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author: Corinne True
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Table Talks of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá at ‘Akká

Mrs. Corinne True

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Questions

Question: What is the significance of the word “He is God” which appears as the heading of every tablet and letter? {.question}

Answer: This is a usage of the people of the East; it is of Islám. Their purpose is that in every matter the commencement should be in the Name of God (i. e., everything we do must begin with the Name of God). As to its observance in the divine tablets, the purport is this: The reality of the Divine Entity is holy above comprehension, beyond definition, and far from the reach of imagination, for that which is imagined is finite, of man, and thereto man is infinite; and certainly the infinite is greater than the finite. Therefore, it is made evident that what is imagined is a creation and not the Creator, for the Essence of Divinity is beyond human imagination.

Now all people worship an imagination, for they have created a God in the realm of imagination and him they worship. If you ask a soul, {{p4}} when he is praying, who art thou worshiping? He will say, God. Which God? The God of my conception. When, in truth, what he imagines is not God. Hence, all people are worshipers of imaginations and ideals. Consequently, there is no pathway or escape for man except the Holy Manifestations, for, as we said the Essence of Divinity is pure, is holy and cannot be brought into the world of ideas. That which can be brought to ideation are the Holy and Divine Manifestations. Further than this, man has no other point for concentration. If he exceed that bound, it will be an imagination.

Therefore, the purpose of the word “He is God” is this: That visible Majesty (the prophet) is the Promised Beauty of the Sun of Reality, the Manifestation of the mysteries of Divinity and Deity, the Revealer of the mysteries of the Merciful, the Origin of the signs of singleness. And I begin with His Blessed Name.

Question: What is the meaning of the disciples having spoken in all tongues? {.question}

Answer: The disciples taught in the language of the Kingdom. That language (or tongue) is the equivalent of all languages, for the Word of the Kingdom

is an expression of heavenly significances and heavenly mysteries. Whosoever attains it, to him the realities and mysteries of creation are clear. The heavenly significances are the comprehensive reality of all tongues. Therefore, the Holy Spirit having delivered to the disciples the tongue of the Kingdom, they become conversant with the tongues of all nations. With whomsoever among the nations and peoples of the world they conversed, they proved to be co-linguists. Moreover, the known and taught languages of the present exceed a thousand tongues in number. Had the disciples known the literal languages, they should have, at least, transcribed the Gospel in the tongue of some one of the nations, while as a matter of fact it was written only in the Hebraic and the Greek. The Gospel was not even written in the Roman tongue which was at that time an official language, since the government was in the hands of the Romans. As the disciples were not proficient in the Roman tongues they did not write the Gospel therein. {{p5}}

When His Holiness Abraham was ordained, when he established the Law of God, promulgated the new teachings and expounded the Divine mysteries, the tribes of Athur and Chaldea were wont to say: This is mere imagination and a story, a concept in the realm of thought which will not be realized in the outside world. They even said: It is sheer ignorance. They considered themselves the people of intellect and discernment.

It was only a short time after when it became evident that what His Holiness Abraham was saying was reality itself and their thoughts imagination, for in a short period the teachings of Abraham were established outwardly, the Holy Land was dedicated to his posterity, the foundation of the Law of God was laid; His Holiness Isaac and Jacob stepped into the plane of existence; His Holiness Joseph became the dear one of Egypt; His Holiness Ishmael was blessed and enlightened Mt. Paran.

Moses, the Interlocutor, appeared and in the desert of Sinai he witnessed the burning fire of God in the most verdant tree; he rescued the Israelites from the oppression and bondage of the Copts and led them to the Holy Land through the blessings of his teachings and law, which were suitable and agreeable to that period, and thus a great nation was organized.

With this perfect example (experience) before the people, it became evident that they had committed a mistake. Notwithstanding this they did not learn the lesson or heed the counsel. Nay, rather, when His Holiness Moses came, the people again sinned (lit., made a mistake), for the people of Pharaoh called the teachings and the law of His Holiness Moses illusion and of no importance. They considered their own thoughts reality.

Nevertheless in a short time it became clear and evident that what His Holiness Moses said was reality because it came to pass; the Law of God was fully established and became the cause of the honor and progress of all the Israelites. But the thoughts and conceptions of the Copts, the people of Pharaoh, were sheer imagination.

