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author: Joseph Hannen
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Account of our Visit In Haifa and 'Akká

Joseph Hannen

1909

February 20th, 28th inclusive 1909

We arrived in Haifa about 10 A. M. after a most stormy voyage and were at anchor until nearly 5 o'clock before finally landing. Meanwhile it seems the crowning event in the history of 'Akká was being enacted in part in that our Lord had for practically the first time availed himself and the Believers of the newly given freedom by coming to Haifa with half of the Pilgrims now at 'Akká and publicly celebrating a Feast at Mt. Carmel. Tomorrow the other half is to go there and we are told that we may participate at the hotel, we were visited just before supper by Mírzá Jalál Effendi and Mírzá Munír Zain who conveyed to us the startling and glad news that our Lord was in Haifa and would receive us after supper. So at 7:30 we were escorted under a canopy of brilliant stars which fairly sang with the glory of the expected meeting. The home presented a brilliant and off on the mountain side half way to the summit or farther gleamed an eye as it were which was pointed out to us, as marking the site of the Tomb of the Báb. It was as if a great eye were beaming upon us – that even so long after His departure that Holy One was to be our Gate to Heaven.

Entering through stately gates we were ushered into a parlor where we awaited our summons, which was given in a moment. Thus with the slightest preparation we were to meet our Lord. Words cannot describe the scene which followed. If the soul could speak its language might by being a million times richer than that of the mind fully convey our emotions. Asking after our health and journey first bidding us welcome. The Master spoke of the joy imparted by the visit of Mrs. Hannen's sister dwelling particularly on the work of Miss Alma Knobloch in Stuttgart. He said that while others had conquered Germany in the past and had in turn been deposed this conquest would be immortal Napoleon ruled but a little while, this rule would be never ending. She would be greatly blessed in her work. She is the conqueror of Germany. Mention was made of the privilege we had in coming now so openly, white but recently many had been disappointed and the visit of Mr. and Mrs. Mills who but saw our Lord from a distance and went away happy, was cited. The Master said it was not the time which counted but the receptivity. One boy may go to a school for ten years and still be a dullard, another may receive but little schooling and be wise. One patient may be given many medicines and yet remain ill, while another receives but one

and is cured. One merchant will work hard for years and gain little success; another completes but a single deal and is made rich. So it is not the length of one's sojourn but his receptivity, which determines his blessing.

Taking Mrs. Hannen in to see the ladies of the Holy Household, I chanted with Mírzá Asadu'lláh, Dr. Ammen Ullah Farced, who was our interpreter, and Mírzá Vaheed with Mírzá Munír Zayn. Even when nothing was said – the heart was too full for loquacity, the very silence was eloquent. The great eyes burned with love and the room was filled with heavenly emanations. Returning, our Lord, who had greeted me as His Joseph told me that we should be from tomorrow morning to be His guests at the home of His son-in-law Mírzá Zalah Effendi as he wanted us near Him. He said through His interpreter, "You are my own son" and added in English, "my son, my son." Returning we learned that most of the Pilgrims to be seen tomorrow were Jews. Mentioning the fact that the conversion of this race was regarded in America as one of the strong proofs of the Cause in America. We were told in interesting fact that in Hamadán, Persia, Christian Missionaries have been trying for 12 years to convert the Jews. They had a College for young men and recently the entire student body, all Jews became Bahá'í. Whereupon the missionaries offered to sell the College to the Bahá'ís and this was done. It was recalled that Mírzá Aḥmad Yazdí had told us while in Port Sa'íd that the French Government HAD RECENTLY ASKED THE Tíhrán Assembly, the request being made officially by the French Consul to send Bahá'í Missionaries to Algiers to bring about the union of religious condition in that province which the Christian Churches had not been able to effect.

Returning to our Hotel early at the command of our Lord, to rest. We were lighted by the stars which twinkle a response to the light of happiness in our eyes and helped to sleep by the Voice of the Sea with the Echo of that greater voice in our hearts.

