

Home of Baha Ollah, Acca
 Syria. February 15th 1915

Dear friends!

Speaking of the various customs of the different nations in drinking tea the Master said this afternoon:—"During our stay in Bagdad there lived in that city one of the Amiers of Afghanistan. He was reputed to be very wealthy and cultured. He used to frequent our house and ask questions concerning the Islamic religion. One morning he invited me to tea and I accepted his invitation. When we reached his house he boiled a quantity of green tea in a large Kettle and poured the hot black liquid into a capacious vase. Then he cut into small pieces three or four loaves of bread and mixed it with the steaming tea. When the pieces of bread were well-soaked he spread over it a pound of butter. Putting this unpalatable concoction on a tray he placed it on the floor and asked me to help myself. In order not to hurt his feeling of hospitality I took one mouthful but could not continue. I asked for a little sugar but he remonstrated that sugar will utterly spoil the choiced dish. He could not understand why I did not like it, because he said: 'This is one of the best delicacies in Afghanistan'. I excused myself from eating but after half an hour the large vase was empty and our friend had a hearty breakfast."

Again when he was speaking about music he said:—"In Europe and America music plays an important part in the national and individual life of the nations inhabiting those regions. From the very beginning the educators instill the love of music in the hearts and minds of the children. In their common schools they are taught in a concrete manner the laws of harmony and motion. They memorize many songs and sing them quite unconsciously. Thus when they are grown up they have more or less a cultivated taste for music. If they are not able to play or sing publicly they are at least able to discriminate between the bad and ^{the} good music. Almost in every family one finds a piano and as a person passes through their streets he hears the strains of music. The musical profession is much honored by the public and a rare artist is welcomed and greeted by Kings and emperors."

Music is a divine art and capable of unlimited progress. It uplifts human soul towards his Maker and opens before the vistas of his eyes, the fair panorama of heavenly Bliss. The parents must see to it that their children are taught the best, classical music, such masterpieces that refine the souls and etherealize the aspirations. The life of a person who has ^{to appreciate} learned the artistic value and moral significance of music is redolent with brightness, health and joy. In every object he will see symmetry, proportion, ^{Beauty} and concord. The sighing of the winds through the pines, the rich and ^{melodious} song of the nightingales, the deafening clatter of the cicadas, the creaking of frogs, the sound produced by the rapid movements of their wings, the fury and rage of the tempest, the gentle murmur of the rivulets - all of these are to his ears the overtones and undertones of the grand Orchestra of creation. Once during my early childhood I became very sick. At the time, my family lived in Teheran. I was lying in bed in a semi-~~un~~conscious state. After much consultation the Doctors agreed upon a course of "musical treatment." Before sunset they brought into my room an old man with a very long beard. He carried under his 'Ala a guitar. He sat near my bed and immediately began to play and sing. All through the night he played and sang, now in high, resonant tone and again in sweet, soft strains. My soul was charmed with his music. During ^{certain} hours of the night I opened my eyes and to my surprise I saw him weeping. In the morning I felt better and asked my mother why the musician was weeping? She said: 'He was not a professional artist but a mystic worshipper of the Beloved. His singing was not mechanical, but an outpouring of the joy felt in his heart. His poems were mystic and allegorical addresses to the Adored One. Through his music he spoke to the hearts and quickened and moved them by the power of spirit. He did not make himself a slave of technique or enunciation but he sang the living truth, the eternal reality, hidden in the chambers of human consciousnesses. In his mysterious way, with the Key of Life, he opened the secret doors of beatitude and unlocked the gates of the higher and loftier vision.' Soon I became well and strong but the song and music of the mystic artist has ever been with me."

As he was walking in the Gahkouri he turned his face to me and asked: "Dost thou sleep well during these nights?" Ahmad: "Yes. I sleep quite soundly, but if any one else sleeps in the same room, he tells me in the morning that I speak in the sleep, sometimes in Persian, often in English." Abdul Baha: "When I go to bed I lie awake for one or two hours, then I sleep well for four hours. The sleep before twilight is ^{also} very invigorating. Taki Meshadi often spoke during the hours of sleep. Once I slept with him in the same room and was kept awake because of this habit of his. I thought he will be embarrassed and lose his sleep if I called his attention to it, therefore I never told him anything about it. It is stated that while a person speaks during his sleep, if questions are put to him he will answer truthfully. Meshadi was a blessed soul and he served this Cause with rare faithfulness. His soliloquies during the hours of sleep amused me very much and ^{often} I was afraid that the sound of my laughter will awake him. My feet get very cold during the day but when I go to bed they become so warm that I have to keep them out of the coverlet all night. The best hour that I like in these days is just after sunset. Over one's soul steals a quiet serenity. A calm beauty and satisfaction comes unheralded and one is submerged, as though, in a sea of contemplation." Just as he finished his last word the sun did set in the sea, tinging the West with fiery clouds, floating in the infinite azure and decorating the palaces of immensity with bright colors. "Look, look! How ideal!" this picturing of the Master artist! I looked, and it was indeed very beautiful but when I beheld his face, lo! it was transfigured with the light of Love and tenderness, his lips were moving in concentrated prayer, his eyes were turned toward the throne of Glory and his whole being was like unto a mountain of refulgent rays. I dropped my eyes and when I looked up again he said: - "Let us go home. I was praying that God may fill the ^{world} with the light of His Love, that He may save mankind from the delusion of self, that He may forgive their faults and shortcomings, that He may deliver them from the claws of brutal forces, ^{and} that He may usher them under the Universal Canopy of the Oneness of the world of humanity." "I am sure that thy prayers will be answered." I said. "God willing. Ensha - Allah, Etsha Allah"