

... description: 1921, Inez Greeven  
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## Pilgrim Notes

Inez Greeven

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### Pilgrim Notes

Inez Greeven

September 1921

Arrived. Sept. 1921. Three at Pilgrim House, Kelsey, Daisy and I. Later Mrs. Staunard came. Louvards the end a couple from Beirut. Master came almost daily to house at 11 o'clock for a rest after His walk. Very often for midday meal (unusual), sent for us to have tea at His house about 3 P.M. and came again for the evening meal. Things recalled that were said and various times. Were we comfortable and happy in the Pilgrim House? Answered that everything was wonderful and we couldn't be happier – that the food always tasted better in Haifa than anywhere else. Master said, "That is due only to the love in your hearts – in reality it is very simple" and told the story of the visit to thorns gatherer. At dinner one day, The Master said: "Today we have children soup – which Rúhí Effendi likes very much and he is therefore happy and grateful to God (much laughter and Rúhí confused). But there is no merit in being thankful only when one has all that he wants – the real test is to allow gratitude to God under all conditions even when he has nothing to eat." When Master came she asked many questions and the Master said it would be better conversation on more spiritual .

\_\_\_\_\_ (the rest  
of page 2)

So when I met Him that evening at late sunset standing before the gate of His garden, He greeted me with these words, as He pointed to the darkening sky: "Good stars, good heavens, good night." And walked on through the gate.

**Oct. 1921.**

The story of love – (eating the dough). In answer to a philosopher, about Socrates – Sun spots due to volcanic eruption of radium. Mars inhabited, but not our form of life – each kind must have its own element.

Answer to how to know the will of God: "Study the Tablets, information for

everything therein.” I said we might not build on our land in Haifa at all, but someday give the land to the Cause. The Master said, “No, build a little house for yourself now, it does not have to be as large as this one – just a few rooms.”

Thank God that I have kept my promise to you that I would keep you to speak, but you did not keep yours. I pray constantly for the Divine Confirmations for you, and if you will turn to me I will always help you. My desire is that you shall become ablaze with love like this lamp and that I may hear your voice speaking to 2 and 3 thousands here in Haifa. Kurat al Aime was so timid that when one asks her of her health she could hardly be heard to reply – yet when heart became alight with love – even though she had not seen Bahá’u’lláh she raised her voice before men and women and set them on fire. I want you to do likewise – only be assured that I will help you, be assured. Turn your face to the Kingdom of Abhá and ask help, they regard the people as ants and speak – take no heed for what you shall say. When I gave talks before the people in Europe I regarded them as sheep, do as I did. You are of Bahá’u’lláh’s chosen and you have \_\_\_\_ great bounty. I never forget you but pray for you always – we are never separated in spirit. How much better than to be here in body, as you see so many of those who live in Haifa always. You are my two dear daughters and I am well pleased with you – with the good love you have in your hearts. This is your home – know that if you stay a year, it is too short. You may return when you like. I shall give you such a cup of the wine of the love of God to drink while here that you will be intoxicated for the rest of your life handed Him a very beautiful pear from the garden. There was no displeasure at this interruptions, nor was the tiny grandson allowed to feel any indifferent to his gift; the Master gathered the child to Him, took a large knife from His pocket and cut the pear as many pieces as there were persons in the room (about six or seven) and insisted that we each eat one then and there. I also see the gesture with which the Master put his hand into a box of chocolates, which someone had brought Him from Europe, and gave them to the waiting children. All the generosity of which He was the Manifestation was expressed in that one movement. Not a few pieces picked here and there, but the hand trust deep into the box and brought up overflowing. Or when He urged us at table to “Eat, eat,” – then our plates were piled high as little mountains and we did not know if this were a test of our obedience or lavish hospitality! I only recall that after I had made myself finish the last grain of rice. I felt very virtuous and as if my sacrifices had surely won recognition on the Abhá plane.

Those days at Haifa are in memory woven into a pattern of pure bliss – a \_\_\_\_ when although one dwelt on earth’s one’s spirit was in heaven. Time lost all meaning: it was of no importance whether it was Monday or Tuesday, March or May. We lived entirely by the sun of the Master’s Presence; those moments before we were summoned to His house, to be given a private talk, were full of excitement and those when we caught a glimpse of His turban above the garden wall, as He passed on the road for His daily walk, were full of a glowing and quiet emotion.

When we told the Master how grateful we were for this great privilege of being permitted to visit Haifa, He answered: "Yes, but your conduct when you leave here will prove your gratitude to God for this bounty."

One evening at supper I asked the Master why it was that so many pilgrims to Haifa shared the same experience, in as much as they did not realize at the time of being there the full significance of all they were receiving; that it was only later upon reaching home that the full light seem to burst over them. The Master answered by pointing to a hanging lamp overhead, which cast a large circle of shadow on the table, and said: "Directly under the lamp there is always a shadow. It is only when one comes out from under his shadow. It is only when one comes out from under this shadow that one receives the full benefit of the direct rays."

During the first part of our 1921 visit we were only three at the Pilgrim House. 'Abdu'l-Bahá seemed to feel that we were lonely (perhaps because the year before we had been nineteen or twenty together) and due to this gave us a great deal of His time. He came many mornings about 11 o'clock, after He had taken His walk, and rested in one of the bedrooms for a short while. Then He would sit at the open doorway and talk to us. One morning He told us of two things that had happened before he came to us. One of the He has performed." This is how it came about that 'Abdu'l-Bahá spoke of these miracles He had sent us, early that morning, a large silk handkerchief of jasmine blossoms, from the garden at Bahjí, with which to decorate the dining-table. When I thanked the Master for them, and said how heavenly the perfume was, He said: "Yes, I have given some of them also to an English officer who came to me this morning in great distress because his wife is ill unto death. He begged me to pray for him that his wife might be healed. I gave him a handful of these blossoms to take to her, told him that she must inhale the perfume and that I would pray for her. Now she will recover."