Sunday, February 21, 1909

After breakfast at the Hotel, we were called for by Dr. Faríd and conveyed first to the book's Office and then to the home of Mírzá Jalál adjoining the residence built by Madame Jackson and in which our Lord is at present living, here we were put in possession, the family being in 'Akká just now. Soon the Master sent word that we were to accompany Him to the Holy Tomb on Mount Carmel with the half of the Pilgrims who were to continue the feast of yesterday. A three horse vehicle was occupied by our Lord, Mírzá Zayn as interpreter ourselves in front of Him, an aged and venerable Believer with the driver. On the way, 'Abdu'l-Bahá referred to the fact that we would see Jewish Believers, that the Christian Missionaries had striven for years to convert this people and had done countless things for them, to no avail: but behold! The power of the Word of Bahá'u'lláh – they were now Believers in Christ. This going up to the Mountain of the Lord – Carmel – and the Assemblage there was a fulfilment of the prophecies in Isaiah 2:3 and LVI:6, 7. We found a Karty

of about 24 and more carne later. It was explained that some had travelled for weeks and months from distant places one specified 3 months enroute walking, and on horses, donkies and camel just to see our Lord. What greater proof than this could be asked! Following a visit to the Holy Tomb, where the Master chanted the Tablet of Visitation, we partook of a Feast – rice, bread, cheese and clabber – and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá welcomed each one and walked about eating nothing Himself until all had finished and were gone. We sat at the wall with the beautiful panamara – the street leading to the pier straight in front – in the distance ‘Akká – a City of Enchantment, beyond the placid Mediterranean. Various Believers joined us and conversed giving eloquent proof. When the Master appeared, all arose and faced Him. In a while – time passed here like magic – tea was served – Mrs. Hannen chanted the Commune in English and the Arabic Prayer. Then the Pilgrims from Hamadán bade us adieu, as they were going to Jerusalem, because being Jews their people would naturally expect them to go there. The Master would not have them antagonize this feeling. So they sacrifice the time and take the long trip overland because of this. A second visit to the Holy Tomb, where the master again chanted, marked the time to come down. It was my privilege to walk in the footsteps of the Master, and I found it as difficult as one might expect of such an undertaking, stumbling, where He trod firmly. Carmel abounds with beautiful flowers particularly the red anemones, which I had so longed to see and which are now spread around in profession.

While going to the Tomb ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said to Mrs. Hannen, “You had a vision about two years ago of going up Mount Carmel and seeing many strange people. This vision will be fulfilled today and you will see the same people you dreamed of,” and so it was.

In conversation, a utterance developed - ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had said to Mr. Haney, when he said he should not be able to digest the many spiritual food the ability to digest them goes with the gift.

Our Lord says that the Believers must applaud in the meetings when they desire to do so by saying in unison Ya Bahá’u’lláh, not otherwise such as by clapping etc.

There are four greetings given by the Báb

- Alláh-u-A’zam – God is the Greatest
- Alláh-u-Akbar – God the Most Magnificent
- Alláh-u-Ajmal – God is the Most Beautiful
- Alláh-u-Abhá – God is the Most Glorious

Bahá’u’lláh approved of all these but preferred the latter for greeting at meetings and for the 95 prayers. Ya Bahá’u’l-Abhá! Should be used when supplicating in great need. Bahá is glory: Abhá is Most Glorious – viz. Comparative and superlative.

Dr. Faríd to us as Jesus Christ chose for His topics familiar subjects using the

objective system of teaching and scorning oratorical effects, so ‘Abdu’l-Bahá taught by and from life. He cited an incident of today, when he met the Master walking in the city after His return from the Tomb. A party of nuns or sisters in a religious garb passed our Lord, indicating them, said to the Believers with Him, “See these women, they have severed themselves from the world and given all to serve God, and to know Him. Consider how blessed you are, to have what is nevertheless denied them.”

Early this morning, before breakfast and when we were just presentable for the day. Our Lord came to us. First asking about our health and if we had rested well. He asked after the health of the Believers in Washington. He said: “It is well to visit in the morning; better than in the evening for the sun is just rising and is typical of the Sun of Divine Revelation. I arise very early, about midnight.”

We asked if we might present the letters and gifts from America now, He was agreeable to this. While we were reaching for them, He said: “You are in yourselves a long and interesting letter from all the Believers, you are a present from the Friends in the Occident. When a merchant wishes to sell any again, he sends a handful of the grain as sample you are the samples of the American Believers.” When I replied that I hoped He would know the goods as being better than the samples, He said: “If the goods are equal to the samples, it is very well.”

