

Bahai Fest

Mount Carmel Haifa, Syria

March 24th 1914

Dear friends!

Most interesting and significant Bahai personalities are living on Mount Carmel. Each one of them is a power in his own community and has done much to push back the frontier of ignorance and dispel the darkness of prejudice and spread the light of divine knowledge. N. R. Vakil of Surat, India is an energetic young Bahai. Born and bred in the close confinement and narrow circle of Hindu cast system, he has leapt out of the limited bounds into the broad arena of universal fellowship. He has broken the chains and fetters of ancestral traditions and hide-bound dogmas and is now soaring toward the shining heights of common brotherhood. He has a sunny nature and as the Beloved said "always smiles". He speaks the English fluently and writes it very perfectly.

Many articles written by him on the Cause have appeared in the English Press of India and there is ^{also} a very instructive pamphlet from his pen. He is set aglow with the fire of the Love of God and is a living example of the levelling power of the Bahai Revelation. He has already taught many souls and will teach more when he is back amongst his own people, burning with this holy yearning. What an illumined, loving, refined face he has! The first moment I looked into his face I loved him as one of my dearest brothers. Tonight I spent a delightful hour with him in my nest. My feeling towards him was mingled with the sweet fragrance of the roses, two large vases of which decorated my writing table. "My father" he said "is an orthodox Hindu and should he know that I eat at the same table not with a Mohamadan or a Zoroastrian but with a Hindu belonging to another cast ^{word} he will disown me for ever. Indian people are

divided into 4 great Castes, each one of which
 is subdivided into innumerable smaller
 ramifications. The members of these castes never
 associate with each other socially. Inter m-
 arriage is rigidly forbidden and close communi-
 cation not allowed. If a person ^{invited} his friend
 to dinner, he will set for him ^{a separate} table and
 he must consume his dinner all alone. The
 dishes ~~with which~~ ^{he eats} are ^{not} touched by the
 members of the family and are kept entirely
 separate. It is most difficult for you to
 realize the importance of caste. The caste
 rule ^{even} forbids a member to leave India. I have
^{three} four brothers, all of whom know something
 about the Cause but none of them ^{have} ~~has~~ yet
 accepted the revelation. He talked with me
 about many other things, about Hindu customs
 and manners. "Now" he said at last "praise
 be to God that I have become a Bahai. I love all
 the people and my highest wish is to serve

mankind. Our Cause is the Cause of salvation. All the people are eagerly expecting the arrival of the Master. We hope he will come to us and scatter far and wide the rays of the Sun of Reality."

In the morning the Master called into his Presence all the newly arrived pilgrims and Sayad Mohamed Mastafa gave a short, concise report of the work of Doctor and Mrs. Petersen in Bombay and Surat. They are teaching many new souls and are holding high the torch of Divine Guidance. Several petitions from most important Hindu personages were presented to the Master. "In India" the Beloved said "We need many able teachers who are familiar with the systems of Hindu thought and know the vernacular languages. Sayad Mohamed Mastafa is a perfect teacher. He fills all these requirements but we need many souls like ^{unto} him." Mrs. Stammers work in Karachi was also reviewed and many hearts were made very happy.

The Beloved praised Doctor Bahram and his active work in Surat. "He is attracted and enraptured and I hope he will make extraordinary progress in this glorious Cause."

After this meeting the believers gathered around our Indian friends and greeted them with love and genuine affection. Sayad Mostafa was the speaker of the hour and gave the highest commendation to the patience and perseverance of Mrs. Geringer in the proclamation of the Glad News of the Kingdom of Peace. "She has delivered a lecture before the Jain Students Association and all of them are greatly attracted to the Cause. The President of this sect has asked her to form classes for their women and teach them systematically. He has written a petition to the Beloved and has supplicated Him to go to India, saying the Master's arrival will confer a new life to the Indian people, that these teachings flowing from his lips will illumine their hearts. 'O Lord! We are

waiting' he says at the end of his letter

According to the Buddhist beliefs, they expected the coming of ^{the 5th} Budhas; four of these have appeared, the last one being Lord Gautama who appeared in India before Christ. They are now waiting for the coming of the fifth Buddha which, according to our interpretation, has been fulfilled in the Manifestation of Baha-Allah. Whenever we talk to them about the teachings in a general way they express the highest pleasure but no sooner we tell them ^{that} Mitra, the fifth Buddha has appeared ^{then} they ^{make} ~~take~~ ^{interesting} ~~expectation~~ ^{to it}. India is now ready for the Bahai principles.

The Master did not leave the house ^{today} and Gaemmagam and other officers called on him. The evening was spent quietly and sweetly with the Holy members of the family and thus there was no meeting; the believers ascended the mountain while a number of them were chanting improvised poems.