

Moonbeam Bahai Cabin
Abaa Senan, Acca, Syria
December 14th 1914

Dear friends!

How wonderful it is that we are again on the top of the mountain in the heart of a peaceful abode, where the shepherds roam with their flocks and direct like play on their flutes, while the sheep and the goats, the cows and the horses gaze on the side of an undulating hill or in the hollow of a ravine! Imagine me sitting on a rock, beside a simple-hearted shepherd, who is all innocence and trust, he ~~continuing~~ playing on his flute and I, writing my Diary. A scene of quiet beauty and silent grandeur is spread before my eyes. There is nothing to interrupt the spiritual peace of the mind, the inter-play of the underlying forces of nature. Behind ^{me} there are hills upon hills which are cut by deep ravines; on the top of many of these hills are small villages whose inhabitants are Moslems, Jews, Christians and Druses; one of these villages is called "Yerkesh" visited by the Blessed Perfection two or three times. These hills are very rocky and scantily cultivated but they are well-fitted for big olive and fig orchards. This is now the beginning of the spring in Palestine and all these mountains are clothed with green mantles because of frequent rainfalls. Before my eyes is stretched the plain of Acca interspersed with gardens and fertile ground. Ba-hajee and Acca and its bay and Mount Carmel are in plain sight and the calm blue sea is like an unruffled lake. It is here and on such divine hour that one feels keenly the alluring charm of nature and notices the flight of a bird, the buzzing of an insect, the gentle waving of the fresh grass caused by soft breeze, the whiteness of the clouds, the cerulean color of the sky, the singing of a nightingale and the slightest motion in nature is observed ^{and enjoyed} with a rapturous delight. Indeed a touch of nature makes all the world kin. It is this oneness of life that must teach us tenderness, love, sympathy and kindness towards all the creatures. This truth is so plain that it does not need any explanation. We are all one, and an injury to a man in England or in France or in Germany or in any part of the world is a real injury against me. The essence of our lives must be kneaded with this Universal Oneness of all phenomena.

When this morning I entered the room of our Beloved he asked me to sit beside the tea service and serve the friends. Outwardly I did not know that we are going to Abou Senan today, but so it was decided later on. ~~intending~~ Having drunk our tea the Master gave me a letter just received from Hague, Holland, enclosing a personal letter from Mr Henry J Van Ginkel and the manifesto of the new society founded on the 8th of October 1914 by the name Nederlandsche Anti-Oorlog Raad. [Dutch Anti-War Council] Mr Ginkel himself according to the list of officers is an active member as the "Representative of the Bahai Movement in Holland" and the object of the Council "to draw the attention of world-wide famous international lawyers, economists, sociologists and the leaders of mankind to the discussion of preparing a plan to be presented to the warring nations after the war. The said official communication argues especially the necessity of concentrating the forces of Peace Societies so that they may be prepared in due time for the international action and efficient reform when the peace negotiations have begun. This is a far-reaching and ambitious scheme and when I translated part of its contents to the Master he was very pleased with its sane and practical suggestions and wished the Council every success and accomplishment. Every Bahai living in the Western world must get a copy of this Manifesto and cooperate individually and collectively as far as possible to ease the world from the insanity of armaments. The Master said: "Every Movement that strives to serve the world of humanity and advance the general happiness of mankind is serving Baha Ollah but now the time has come that all the national and international Societies working for the realization of Universal Peace concentrate their forces in one focal centre so that the desired and supreme result be achieved. So far the lack of cooperation between the various Societies and the activities of influential individuals has been very deplorable but all the interested persons hope the ^{future} policy will be a broad, international co-operation and not petty rivalries and unproductive structures."

Mr Ginkel in his letter to the Master says: - "your servant H. J. Van Ginkel begs to draw your attention to the enclosed letters to show what is done in his country for the after-war state, and hopes that it

may have your blessing and that you will support us by your great influence. He fears your work will be difficult even where you are, now that war is also raging in these parts. But Allah will keep you to lead our work now when it is most needed and certainly will bear fruit. This crisis has sounds like the bursting of seeds in the ploughed ground and soon there will be a great green field, the color of hope covering the newly-prepared ground.

