

Home of Baha Ollah
 Acca Syria
 March 23d 1915

Dear friends!

It was not a regular bombardment but something akin to it. Many people in Acca and in Aboon Senan as well, heard its roaring, tearing, deafening boom, sat up and took notice. It was about 9 o'clock A.M. and lasted only half an hour. The hollow sound of the cannons came of course from the direction of Haifa but no warship was in sight. In the evening it was made all clear: The Army in Jaffa needed some barley. It would have taken too long a time to ship it by land, so the government had thought that it will be worth the risk to send two large cargo-boats by the sea. The boats had set on their sails and were already on the other side of the promontory of Mount Carmel, speeding toward Jaffa when a French warship appeared in the horizon and spotted them. Steaming toward ^{them} she made a sign that they should stop and surrender their cargo. The sailmen not relishing the idea of falling as prisoners of war into the hand of the Frenchman turned the prows of their vessels toward the shore, caused them to run into the sandy beach and with the help of a guard of soldiers stationed there emptied them of all the sacks of barley. The Captain of the warship realizing his failure in seizing them ^{opened} fire and threw about 130 shells, not exactly at them but at the shore. Several of them in their hot velocity reached the top of Mount Carmel, hit the roof of a house and ^{came} down to the floor with a crash, one destroyed a wall and many ^{houses} bored the soft sand and remained there, unexploded. The government has rescued them from their bed of sand and brought them to the city hall, no doubt as relics of "Turkish victory" to be heralded through the Agency tomorrow morning. There has ^{been} no casualty so far as the present reports are concerned. When the cannonading ceased, in one hour the warship was seen in the far off, rapidly approaching. She entered the harbor of Haifa and went very near the Port. The people were very much afraid, thinking that she will bombard the

town without doubt; consequently many of them ^{left} their homes and escaped ^{into} the caverns and other seemingly safe crevices, ^{in the mountains} but after a stay of 3 hours she raised her anchor and sailed off. The 30,000 soldiers drawn from the mass of population for the defence of the Syrian ports are drawing nearer and kept ready to repulse the "invaders."

This Morning the glad Countenance of the Lord shone upon us and the white doves of his words fluttered around the nests of our hearts. We listened to him with rapturous delight and were intoxicated with the wine of his explanations. We prayed for the attainment of his good-pleasure and supplicated for the privileges of service. As he was walking from one to the other end of the room he said in answer to a question: "My highest desire in this world is to be confirmed in the service of the Threshold of the Blessed Perfection. No other title or station is pleasing to me. Baha Ollah Himself has crowned my head with the Diadem of Servitude. I will not exchange this Crown of Bondage with that of Lordship, this mat of slavehood with the throne of sovereignty, this earth of meekness with the heaven of grandeur. Relationship with Baha Ollah does not amount to anything if it is ^{not} confirmed by the Graces of the Holy Spirit. His own brother, Subhe-Ezel opposed Him and constituted the point of negation. My brothers - Mirza Mahamad Ali and Mirza Badi-Ollah related the Covenant. The Bab was a descendant from Mohamad and amongst those who condemned him to death were those who claimed the same relationship. Christ's brothers left him and did not believe in him. In the days of Mohamad those who persecuted him and called him 'enchanted, bewitched, possessed and a sorcerer' were his own uncles and relatives. Therefore let not any considerations of physical relationship hinder you from recognizing the truth. In this Dispensation none of these matters have the weight of a mustard seed. Every person, no matter who he is - must be judged according to the standard of spirituality, sanctity, severance, attraction, fidelity to and service in the Cause - which he manifests in his daily thoughts, speeches and deeds. This is the unerring criterion and the searching test....."

Then turning his face to me he said: "I desire that thou mayst walk in my footsteps and follow my advice. I have ordained for thee a great station and that is no other than the station of service. Strive day and night that thou mayst attain to its loftiest height. Advance in the Cause, be thou permeated with the spirit of progress. Let thy reliance be ^{on} Baha Ollah. Be ^{thy} His servant. Hold in thy hand the flag of His army and let not the onslaught of the enemies discourage thee. Think of the promotion of the Cause of the Blessed Beauty, spread His Teachings, and unfurl His banner. Prepare thyself and be ready to arise in the service of the Lord of the worlds when the opportune time comes around, and the command is issued forth. Then thou must have no rest ^{and} seek after no abode save ceaseless activity in the spread of Truth and a constant longing after the Abode of Eternal Peace."

The Beloved alone is able to confirm me in the accomplishment of his wishes. I do not see in myself the power or capability. It is in his hand to harrow the ground, to sow the seeds and water them ^{with} the river of his Love. His is the right to confer and the authority to withhold. When I think of it, I am not worthy to stand in his presence for ^{even} one second, how much more to be addressed by him! His Kindness is indeed boundless and his loving compassion is immeasurable. Like a mountain of sins I raise my hand of supplication toward the ^{heaven} of his Forgiveness and similar unto a dry wilderness of transgression I yearn for the clear fountain of his pardon. I bow down ^{my head} in shame because I have nothing to offer worthy of his court of Purity. Like unto a broken-winged bird I am thrown into the dark well of ignorance and pray for the rising of the sun of righteousness with healing in his wings - thus I may be strengthened to soar toward the empyrean Palace of his Presence. My supreme longing is to sing the songs of his praise, to sweeten the tongues with the delicacy of his love, to universalize the sympathies with the sentiments of his humanity, to paint his portrait on the clean canvas of the hearts, to beautify the characters with the examples of his life and to ^{soothe} the believers in the spirit of his service.