

Moonbeam Bahai Cabin
 Abou Senan, Acre. Syria
 March 24 1915

Dear friends,

Religious intolerance has been a venomous screen that poisoned the pure fountain of religious freedom from the dawn of recorded history. It was intolerance that crucified Christ and again it was intolerance that persecuted the Christians, expelled the Jews from their homes in Russia, created the board of inquisition, burned on ^{the} stake holy men as heretics and women as witches. It was intolerance that martyred the Bab and his followers, that exiled Baha Ollah and confined him in the worst prison. It was intolerance that heaped upon Abdu'l-Baha innumerable hardships and sufferings all through his life. Intolerance is the deadliest weapon in the hand of bigotry and the sharpest sword to cut to pieces the heart of freedom. It is the foul monster of the deep, the arch-fiend of mankind and the dreadful satan of hell. In this enlightened age an intolerant man or woman is a sui generis ^{and} an anomaly. Praise be to God that in the Bahai dispensation our hands and feet are freed from these chains and fetters. We are taught to consort with all the people with joy and fragrance and look upon all mankind as ^{the branches} the leaves, the blossoms and the fruits of one tree. The Sun of God shines upon all, the Generosity of God sustains all, the rain of His Mercy pours upon all, the splendors of His forgiveness encircle all and His bounteous table is spread before all. No created being is excluded from His all-inclusive Court. He is kind to all His creatures but they show towards each other enmity and hostility. The Shepherd loves all His sheep but the sheep fight amongst themselves. Differences on the ground of dogmas and doctrines exist only in the sphere of the mind. They belong to the world of psychology. Although they have no outward, tangible existence yet they are the cause of so much strangeness, alienation and envy. If the variety of colors ^{which is real} do not prevent the doves to associate with each other; why should mankind prevent themselves from each other's association simply on the ground of dogmatic views and opinions which have no outward forms ^{and} shapes? These facts are as simple and plain as the rays of the Sun.

and still when a soul is inclined to be a little intolerant he brushes aside all these creational truths and clings to narrow ideas of religious privileges and ^{per} spirit. A Bahai must therefore be a tolerant person; - to the extent that he may extend a hand of toleration to even an intolerant man. Broad toleration, universal toleration, all-embracing toleration is the foundation principle of the Bahai Cause. As the Blessed Beauty says in the Hidden Words, 'The doors of Placeless are opened.' Let us realize that the doors of the placeless or in other words - the Kingdom of God - are not opened only for the Bahais. They are opened for all mankind. Into the Bahai fold all are welcomed and none is excluded. In the life of Abdul Baha we have a complete example of universal toleration. I do not know of any instance that he has ever sent away a soul from his door. Every one is welcomed. The Bahais must learn from him the practical lessons of tolerance and broad-mindedness, and try their utmost to learn from his words and deeds the principles of spiritual fellowships. If we walk in his footsteps we will become as adornments to the temple of the Cause and make for ourselves broader and broader field ~~field~~ of service and usefulness. With a little thoughtlessness on our part we may commit the mistake of our forefathers and drag the pristine beauty and comeliness of the Bahai Cause to the quagmire of an intolerant sect or thrown into the dark cell of a bigoted, unreasonable, blind community. The fire of intolerance burns the face of religion; the irons of intolerance stigmatize the fair, white limbs of love; the waves of intolerance wash ^{away} the banks of impartiality; the spirit of intolerance blinds the eyes of truth, the attitude of intolerance thunders forth popish bulls of excommunication against god-fearing innocent men and women and the fierce hot winds of intolerance blacken green prairies and verdant trees. True religion binds together the members of a community, ^{but} if it does separate them, if it discards amity and love as the basis of human relation, if it creates differences and brings ill-feeling - then it is not religion; it is better to be irreligious and throw away the dogmas that bring shame upon the glorious head of religion. Religion is light, intolerance is darkness, Religion is life, intolerance is death, Religion is truth, intolerance is its opposite.

This was the first day of the month of the Bahai fast and therefore we got ^{up} very early this morning to eat our supper and fast during the day. This is a most ideal season for fasting, as the weather is most temperate and the companionship of Abdul Baha a source of reinforcement. The physical and spiritual benefits of fasting are innumerable, it clears the body, helps the constitution, spiritualizes the feelings, illumines the heart, etherealizes the mind and teaches the lesson of endurance and contentment. There are many long supplications revealed by the Blessed Perfection to be read especially on the first night ushering ⁱⁿ the month of fasting as well as other days of this month. I am not sure whether any of ^{these} Tablets are translated into English but I hope it will be done ⁱⁿ the future. Mrs Getsinger is also fasting as well as other Bahais. Some of them whose business is in Acca and must associate with the Mohamadians cannot keep fasting at the present time. Our supper of this first night was prepared with the Blessed hand of the Greatest Holy Leaf and concerning ^{this} Mrs Getsinger sends me a note out of which I extract the following: "I am glad you are my partner in keeping the fast this year as well as our dear brothers Doctor Habibollah and Badi Effendi. Hazrate Khanom prepared 'Shir Berenj' with her own hands for all of us tomorrow ^{mor-}ning and as you eat this heavenly food remember the Angel whose kindness gives it to us. Pray for her - for I see that sometimes she seems very weak and the world needs her divine presence of goodness for many years yet."