In sooth this was the second experience (lit., trial) and yet the people did not accept the warning and did not awaken, but rather remained in ignorance and negligence until His Holiness Christ with a smiling face and an eloquent tongue appeared, diffused the fragrances of the rose-garden of mysteries and conferred the bounty of the Holy Spirit. People, notwithstanding the two trials they had before and the mistakes they had made, still said that the teachings of the glorious Gospel were illusions, thoughts and an imagination without foundation. They said it was void of philosophy; baseless thoughts. They thought they were wise, that they had intelligence, knew wisdom and were in possession of the quintessence of politics. {{p6}}

Before long it was evident that they had again made a mistake, for what Christ said was reality was true; they were heavenly thoughts, Divine teachings, while the thoughts of the tribes and peoples were baseless imaginations. This was the third mistake. The trial was repeated in the appearance of His Holiness the Apostle (Muḥammad) and His Holiness the Supreme (the Báb).

Now the Blessed Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) has appeared. The merciful teachings and counsels have become evident. The summons to the oneness and unity of the world of humanity raised, the banner of the Kingdom of Peace unfurled, and the tent of concord and love among all the human race pitched in the center of the world, inviting all to it, and yet there are some ignorant ones who imagine that this Divine doctrine is without foundation and their own conceptions are lofty ideals. But soon it will be clear that what He has said is correct, solid and effective and the thoughts of all others devoid of significance. {{p7}}

Question: What is the significance of “mystery” referred to in the blessed tablets? {.question}

Answer: Mystery signifies the subjects and questions which are far beyond the minds and comprehensions of the people. When a perfect personage unveils and expounds them, fair souls comprehend them. Therefore the reality of the Manifestation of Christ was, in the cycle of Moses, a mystery of Divine Mysteries, which afterward became revealed in the Manifestation of Christ.

Question: What Divine wisdom is there in fasting? {.question}

Answer: The Divine wisdom in fasting is manifold. Among them is this: As during those days (i. e. the period of fasting which the followers afterward observe) the Manifestation of the Sun of Reality, through Divine inspiration, is engaged in the Descent of Verses, the instituting of Divine Law and the arrangement of Teachings, through excessive occupation and intense attraction there remains no condition or time for eating and drinking. For example, when His Holiness Moses went to Mount Tur (Sinai) and there engaged in instituting the Law of God, he fasted forty days. For the purpose of awakening and admonishing the people of Israel, fasting was enjoined upon them.

Likewise His Holiness Christ in the beginning of instituting the Spiritual Law, the systematizing of the Teachings and the arrangement of counsels, for forty

days abstained from eating and drinking. In the beginning the disciples and Christians fasted. Later the assemblages of the chief Christians changed fasting into Lenten observances. {{p8}}

Likewise the Qur'án having descended in the month Ramazan, fasting during that month became a duty. In like manner His Holiness the Supreme (the Báb), in the beginning of the Manifestation, through the excessive effect of descending Verses, passed days in which his nourishment was reduced to tea only.

Likewise, the Blessed Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh), when busy with instituting the Divine Teachings and during the days when the Verses (the Word of God) descended continuously through the great effect of the Verses and the throbbing of the heart, took no food except the least amount.

The purpose is this: In order to follow the Divine Manifestations and for the purpose of admonition and the commemoration of their state, it became incumbent upon the people to fast during those days.

The Christians, as was written, formerly fasted fully. For every sincere soul who has a beloved longs to experience that state in which his beloved is. If his beloved is in a state of sorrow, he desires sorrow; if in a state of joy he desires joy; if in a state of rest, he desires rest; if in a state of trouble, he desires trouble.

Now since in those days His Holiness the Supreme (the Báb) fasted many days, and the Blessed Beauty (Bahá'u'lláh) took but little food or drink, and some days Christ did not eat, it became necessary that the friends should follow that example. For thus saith He in the Tablet of Visitation: "They, the believers, have followed that which they were commanded, for love of Thee." This is one wisdom of the wisdoms of fasting. {{p9}}

The second wisdom is this: Fasting is the cause of awakening man. The heart becomes tender and the spirituality of man increases. This is produced by the fact that man's thoughts will be confined to the commemoration of God, and through this awakening and stimulation surely ideal advancements follow.

