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PART III

Rúháníyyih Ruth Moffett

1954

AFTERGLOW OF HAIFA

“An epoch in its sublimity, its fecundity and duration by any previous Dispensation, and characterized, except for a short interval of three years, by half a century of continuous and progressive Revelation, had terminated. The Message proclaimed by the Báb had yielded its golden fruit. The most momentous, though not the most spectacular phase of the Heroic Age had ended. The Sun of Truth, the world’s greatest Luminary, and had risen in the Seya-Chal of Ṭihrán, had broken through the clouds which enveloped it in Baghdád, had suffered a momentary eclipse whilst mounting to its zenith in Adrianople, and had set finally in ‘Akká, never to reappear ere the lapse of a full millenium. God’s newborn Faith, the cynosure of all past Dispensations, had been fully and unreservedly proclaimed.” G.P.B. — 223. {{p30}}

Our Guardian clearly, fully, and unreservedly elucidated to the eager pilgrims this excerpt from God Passes By.

It is like pulling the heart out by the roots for most of the pilgrims to leave Haifa, the Guardian and his spiritual family, and the blessed Shrines. He usually gives the departing pilgrim loving and helpful suggestions and instructions that not only prove most helpful, but again proves the great, loving understanding, and great wisdom of our Guardian.

To this departing pilgrim on that memorable evening he said, “I hope you will help the friends wherever you go to understand these important points: 1 — To persevere even in the midst of difficulties; 2 — To sacrifice with joy and gratitude; 3 — For the pioneers to remain at their posts, and great will be their blessings; 4 — Make every effort to establish an Assembly; 5 — To love

the people with a warm, encircling love; 6 — To keep active; 7 — Exceedingly important is to live the life; and 8 — To Teach, teach, teach! adhered to, will bring success and blessing to one's life." One of the last statements made by the Guardian, "Tell the friends I am expecting great things of them in the Glorious Crusade."

The parting words of dear Rúḥíyyih Khánúm that last evening were: " 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, 'There are usually two pilgrim's visits: The first is for blessings and encouragement to go forth in God's vineyard; the second, you come with banners flying like soldiers in gladness and triumph to receive your reward. The pilgrimage is given that you may take in and then give out, to receive and then impart, to absorb and then bestow. Without these there has been no pilgrimage. It will dissolve into nothing. The Holy Land is the heart of the Faith. The heart purifies the blood stream with enriched life. The pilgrim comes laden with the impurities of the world to the heart. Here he becomes refreshed and purified to carry the life-bestowing Word of God to the world. May you be richly blessed and assisted in sharing the life-giving stream.'"

At the last moment of departure, one learns the supreme lesson that nothing really matters but your complete consecration to Bahá'u'lláh. From this moment on, all else seems secondary. From now on all your talents and efforts seem valueless unless devoted to His service. If you do not rise in consecrated service, Bahá'u'lláh will raise others who, however humble, untrained, or unlearned, have this greatest virtue of dedication. They will do what you, with all your gifts, have failed to do. These soul-stirring words ring in your heart. "The hour has struck'. Beware lest by turning back He may change you for another people who shall not be your like, and who shall take from you the Kingdom of God.

It was a loving but sad farewell as one left this Heaven of Heavens and Bahá'í World Center, the Kiblaat of the World! As our plane circled over Haifa, the golden dome of the Shrine of the Báb, the Queen of Mt. Carmel, shimmered in the glorious sunshine and seemed to reflect the light in the golden heart of our Guardian. Yes, that golden dome seems a harbinger of the Golden Age just ahead!

[The following pages 31-52 are a diary of Moffett's journeys after her pilgrimage from June 2, 1954 until her return home to Chicago, September 17, 1954]
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THE ISLAND OF CYPRUS June 2, 1954

It was a beautiful trip across the deep, lovely Mediterranean Sea with the lighter blue of the sky overhead. The Holy Land with all of its precious treasures faded from view, but its spiritual treasures were stored eternally in the heart. As we flew over the great island of Cyprus, we could see it was a flat desert land. There was famous Mt. Olympus, 6,500 feet high, the home of the mythical gods and goddesses who, it is claimed, were the heroes of Atlantis. We landed in Nicosia, the capitol of Cyprus, this historical old city, and spent a few hours there, but

felt the need of hurrying on to Ñ

THE ISLAND OF RHODES June 3, 1954

We passed over what seemed a series of barren islands, of submerged mountains, and arrived at the beautiful airport of the Island of Rhodes. Here we saw the place where one of the seven ancient wonders of the world stood Ñ Colossus of Rhodes, with one foot on the mainland and the other on the island which forms the harbour. Here we met Romona Brown from California, and Elizabeth Bevan, a pioneer to the Island of Rhodes, who had become very discouraged because, after six months, she had been unable to obtain a work permit. Ruth was able to assist them and to leave some of the last words of the Guardian to “encourage the pioneers to remain at their posts.”