During the day we saw the Beloved three times as he took his walk through the roads of the mountain and the valley. In the evening he was in the reception room. Sheikh Saleh and his sons related the cruelties wrought by the soldiers on the poor peasants. The Master listened with sympathy and patience and then gave the shortest and ~~most~~ significant talk that I have ever heard: - "All these things are happening daily; - so that the fore-ordained matters may come to pass." Then he arose from his seat and retired. We sat for a time and continued to converse on our heart-wished subjects. It was quite late when we went to bed, thanking God for all His Bounties and Favours poured upon us from His Supreme Heaven.

Moonbeam Bahai Cabin,
Abou Senan, Acca, Palestine.
March 2, 1915.

Dear Friends:-

During the day, I saw our Beloved Abdul Baha several times. In the morning, He took a long walk through the Mountain and valley of this delightful resort, where His family and friends have been living the past few months.

As He walked along the narrow path of the mountain over looking the Mediterranean Sea, He waved His Hand toward me, and said:-

"Religious intolerance has been a venomous serpent that poisoned the pure fountain of religious freedom from the dawn of recorded history.

It was intolerance that crucified Christ, again, it was intolerance that persecuted the Christians, created the Board of Inquisition, burned at the stake holy men as heretics, and women as witches.

It was intolerance that expelled the Jews from their homes in Russia. It is intolerance that has enkindled the fire of war and carnage throughout the world.

It was intolerance that martyred the Bab, and His followers, exiled Baha'Ullah and confined Him in the worst of prisons.

Intolerance is the deadliest weapon in the hand of bigotry, and the sharpest sword to cut to pieces the heart of freedom.

It is the foul monster of the deep, the arch-fiend of mankind and the dreadful Satan of hell.

In this enlightened age an intolerant man or woman is an anomaly. Praise be to God, that in the Bahai Dispensation, our hands and feet are freed from these chains and fetters.

We are taught to consort with all the people with joy and fragrance, and look on all mankind as the branches, the leaves, the blossoms and fruits of one Tree.

The Sun of God shines on all, the generosity of God sustains all, and the Rain of His Mercy falls upon all, the Splendor of His Forgiveness encircles all and His Bounteous Table is spread before all. No created being is excluded from His All-Inclusive Court.

He is kind to all His creatures, but they show toward each other enmity and hostility.

The Shepherd loves all his sheep, but the sheep fight among themselves. Differences on the ground of dogmas and doctrines exist only in the sphere of the mind. Although they have no outward tangible existence yet they are the cause of so much strangeness and alienation and envy.

If the variety of colors which are real, does not prevent the doves to associate with each other, why should mankind prevent themselves from each others association simply on the ground of dogmatic views, and antagonistic opinions which have no outward forms and shapes. These facts are as simple and plain as the rays of the sun, and still when a soul is inclined to be a little intolerant, he brushes aside all these creational truths and clings to narrow ideas of religious privileges and party spirit.

A Bahai therefore, must not only be tolerant but appreciative to the extent that he may extend the hand of genuine fellowship to an intolerant man.

Broad toleration, universal toleration, all-embracing toleration is the foundational principle of the Bahai Cause.

As the Blessed Beauty says in the Hidden Words, "The Doors of the Placeless are opened?" Let us realize the Doors of the Placeless, or in other words the Kingdom of God are not opened only for a few, they are opened for all mankind.

Into the Bahai fold all are welcomed and none are excluded.

In the Life and Teachings of Baha'Ullah, we have a complete example of universal association.

The Bahais must learn from Him, the practical lessons of tolerance and broadmindedness and try their utmost to learn from His Words and deeds, the principles of Spiritual fellowship.

If they walk in His foot-steps they will become as adornments to the temple of the Cause and make for themselves a broader and broader field of service and usefulness.

With a little thoughtlessness on our part we may commit the mistake of the forefathers and drag the Pristine Beauty and Comeliness of the Bahai Cause through the quagmire of an intolerant sect, or thrown into the dark cell of a bigoted, unreasonable, blind community.

The fire of intolerance burns the Face of religion; the iron of intolerance astigmatize the fair white limbs of love; the waves of intolerance wash away the banks of impartiality; the spirit of intolerance blinds their eyes of Truth; the attitude of intolerance thunders forth Popish Bulls of excommunication against God-fearing innocent men and women, and the fierce hot winds of intolerance blackens the green prairies and the verdant trees of Reality.

True Religion binds together the members of a community, but if it does separate them, if it discards amity and love as the basis of human relation, if it creates difference and brings ill-feeling --- then it is not religion; it is better to be irreligious and throw away the dogmas that bring shame to the glorious Head of Religion.

Religion is Light, intolerance is darkness.

Religion is Life, intolerance is death.

Religion is Truth, intolerance is falsehood.