Third wisdom: Fasting is of two kinds, material and spiritual. The material fasting is abstaining from food or drink, that is, from the appetites of the body. But spiritual, ideal fasting is this, that man abstain from selfish passions, from negligence and from satanic animal traits. Therefore material fasting is a token of the spiritual fasting. That is: O God! as I am fasting from the appetites of the body and not occupied with eating and drinking, even so purify and make holy my heart and my life from aught else save Thy Love, and protect and preserve my soul from self-passions and animal traits. Thus may the spirit associate with the Fragrances of Holiness and fast from everything else save Thy mention. {{p10}}

We reached Haifa on Monday evening, having taken ship at Alexandria Saturday afternoon. The trip from Port Sa'id was beautiful and the sea was perfectly calm. As we neared Mt. Carmel the sun shone on the point, making a picture never to be forgotten. Fresh verdure and new life was beginning to be manifest. After

landing, Cook's man drove us to the Carmel House and there we breathed the most delicious air of quiet and peace, our hearts praising God that He had, in His Mercy, permitted us to come to the New Holy City, the New Jerusalem, to the King of Kings, enthroned in the hearts but imprisoned as far as the material world goes.

We remained two nights and a day in Haifa and the weather was most favorable for seeing the beauties of Haifa. The same day of our arrival the Master's wife had driven into Haifa to see Rhooah Khánúm who is living, for the present, in Madame Jackson's new house. The two sons-in-law of The Master came to the hotel for us to bring us to see the ladies and Mírzá Asadu'lláh. We were almost beside ourselves with the joy of realizing that actually and truly we were in Haifa, with 'Akká just across the bay ever in sight, and, further, to have the great privilege of seeing the Master's wife and the daughter, was almost more than the capacity of the limited heart could endure. We went back to the hotel after a half hour's visit with these holy souls. The moon was all but full and the entire setting seemed like heaven itself. We fell asleep on our pillows perfectly intoxicated with the realization that at last we were to visit the One upon whose Holy Utterances we had been feeding our souls for the past eight years. Sleep was very sweet that night and upon arising the next morning we looked out of our bedroom windows to see 'Akká across the blue sea and Carmel's point bathed in the new morning's sunshine- -a veritable landscape dream almost too beautiful to belong to earth. {{p11}}

During the forenoon our traveling companion, Madame Scaramucci, whom we had met for the first time at Port Sa'id, took a carriage drive with my daughter Arna while I looked after certain packages and letters for the friends in Haifa. They had but just left me and turned the corner when Mírzá Ameen's brother came to the hotel to escort us to Mírzá Asadu'lláh's home. I had to go alone because I did not know where to find Madame Scaramucci and Arna.

Mírzá Asadu'lláh, his wife, two sons and a daughter greeted me with great warmth, asking many questions about the friends in America and the progress of the Temple. The work which Chicago had been doing was clearly explained to him and he said it was well we had made it an American movement and he hoped it would be built by the believers of the world. He commended our wisdom in referring the location to the Master. The Master's wife and the daughter Rhooah came to call, also a sister of the Master's wife who lives in Haifa. Coffee and cookies were served, and after quite a visit, I went back to the hotel and found Arna and the Bahá'í sister had returned and were wondering where I could be. {{p12}}

THE TOMB OF THE BÁB

At half past two we went to Madame Jacksons' home, which is called the home of 'Abbás Effendi, to meet Rhooah Khánúm who had invited us to drive with her to the Holy Tomb of the Báb on the side of Mt. Carmel.

The blessed Master's carriage drove up for us and our hearts almost beat aloud to realize we were to drive in his carriage, with his beautiful daughter, to that Holy Tomb of the Báb, which every believer in the world knows about. Not only is its architecture remarkable, but its location is positively commanding, built upon the solid rock of the great mountain, very high up from the sea and looking down the main avenue of Haifa, which leads direct to the sea. A stone pier or landing was built a few years ago at Haifa for the Emperor of Germany, who visited the Holy Land, entering by way of Haifa because there is a large German settlement here. {{p13}}

