

Ramleh, Egypt
Oct 9th 1913

Dear friends!

"The world of humanity has two wings, one the male; the other the female. When both wings are reinforced with the same impulse the bird will be enabled to wing its flight heavenward to the summit of progress."

In the Bahai world the position of women is unique and unprecedented. Through the revelation of Baha-Allah the women of the East have gained their right position in society and day by day they are advancing along the paths of progress and refinement. They have shattered the cage of confinement and isolation and are freed from former restrictions. Many schools with a modern curriculum are springing up here and there to teach the future mothers of the East. We are in a transition period when old rules and established customs are put aside and progressive ideas are planted in the hearts and the minds. The complete emancipation of ^{the} women of the East will be realized through an evolutionary

process, step by step and not by a radical revolution. The most important Eastern problem as regards women and girls is their education and training; - so that they may fully realize the responsibility of their complete freedom once they attain to the degree of enjoying it. A hasty and radical change will be followed by chaos and disorder and no good will come out of it. The Western nations in a general way have a wrong notion about the status of women in the East because some of the prejudiced missionaries have depicted their conditions in the blackest manner. For example they have quoted the flimsiest and most doubtful traditions of Islam to show that the influence of Mahomads' teachings have degraded the women and have buried them alive behind the seraglio and Harem. "Women are the whips of Satan" is a pre-Islamic adage and was current amongst the Arabs before Mahamad was ever born. Or "When women was created the Devil said to her - You are half my army; you have my confidence, I need no better weapon." There are many

other statements such as these quoted by the Christian missionaries to demonstrate their ven-
 erous prejudices. These misrepresentations beset
 the heaven of fair judgment as to prompt a Canon
 of the Church of England to declare: "So little did
 the prophet reckon of women that she is never
 even mentioned in the Koran." Another English
 authoress announces: "The Moslem does not even
 attribute the possession of a soul to women".
 These allegations are not only unjust but cruel
 in their treatment and put the men of the East
 in a false position. In reality there are many
 sayings of Mohamad both in the Koran and
 traditions which prove the falsity of these
 accusations. In order to impress his followers
 with the sanctity and importance of the position
 of the Mother in the community he hath
 said: - "The Keys of Paradise are at your ^{mother's}
 feet." In the Koran he says: - "Associate kindly
 with women, for in them God hath placed
 abundant good." "He hath put love and
 tenderness between you." These sayings clearly
 show that Mohamad never commanded

the seclusion of women but on the contrary he enjoins upon his followers to "associate with them. Again he says: "The best men are those who are best to their wives and daughters. The best Muslims are those who best treat their wives". You will be no doubt surprised to know that Mohamad never commanded women to wear veils. On the contrary he says: "A woman should not show but her face and hands." But later on the Mohamadan priests and self-seeking clergy prevented women from being educated as the Ministers of the Christian Churches in Medieval ages monopolized learnings in the Convents and spread abroad the veils of the useful birds of ignorance and obscurantism. Another instance which more clearly shows that ^{the} veil is a social custom and not a religious creed is the following authoritative story about Mohamad and one of his adherents: - "When Al Moghera Ibn Sheba informed Mohamad that he was about to marry he asked him, 'Dost

you see her? "No," was the reply. The prophet then said, "you must certainly see each other before you marry". A new teaching of Mahamad against which the Arabs of the day were at first inclined to revolt is - "People! be humble before God, who hath created man and his wife of the same soul." Here is a declaration of perfect equality: "ye have rights over your wives and your wives have rights over you." Indeed an astonishing doctrine in that day and period.

On the other hand the ideal state of marriage has never entirely lost in the East. It was in the sixteenth century when Itharani who died in Cairo penned these imperishable words:- "We Sufis have entered into an engagement to espouse only one wife, and not to associate others with her. The man who has only one wife is happy A pure-hearted wife is a great happiness in the house. Oh! how often while I was weaving have I stolen a glance at my wife, the mother of my son, sewing garments for the poor, I understand then

that I have happiness in my house. Often she opened her larder and distributed its contents to the poor." I have already quoted from the Koran that Mohamad taught that men and women are endowed or created with the same soul. The following quatrain of Rumi, the celebrated mystic poet makes this point still clearer: -

Love and tenderness are qualities of humanity
 Passion and lust are qualities of Animality
 Woman is a ray of God, not a mere mistress
 The Creator's Self as it were, not a mere creature.

In conclusion let me quote another verse from the Koran showing how Mohamad looked upon this matter: - " Truly the men who resign themselves to God, and the women who resign themselves, and the devout men and the devout women and the men of truth and the women of truth, and the patient and humble, and who give alms and who fast and are chaste, men and women, and the men and women who often remember God; for them hath God

prepared forgiveness and a rich recompense."

These quotations and the innumerable others which will show you most conclusively how the Pure religion of Islam - free from the accretions of the Ulemas - look upon this rather important matter. Now for many ages past the Eastern women could not enjoy any educational facilities but through the Blessings of the teachings of Baha Ullah they are beginning to see the light and come out of their hard crusted shells. The dark ages are behind, the Century of light is ahead. For them there is no retrogression. They are pushing forward. They are hungry for knowledge. Their intelligence is quickened, their susceptibilities are refined, their progress assured, their future emancipation is certain. Step by step they climb the mountain of human rights and equality and soon they will take possession of the summit. Once they have gained the highest altitude they will stay there. They will be in full

command of the height and enjoy the fruits of their hard won victories. Baha-Allah is their Supporter! Abdul Baha is their Confirmer!

This morning the Beloved came to our house and stayed for a few minutes. Then he went out with Mirza Ali Akbar to see the new houses which he is going to rent for the rest of the season. This shows that we are going to stay here for a few months longer. In the afternoon Mir Sayad Hossein Afnan departed for Cairo, thus reducing the family of the Master but others may come next week from Haifa. Mrs Isabel Fraser departed for Naples and may return after a few days. About 5 o'clock the Master sent for Haji Mirza and getting into a carriage they drove toward the sea and the Beloved coming out of the carriage stayed near the shore for nearly one hour. Returning to the Victoria Hotel he sent for me. Mr Atwood's daughter, Helen 7 yrs old was brought in by Miss Heslop and the Master took her into his arms for a long time, calling her "my dear daughter. I love you very much" and giving her some money. Then he left for the house. We followed him to the door and he bade us farewell. I was very happy, because I saw him today.