

Home of Abdul Baha
 Mount Carmel, Haifa, Syria
 January 31st 1915

Dear friends!

"God has created me to teach mankind the law of unity and agreement and instruct them in the principles of love and amity. My mission to the people is to make clear to them that fellowship is better than enmity and co-operation preferable to competition." The above were the words of the Beloved to Doctor Getzinger this noon in a lengthy interview. Doctor Getzinger unfolded to him the plan of Haifa Relief Fund from the beginning to the end and how he has brought with himself about \$1000 for the maintenance of the poor. Gently and lovingly he refused to accept the money and directed our brother to take back the sum to America and reimburse it to their respective contributors. This, he thought, would be better and more in accord with the spirit of the Cause. He would not think to accept one cent and he was assured that God will take care of the poor of Haifa and Acca. There must of a surety ^{be} much sufferings amongst the poor of the United States or some needs for financial assistance to be given to various Bahais Assemblies to further their work and publish their literature. The donors may do something in these lines if they are inclined to do so. Then, because, there was an Italian steamer leaving for Alexandria at 5pm, the Master told him to ^{be} prepared ~~himself~~ ^{to} leave the country, before certain complications owing to his presence in Haifa, may crop up and bring about unavoidable difficulties. At three P.M. he called at the Italian agency, secured his ticket and returned to bid his farewell word to the Beloved. He was in his own private room and there, our brother received his blessings. "Convey my wonderful Bahai greeting to all the Bahais in America" were the last words of Abdul Baha. Afterwards we heard that he had again some difficulties in the Custom house but the American Consul had come to his assistance and he boarded the steamer safely. I hope he will reach his destination without any mishap and carry to the friends the holy Fragrances of the Spirit.

Herein I may translate a beautiful story about severance related by the Beloved in the course of his conversation the other night:- "Mulla Haggami writes in his book: 'When I completed my education in the University of Bokhara and gained mastery over the various branches of philosophy and jurisprudence, I heard that a devout, holy man lived in Neishabour whose severance and sanctity was the topic of discussion in all the religious circles. I said to myself: now that I have finished my studies and have learned all that ought to be learned, it will add to my knowledge and increase my wisdom if I take a trip to that town and meet that blessed man. Having made all the necessary preparations I rode on my little donkey and started on the long voyage. Long before I reached Neishabour I saw fertile fields, grazing herds of sheep, goats and cows, fruitful gardens and prosperous-looking villages. I inquired from my fellow-travellers to whom these lands, orchards and herds belong. They all unanimously answered: they are the possessions of the 'Holy Man' living in the city. I was rather astonished at their answer, knowing by experience how incompatible is the possession of such vast holdings by a holy man! I thought that wealth and detachment are two opposite poles that can never meet each other and therefore if this man of God was really severed, how could he be possibly so enormously rich! These doubts suggested to my mind made me more curious and eager to see the holy man and converse with him. When I entered the city and inquired about his address they directed me to a wonderful palace built in the centre of the town. This added to my bewilderment and amazement. Entering the palace I was welcomed by the 'holy man' and asked to be his guest as long as I intended to tarry in the city. He was pleased with my conversation and invited me to attend his dinners every night. Often we spoke together on deep, philosophic and abstruse subjects till past midnight and little by little became very attached to each other. One day he asked me to take a walk with him through the country. On the way we spoke about the pilgrimage to the holy Mecca. He praised the manner and the devotion of the old Pilgrims with staff in hand, making the journey to the holy Shrines on foot. He delivered himself of the opinion that throughout all his life he has been longing to

to visit Mecca. Realizing how vast was his resources I thought how excellent it would be if I could travel with him and therefore concurred with his ideas and attolled his resolution. 'This is an excellent plan' I said 'It will indeed give me much pleasure to accompany you on your journey.' He did not say anything but continued in his walk till it was almost dusk. Because immediately after a few minutes of silence we became so absorbed in the question of pilgrimage I did not realize that we were getting miles and miles away from the city but the coming darkness brought it home to me. I asked him: 'Where art thou going, my friend?' 'To Mecca' he answered calmly. 'What' Gracious heaven! Who has ever heard that one of your station and affluence will ever travel like this? 'Didst thou not hear me praising ~~the~~ the old pilgrims?' 'yes, but that was an ideal picture of bygone ages. No one would ever dream to travel like them nowadays. Beside these considerations you are a wealthy man and every one expects that you should travel in accord with your means.' 'No! I like to travel in this manner. Come on, my friend, in an hour we shall reach a small village. We will rest there for the night, ~~and start~~ refresh ourselves from fatigue and start on our way the next morning.' 'This will never do. We have taken nothing with us. Let us return and prepare the means of this long voyage in a befitting manner.' 'I cannot accede to thy request, if thou desirest to return, thou mayest do so, but I must go on.' 'Then let me go and bring my donkey.' 'What' Art thou so attached to thy donkey that thou canst ^{not} leave it behind, whilst I have left everything palace, villages, comfort and wealth? Hast thou not yet learned the lesson of severance? 'Still I could not believe that he really meant all this, so I resolved to return to the city and wait there till he was over his peculiar whim. I bade him farewell and he continued his solitary journey. I was a guest in his palace for two years and then he came back - having fully performed his pilgrimage. This action of his convinced me, that although he was very rich still he was the most detached man living in that age. He had everything but he had attained to the station of sacrifice; I had nothing - only a donkey - yet was I attached to it."