

Home of Baha Ullah
 Acca Syria
 December 31st 1914

Dear friends:

Haji Sayad javad arrived to day from Port Said in quest of news. For the last two months all the means of communications have been cut asunder between Turkey and Egypt and all the eastern and Western believers, metaphorically speaking, have been storming at the gate of Port Said for definite news about the whereabouts of the Beloved. Because they did receive not even a shred of news they had let their imaginations invent fearful things. Knowing the whimsical caprices of Oriental governments and how this movement has fared in the past and its founders subjected to martyrdom, exile and persecutions they had thought that a similar program is put into execution and the Master and those who are around him are banished to a distant part without letting the world know anything about it. When Haji Sayad javad left Port Said, he did not know exactly what it will become of him, whether he will be allowed to land or taken ^{as a prisoner} or sent back on the same steamer without accomplishing his object. He did not know where the Master is, where the believers are, whether we are all alive or dead or missing. Letters and cablegrams from the assemblies of the Orient and Occident sent to Port Said insisted to know something, no matter how meagre, about the dear Master and Ahmad Yazdi could answer none of them, because he himself was anxious as much to get a word from the head ^{quarter} and there was no human agency whatever. He did answer that he has received no news from the Beloved for the last two months and does not know where he is, the believers would have become wild with frantic fear. As it was he waited and waited and when even the capital of his patience was consumed, he sent our friends at the risk of everything to find out what is going on behind the scene and how it fares with Abdul Baha. The expectation had become so tense and unbearable and the imaginary consequences so great that the believers of Shiraz had sent some one to Port Said especially to find out what has happened to the Master. As one of them had given vent to the bitterness of his soul: "if this is civilization a thousand maledictions be upon its head".

Haji Sayad Jawad has not brought with himself ~~not~~ even one letter but ^{he} tells me they are piled up in the office of Ahmad Yazdi and nearly two bushels of newspapers and magazines are awaiting our reading faculty. The Post office censors open all the letters and newspapers coming from Europe, ^{America} and Asia and after reading each carefully, if they do not object to any of its contents they deliver them to their recipients, otherwise they are quietly destroyed without any compunction. It is most difficult to know ^{when} this blockade will be raised. It may take all this winter and then run over into the ^{next} spring. Just as the believers are so anxious to get the news of the Master he is looking also to the time when these national prohibitions are abrogated and the Bahai world again united with the golden thread of international correspondence. Although the outward connection is broken yet we are all sailing in the Ark of Bahai love and fellowship. Ours is the ideal union of the hearts and the souls. Because the foundation principle of our lives is one and the same, appearances which are illusive are always brushed aside. We are all the dwellers of the Kingdom of Abha, and therein separation does not exist. The same light illumines our path, the same aim prompts us in the service of humanity, the same object wins our adherence to the cause of international arbitration, the same ideal leads us into the battlefield of self-sacrifice and the same inspiration ^{con}vinces us to go out into the world and deliver the message of the Kingdom of God. Under the Universal Flag of Baha Ollahi we are all one, united and agreed, fighting against the Devil and the combined powers of the flesh. We have forgotten everything save His love, abandoned every affair save His Cause, have turned away our faces from every direction save His Countenance. We have dedicated our lives to the service of His Threshold. We are the lovers of His beauty, seek after His good-pleasure, and wander in the wilderness of His freedom. Baha we know, Baha we love, Baha we adore and the Glory of Baha we witness in Abdul Baha. This is our path. This is our faith. This is the honor of the Bahai world and to this carrying out of this lofty resolution we consecrate our god-given faculties and abilities.

It was about 12 P. M. and we were going to sit at the table for our lunch when Haji Sayad Javad entered the room. The Master exclaimed in great surprise by "Oh! O — he! it is you. How did you manage to come?" Then while we sat around the table he related to our fascinated ears the news of the Cause and the utter anxiety of the friends and what is going on in Egypt and the minute preparations the English government has undertaken to meet the Turkish Army when they reach the frontier. When the Master retired to get his siesta we again sat around the newsman hearing the news and telling him the news, because he is going to leave tomorrow for Portland to forward the news of the good health of the Beloved to the Bahai world. The Master saw him alone in the afternoon and then sent him for the night to Akbar Serran — so that he may meet also the holy family and the believers.

In the evening the Beloved gave a short talk on spiritual happiness and how we must live above the pains and joys of this material world and live ever in the station of unchanging devotion to the grand and noble aim of life. He illustrated his ^{talk} putting ^{examples} out of the inexhaustible storehouse of his own rich life and pointed out the clear path of sublime serenity in the midst of conflicting obstacles and stumbling blocks. It was indeed a fitting prologue to the great, ^{sealed} book of the coming year and an appropriate epilogue to the historical year whose book will be closed tonight at twelve. The year 1914 was probably the stormiest year that this old earth had ever witnessed in its most eventful career and we are being ushered into the dark vest of a new year with doubt and hesitation as to our future. Looking back upon the records of the past twelve months I wonder what tangible services the believers have rendered to the great Cause of human brotherhood. Of course we cannot judge and weigh the facts presented in their universal relations to each other, because we are living too much near our time and often a small action unnoticed by us will assume great importance in the eyes of the future generations. We have done what we could and we hope in this year we will right the mistakes committed consciously or unconsciously.