
 it comes I will embrace it like unto a bridegroom who embraces into
 his expectant arms his blushing bride. I am loyal to the Cause of
 Baha Ollah, if I am sincere in my profession of faith, if I am devoted to
 the memory of my beloved, heavenly Father I must hail with joy
 and ecstasy the ruby goblet of martyrdom and drink its immortality
 nectar with radiant face and unflinching steadfastness! This transient
 life is only for a few days and therefore we must be ready to serve the
 Cause of God in any way that lies in our power. " Then he related some
 of the incidents of the Investigation Committee and a historical event
 of the Abbasside Khalfate in Bagdad during the reign of Haroun-
 er-Reshid. This was about a prominent statesman who was hanged on a
 pillory and the poem composed by a friend of his, eulogizing the manner
 of his execution and the courage shown by him under the severe trials

After the talk which was so dominant in its spirit of vehement sincerity and fiery enthusiasm he became suddenly silent and I could hear the breathing of the believers and see the weeping eyes. They were swayed with such intense emotions that I could see the deep contractions and wrinkles in their faces. When we left the room I was so moved that I could not speak with any ^{one} therefore I retired into one corner of the orange grove and for a long time communed with myself. During these hours one is attacked with such conflicting thoughts, gripping the mind and the heart with great tenacity. The glances of the brilliant stars came to my assistance and I found my ideal path again clear and broad, illumined by the light of faith and assurance. When I returned to my room I heard the believers still stalking about the electrically-charged talk delivered by the Master. I opened a little book of Tablets and ~~found~~ came across the following passage:—

"O those who art firm in the Covenant! When a just man looks to himself he will become characterized with the utmost humility and submission. He will observe that he is less than an atom and lower than the earth. ^{When} he will behold the infinite Graces and outpourings of the Cycle of Manifestation like unto a scintilla he will appear in the ray of the Sun of Reality. The Bounties of the Blessed Beauty suffer the mosquito to become the lion of the jungle of ~~the~~ night, the sparrow to be changed into the falcon of the East of Illumination, the comet is transformed into the ^{world} illuminating sun and the ~~scout~~ is made the eagle of the field of ^{chase}. This is through the Favor of the Most Glorious Lord and not through the capability and ability of mankind. Therefore, render thanks giving at the Threshold of the Unique God, because thou art aware of thy lowliness and poverty and before the Known and unknown art exhilarated with the cup of evanescence. Abdul Baha is pleased with thee, for in reality thou art self-sacrificing ~~and~~ in the Path of the Blessed Perfection. Thou art away from aught else save God and day and night art constant and firm in the Service of the Cause."

It was late in the evening when I ~~retired~~ ^{retired} to bed and with a heart at ease went to sleep.