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Musl'im fellow students, but the light in their faces was different, because the reality of religion had reached their hearts, and they were of the new age of spiritual knowledge, although they wore the theological garb of the past.

The meeting over, our host, Ḥájí Mírzá Ḥasan, took us through several rooms in his house, where he had many interesting Bahá'í writings in manuscript artistically Illuminated. The artist scribes of the Orient do rich and beautiful work of this kind. We also saw photographs of some of the Bahá'í martyrs and other subjects of like character collected from various sources, all of which were of great interest to us two Americans, for in the West we have but few such treasures.

Although Egypt was in a state of war, and we had experienced some difficulties in entering, the country, yet once in the land we saw and heard very little that savored of war. Being advised of a scarcity of steamers leaving from Port Sa'íd for the ports of Syria, we engaged passage by the first ship sailing, and after a stay of four days in Cairo we left for Port Sa'íd.

Almost everyone whom we had met while in Cairo was at the train to see la off. All four of us, two Persians and two Americans, had a compartment to ours elves, and before the train pulled out the place was a bower of flowers, for each of the many friends brought flowers, fruit, or sweets as parting souvenirs, while one arrived followed by a boy bearing a tray of iced sherbets, all of which, considering the excessive heat, added much to our comfort.

The people in the station and on board the train eyed us with no little attention on account of the mixture of people of divers races and religions congregated about us, for even in Egypt, where Europeans have lived for some generations, there is no real affinity and brotherhood between the oriental and occidental, whereas, we through the Bahá'í Cause were here surrounded by kind, and loving brothers of foreign races In a time of war and general uneasiness.

Because of the threatened unrest of the country, a strict watch was being kept upon all Europeans who might stir up the natives against the British government of occupation. I was prepared to have the military authorities ask for our passports, but we had no inconvenience, although two of the officers kept a watch upon our movements.

A run of three hours brought us to Port Sa'id, where another group of friends welcomed us and made our stay there of three days pass very quickly. Much of our time here was spent in the company of our good brother Bahá'í, the Persian Vice Consul, Mírzá Aḥmad Yazdí, whose kind services to the traveling

Bahá'ís has made him friends in all parts of the world. On account of the opposition of the Musl'ims but little, if any, direct Bahá'í teaching was being done in Egypt; nevertheless the light of the Cause will out, it cannot be hidden. Since that time the agitation against the Bahá'í Movement has reached the point of its official recognition as a new religions teaching distinct from Islám.

During one of the sojourns of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in Port Sa'id, some native Arabs were attracted to Him and became so enkindled with the spirit of the Cause that they soon came to be known as Bahá'ís. Two of these in particular became the target of a Musl'im attack. A party of infuriated fanatical Muḥammadans surrounded their place of business, demolished their windows, and dragged these two men out and down the street, pelting them with melon rinds and other filth from the gutter. Although shaken and bruised, they fortunately sustained no serious injuries, while their faith and fortitude, upon the other hand, were greatly increased.

One night we attended a meeting where we met these two friends. One of them chanted in the original Arabic a prayer from the pen of Bahá'u'lláh. We, of course, did not understand the words, but the man put so much feeling and fervor into his chant that we were not long in catching the spirit of the prayer, for those assembled were all moved and swayed.

People have often asked me if I did not find it a drawback in traveling in the East to be unable to speak the oriental languages and to be dependent upon interpreters. Where the tie of union is strong, a very few words can express much; in fact, at times words seem almost superfluous. With the average oriental his religion is the all-absorbing thing in his life, and the tie of faith is stronger than any human tie of blood. If you meet him on the ground of spiritual realities he is your brother in the most spiritual sense of the word, ready to make any sacrifice for you and to do you any service. The heart of the most conventional Westerner soon responds to this spirit of devotion and sincerity, and he is then at ease, and a rapture of soul is established, and more or less intuitively he understands the people about him and he feels with them. Under these conditions, although the words may be spoken through an interpreter, yet; the spirit of the conversation is unbroken and direct.

These were the early days of October. At that time Turkey had not yet gone into the war. However, her relations with Egypt were becoming strained. Syria

being under Turkey, our American Consular agent in Port Sa'íd was disposed to try to dissuade us from going to Haifa, telling us that the possibility of a "Holy War" had been reported, and in that case there might be massacres of Christians in those parts. Feeling the impossibility of making this gentleman understand the nature of our mission, and the reasons why we felt perfectly safe in going into Turkish domains, we did not attempt to argue the point, and he finally arranged our papers and we embarked on a neutral ship – flying the Italian flag for the port of Haifa.

8 – Visiting the Master

Sailing from Port Sa'íd in the evening we dropped anchor the following morning outside of the reef of Joppa, the port where travelers for Jerusalem disembark. There was not the flotilla of snail boats which almost invariably swarmed here from the shore and surrounded the ship, greeting the passing vessels and bringing various kinds of edibles and curios to tempt the traveler, and crowded with rapacious boatmen who try to inveigle one into going ashore to see the few sights of which the town boasts. Presently we saw coming out from the shore and through the narrow passage in the reef a boat flying a yellow flag. Our own quarantine flag was flying, so we knew we were in for a disinfection, for before sailing we had heard that on account of reported cases of plague in Egypt a Turkish quarantine was eminent.