Gazing with love upon photographs, accepting gifts and letters with individual interest. He passed to our questions on behalf of the Friends.

A proposed journey was discouraged because of condition in the country to be traversed.

Another was approved.

To a Believer who outlined a trip which has been commanded to be made, but for which he had been unable to obtain a companion, He said: “The Blessed Perfection has forbidden solitary travelling (i.e. for teaching) particularly long distances! Therefore those days of your leisure, namely your vacation, should be spent right in America, going from city to city and delivering the Glad Tidings, so that next year you may find your companion and make this trip. At present, the delivery of the Glad Tidings in the United States is of great importance, because the fame of the Cause has become widely known in America and many are the souls who long to hear more of the teachings. Therefore if you should devote your vacation to the spread of the Glad Tidings right in America it will be productive of greater results. If you are very disereous of making an Eastern Trip this year you may come to ‘Akká for a visit. If however, you should go from City to promulgate the Glad Tidings it is preferable, and a good result will be forthcoming.”

The next question concerned the marriage of a Believer to one not in the Faith, He said: “There is no harm in it; it is very good. In the Law of God that is to

say in this dispensation it is both permissible to give in marriage and to give in marriage and to take in marriage. That is to say, to give to him who is not a Believer and vice-versa. All bigotries of the past have been removed from this Cause.”

Giving directions concerning a matter of great personal moment to us, the Master asked that other question be presented at a later time and left us. All eyes turned toward Him, as flowers to the sun, and when He was gone it seemed darker, though the sun was brilliantly shining outside.

In conversation with a pilgrim, Mírzá Ḥabíbu'lláh Ullah of Beirut a student at the American College there, an incident was related which has just transpired and shows the Masters ability to perform, seeming miracles. It seems that there has been some friction between the Muḥammada and the Christian students, which culminated in the former refusing to go to the chapel. The Bahá'í students (quite a number are Believers) took no sides acting upon their understanding of the general commands and continued to attend the Chapel. Unexpectedly a telegram came from 'Abdu'l-Bahá saying that they should side with the Muḥammadans. Wonderingly they obeyed. On the following day and notices were posted threatening these students with death had they not taken this action. Thus our Lord saved their lives entirely without anyone notifying Him of the conditions. Mírzá Zain explained that the reason the Bahá'ís in Persia were not being troubled now was because in past years they had not interfered with political affairs, though they often wondered at the commands given to that effect. Now the Cause is plain, and while Muḥammadans are destroying each other, our friends are safe.

In the evening about 8:30 the Master again visited us. “Goodnight” was His greeting in English and then “Good evening” He explained that the Arabs greet each other when meeting by saying “Goodnight,” whereas in English the term is “Good Evening,” also the equivalent in Turkish.

The Master said that He had been invited out and had felt it necessary to go, hence His failure to call upon us sooner. He said he had partaken of an Arabic meal with raw foods which He ate rather than disappoint His host and He wondered what we would have done with the foods. Saying He hoped we were happy – that we must be happy. He added that through the body might not be at rest here the soul is at rest. The question was asked as to the means of raising money for the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár it being explained that some of the Believers were in favour of Bazaars or entertainments for that purpose. While others thought such means not fitting, He replied that if the entertainments were of an intellectual character such purpose. The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár will be erected and hundreds of such structures in due reason. It is not a favor to contribute but a blessing to be allowed to give to such a purpose. He had been especially touched by the gifts of some children who have saved carfare by walking and giving money to the Temple Fund. Such gifts through small, are very acceptable. It is as when a child goes into a garden and picks a flower for the father. The gift is pretty but the spirit makes it welcome. 'Abdu'l-Bahá

has had large fortunes offered to Him, but has refused them while small things, such as a simple handkerchief, when sent with love, have been accepted.

The Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in 'Ishqábád, has proven to be a great aid to the Cause and so it shall be in America. Wherever the heart of a Believer sincerely worships there is a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, but with the growth of the Cause the outward Temple is also necessary. The Master visited us in the morning after we had breakfast and again inquired most solicitously about our healths and welfare. The following question was profounded. (Insert Talks ____ at 'Akká). St. Paul says: 2 Lo 11:15-15. He says Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; and in John 4:3 St. John speaks of Anti Christ as the spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. What is the application of these teachings to this day and hon – may the spirit of Anti-Christ be identified today? He replied: "This refers to the great disturbance which is to occur in that day – the later day. That those souls who occupy the highest stations shall be reverted to the lowest and the souls who occupy the lowest degrees shall be promoted to the highest. For when a new sovereignty is established, during its establishment, great and varied changes take place. Many of the Ministers and men in charge of affairs will be given the lowest posts and many souls who are as nothing will be elevated to a lofty post. To give you a concrete example, Take the Ottoman Government: The great men of affairs ministers plenipotentiary, who favoured, however despotism or monarchy, are now exiles or given very low posts, whereas those who were refugees, many of them banished, owing to their constitutional tendency, have been promoted to the high posts. When in a minor affair such absolute transformation holds as for instance, in the change of a government from despotism status to constitutionalism, how much greater indeed are the changes – when the great organization of the divine sovereignty occurs. These are the signs of the days of the Manifestation that those who are the highest become the lowest and vice versa. To illustrate" The great Rabbi Caiaphas becomes the abased one, whereas a humble fisherman such Peter is so greatly elevated, Mary the Magdalene even an adulteress will be promoted to such a lofty station. Furthermore the intention is to demonstrate that this Manifestation is empowered to do that which He willeth and to command that which He desireth. He who is of the greatest men is by His Word made the basest man, and the man or soul who outwardly is as nothing is taken by that mighty hold and made everything of that is what Jesus Christ means when He says that from the various parts of the earth, nations shall flock to the Kingdom, but the children of the Kingdom shall become outcasts, Math. 8:12 Therefore in the day of the Manifestation of Bahá'u'lláh, Lubi Ezel became the lowest of men whereas remote souls became the nearest to the throne. Whatever He shall do is Truth for he is Truth. He designated Caiaphas as Satan whereas he was the Divinest of the Rabbis, He officiated. Mary the Magdalene the holiest of the holy souls an angel. Likewise the other disciples were mere called angels. Therefore He wished to say again the Manifestation of God is He who doeth whatsoever He willeth. Why and wherefore do not apply to His ways. It

cannot be said or questioned why is this debased one elevated, why that lofty one abased. For in the world of existence every great affair which occurs has for its concomitant great changes; what cause can be imagined as greater than the founding of divine sovereignty? That that is why Jesus Christ says that an outcast stone becomes the corner stone. Likewise that corner stone becomes an outcast stone. The other takes the former's place. The simple fact that the outcast stone is to occupy the corner-stones place, indicates that the former has to be outcast. (end in 'Akká notes p. 6)

Hájí Muḥammad Karaim Khán was a man great influence in Persia and denied the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh and worked against them writing many books, attempting at reputations and leaving no means of hate and animosity. His son also wrote treaties contradicting denying the appearance of the Báb and the validity of the Manifestation.

The spirit of Anti-Christ was identified at the day of the Manifestation in the person of Hájí Muḥammad Karaim Khán who did not confess that the Christ spirit had become manifestation in the flesh in this day."

Question no. 2:

Does the Oriental Teaching about Adepts, Initiates Masters, etc. harmonize with the spirit of the Manifestation of God?

Answer: In this day or dispensation asceticism is of the spiritual type: For spiritual asceticism is correct – is productive of result. On the one hand a man may attain virtues by inherent force of nature or existence: on the other hand these virtues may be due to the weakness of his nature. For instance, an infant is detached from the world; that severance or detachment is due to its potential weakness. But a wise man having passed the stage of maturity will likewise be detached from the world and care nothing for the world but that severance at that stage is indicative of inherent force or strength of character. A withered arm is incapable of storing or striking anybody. But that harmlessness is not due to virtue; it is due to imperfection. But if a person whose arm and hand is well and whole shall not strike them, it is a symptom of strength and virtue. A man who is a mute and dumb cannot lie, but that lack of lying is an indication of his weakness, not to his perfection. But he whose tongue speaketh and yet lieth not is verily mighty. He who is an anomaly of nature will not commit unseemly acts, but the noncommittal f this unseemly acts is not an indication of his strength, but of his weakness. But when he is whole in nature not an anomaly, then if he does not commit such unseemly acts it is truly proof of his righteousness. A dead man is harmless, no harm can come from him but this is not eulogy. But if he be alive and harmless that is eulogizing him. Now we come to the subject. By enduring ascetic hardships, the power of nature will undergo dissolution which will result in great weakness whereby one is made incapable of doing anything. He will not show any temper. He will not do any corruption. He will not cause a riot. He is quiet, He is wronged. He is like a lamb. But