ATHENS & KIFISSIA, GREECE * June 4, to June 7, 1954

Elizabeth Bevan, Romona Brown and Ruth Moffett went to Athens to try to help Elizabeth to obtain a work permit for the Island of Rhodes. We lived in the beautiful resort hotel in Kifissia and went daily to Athens. We saw many of the ancient monuments, with an excellent guide....the Parthenon; the Temple of Athens, ancient Grecian theater, the Museum of Athens, the Acropolis, the Temple of Baccus, the prison of Socrates, where Paul spoke to the Athenians on Mars Hill in 54 A.D., and where the Chairman of the Court, Dioneceius became the first Christian in Athens. Sandwiched in between all the interesting historical sights were the eager questions as to the messages from the Guardian, the observance of the Feast of Núr Ñ Light, with Dwight and Carol Allen, pioneers, long talks on how to spread the great, glad Message of Bahá'u'lláh.

ROME June 7 to June 12, 1954

In Rome, the Eternal City, Ruth was a guest of Dr. Ugo Giachery, Hand of the Cause, and his wife, Angeline. This was a blessed experience. Each day there were teas and firesides, and a large public meeting with very warm response, particularly to the messages from the Guardian. Some of the friends guided us through St. Peter's, the Vatican, the castle of St. Angelo, the Colliseum, the palace of Nero, the Roman Forum, the graves of Keates and Shelley and the huge building of Ministry of Propaganda for the Catholic world. It was a great privilege to again see Pope Pius X as he lay in state in his gorgeous robes, golden slippers, gloves and golden mask; the most saintly and beloved of all the popes, who was beautified in 1950. It was Ruth's privilege to have had an interview in his private audience chamber in 1927, along with four cardinals, and had some remarkable experiences. She also received the blessing of the present Pope Pius XII. Dr. Giachery and Angeline were most hospitable and helpful in making all these things possible, and great blessing comes from their sincere spirit and the rich experiences with the friends in Rome, who said they could feel the spirit of the Shrines, brought by Ruth.

THE ISLANDS OF ELBA June 12, 1954

We reluctantly left the dear friends and the fascinating city of Rome at 10 am via Swiss Air Lines, flying over the many off-shore islands straight for the mountainous, unwooded Island of Elba, the largest of the Tyrrhenian archipelago. It is 18 miles long and 3.7 miles broad and has an area of 86 square miles. It is part of a sunken mountain range extending from the Italian mainland to Corsica and Sardinia. {{p32}} the highest point of the Island is Mt. Capanne, 3,350 feet high. The climate is mild and the soil fertile and rich in mineral deposits. From ancient times, Elba has been famous for her iron and tin mines. Historically, it is noted as the residence of Napoleon after his first abdication., from May 14, 1814 to February 26, 1815, just before the birth of Bahá'u'lláh. During that time Napoleon was the Emperor of the Island, and after his departure it was restored to Tuscony and became a part of Italy in 1860. The total population is only about 32,000, made up mostly of mining and fishing villages.

It was near this historic, treeless island where our beloved Dorothy Baker, Hand of the Cause of God, and International Bahá'í teacher, when returning from New Delhi Conference was blown to bits in the fateful jet plane which exploded over Elba, shocking the entire world. The plane was piloted by the president of the company, himself, which was the cause of our plane dipping low in his honour as we flew over this destiny-laden spot. To the mind of this pilgrim, Ruth, it was in honour of this one of the Hands of the Cause of God, our beloved friend and co-worker, who had the key to our home for 25 years, and who left a trail of inspiration wherever she went Ñ Dorothy Beecher Baker, that we dipped in tribute.

Her beautiful spirit ascended at the height of her lustre to serve in greater realms of glory in the Kingdom of Abhá. Many prayers were offered in her behalf as we approached the Island of Elba and dipped low in her honour and then rose high to scale the towering Alps. Many of the words spoken just a few weeks before, to Ruth, in loving Counsel, were so clear and vivid it seemed that our Dorothy was actually standing beside her in the plane, radiant and beautiful. In the midst of such deep prayer for her, you can imagine the startling effect when the stewardess spoke, offering tea. That experience will never be forgotten, not will the experience of flying over the highest peaks of the snow-capped Alps and over Mt. Blanc, standing agelessly in her majestic splendour.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND Ñ June 12, 1954

Beside beautiful Lake Geneva, poetically called Lac Lemán, on the two-way River Rhone in the far-stretching green valley between snow-capped mountain ranges, lies the historic, old city of Geneva, noted for her eleventh century Romanesque cathedral of St. Peter, the great University of Geneva, and where the writer took a course of study on her previous trip to Europe. Geneva was the home of Calvin, who in 1535 helped to establish the "Reformed Religion", as it was called. It was the home of the League of Nations, established by

President Woodrow Wilson in 1920. The same year witnessed the founding of the International Labor Office, the International School of Studies under Dr. Zimmerman. While a Special Delegate to the League of Nations, Ruth had the privilege of attending the sessions in all of these and other International Institutions, and learned much in appraising values and relationships. She was glad to be in this key city again during the Prickly International Conference, which was in session, and to which our Guardian had referred as unable to achieve its purpose.

There was a warm welcome by the Bahá'í friends who gathered in the apartment of Honor Kempton, eager to hear every word from our beloved Guardian. Sunday was spent with the Ashraf family and their remarkable children, 5th. generation Bahá'ís. The oldest child, 13, was with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Sunday night, 17 were again in Honor Kempton's apartment, begging this pilgrim to remain longer saying that she had brought so much from Haifa, for which they were so hungry. After the lectures we discussed ways of making contacts,