It was very significant that while I was reading these peace propositions to the Beloved Khawro brought the word that the warship of yesterday has again appeared in the harbor - thus from the world of the ideal we were brought in touch with the realm of the actual - the two opposing each other with main and force. About noon two small submarines were lowered in the water, one swimming fast towards Aden, another going in a straight line to Haifa. This raised the fear of the inhabitants and I joined a crowd of more than five hundred wild, fearful men on the roof of the Inn, pointing out the submarines whenever they appeared on the surface. Their mission was however one of search under the water to find out whether there are any mines. Sheikh Salmen had come from Aden, begging the Master to leave the town, because all the members of the Holy Family and the believers will not sleep if he stays in Aden. The Beloved did not want to go, preferring to stay where he was but our Sheikh continued his pleadings till he gave his consent to leave at 3 P. M. He told him that nothing is going to happen at this time, that the present object of the cruiser is to seize the German ship which has been in the harbor since the beginning of the war but he would not listen. After lunch the Master slept for an hour and then told Khawro and me to be ready. It was exactly at three o'clock that the carriage pulled out of the stable and we started our ride to Aden. The road was very muddy, the mud stuck to the wheels like glue and formed large, revolving fans. In some places the wheels entered into the marshy, untried ground up to their axis. The poor horses strained and perspired and panted, beads of perspiration falling from their bodies. Khawro thought better to come down and walk to lighten the carriage somewhat, but the road was so detestable. Every hundred or 200 steps the Master asked Isfandiyar

to stop the horses to rest. On the way we saw an Arab woman with bare feet wading through the mud and slush and on her head carrying a heavy bundle of wares. This the Master asked her to put in the carriage. Finally Safarideya had become ^{desperate} and encourage his 'dear horses' to reach the Olive grove, because there the road would be passably well. On the way while the horses were pulling the carriage with all their force the Master said :- "Once I had engaged a carriage to go to Tiberias ^{difficult} For several nights days it was raining very hard and we anticipated a ^{difficult} passage. Night overtook us and the rain started with great force. Our horses were not used to such severe passage, And besides this, the driver lost the way in the gloomy darkness; thus we were caught in a bog and apparently there was no way ⁱⁿ ~~out~~ ^{of} ~~the~~ ^{it}. The driver was, however, a resourceful man and told us that by the indication of this morass there was a village three miles south of it and that if we permitted him he would go and find a way of freedom. For more than three hours we sat in the carriage stuck in the mud, while the rain was descending heavily. Then we heard the voice of our driver and a lot of peasants. They were about 30 men as I found later. All of a sudden they raised our carriage out of mud and carried it on their shoulders all along the way till we reached the village. Here they prepared for us a warm room and a hot dinner and entertained us with genuine hospitality.

Long before Khassro had reached Abou Senan and informed the friends about the Belonds' coming. Sheikh Saleh thinking that perhaps our carriage will be stuck in the mud had sent for 30 men and were ready to start when they saw us from far. All the believers had come down the mountain to welcome the Master. Our baggage were distributed amongst the Disciples who were gathered to pull up the carriage out of the mud and the Belonds rode on a horse and all together started our upward ascent.

In the evening he came down in the reception room of ^{Saleh} ~~Sheikh~~ ^{one} ~~Salah~~ and gave two informal talks, ~~about~~ ^{one} to the believers and another to the Arabs. His Arabic talk was very lengthy and stirring on the unity of mankind and ended it in the following words :- "What is the real object of religion? Is it life or death, unity or enmity, strangeness or fellowship, Peace or ^{war} ~~war~~, Union or separation, love or hatred? Every fair minded person testifies that it is the first qualities but mankind has ever chosen the latter with evident loss of life and destruction."