this is due to weakness. But he who has attained spiritual asceticism acquires these attributes by the strength of character. When a man is by nature that is to say, imperfection of nature, incapable of compelling uncommendable acts, that is not a eulogy to him but if he by sheer force of will and spiritual training attains to the character which prevents him from doing such things that is a great credit to Him. The insane is entirely detached attachments, but this is not eulogy. But the disciples of Christ who were in a normal state of mind and body, perfect minds yet they let go of everything in life, that is indeed commendable. Physical Asceticism will, in the court of time was an absolute atrophy of the parts resulting in the greatest weakness. There will be no love of transgressing

No attachment to this life no covetousness, no aggressiveness, but all this is due to great weakness of powers. But spiritual asceticism will help one to attain to such blossoming of powers as will enable him to make up his mind against the things that are not to be, and will encourage him in the things to be. In this Dispensation there is no physical or material asceticism. The spiritual are ascetics, and that is expressed by training souls and education humanity in morals the acquisition of the qualities of the kingdom. At dinner, the Master was present, and showed each of us to our places, offering the food but Himself partaking of none. He walked around us and gave us Teachings. At the outset, He said that this material food was very simple just enough for life, but that the spiritual food was varied and abundant. This material food would last for about five hours, and tomorrow we should again be hungry, but the spiritual food was eternal and would forever satisfy. As we came to the table because we were hungry so we should approach the spiritual table. Jesus Christ while on earth – He established the Lords Supper at which the material food was simple but the spiritual food abundant and immortal.

He said that, “we were gazing upon Mt. Carmel were many Kings and world conquerors had come but now one did not think of them but of the simple Prophets and of Jesus and His Disciples.” One of the dinner guests said, “But why think of the personality of Jesus why not of the spirit?” ‘Abdu’l-Bahá answered “Bravo! Very good! It is not the personality at which we should look. The nations of the world are looking to the personality and hence they are deprived of the reality of Spiritual Truth. It is as if one looked at the horizon instead of the sun, and because the sun was last seen at this horizon should expect it to appear again at the same place. So one horizon is that of Jesus, another that of Moses another of Muḥammad, etc. the Jews looked at the Horizon of Moses. They were so much under the influence of his personality that they did not recognize Jesus when He came. If we can know the sun we do not need the limitation of horizons again the personality is like the chimney and the Truth is as the Light. We can put the light of the lamp in another chimney and it is still the same light. We should not become attached to the chimney and put the light out of our thoughts Consider a lover and his sweetheart. Will he love her only because of a certain costume? Nay for him in that case his love will vanish if she were to appear in another garment or incognito. He must love her for herself. Even so, we must put aside the horizon, the chimney, and the

costume and disperse with personality if we would know the Truth.”

At supper, the Master said, “That beauty is in the realm of mind as the eye cannot see more than about five miles. While the spirit has a boundless vision as for instance it can make discoveries in America.”

He was asked to give the meaning of Cain and Abel – the reply was that, “There are two meanings to this narration – the material and spiritual. As to the former the occurrence is correctly stated and really happened. In the spiritual significance, we find the Abel represents the Divine Law or Religion and Cain the human nature. The Divine Law is present in man, and attains a certain development when the human nature overcomes it. A man may take a forest and by skilful attention turn it into a garden. But if it be neglected for a time, it reverts into its former condition. So there is always present the tendency to multiply the action of the Divine Law or Religion. The Religion of Moses attained its highest development and before the time of Christ it had been acted upon by human forces. So Christianity reached its zenith and outside forces entered until the Divine Law became to an extent superseded. A man may with the utmost care, attend to a garden for a hundred years but if it be neglected for a single year it will become a wilderness.” Asked to explain the development of life from its lowest to its highest forms in accordance with a chart talk given to Mrs. Getsinger. The Master recalled this teaching and He explained that the development of existence may be represented by two arcs forming a circle. The one descending, the other ascending. Beginning with the mineral, the vegetable, and the animal, the human follows being at the end of the descending arc and therefore the vilest lowest point of life. If a man becomes stationary at that point he is the lowest of the low. As for instance if the animal does that which is not commendable it is not to be blamed as much as man can hate more terribly than an animal. Man can be more cruel than an animal and all the baser qualities or passions are intensified if present in the human family. It is by progressing into the spiritual life that the ascending arch is reached and man can grow and develop.