A few minutes later the Master said: "I shall tell you something that happened while I was taking my walk," and began to laugh as if recalling something very amusing. He began: "About a year ago an old, old man, whose house I pass sometimes when walking came out to the gate to speak to me. He said that he was very sad because his greatest wish in life had never been fulfilled – and that was to have a child; he and his wife were old now and hope was gone, but perhaps if I would pray for them God might hear it and send them a child. I promised him I would pray for him that his wish be fulfilled. I had not seen the man again until today, and as I passed the house he came running on the road and held up the tiniest baby I have ever seen – just so big." And the Master laughing heartily, marked off between His hands a space so short that it was inconceivable any baby could be so tiny and live.

During the latter part of our visit other pilgrims joined us and many scientific questions were asked. 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered these, but said He preferred to have the conversation held to more spiritual lines, especially when some expected guests from Beirut should arrive. Two of the questions recalled were as follow:

Q. "Are the planets inhabited?"

A. "Yes, but not with our form of life, each kind must have its own element."

Q. "What is the cause of sun-spots?"

A. "Volcanic eruption of radium."

On another occasion 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that in the future all countries would become tea drinkers – such as China, England, Japan and Russia are today. He explained that tea aids digestion and opens the door to spiritual influences, whereas coffee is disintegrating (due to the pulverized particles it contains) and is a physical stimulant.

When we were a large group at the Pilgrim House, as in the Spring of 1920, there was occasionally a conflict of opinion as to some happening of the day. I recall one morning in particular when argument had waxed hot over the loss of a piece of jewellery in front of the Shrine of the Báb. One of the pilgrims said that this was symbolic, the meaning was clear that all such silly vanities must be lost at Haifa, but the whole gathering dissented with one voice. Then the advocate of no jewellery carried \_\_\_\_\_ battle was in full force when we became aware that the Master had entered the room. One moment of His presence was sufficient to make us realize the banality of our conversation and the futility of such argument. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá glanced around the long table where we were sitting and designation each in turn, said: "I find Mrs. Blank suitably dressed for her position in life (her dress was of the best quality and workmanship to be had) as also Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_," – *whose dress was of gingham cut on the lines of a wrapper. In referring to this incident later, the Master said to me: "When there are so many in one house there is apt to be friction, but you must be the peacemaker. When the conversation turns to war you must lead it back to peace – or leave."* I said that these were almost the first words I could recall from my childhood, as my grandmother never tired of teaching us: "*Blessed is the \_\_\_\_\_aker.*" The Master answered: "*And today she is enjoying the Kingdom of God for \_\_\_\_\_ alone.*"

On the last day of our 1921 visit I was numbed by the pain of the coming separation; I must have sensed that it was to be my last time with the Master. Several times during that day I was recalled to His home and He explained that it was a special favour due to my leaving. When my \_\_\_\_\_ our last farewell, and showing very \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_. Now \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ in person \_\_\_\_\_ many who live here \_\_\_\_\_ not know me in spirit. Then. \_\_\_\_\_ a streak of sunlight on the floor, He said: "Although the sun is so far away yet it is light is ever with you, and so no matter where you may be shall always near you."

I feel that these words of promise should give to each believer who had not the opportunity of seeing the Master in the body that measure of happiness that

He so wished for all of us.

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‘Abdu’l-Bahá so seldom did thing repetitions that when such a thing occurred we know that it had a special significance.

During one of my visits to Haifa, the Master came daily the Pilgrims House to take a midday meal with us. We were always awaiting Him in the central hall, \_\_\_\_\_ as a dining room, upon entering He would shake hands with each of us.

Our several days in suc\_\_\_\_\_ ‘Abdu’l-baha went to Mrs. S\_\_\_\_\_ and and, \_\_\_\_\_ shaking hands, \_\_\_\_\_ her that He would now squeeze her hand and she must see if she could resist it.

Soon Mrs. S\_\_\_\_\_ was jumping around frantically, squealing and laughing at the same time. As she was very tall and liquefied person, these unusual girations created a comical sight and we were all convulsed with laughter, in which the Master joined heartily.

When Mrs. S\_\_\_\_\_ could endure no more, the Master released her hand and said that now she must try to do the same to Him. She made a tremendous effort, using both hands in order to produce the save result, but to no avail. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá stood *ingly motionless and hers*, \_\_\_\_\_ to admit herself finally \_\_\_\_\_.

When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá turned to me and said I must meditate on this when I returned home.

The next day this was repeated and the next. Each time, He said I must meditate on this.

## Spring

Twenty one years I have never been able to come to any conclusion that did not come too obvious to hear \_\_\_\_\_ relation to what the Master included. Only within the past week has a believer \_\_\_\_\_ a solution that would \_\_\_\_\_ to answer the question. \_\_\_\_\_ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s hand was flexible, relaxed and gave with \_\_\_\_\_ pressure placed upon it, while the hand of Mrs. S\_\_\_\_\_ was rigid – the knuckles stiffened – and pain was the result of every motion to release herself.

Could it not be that the Master wanted us to learn through a physical demonstration the spiritual value of non-resistance to the painful experiences of our lives – or the real viewing of “radiant acquiescence”?

To be tense in mind or body brings its own penalty, but the flexibility exhibited by the Master assures one of vulnerability.

If we allow ourselves to become rigid in our attitude toward life and in our actions, the result will be not only pain but a deprivation of much of the happiness which the Master always stressed and without which, He said, spiritual progress was impossible.

Thus, I believe, was the lesson ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wanted me to learn.