

Home of Baha - Olleh

Acca Syria. Nov 11th 1914

Dear friends!

In these days the Beloved, is in perfect good health and both in his talks and actions demonstrates a wonderful agility, confidence, joy and assurance. Through his magnetic personality he has caught and carried us into this atmosphere of serene trust and calm resignation. Although the tumultuous waves of revolutions and wars are rising around us and at every moment gathering momentum and force, now threatening and then roaring as the voices of many waters, yet we know that we are sailing in the Ark of the Covenant and he will guide us at last into the safe harbor. Daily and hourly the conditions are becoming more critical and the brutes of battles more ferocious, the noises of canons and machine guns more deafening, bringing to our ears tales of horror and unspeakable atrocity, but the Master continues to stay in Acca, consoling the people and encouraging those who have been left behind after the general exodus. Practically all the Bahais are safe and sound in Abou Senan, enjoying the fresh air of the Mountain and the spiritual association of each other. They like naturally to have the Beloved in their midst, especially the members of the Holy Family, but he would not go, his work is right here. What does he care about wars and rumors of wars? We may go in a few days to Haifa. Oh! I am so glad that the Master did not send me back to Abou Senan. I want to be right beside him during these days of change and turmoil and report his words and movements for the Bahai world. I felt I did the right thing to come.

In the course of his talks the Beloved, often nowadays, relate personal or historical stories and during the last two or three weeks I have gathered an abundant harvest. The Treasure of the Master's stories is simply inexhaustible and they bear always on the current events of the day and illumine the subject under discussion. Here I like to translate two more stories heard the other night. The first is about one of the Campaigns of Nabi.

In the battle of Khandag the enemies' hordes rushed forward and besieged the city of Medina. Mahamad and his companions were in the town and had no other ^{recourse} but to defend it. The prophet's uncle being amongst the enemies cut all the ways of communication and the innocent inhabitants were on the verge of starvation. All the foodstuffs were consumed and the animals killed to appease the appetite of the people. At last there was nothing to eat and the siege lasted long. Mahamad himself became so hungry that he had to tie a piece of stone on his stomach to alleviate the intestinal pain from lack of food. Circumstances assumed menacing proportions and the inhabitants were in a state of mutiny. A number of intriguers muttered amongst themselves 'Where are the fulfillments of all the promises of Mahamad? Verily God and his messenger lied to us. Where is the victory about which we were assured?' How can we interpret the verse of 'Verily our hosts are victorious over the enemies.' All these predictions were for no other purpose but to mislead us. At the time they were digging a trench. One of these intriguers was amongst the diggers. In the course of their digging they struck a big piece of rock. One of them went to Mahamad and asked him to come and with his presence inspire the workers to raise the stone. When the Messenger of God arrived at the scene and looked into their discouraged faces, he raised his cane and brought down forcefully on the rock while uttering these memorable words: - 'Verily the Empire of the Persian Monarchy is conquered and their countries subdued.' Again he raised his cane and striking the second time against the stone he said: 'Verily the Empire of Rome and its Emperors are vanquished and their forces defeated. I see with my own eyes these events coming to pass.' The intriguer hearing this outwardly impossible prophecy laughed and whispered to his friend who stood beside him: 'Pooh! The prophet is gone certainly mad. With what wild prophecies he is trying to deceive us and put hearts into our bodies. We do not dare to go a few steps beyond this place, but our holy prophet (saturnally) is conquering the Empires of Persia and Rome with the top of his cane! What ambitious dreams!'

Many years passed over this notable prophecy; Mohamad passed away from this life and the Khalif-generals conquered many countries and established the religion of Islam. Finally the Arabian Army defeated the forces of Persia and the palaces and treasures of the Monarchs of Iran fell into their hands. A number of their leaders were walking in one of the Persian palaces admiring the beauty and perfection of Persian civilization. The same old intriguer who had taken exception many years ago to the prediction of Mohamad while in the trenches of Medina was in their midst. Remembering now that significant prophecy he cried out: - 'Verily this is the fulfillment of what God prophesied through Mohamad, His prophet.'

