

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria
June 24th 1915

Dear friends!

Last night Our Beloved delivered a talk on the character and the life of Haji Mirza Mohamad Taki Afnan whose remains is buried in the Bahai cemetery in Haifa. He passed away from this life when the Master was in Tonon, Switzerland.

"His Holiness Afnan was a man of delightful character and sociability. He came to Bagdad where we lived there and visited the Blessed Perfection. With what attraction, enthrallment, joy and exhilaration he listened to the words of the Manifestation! He had such a mild disposition that all the people called him 'sweet Afnan'. He served the Cause of God in many ways. He was a blessed soul. From the beginning of his Bahai life to his last day he was thinking of the glorious Message. Not for one moment did he seek ^{personal} advancement and emolument. Not only in words but through his conduct, deeds, transactions and dealings he presented the spirit of the Cause to those with whom he came in touch. His movements led to the awakening of the people. After his visit to Baha Ollah in Bagdad and his arrival in Persia he devoted his time to the promotion of the Cause. Beside his innate enthusiasm and zeal he was a well-informed and learned man. A well-rounded equipment in various departments of life enables man to teach the Cause of God with greater effect and to a more heterogeneous audience. Thus his holiness Afnan taught his spiritual scholars with an eloquent tongue, a learned pen, with morals and deeds. All the enemies gave unstinted praise to the sublimity of his character and were charmed with his winning qualities, stating that in reality this personage is unique and peerless in his ethical life and is famous for his charitable deeds, actions, virtue, trustworthiness and faith; that in all these attainments he has no equal, but it is very regrettable that he is a Bahai. In their estimation this was his only sin. The underlying motive of this peculiar objection was however this: 'Why is he distinct from all the rest of us? Why

does he not take a part in our frivolities and stupidities? Why is he not heedless and negligent? Why is he not submerged in the sea of passion and desire? Why is he not a worshipper of self and ego?

"When he was living in Yazd he worked day and night for the benefit of his fellowmen. In reality, his very existence was teaching. He had no other intention save the promulgation of the Word of God and entertained no other hope except the diffusion of the Fragrances of God. His ultimate yearning was to attain to the nearness of the Threshold of the Almighty. The Blessed Perfection was very much pleased with him. Again and again I heard his praises from the Supreme tongue, expressing the utmost satisfaction concerning his manners and behaviour. This led me to the conclusion that he will become the centre of a great, noble and enduring work. After the ascension of Baha Ollah he manifested the utmost firmness and steadfastness in the Covenant of God and displayed greater zeal and eagerness in the service of the Cause. Although he had to meet many difficulties and surmount many obstacles yet he left his rest, comfort, commerce, possession and belonging and hastened toward Ashkabad. There he initiated and promoted the idea of the building of Mashrak al Azkar, interested the friends in this undertaking and spent his own money in its own construction. Truly he was confirmed by God in this most great service. He is the first person who undertook and laid the foundation of the first Mashrak al Azkar in the Bahai world and sacrificed his spirit, his heart and his possession in its construction. The most wonderful part of his life was that he succeeded in the thorough execution of his plan, preceded all the rest in noble activity and during his years of stay in Ashkabad rested neither by day nor by night and encouraged and incited the friends in the upbuilding of this divine Edifice. The believers also demonstrated great determination, opened their purses and contributed large sums for the carrying out of this heavenly object. In reality they contributed more than their ability and displayed magnanimous effort. Hence through their exertion that spiritual temple was raised

and its fame was spread throughout the East and the West. When he completed this mighty work, this stupendous undertaking he came to the holy land and with the utmost sanctity and holiness spent his last days in the neighborhood of the Blessed Sanctuary of Baha Ollah and the Tomb of the Bah. He was ever engaged in the mentioning of the True One and with tongue and heart commended him and prayed to the Almighty. His ^{pure} spirituality was an inspiration and the illumination of his consciousness an matchless example. In Acca and Haifa whenever I felt sad or grieved I sought his association and it was dispelled immediately, feeling joyous and happy. Praise be to God that while he was living in the most great neighborhood he ascended to the Kingdom of Abha. When I heard the news I felt sad because I was not here, but I prayed for him. Upon him be Baha El Abha and Upon him be greeting and praise!

This evening the Beloved called all the believers and delivered the following talk: "The conditions of the people are becoming more and more difficult. One can hardly imagine of more stringent circumstances. They are thrown in the devouring jaw of the beasts of persecution and tyranny. They are being consumed with the raging fire kindled by priestcraft and Kingcraft. All the doors of escape are closed before their faces. It is an impenetrable dark night and the people are grasping in it blindly. It is a tempestuous sea of hardships, bloodshed and carnage and men of all classes are weltering in it. It is a wild jungle of ferocious beasts and kinds of prey. Europe has become a dreadful slaughter-house and a charnel house. The battles which are being waged in these days are sanguinary in the extreme. The warring nations will be well nigh depopulated and their resources exhausted. They have offered the blood of millions of their sons at the brutish altar of their foolish ambition. All this struggle, for what? Who will gain in the end? None. They are all heavy losers"

Home of Abdul Baha
Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
June 25th 1915

Dear friends!

The order of meetings with the Lord is changed.