Asked if everything progressed and therefore all men must advance? He said, “There was either a standstill or a progression. There could not be a descent and upon the same principle that a man could not become a babe again. The animal is the lowest type, we cannot go back of that. Darkness is the absence of light, there could be no lower plane in the respect. So man does not go backward from the physical or human position. It is only when he has begun to ascend that he can descend. The point was often presented as to whether all men would eventually progress to the same stages of perfection. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that this is a matter of Divine Will. That although the Theosophists dwelt upon Karma and ultimate perfection, this was not to be expected as degrees of existence must always be presented. For instance if all men were kings there would really be no kings, as a kingdom requires ministers, soldiers, subjects, etc., etc. The goal to be reached is perfection, according to kind or station and this perfection is happiness. The eye is the most finely organized part of the body;

the nail is of a coarser fibre. But the body could not be all an eye and the nail is equally necessary. In connection with the impossibility of decent in the planes of existence, the point of the effect of old age in the form of second childhood was raised. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that was not really a deterioration of an essential part of the man the mind or spirit, but weakening of the functional organs. For example, the wick in a lamp may burn out or become low, but the oil is still there and the light in that sense is not disintegrated; or the chimney may become blackened with smoke, but the light shines within as brightly, though it be not as plainly discernible.

As to the necessity for diversity in the development of the soul? He said – that diversity is really harmony. If our food were to be all of one kind it would become monotonous. So in reality the perfection of harmony and each may attain perfection in its sphere.

The question was then presented. Care in communication with the spirits of the departed?

‘Abdu’l-Bahá said that there is a communication between spirits but that the spiritual séances as given in Europe where spirits are supposed to move objects etc., etc. are plantasmogaria. That spirit can communicate with spirit is probably the known fact of teaching. It is a self evident fact that nothing tangible passes from the teacher to the pupil yet ideas are conveyed. In point of fact the human mind in its original state is now individualistic and the teacher individualized knowledge by classifying it and locating it with respect to the pupils mind. So soul can communicate with soul and in the realms of existence such intercommunication is possible.”

Wednesday, February 24; Our Lord went to the Tiberius on the shores of the sea of Galilee. This being His first trip on the Railroad. He was sent for an account of the passing out of a relative. Before going He planned that we should go to ‘Akká during His absence and this was according by arranged. The journey along the nine miles of saua beach forming an arc of which Haifa is one end and ‘Akká at the other was never to be forgotten. For the great part of the time we were in the ocean the team of the three horses finding a better roadbed in the Mediteran that along the sands, while the two rivers to be crossed are the river Kishon, the other the Naaman, are tremendously deep, along the narrow places on shore when they would seem to be fordable, but practicable a little way out. Passing several caravans of camels, many Arabs on donkeys or foot, the white city ahead became visible in greater detail until finally the Gate was reached. Here formidable looking iron doors, guarded by soldiers, bespoke the prison city. While rusty hinges told their story of the gates afar, a long time. There were more gates, a winding through narrow streets and still narrower passageways that made one glad that our faithful coachman Esfandiar, knew the way, as a pilot recognizes a channel. Finally at the very seawall, a turn brought us into the court which lead into the domain of the Master. Reaching the private yard, buildings on four sides loomed up, the first floors unoccupied, as is the custom fear of dampness leading to this course. A long flight of stone steps worn by

the steps of thousands in perhaps hundreds of years, lead to the rooms. First we entered the Reception Room of our Lord – the long rather narrow chamber with its cushioned bench along one side, chairs and sittings opposite a table in the centre and His divan, at the head, with books, pictures, etc., strum about was recognizable from the description of many pilgrims. The atmosphere of love radiated, yet it was as if some rare birds had fled its cage, as we missed the great Presence. Through the dining room we reached our chamber, hallowed by the presence of many previous guests. The windows overlooked the great double walls and the moat which made ‘Akká an impregnable fortress to the world. Conquerors who found defeat here. One pondered naturally upon Richard the Lion Hearted Napoleon, Salahed din and those other heroes of history and in sharp contrast beheld the peaceful conquest now attained. Outside the sea beat tempestuously upon which had for thousands of years withstood their assault. Within was His peace.