"In short they carried away all the treasures of Persia and many rare and precious things. Amongst these latter ^{there} was ^{the white} Camphore of ~~one~~ Mesgal ^{of which} (a few grains) did cost at that time one dinar (more than five dollars). These semi-barbarous Arabs thought it is salt. Therefore they put part of it into their food. When they brought to eat there was no taste of salt in it. The funny part of this little episode lies in the fact that they sent for the Persian officers and accused them that their salt had no flavor. The Persians not knowing the situation protested against such ridiculous accusation and claimed that their salt had the same flavor as the salt of other countries. They asked the Arabs to produce it in order that they might test the truthfulness of their statement. When the so-called "salt" was brought forth they saw it is the white camphore of ~~one~~. When the mistake was explained, the ignorance of the Conquerors was established but they remained the undisputed masters of Persia for a long time."

Speaking about the war ^{in Europe} he said: - "His Holiness Christ has nothing to do with these warring nations they call themselves Christians. He is sad and unhappy over the ferocity of his followers. They attribute themselves to Christ but they are not fulfilling one of His laws. Christ never advised them to Kill each other and commit this universal murder."

I was called early this morning by Khosro. I hurried out of my bed and heard the Beloved wants to go to bath and has sent for me to ~~go with~~ ^{accompany} him. Although I went to the large public bath yesterday morning yet I thought it will be fine if I could go ^{also} with him. But some one had already told him that I have been in the bath. It was before sunrise when he came down from his room and welcomed us with his beaming, happy face. As he did not say anything I was encouraged to follow him, but at the door of the bath he turned to me and said: "I heard you have been already in the bath - so there is no need of your coming again." With this he entered the bath and I returned home. He was back after two hours and as he ascended the stairs he said: - "Well! these days we have nothing to do. We are closed in from all sides. Mirza Ahmad! What art thou doing? wilt thou not take a rest? Better days are coming. Be thou confident." He was out immediately afterwards, sitting inside a stall in the square and speaking with its keeper on current events.

For lunch time there was no one at the table except me. As I entered the dining room I found the Beloved sitting in his place. Laughingly he said: - "Come, sit down. Only me and thee are left behind. all the people are gone. We are alone. Come and be seated here. I have ordered for today an Arabian dish called 'Saheefat-El-Armaly'. It is cooked with green pepper and is very hot but it is delicious. I like it very much." Then we commenced eating. After awhile he asked me to order what I liked to be prepared for dinner. I did not know anything would do. No, he insisted that I must order it. I must not wait any longer. Then, I was obliged and asked the preparation of Pilaw and roasted meat. The Master hearing this, laughed and went on explaining to Khosro how to cook this special dish.

In the afternoon he called me into his room and dictated a long Tablet to the judge in Beirut concerning Bashir, numbering him amongst the Martyrs of the Cause. When Mirza Inoos ^{arrived} from Ahlan Senan he was given the Tablet to copy to be mailed this day. While I was there, a young Missionary came to see the Master and he spoke about the fear of the Christians

from the fanatical Muslims. The Beloved asked him about the former missionaries in their society and whether they are progressing. He told him that all the English Doctors who were in Palestine have left their posts and almost no activity is visible in their communities. They are all on the edge of what is going to happen tomorrow. Then they spoke about plants and their efficacies in therapeutics; the war and ~~the~~ New York skyscrapers and other interesting subjects.

Before dark he sat a long time in front of the house and talked with a Syrian Orthodox about the latest news of the war. Then coming up, he entered the room and asked the believers to be seated. For more than two hours he spoke, now about the underlying cause of the present, then a number of stories and the life of one of the old Bahais. Because something had happened against his explicit command he said:— "Whenever I say something and ask a friend to carry out a matter, he must do it just as I have planned it. He should not ^{let} any outside influence change his course. He must walk in the path ^{that} I have laid out for him. This will insure him success. If I say to so and so, go and sit outside the door, he must know this is the best thing for him. He must not start thinking why should he go there why should ^{he} do this? If so, I must then explain to him the reasons for my orders and I have not time for it. Whatever I say depends upon wisdom."

While we were eating he came in and seeing the large hanging lamp extinct he said:— "Khosro, this lamp is the souvenir of Mohamed Mastafa, the father of Doctor Bagdadi. Undoubtedly clean it tomorrow and put oil in it and light it every night. His lamp must be alight all ways. Oh Mirza Ahmed! Thou canst not realize what a blessed holy man he was! Until his last breath he was serving the Cause of God. He had no other thought or ambition save self-sacrifice in the Path of the Merciful. He served the Cause with wonderful zeal and patience. If I want to speak about his many services to the Cause I will have to write a book."