

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
April 26th 1915

Dear friends!

The spiritual life of mankind is a panorama of ravishing beauty. Abdul Baha as the Divine Artist is leading them step by step to the height of the mountain of vision from which vantage-ground he may show them the charms of the ideal panorama. With inspired strength and super-heroic power he has ^{reached} the summit, but on looking around he sees no one but himself. With all his enthusiasm he beckons the stragglers to leave the foot of the mountain and rise higher and higher till they reach to his altitude but they are satisfied with their lots and saporific in their movements. Like unto the radiant spirit of paradise he is standing on the zenith, his feet hardly touching the ground, his body enveloped with the white clouds of revelation, ^{surrounded} with the bright angels of optimism - an ethereal figure betwixt the heaven and the earth, calling his fellow men to rise to his stature "Have courage, my friends" he cries aloud "Let not outside affairs distract your attention or unnecessary loads bend your backs and waste your energies. Free your limbs from trappings and encumbrances and rise to this pinnacle of matchless glory. Here you will see ^{spread} before your astonished eyes a scene of entrancing loveliness, a bird's eye view of that which is best and most holy in the complete landscape of the human life. There are azure lakelets in which are reflected the perfect, adoring image of heavenly Beloved; primeval forests of sturdy, vigorous qualities; unfading, green prairies of young hopes, budding aspirations and blossoming yearnings; cool, running brooks of crystalline thoughts and translucent precepts; verdant gardens of fragrant morals and conducts, rivaling those of Elysium and Hesperides; lofty mountains of heroic deeds and self abnegation rising their well-nigh inaccessible peaks and ranges to the blue dome of God; undulating hills and glades of divine arts and sciences increasing the rare attraction of the whole, deep valleys of eternal silence ^{and solid truths} filling the hearts with sweet contemplation ^{and} meditation; fairy palaces of supernal qualifications made ready for ^{the} habitation of the sanctified souls, singing nightingales, their mates

foreshadowing ethical progress and the enlargement of the circle of international sympathy, perched on the branches of every tree; altogether a delectable ^{scene}, a winning view, an enchanting spectacle, a delightful panorama." How ^{excellent} it would be if we could gather around us a band of the faithful, resolve to scale the mountain of self and reach the summit of selflessness! Where and how should we start? What are the means ^{for} this voyage? How ^{could} we prepare ourselves? Is the road fraught with dangers? Are wild animals lurking behind the precipitous rocks? Is the path plain or stony? Will you be ready? When will you make up your mind? We like to start very early, if possible before sunrise, - then our eyes will rejoice with a "new-appearing sight," - "the steep-up heavenly hill" bathed in the flood of the "gracious Light".

We must publish abroad the glad news that a new highway is in the process of construction. Laborers and materials are needed on every hand. ^{and the} early completion of the work depend on the number of the former and the availability of the latter. Their wages are given from the inexhaustible treasury of the Lord and their reward is to see the work progressing with visible speed. What a glorious privilege if we could join on our free accord the self-sacrificing band of the laborers and push forward this undertaking of Love! Would we not work joyfully, and gladly and consider ourselves fortunate in taking part in the building of the King's highway? Once it is finished many and innumerable companies of pilgrims will start to reach the top of the mountain. The journey will not fatigue or weary them; it will be rather a most pleasant excursion, because they will be singing the songs of thanksgiving and glorification. Without meeting the difficulties borne by the early pioneers they will find themselves resting on the summit. From that highest point they will look down upon the vast, sweeping panorama of the ever-varied spiritual life of mankind, feeling ^{something} akin to heavenly exultation and bliss. Then the spiritual astronomer will take them to his divine Observatory and let them see through his wonderful telescopes, the distant stars of truths studded in the bright firmament of the Cause.

This morning the Beloved walked in the garden for an hour and spoke with the number of friends who followed him at a distance. The sun was ^{shining} upon him and the roving, precious breeze played through his white locks. I was in my own room, writing, but his sweet voice reached my ears and now and then I raised my head and looked at his commanding stature, dynamic personality and rapid gestures. Then people from various grades of society called on him and he listened to the stories of each with unexampled ^{patience}. I feel sad to see so many poor women with no possible means of support. Their husbands are either dead on the battlefield or in the decimating ranks of Turkish army. From morning till evening they come to the Master's door with pale faces and hopeless stares. So many ^{of them} bring their small children to demonstrate to us the sincerity of their words. Our ears are filled with the cries: "Effendi, I swear by Allah, my husband is in the army, my father is in the army, my brother is in the army. For three days we have had nothing to eat. The government does not ~~do~~ anything for us. The Authorities have taken away our men, our breadwinners and left us to starve with hunger." What can the Master do with all these applicants? To each person a small sum is given but naturally not enough. The only solution of this complex problem is the establishment of peace and the return of normal business condition. Now every avenue of trade and commerce is paralyzed, the men are taken to the slaughter-house up to the age of 50 and 55, the locusts have come and left behind their blight and uncatalogued misfortunes appear almost every day. For these reasons we are all praying for the discontinuance of these catastrophes. The Master is beseeching at the divine Threshold almost every day and in this instance we follow him. This afternoon he went out alone and when he returned he caught me in the garden picking up a rose. "What art thou doing? Bring it to me." I took it to him and he inhaled its delicate fragrance. "I walked a very long way" he said "and I was thinking of the unrestrained mercy of God and the barbarism of men. He desired to fill the world with love but they have filled it with hatred. He wished them to drink the seraphic nectar of amity but they are drunk with the fetid wine of enmity. ^{become} ~~But that they may be released from the dungeon of self.~~"

This evening he sent for us and with happiness we sat in his presence. He spoke on the two Hague Conferences and how the world expected to see the organization of a third International gathering of ~~the~~ similar nature when the storm of the European war burst out and deluged mankind with blood. "The signatory Powers of the Hague Conventions" he said "did not abide by their own agreements. They violated in this last outburst of savagery every article of those carefully drawn, long-debated conventions. In the name of patriotism they have committed every shameful crime. They have been too willing to propagate those axioms and formulas which are injurious to others and beneficial to themselves but the principles insuring the welfare of mankind they have been too ready to throw them overboard. Instinctively the hearts of men are inclined to do evil, because they live in the material world, save those souls who through the fragrances of the Merciful are freed from the circle of the bestial nature. Were the world not enlightened with the coming of the prophets, were there not the teaching of the heavenly books, were there not the appearance of the celestial rose-garden, were there not the effulgence of the Love of God; the world of humanity would have been the world of animality, nay rather lower and baser. The holy Manifestations appear, the fragrances of God are diffused; - so that the world of humanity might be distinguished from the animal kingdom, the realm of darkness be transformed into the sphere of light, the gloomy earth be changed into the celestial universe ^{and} the carnally-minded become endowed with god-like sentiments. The philosophers claim ^{that} they also call the people to that which is praiseworthy and exhort them to shun evil. From what source have they learned this fact? If we investigate carefully we will understand that they have borrowed this very idea of good and evil from the prophets. The messengers of God have not come with the sword of war and division but with the olive branch of peace and union. Their mission is to bind and not to break, to heal and not to wound, to educate mankind and not to add to their ignorance, to pull them out of darkness and illumine them with the light of knowledge."