

Home of Baha Ollah 14
Acca Syria
January 7th 1915

Dear friends!

As long as Abdul Baha lives in this home it is a sea of spiritual susceptibilities and a rose-garden of fragrant emotions. Because it has been for years the residence of his heavenly Father he is peculiarly attached to it. Often have I heard him expressing his preference for it above all other places. Wherever we go he turns his thought to this home and longs to be back in the holy room wherein the Blessed Beauty spent his days and received the believers. The sweetness and spirituality of those days are ^{ever} present in his mind and his own resemblance to Baha Ollah makes us realize more vividly the joy and ecstasy of the Glorious Age of the Manifestation of God. It is so peaceful and quiet to live here and associate day and night with the Beloved. In the future, mankind will journey from the four ends of the earth and come to Acca to visit this Home, pray in its rooms and inhale the spirit of the Founder of the Universal Religion. They ^{will} remember these days of the Centre of the Covenant and how he spent his divine life upon earth and amongst the inhabitants of this small town; they ^{will} yearn for a glimpse of these hours and wish they had been born in this Cycle of the Sun of Reality. They will wonder at the obtuseness and heedlessness of their ancestors who were so deaf as not to hear the sound of the trumpet in the day of resurrection. In order to console themselves they will relate with thousandfold accompaniments the joyous story of the sublime lives of Baha Ollah and the Interpreter of the Book. They will construct the most costly palace on the spot of this home and cover its doors with precious jewels and valuable gems. But even those things shall pass away, while the memory and blessings of these days shall last for ever and ever. Those who have lived in this century, looked into the Countenance of the Beloved, recognized him as the Centre of Light, advanced toward him with childlike hearts, dedicated themselves to the service of the Cause of his Father - they are the ones who have carved the hall of precedence from the field of humanity.

Another historical Bahai home is the home of the Bab in Shiraz. In the estimation of the Bahais it is one of the most sacred places in the world. It belonged to the father of the First Point and it came to him as an inheritance. He was born there, reared there and grew to manhood there. It is a small house of three rooms, a balcony and a small courtyard. For years after the martyrdom of the Bab the home was neglected and on account of the fanaticism of the people very few dared to approach it, ^{even} by sight and still fewer by day. Then Baha Ollah revealed a long Tablet of visitation for it and instituted ^{it} as a holy place of Pilgrimage for the friends. Several years ago Abdul Baha, hearing that the Home was in a dilapidated condition, contributed a specified sum and requested other believers in Persia to do the same, - in order to repair it. In this manner 2 or 3 thousand dollars were collected and a complete overhauling was given to the home with a scrupulous regard to the original architecture. The guardianship of this Blessed Home is in the hands of the Afnans - the relatives of the Bab, several of whom are living in an adjoining house. On feast days, such as Now Rouz and ^{and especially the anniversary of the Bab} Rizevan, the believers gather in the Home, read the visitation Tablet and commemorate these occasions with much solemnity and spirituality. Of the objects that are of real interest in this Home is the orange tree in the small courtyard planted by the Bab himself, the blossoms and the fruits of which are carried away by the visitors as precious mementos. Of the furniture which belonged to the room of the Bab, the rugs, the curtains, the Samavar, the tray and a few other things can be seen. They are brought out and ^{exhibited} only on very rare occasions. If the visitor is very persistent and one of the old and tried faithful he will be shown as a distinct privilege the Aba, the robes, the shirts, ~~the~~ ~~shirts~~ and ~~the~~ other sacred relics ^{of the Bab}. And last but not least he will brighten his eyes by looking at the blessed writings of the Bab which form the most priceless part of the inestimable treasure guarded with a whole-hearted precaution. To complete this inadequate description I would like to add that just outside of the city of Shiraz there is a small grove, containing, I believe a number of Acacia trees where almost every day the Bab used to come out and walk. This place can be seen till this day and is known by the name 'Goudé' - Khazeenah.

Another house which is the object of the greatest veneration on the part of the Bahais is the house of Bagdad in which Baha Ollah and his family lived over eleven years. He was exiled from Teheran on October 14th 1853, arriving in Bagdad some months afterwards. The river Euphrates divides that city into two sections ^{called} the old and the New Bagdad and these two banks are united by a peculiar ferry-boat bridge which is often washed away by an inundation. The Blessed Perfection lived in a house in the "old Bagdad". The story of this house is a long and complicated one. For the present it is in the grip of a ^{strong} litigation. The enemies have put their avaricious hands on it and wish to sell it to the strangers. Moreover, almost all its rooms have fallen to ruin and very little ^{has} remained of its former form and appearance. My prayer ^{is} that God may inspire a soul to come to the rescue of this "the Greatest House" as ^{it is} called by Baha Ollah, take it out of the clutches of the outsiders and restore it to its primal architecture. There are now quite a number of people still alive who can draw the original design, not to mention the Beloved but after this generation there will be no one to recall it. The other day the Master told me that if he had time or opportunity he would go himself to Bagdad and arrange this important matter. Personally I hope some one from amongst the believers will arise in the accomplishment of this service. All through the future ages the Bahais will remember him with gratitude and thankfulness and praise his vision and foresight in thus bequeathing to posterity this divine edifice where the Appearance of the King of Kings spent the early portion of His exile. May God raise such a servant in accord with His Will.

According to the Orthodox calendar this was ^{the} Christmas ^{of that year} day, and the Beloved was out from morning till noon paying calls on his Christian Orthodox friends. When I saw him in the afternoon he was very sad and pensive, because he had seen so much misery and poverty in the homes. "It did not seem to be a holiday" he said "it was as though all the people were in mourning." In the evening several Christians and Mahamadaus called on him and thus we were deprived of the light of his face. Instead he sent down a tray of mandarines to be distributed amongst the friends.