We were visited after dinner by the pilgrims from every clime, Orientals, venerable men of God, many of whom had suffered for the Cause, pressed forward to greet us in love. Thus the remainder of the days was passed. On Thursday we visited the room where the photographs of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh are kept and gazed upon the blessed relics, encased in filigree silver frames. Then we were told that that after dinner we were to visit the Holy Tomb, and the Ridván. The day was beautiful in sharp contrast to the proceeding day. The Tomb is located outside of the City, about half a mile. First one reached the Hospice or Tea House kept for the reception of pilgrims. Then the “Palace” or residence of the Blessed Perfection these with the garden formed the “Bahijah” or Palace. The Tomb is back of the residence, surrounded by a beautiful garden abloom with roses, violets and spring flowers. Inside the portals one is veritably in a heaven of rest. Tropical plants lend verdure and fragrance to the soft moist atmosphere. Costly rugs cover the marble floor of the outer room, with the garden in the hollow square, glass walls from about 15 feet above the floor to the roof, possibly 20 feet beyond, give sunshine at all times. When the orb of day is visible. From the window, sweet breezes wafted in, causing prisms in a chandelier to tinkle occasionally is bordered with deep colored oranges, so that all the senses are enraptured with the beauty enabling the spirit as it were to stand alone before its maker. The Tomb itself is visible from a door at one side, at the head of the room, and many candles are to be seen. Here one prays, as it were closer than ever before or after to their own God whom the Blessed Perfection manifested in the highest degree.

A drive of perhaps across the Valley of Achor, brought us to the Ridván, or “Garden of Paradise.” This is a piece of land shaped like a great ship surrounded on three sides by running water. Here Bahá’u’lláh sat oft neath the great mulberry trees forming a tent or canopy of green. Orange trees and many other varieties with a profusion of flowers stocks verbenas, carnations, violets, etc., form a delightful garden. Several pilgrims accidents encountered were about to serve tea in which we participated. We visited the Room of the Blessed Perfection, were given pomegranates by the Gardener, ‘Abdu’l Kázim, then left for Haifa. The

shores peaceful today, were strewn with wreckage from an Italian Steamer which struck upon the rocks the preceeding Sunday. Arabs lined almost the entire distance taking the prizes of wood, oranges and numerous other things brought ashore in the heavy seas of the preceding day and night. We reached Haifa about 5 o'clock just in time for the Master's return.

Soon He greeted us in our room, and said that He had returned earlier because of our presence – He had been with us in Spirit though absent in body. Since leaving us He had walked where Christ walked along the shores of Galilee.

A question was presented.

Is it the duty of the Believers to attend the weekly meeting? 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "It is not a duty incumbent upon them; it is not obligatory, but if they have no special demand upon their time, the Believers must be present at the meetings. A man may have some special duty to attend to in the nature of an obligation; then he cannot attend, but if that duty is not important and he should be absent it is not commendable. If the love of God is truly in a man's heart, he earnestly desires to be present at all meetings. In fact, he would like to be there every night and every day."

Question: In the regular meetings to which outsiders are invited. i.e. open meetings should the Holy Utterances only be read or explanations also be given?

Answer: In such meetings that is to say, the Meetings which are open to the public, a necessary part of the gram should be explanations or introductions to the subject that such a Manifestation has occurred and of course Tablets should be read. It should consist of both speech making though delivery of the Glad Tidings as well as the reading of the Holy Utterances. Dr. Faríd asked: "Do you have singing at the meetings in Washington? (Answer: At the School only.)"

The singing of hymns in the Meetings is not obligatory, i.e. not stated in the Book of Laws, but is allowable. But the parts which are incumbent upon the followers to observe are as follows: First the reading of prayer then tablets which contain instructions such as the *Tajalleat* the *Ṭarázát* the *Ishrakat*.

