

Home of Baha Ollah Acca
Syria February 27th 1915

Dear friends!

Sheikh Mohamad is one of the oldest Khoran reciters of Acca and consequently one of the earliest friends of the Master. He has a very weak eyesight and nowadays he can hardly see anything. In former years he used to call on the Master quite often and recite the Koran. For the first time this evening I was introduced to him. He is a short, jovial man with a small beard. The Beloved had seen him in the street today and asked him to come tonight and chant for us a chapter of the Holy Book. For this reason, I was given an opportunity to see and listen to him chanting. When he finished his recital, coffee was served ^{him} and the Master commenced to joke with him about the old days and how his friend manages to live in these hard times with no sources of income. After awhile a most interesting Dialogue passed between the Master and the Sheikh that I like to share with you as much of it as I have preserved in my ^{memory}.
Sheikh Mohammed: Effendi! I never understood why you went to France, a country so far away from Acca?

Abdul Baha: Didst thou not hear that I went to America? France in comparison to America is very near.

S. M. Oh! Yes, I have heard about it. What land of a country is America? Is it as large as Acca?

A. B. [laughter] No, no, not so large. It is just about half as large as Acca.

S. M. I knew it. There could be found no finer and more beautiful city than the one in which I have lived all my life.

A. B. ^{Good} Man! I just joked with thee. Let us suppose then one thousand countries as big as Syria are put together. If thou couldst conceive such a thing possible, then thou wilt have an idea of the bigness of America.

S. M. Now, you are joking, Effendi. How can such a thing be possible?

A. B. I assure thee, that this ^{is} a fact. ^{no more than a plain} But don't trouble thy mind. We are not going to quarrel about it.

S. M. Are the men in America just like us? Can there be found any ^{men}?

A. B. Yes, there are men, women and children also. Outwardly there are many resemblances but inwardly there are differences enough.

S. M. How is the weather in America? Is it as fair as the weather of Acca?

A. B. The weather in some parts of America is as fair as paradise, very revitalizing.

S. M. Are there gardens, flowers, trees and sea like ours.

A. B. Of course. you find all these in abundance and more than you can imagine.

S. M. Are there any calliflowers?

A. B. Yes indeed. There are cabliages, ^{also} parsley, beans, lettuce, turnips, radishes olive oil, chickens and eggs.

S. M. Ah Effendi! This must be a fine country to live in.

A. B. Wouldst thou like to go there?

S. M. What can I do in that far off land? Who will be friend me there?

A. B. My friend! Acca is the best place for both of us.

S. M. How are houses, the buildings in America? Are they as tall and large ^{as ours}

A. B. There are some houses 20, 30, 40 and fifty stories high, they are all lighted by electricity, people reach every floor by elevated, they have ^{bored} through the ground, built tunnels and constructed ^{under the sea, mountains and houses} railroads, they fly like the birds in the air, they swim like the fish under the waters, they have spanned rivers with iron bridges, they have founded factories where thousands of men work all day, their cities are like busy bee-hives, swarmed with millions of industrious, active men and women, boys and girls - just like ours - only ^{much} brighter, more intelligent, more alive to the spirit of this age.

S. M. I really did not understand all you said. I am a poor ^{man} and have seen nothing of this world, I cannot make money enough to buy bread.

A. B. God has fed thee on the bread of His Word. The holy Koran is the Word of God and on that thou hast sustained thy spirit during all these years.

S. M. Yes indeed. What thou sayest is the truth. Three years ago I saw thee in a dream while thou wert I suppose in America and I asked thee: 'what art thou doing here? Who has brought thee here?' and thou didst answer: 'God has brought me here and I am doing His work.'

A. B. This is true. God guided my steps to that country and I was

gaged in His Service.

M. Why didst thou not visited first the 'Illumined Medina, the sacred city of the Holy Prophet?

A.B. Did I not tell thee that God sent me there and if it is His Will I will also visit sometimes in the future the city of Medina.

During the day I saw the Beloved ~~me~~ 3 times and he was not unhappy nor unwell. He spoke in the morning about the complete interruption of the channels of news and the total lack of veracity shown on the part of the officials. Another time he was sure that the Love of God will conquer over all things and establish that inner, more spiritual communication between the hearts and will usher in the dawn of universal Peace. Again he was hopeful that the believers will be instrumental in serving the Cause and spreading the Teachings far and wide. This evening before Sheikh Inshamad entered the room he gave an informal talk to the believers which I may introduce herein as the closing part of this day:-

"This century is pregnant with the most mighty and world-reforming events. Now it is going through the painful throes of a new birth. The body of the world must go through these tortures and agonies; so that the beautiful babes of universal ideals may be born on the arena of existence. If a person desires to comprehend the wisdom of the present day events he must think of the past occurrences and realize how their ^{true} significances appear years afterwards. For example, let us for a moment consider the chain of events transpired from the beginning of this Cause. If His Holiness the Bab did not become the object of oppression and persecution and if he was not imprisoned and sent away from Shiraz to Agha Khan, then Teheran, Tabriz, and Isfahan and if he was not at last martyred for His Cause - the Truth would have not been established in Persia. At first it was very difficult to bear these trials but later on it became evident that every event no matter how slight connects these links into one strong, inseparable chain. Then, let us consider the sufferings and ordeals of the life of Baha Ollah who was at first thrown into prison in Teheran, then exiled to Bagdad, Constantinople, Adrianople and finally Acca. Now the wisdom of each of those mighty events

have become evident. If the Blessed Beauty was not exiled to Bagdad and did not stay 11 years, the fame of the Cause would not have become international. If He was not banished to Adrianople, the Great Tablets to the Kings and rulers would not have been revealed and then if He was not sent to Acca, the prophecies of the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled and the Principles of this Revelation would not have been promulgated in America and Europe. It is evident, then, that each one of these events - although considered a calamity in its own day - has played a most important part in the progress of the Cause and has enlarged the circle of its influence. These events form the essential foundations of the Movement and the chief landmarks of the onward march of the spirit of universalism.

"In a similar manner each one of the present overwhelming disasters contains a deep wisdom, which will become unveiled when this world-wide deluge is subsided. The Inward benefic force hedges forth in the garment of Appearances, often followed by convulsive extortions and exacerbating paroxysms. The change in the seasons of the year demonstrate this basic fact. When the season of winter draws nigh, the weather becomes little by little colder and more chilly, the trees become dry and their yellow and red leaves are fallen on the ground or blown up through the air by the force of the gales. The velocity of the winds is increased, and the verdant country divested of its emerald robe. The face of nature assumes a frosty aspect, its forehead furrowed by the dark wrinkles of barrenness. The beauty and charm of the country is vanished. Thunder and lightning, snow and hail, rain and storm, frigidity and iciness succeeds each other in varying degree and causing much discomfort and vexation. How a severe winter deals its cold blows unthinkingly on all those who comes across its path, unguarded and in a heedless manner, is well known to every person; and how the gardens and orchards are stripped of their alluring vestures are witnessed by all the lovers of spring! But when the balmy spring comes, we realize the results of the hard winter and behold with pleasure the rich colors of nature. Therefore we may liken the present state of the world to the winter but the spring, ah yes! the spring is coming, it is bound to come. Let us all think of the spring of mankind! How delightful! how soul-entrancing! How hopeful! How dimly radiant!"