

... description: 1926, Albert Joseph  
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title: A PILGRIMAGE TO HAIFA notes: ...

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#### BEFORE THE MANCHESTER ASSEMBLY: FEBRUARY 20TH 1926.

Mr. Albert Joseph said that he set out from Manchester, feeling that he was representing us all on this sweet pilgrimage. For a long time he had felt an ardent longing to visit the Holy Places, and especially to see Shoghi Effendi again. Leaving Manchester on Saturday, December 26th 1925, he passed through London. Paris, Marseilles; touched at Bizerta, on the N. African Coast: and arrived at Alexandria from whence he took trip to Cairo and visited the great Pyramid that Ancient symbol of true Religion which is still one of the wonders of the world.

From Cairo, he took train from Haifa in Palestine, yet as he approached the Holy Land, he felt something a sense of “overwhelming”. He could not analyse his feelings, but thought that if anyone had told him to return home, he would have done so. However, the machinery was in motion, whatever his feelings might be, and the train was swiftly moving towards the city, he had so joyfully set out to reach. He arrived in Haifa during the morning of January 4th 1926, and on that day, he had the pleasure of meeting again and chatting with Rúhí Effendi, who made him feel at home in Haifa and was very kind to him. Later, at about four o'clock, he had the privilege of a most interesting interview with the Beloved Guardian; after which, he, in company with other visitors visited the Shrine of the Blessed Báb and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá upon Mount Carmel, catching the spirit of the Holy Place and breathing the pure air from the historic sea.

He said that those few hours waiting to meet the Beloved Guardian were like twelve months to him. When he met Shoghi Effendi, he seemed overwhelmed. He was in the presence of one quite different from the one we met in Manchester in 1921. The same bright face; eyes that shone even radiantly; but a spirit intensified. He was in the presence of a personality different from us.

The pilgrim said “I do wish everybody who is interested in Shoghi Effendi were able to come to Haifa and visit him”. He also said that Shoghi Effendi answered his questions without his having to ask them for in the things he said to Mr. Joseph the questions were answered. During this interview, the Beloved Guardian gave him this counsel for us all – emphasising it – that we must all keep united; that we must meet as often as possible; and that we should do everything after consultation together: i.e., when all are agreed. The Beloved Guardian also counselled us to send forth regularly as circular letter to all the groups and assemblies. This, he said, keeps all a united whole; keeps all the movement alive and quickens again the assembly that sends it forth, East & West are too Far apart; therefore correspondence takes the place of visiting and brings them close together.

Each day, Mr. Joseph visited the Shrine and prayed for us and for the Bahá’í Movement. Several times he visited the Holy Shrine of Bahjí (the resting place of Bahá’u’lláh outside the age-worn and war-worn little city of Aces). The description he gave of the shrine may be known from so many Bahá’í books and pamphlets and yet we saw it more clearly than ever; the inner shrine no pilgrim is allowed to enter; the other rooms with their brilliant lights and Persian Carpets and rose-gardens. What impressed us most was his attempt to describe the indescribable: one with a better command of the English language would have found it beyond him! – The intense feeling of sanctity which the Holy Places awaken. The atmosphere is one of holiness; full of a quality which reduces the lover to tears while filling the soul with wonderful