We cabin passengers were not put to any inconvenience, but the passengers in the steerage had both their effects and their persons disinfected, as well as having imposed upon each a bill of costs for the same, all of which from the upper deck viewed sympathetically, having, myself on past travels twice gone through with this disagreeable formality.

Joppa rises picturesquely from the water's edge on a prominence overlooking the sea. Like many of the cities of the Levant it is really more attractive from a distance than when one finds oneself within its narrow streets and crowded bazaars, although the newer quarters of the city are well laid off with broad streets and avenues of trees. Prominent from the sea are several church towers and mosque minarets. The chief place of biblical interest is the house of "Simon the Tanner." We could see its roof from the ship's deck.

Off to the north of Joppa stretches the rocky and sandy as will be seen by the following words addressed to the friends during His captivity:

"When one is released from the prison of the self, that is Indeed a release, a freedom. it is very easy to be released from this material outer prison, but hard and difficult to be released from that other prison.

"From this prison you may be released by only one word from the Sulṭán, to be released from that other prison is very difficult, even through all the words which have been pronounced by the Prophets of God. From this prison you may be released by making a break in the wall, from that other prison it is very hard

to find a way of escape. Sometimes you become so weak that you are unable to do anything by which to make a way out.

“This prison weakens the body, but that other prison causes the death of the spirit.”

In the present, as in times past, the greatest light has shone out from the most dense darkness. It is quite in line with the history of the religious movements of all ages that this great spiritual Cause of modern times should have been opposed by the leaders of the people whom it strove to elevate and free from superstition. Thus Bahá'u'lláh in order to alleviate the world's troubles took upon Himself all of those troubles which He sought to dispel.

The darkest side of Turkish despotism has been alluded to by writers, and the tombs of many of its royal victims are visible in the Turkish mosques, but its real history will never be written, for its deeds were never recorded on paper or parchment. They were branded into the souls of those who, through torture and unnatural death, left no earthly record of their sufferings.

There we rode at anchor before the walls of 'Akká. Only a hundred yards or more away rose on a rock, surrounded by the sea, the ruins of a once stronghold tower, built by the Crusaders, while off not far from the landside fortifications of the city now crumbling with age we could dimly discern the outline of the low hill thrown up by Napoleon, upon which he placed his cannon when he attempted to take 'Akká and met with defeat. Here and there lights glimmered through openings in the walls, and off to the left the bright light of the lighthouse on the ramparts shone clearly. Above, the sky was clear. Every star seemed visible, and in a short time the moon rose in all her glory above the mountains beyond the plain of 'Akká, bringing into relief the great white dome and minarets of the mosque in 'Akká and the richness of the foliage of the trees along the shore, while behind us in the light stretched a long band of surf along the shore off towards the Mount of Carmel on the opposite side of the bay. It was a scene the beauty of which will always remain with me.

We had happily made interesting acquaintances on board, so that in addition to our party of two Americans and two Persians there were others with us to enjoy the scene.

One of these was a young man, a recently appointed instructor in a mission college in Syria. He was just graduated from the University of Illinois, and before leaving America had met some 73ahaiis in his college town, and through them became filled with the desire to visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Understanding that we were Americans bound for Haifa, he asked if we had ever heard of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whereupon we explained to him our connection with the Cause.

Our two Persian comrades discovered a friend of theirs on board, a young Swiss instructor in French in the American University in Beirut who, in company with a party of students the season previous, had spent several days on Mount Carmel with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

We passed a memorable evening with these fellow-travelers, who were anxious to talk of the Cause.

We were longing and counting the hours when we would be able to land in Haifa and meet our beloved teacher and friend ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

At sunrise the following morning we were on deck as our ship dropped anchor off Haifa. We had no difficulty in entering the country. Curiously enough our luggage was not opened, nor were passports asked for. The town and country were in a distressing state of war panic. The banks and foreign post-offices were closed, and everywhere the first states of war were visible. The army was gathering in the interior, and men and munitions were daily being sent inland to the scene of mobilization, while the government had commandeered all horses and vehicles, and had seized vast quantities of foodstuffs and needed merchandise from the local merchants and other private individuals. Business was at a standstill and the panic general.

It was not known how Turkey was going to side in the war, but of the fact that she was going to fight everyone felt sure, and the army was preparing for action.

Because of the evidently approaching hostilities there had been an exodus of many families from the coast cities, and these had sought refuge in the interior. On landing we were informed that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had just returned to Haifa from the little village of Abou-Sinan, situated at some little distance up in the mountains back of ‘Akká, where He had been attending to the welfare of the members of His family and those of a number of other Bahá’ís, some fifty or sixty-people in all men, women and children, for whose accommodation and comfort there ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had personally arranged.’ One of the friends explained to us how several houses had been rented in this town in the hills, then of the transport of ‘furniture, cooking utensils, and other luggage by camel pack trains, and of the carriages and wagons which finally conveyed the people thither.

