

Home of Baha Ollah Acca  
Syria. February 24th 1915

Dear friends!

The Master was speaking about ideal love and true friendship; the love that makes every bitter sweet; the friendship that endureth for aye; the love that changes the darkness of sorrow into the light of joy; the friendship that suffereth no backsliding; the love that begirdeth the globe with the strong chain of sympathy; the friendship that bounds the people together through thick and thin; the love that is founded upon the rock of spiritual faith; the friendship that makes two hearts to beat as one; the love that purifies all the motives of humanity; the friendship that removes all the barriers of race and nationality; the love that glows in the hearths of men, the friendship that makes the fireside cheerful; the love that infuses life into the dead bodies, the friendship that gives us animation and vivacity; the love that transforms the clay wall of a prison into the spacious garden of paradise, the friendship that opens before eyes the illimitable vista of heavenly bliss.

Then he quoted the following lines of poetry from Masnavi: -

"The loved one addressing the lover said once;

O my adored one! Many cities hast thou seen in distant lands;  
Which one of those cities didst thou like best?

The lover answered: The city in which my beloved rest.

Wherever thou art with me paradise is the place

Though the dark bottom of a well be my residence."

Continuing his remarks he said: The progress and adornment of a country depends upon the qualities and perceptions of its people and not upon its monuments, parks, gardens, chateaus and mansions. A nation is advanced and retrograded according to the degree of intelligence displayed by the individuals composing it. If you enter a dark and narrow house wherein you may find men and women attracted with the fragrances of God and enkindled with the fire of the Love of God, their conversations will impart happiness to you but the most delectable palace the inmates of which are the people of the tombs is oppressive and burdensome. For about 46 or forty seven years we have



been living in this prison, desolate town. In the beginning we were all chucked up in the military barracks - men, women and children. Conditions were most severe and the health of every member of this little community was threatened by the attacks of diseases. At the gate of the barracks was stationed many guards and no communication was permitted with the outside world. Every morning four of us closely guarded by 4 soldiers were conducted through the bazaar to buy the necessary means of livelihood. We were not allowed to speak with the traders or shopkeepers more than what was required. Notwithstanding these restrictions and this confinement we were in the utmost joy; our breasts were dilated with the happiness of the Kingdom, our trust was in the Mercies of the Lord, our hearts were attracted with the Fragrances of God and our souls rejoiced by the Glad-tidings of Truth."

We spent an hour in the sweet presence of the Beloved this morning and were thus intoxicated with the ruby wine of his utterances. Then he came down from his room and disappeared into a small street, going after his business - doing good. About noon he returned home and we had the pleasure of eating with him at the same table.

Demetri, Alexander and Joseph are three storekeepers who are the neighbors of the Master. They are Christians and old inhabitants of Acca. The Beloved often invites them to afternoon tea and this was one of those afternoons. He loves to joke with them and today he wondered why Joseph was not arrested and sent to Damascus, there to enjoy the companionship of his fellow-religionists. The Master thought he will have a "nice time" in prison, languishing away for a sight of his wife and daughter. But Joseph was of a different opinion: "My Lord" he said "I assure thee that I know nothing about politics. When I get up in the morning I plan our lunch and in the afternoon I think about our dinner. To hell with politics and suspicion. See how many of our excellent neighbors - amongst them Ostad Modavvar - are arrested on mere surmises! The world is certainly going



to the dogs. Nowadays it is dangerous to speak even one word about politics. One is not sure of the members of his own family. Anybody around us may be a spy or an informer, therefore why should I bother myself with these things. The Master thought and agreed with him that this was the wisest <sup>course</sup> to be taken. When they left the house he came down also and for an hour was walking with the Commissioner of Police in the open court near the sea.

We have heard from Haifa that our dear angel, Haji Mirza Haydar Ali is severely sick and Doctor Habibollah told me the other day that he is attacked with Pneumonia. Another old Bahai who is ill <sup>in accord</sup> is Aga Abdor Rahim. He is about 90 years old and has been a Bahai from the beginning of this Cause. He has been with Baha Ollah in Bagdad, then Adrianople and at last in this most great Prison. His daughter is a maid in the holy family. When the Master heard that he is sick he went immediately to call on him and sent for his daughter to come and nurse him. "When Aga Abdor Rahim came to Bagdad" the Blessed said "Tonight he was a young man with heavy black mustaches. He has grown old in this Cause. He has seen with his own eyes <sup>these</sup> eyes the sowing of the seed, its growth and development in the world, and has served the Truth in many ways. When he arrived in Bagdad the Blessed Beauty was the target of many arrows of oppressions, the Mullahs held many conferences and consulted together how best to extinguish this Divine Light. Notwithstanding these obstacles Baha Ollah stood firm and accepted all the trials and hardships heaped upon him by the enemies. When they came into His Spiritual Presence they were awed with the Majesty of His appearance and the magnetism of His Countenance. They listened to His words with rapt attention and went away dumbfounded. I was a child then but the particulars of those meetings are engraved deep in the Tablet of my heart and mind."