

Home of Abdu'l Baha
 Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria
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Dear friends!

Peculiar customs and strange habits characterize each religion and nation and this statement is amply demonstrated to the students of ancient mythologies and hoary systems of the old world. The Zoroastrians and the Hindus have such unaccountable rites and spurious ceremonies that one could not believe they are true, if he did not hear them related by the Bahais belonging to these religions. They appreciate more than anything ^{else} the universal toleration and spiritual catholicity of the Bahai Dispensation, because for years they have kept fast in the grooves and fetters of these servile usages and degrading observances. For the last two days one of our Zoroastrian Bahais told us so many of their inner, mystic rites of his former religion that I am ashamed to write them down but doubly thankful that the Sun of Reality hath shone forth to scatter the gross darkness of superstitions. The religion of Bahá-Allah is purified and cleansed from all human ignorance and limitation. Like unto a virgin ^{Bride} it has descended from the heaven of the Divine Will. It is the new Jerusalem established not only on the face of the earth but in the hearts of men. It is the tabernacle of testimony and the Rose of the Paradise of Abha. How glad and happy each one of us must feel that God has taken us out of our damp, narrow, dark prisons and suffered us to enter into the spacious hall of His nearness! This a celestial Mercy on His Part and a bright Bestowal through His Generosity; otherwise no one could gather us under the tent of this ideal fraternity and no power could unite us with this strong bond of spiritual relationship. The religion of the Blessed Perfection like unto a beautiful, soul-refreshing spring is vitalizing in its effect, rejuvenating in its influence, beneficial in its results, holy in its aspirations and uplifting in its sway. Those who have embraced it have experienced this wonderful, beatifying exhilaration and know that they are moving in a new world - broad as heaven and limitless

Today the Beloved was out most of the time and about noon our dear brother returned from Abou Senan. When they arrived the Master was walking in the avenues of the garden, breathing the fresh, odorous air of the mountains and speaking with us on the innocence and beauty of the flowers. For nearly one hour he walked. Now he was silent and again discoursing on the wondrous majesty of nature, reminding us of the deep meaning underlying the beautiful couplet of Sādi :-

"To pious ~~and~~ minds each verdant leaf displays,

A volume teeming with th' Almighty's praise."

Thus we spent many sacred minutes in his company and gathered many pearls ^{falling} from his soul-speaking lips. Soon he left us to our own murings and thoughts of him. The foundation of speech is the irresistible working of the power of silence and I have learned to love those minutes which are devoted to the inner communion of the spirit. Concentrated mental activity is the root of the tree of accurate intelligence and words, utterances, written or oral are the blossoms thereof, while deeds and accomplishments are the fruits. Through the process of silence, thought is refined and etherealized, filling the valleys and mountains with its reverberating echoes and the hearts with its dreams and fantasies. In silence we find our strength, build up our wasted constitution and store energies for future wants. Silence must be productive and not barren, dynamic and not static, active and not passive, positive and not negative. There are periods designated to silence ^{as well as to} ~~and~~ speech. We must know when it is necessary to speak and when to keep silence. Thus Sadi says in the following Stanza :-

"Silence is mannerly, so deem the wise,

But in the fitting time use language free;

Blindness of judgment just in two things lies,

To speak unwished, not to speak unseasonably."

In the evening the Master sent down our brother Mirza Jalal to take us into his presence and we obeyed his order with unfeigned pleasure and delight. At first he spoke about

the successive invasions of ^{Persia by} many barbaric tyrants of the old, such as Chingiz Khan, Tamerlane, Nadir Shah, Afghans etc. They laid waste the entire country, depopulated the cities, pillaged the entire belongings of the people and made captives the daughters and wives of the conquered. Then he dwelt on the present bloody drama which is being enacted by heartless and cruel actors all over the world:-

Truly I say this is the most prodigious catastrophe and the most ill-boding calamity which has ever taken place on this globe. According to a number of reports already more than 2 millions souls are killed and wounded. Consider for a moment what mad and awful frenzy has taken possession of the hearts of men that they are murdering their own brothers with this amazing rapidity. What is this malignity, this rancor, this maliciousness! The inhabitants of the whole world are thrown into the melting pot of tribulations and afflictions. This adversity is so overwhelmingly huge that it has cast a spell of torpor and stupefaction over all the senses of people. Their sorrows and sufferings ^{are} so out of all proportions that nothing can comfort them. For this reason their lamentations and cries are raised to the throne of the Almighty, begging for succor and assistance. Whenever ~~the~~ mankind live in accord with their own passions and desires and give the reins to the baser propensities of their natures, this world becomes worse than the 'dark abyss of inferno'; which fact is literally true of the present condition, but if they conduct themselves according to the Divine teachings, the commandments and behests of the Prophets of God, the face of the earth will be transformed into the heavenly paradise. Then they will rejoice over their good-fortune and wellbeing. How much better it would have been if these emperors, Kings, Ministers, Representatives and politicians treated each other according to the law of love and affinity. The result of such and similar treatments would have made them very happy, their ^{countries} most prosperous and their people advancing daily along the line of arts and industries.

On the other hand many Kings and rulers of Europe are related to each other by the ties of blood and are Kith and Kin - still they have arisen ^{to} destroy the edifice of each other. Would it not have been better if they settled their disputes like the individual members of a community before a tribunal or similar to the different States before the Supreme Court of Justice! Then they would have tasted the sweet delicacy of Love and the honey of affection. But the brutal desire and cupidity of man has changed the crystalline purity of this clear of life with the turbid water of carnal appetite. Cupidity and aggression is like into a hydrophobic dog which inoculates the poison of animosity into the spiritual constitution of men. Once having caught this canine madness of avarice and covetousness, they fall upon each other, pell-mell, and bite and wound each other. They are turned into such rabid creatures that in their very ferocity they dance and howl with glee. In brief, like unto the sparrows they are caught captives in the claws of the falcons of self. ^{They} have no other thought, valuation, cognition, judgment and discrimination. Like unto the weather-cocks they are turned this and ~~that~~ ^{by} that direction ~~according to~~ the blowing of the wind of Self-interest and rapacity. These nations do not become mindful and aware, nay rather they will add day by day to their heedlessness and negligence. They do not give up their quarrels, dissensions and wars, nay rather their blood-thirstiness finds momentum and velocity as the years roll on. But you who are the servants of the Blessed Perfection must ignite a lamp in the darkness of this world, diffuse the Fragrances of Peace and Love, teach mankind the lessons of truth and veracity, raise the tone of public morality, unfurl the standard of divine justice, inculcate the principles of equality, brotherliness and unity, ^{suffer} men to be inspired by the breathes of the Holy Spirit, grant them ideal sight and hearing, lead them into the high and broad boulevards of the Kingdom and bestow upon them the freshness and beauty of the Spirit."