From Haifa we could see beyond the plain of ‘Akká the white houses of Abou Sinan off in the hills, and although we did not go there ourselves, our eyes often sought the spot where so many of our people were.

Haifa at the foot of Mount Carmel, is a town which owes its present prosperity largely to the religious life and. Interests centered there. The German Temple Colony and other Protestant missions from the west, as well as several Catholic monasteries and convents and the recently constructed Jewish University, all testify to the fact that with these various peoples Carmel is the land of spiritual promise in the future as well as of historical religious interests of the past, while the centering here, upon this Mountain of God, of the Bahá’í Cause is in reality the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies regarding the new era of soul enlightenment which in the latter days were to illuminate the whole world from this Holy Land of promise.

Upon landing we drove to the hotel of the German Colony, where we settled ourselves for a stay of some days amid simple but clean and wholesome sur-

roundings. That same afternoon we went to the home of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá on the outskirts of the city, and there had our first meeting with our much-beloved teacher.

He received us simply and cordially and with the kindness and affection of the most loving father. We were moved by His tenderness as He inquired into some of the details of our travels, and asked regarding the welfare of His friends in various countries.

Everyone was at ease in ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s presence, for His atmosphere was one of sympathetic understanding and love. In fact, there were few persons, if any, who did not respond to the spirit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, for there is in every soul that closed door which opens only in the presence of true love and friendship; in fact, which cannot remain closed in the face of Him whose life and personality have been sacrificed in the Path of God, and who has the spiritual message of Divine Love for the world.

During our stay of two weeks, October 5 to 19, in Haifa, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent much of His time lodged in a house upon the side of the mountain near the building built over the tomb of The Báb, the spot where are deposited the remains of the forerunner of Bahá’u’lláh, transferred thither by the friends from Tabriz, the place of His martyrdom in Persia.

The building, occupies a commanding position upon a terrace high up on the mountain side. From the garden about it one has an extended view out over the sea and across the bay, upon the opposite side of which is ‘Akká. Like a bird she appears to float upon the water, her white walls and towers rising directly out of the sea, while behind her arise the mountains of the Phoenician coast range stretching off to the north, where they join the greater Lebanon Mountains.

With the deep blue of the sea and the brilliant coloring of the oriental landscape this is one of the famous and most beautiful views of the world, particularly when seen at night under the mellow light of the moon as it rises over the mountain off towards the east beyond the plain of ‘Akká, high up in a valley of which is Nazareth, where Jesus lived.

It was on one of our pilgrimages up the mountain where we went to the little house near the tomb to call on ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that He addressed us as follows:

You are welcome? You are well? You are pleased and happy? How do you find the landscape and view from here? the scene is very beautiful. It is permeated with spirituality. This is a unique scene in all Syria. It is recorded in the Old Testament that the Lord is the Excellency of Carmel, and Carmel means the Vineyard of God. Practically all the prophets of Israel have visited this mountain. Even His Holiness, Jesus Christ, has been here several times, and now the remains of The Báb are resting on its slope. His Holiness, the Blessed Beauty (Bahá’u’lláh) has pitched His tent on various spots on this mountain. The tent of Bahá’u’lláh has been raised on this Holy ground.”

After a silence of several minutes, during which ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gazed out of the

window, a silence filled with deep spirituality, in which He seemed to be receiving the vibrations from all parts of the world. He continued: "For this reason these places are called the Holy Land and eulogies and praises have been sung by all the seers and prophets of the past concerning these sacred grounds."

My companion remarked upon the beauty of the scene, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá replied: "Of course it is beautiful. Carmel is a derivative of two words, Carm and El. Carm means garden, and El means God. Therefore it is the Garden of God.

The Fragrances of the Holy Spirit waft from this spot. If the nostrils are open, they will inhale these breaths. This blessed spot is fragrant. Praise ye God that ye have reached this place. The result will become evident in the future."

At the time of which I write we two Americans were the only Western Bahá'í pilgrims on Carmel, the "Mountain of God," as it is called, but in addition to ourselves there was a party of some fifteen or twenty students from the American University In Beirut, who were spending their Summer vacation on the mountain with 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

I have lived much of my life more or less associated with student bodies, but never before had I been so privileged as to know intimately so spiritually minded a group of young men as these. They were fond of all manner of humor and merriment, and some very jolly times we had together, but through all, and above all stood out the ideal common to them all, that of preparing themselves to go forth in the Cause as servants of God to teach and to serve His people in order that more spiritual conditions might exist in the world.

A few words by 'Abdu'l-Bahá's secretary to American believers, written during our visit, may not be out of place here: "The daily spiritual association with our two dear American brothers, Mr. R—and Mr. L—confers upon us new joy and pleasure, for having visited all the Western Assemblies in the United States and Europe they have a great deal to tell us. They come also from war-ridden Germany, and their descriptions give us the assurance that although it may sound as a paradox the Cause of Universal Peace is marching on and the silent and ere long protesting advocates against the