At supper 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: "The Arabs we met today were deprived of civilization and yet they think they are not in need of civilization or knowledge. They never prefer other to themselves, while in reality they are in absolute need of civilization and education. When the people of Europe look at the Arabs, they say – and they are right – that the Arabs are entirely deprived of every kind of knowledge but they themselves think they are independent. Likewise those who think themselves to be civilized may say they are independent of spiritual facts. When the people of reality realize this it causes them to grieve because they find that true they are deprived of every bounty and favour. Civilization is like unto the body. Spirituality is like the soul. A body with spirit is improbable though it should be of the utmost beauty while without spirit it is nothing. One should be alive inhaling the fragrances of the Holy Spirit. Therefore Christ said: "Set the dead, bury the dead: The one who is born of the flesh in flesh, but he

who is born of the spirit is spirit. A picture though it should be of the utmost beauty, still because it is spiritless it is not alive. When it has no soul or spirit, it is of no use. But even the highest Senegambian endowed with the spirit or life is much better than that beautiful picture for he is alive. The disciples of Christ though they were lacking in culture were alive. But Herod was a learned man, nevertheless he was dead. Pilate was a highly educated man but he was as dead. To sum up one must be alive, and this cannot be obtained save by the Holy Fragrance.”

Question: What is the relative effect of vegetable and animal foods upon the mind of man or spirit of man? ‘Abdu’l-Bahá said: “It has no effect. It does not develop the mind to subsist upon a vegetable diet. A man can be without reason or understanding, though he does not eat meat or flesh and again one eats flesh but his mind is very sharp. The more man avoids hurting the animal the better. It is very strange that a man should kill an animal for his food, but since meat is in the market, one buys it. It is indeed very grievous to kill a lamb or other animal for ones food for the feelings of an animal are just as great as our own. As by the slightest injury for example, a thorn-prick, the man will cry out; how much more grievous is it to kill an animal.”

After supper, the Master retiring early, following a fatiguing journey. We were told that He desired the pilgrims from America, numbers of whom had received permission recently to come here, should inquire at Port Sa’id before proceeding further as to the number already hire. It being His wish that only four should be present at one time because of the attitude of the local Government. If any need what they should take any trips planned for Egypt before coming. He instructed us to convey this information to the Believers as we returned.

Friday, Feb. 26, 1909.

Walking with Mírzá Munír Zain, the Master’s Secretary, we met our Lord who had taken a trip to the German Pier and was returning, followed by nine of the Orientals Friend. The picture was indelibly impressed. The Christ type and the disciples were again presented vividly. Mírzá Munír told of the journey recalling the Master’s pleasure in the new experience of His desire to stand during the trip so as to see the panorama of desert and verdure. The trip on the railroad occupied about 3 hours – then they proceed on horseback to a nearby Arab village where dined. Thence followed by about 30 Arab Shieks, who recently followed the Master (though themselves Muḥammadans) the procession proceeded impressively to another village, about 2 hours journey, opposite and in sight of Tiberias in Galilee. Here prayers were said for the departed, using the Muḥammadan Ceremony, the Master lead and all followed Him and reverently kissed His hand.

In the late afternoon, our Lord visited us; asked for further instructions concerning the Bahá’I Sunday School of Washington D.C. He said:

“In that hour, you have to make the children familiar with the prophecies in

the Gospel, and mentioning the name of God and about this Revelation that is to say instruct them how to become teachers so that the love of God may be established in their hearts while they are young children. They should develop spiritual feelings. You are to explain to them or read to them the Ishrakat, Ṭarázát, Tajalleyat, the words of Paradise and Tablet of the World. You have to make them learn by heart some of these verses. By these means they will become enlightenment and will be educated, for they are like unto a young tree, you can train them in whatever manner you like.”

Instructions were asked concerning the work among the colored people in Washington; He said, “there should be no differentiation between the blacks and the whites, all are the creatures of God, all are created by one God. Think the heart is the best whether white or black. I had a servant Esphandiar by name; he was better than a hundred whites. He was so good tempered, so faithful and trustworthy. One would be amazed at his intelligence. The question of the races is one which is extremely regrettable. For the blacks hate the whites, while the whites distrust the blacks. You must overcome this by showing them that you make no distinction. The end will be very unfortunate for both if the differences are not removed.”

(As now there is a great enmity between the white and the blacks in America. They hate each other. The white consider the blacks ill natured and the blacks are...) {ed}