These Germans originally came to Haifa because they had reckoned from prophecies that this is the part of the Holy Land from which the Voice of God would be proclaimed at the second coming of Christ. A great interest existed in our hearts to see thoroughly this wonderful Tomb, and this desire had grown out of the work we had been doing for the Temple in America. After seeing its massive walls and solid masonry, we did not wonder that the Turkish Government might believe that the Master was building a great military fort. This Tomb is built to last for thousands of years, and one can quite believe it will after seeing it. There is a flower garden in front of this building and the wife of the keeper gathered a lovely bunch of red roses and brought them as a gift to us and later she came with a handful of violets. After Rhooah Khánúm had explained the inner rooms — three in breadth, and, when complete, three in depth — we came out of the building to find this keeper's dear little wife had placed four chairs in front of the building and was waiting to serve us a cup of Persian tea, and we sat in that wonderful place, looking over to 'Akká and down to Elijah's cave and the wide sweep of the bay, and we knew there was nowhere else on earth another such a place. The Mercies of God, in this His Greatest Day, are so overwhelming that they are like a consuming fire. All of this had come to us in two days and we had not yet been to 'Akká. I said to our Bahá'í sister companion:

“What must it be in the days before us if we have only touched, as it were, the hem of the garment?” {{p14}}

THE TOMB OF THE BÁB THE RIDE TO 'AKKÁ

Another perfect moonlight night and a delicious sleep brought us to this morning. We had not received the word from 'Akká to come, but were expecting it. We were dressing for breakfast when a knock was heard at our door, and upon opening, Mírzá Ameen's brother was seen, bringing to us the glad tidings that we might take Cook's carriage and go to the house of the Master that morning. After selecting the necessary clothing and packing our suit-cases, leaving our trunks with Cook, we hired a sort of omnibus carriage with three horses to pull us, and started from Haifa at 10 o'clock.

The ride to 'Akká has been described by several pilgrims, but I must be frank to say no mortal can possibly from any description picture it to himself; he must

actually take it to get any idea of its beauty. After passing through the narrow streets of old Haifa, we drove to the shore of the sea. The entire drive is on the sandy beach and nearly all of the time we were driving partly in the sea because the sand there was firmer and easier for the horses. Twice on the way we had to drive well out into the sea in order to pass the mouths of two streams which empty into the sea, the water coming almost into the wagon bed. One little word which the Master had said to Mrs. Lucas, when she made the same pilgrimage, kept our hearts in perfect peace, and that word was this: "Love knows no fear."

To an American, with everything so open and free about our cities, the entrance into 'Akká is something gruesome indeed and had we not known who was within its walls and under the shelter of whose roof we were to be domiciled, we would have fled with terror. It is a prison city which is truly named "The Greatest Prison." {{p15}}

THE MEETING WITH 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

We were greeted at the entrance by the Master's son-in-law and another believer and kindly escorted to our room and our luggage placed there for us. We were left alone for a few minutes. Then a messenger rapped and inquired if Monevah Khánúm might come to see us. We freshened ourselves up after the long, windy drive and were happy to greet the Master's youngest daughter. She came to us so sweetly with those wonderful soulful bright eyes, bearing in her hand three beautiful roses plucked and sent to us by the Master with his welcome.

In a few minutes more the Master himself came into our room and we met him at the door, kissing his hand as he entered. His appearance is absolutely nothing like the picture in America. Once, when first I came into the knowledge of the Revelation, I dreamed of attaining the great meeting and of bringing one of my daughters. The personage I saw in my dream was not like the picture, so for several years I had fancied it must be Bahá'u'lláh. Today, when the Master entered, there was the One whom I had seen in vision, and also I had brought one of my girls, and it is Arna. He came in so naturally and easily, bringing us a handful of hyacinths, purple and pink. He spoke many words of welcome to us and said it made him so happy to see the east and the west becoming so united; that the time was, and not long since, that an Occidental was greatly hated by the Orientals, but now, through the power of the Word of God which alone can thus unite the hearts, the east and the west were loving each other very much, and he hoped it would increase day by day. {{p16}}

He said each believer has a certain time when he should make the desired visit, each having a certain work to do for the progress of the Cause. He hoped all would eventually attain to the meeting. After a few such explanations, he left us and the young daughter and another Persian believer's wife (the brother of Ahmad and Muḥammad Yazdí) joined us and talked with us until dinner was announced. When this sister came to us she brought us each a beautiful

tangerine sent to us by the Master. How we longed to be able to keep these flowers and this fruit for our brothers and sisters in America, who are thinking of us these precious days spent in the home of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! {{p17}}

At dinner, which was served for us in the small dining room into which our room opens, the Master took each by the hand, giving us seats, placing Arna on his right as his guest of honor. The meal was served in courses by a Burmanese believer who is serving in the Master’s home. The Master would take a bite or two and then give us beautiful lessons. He spoke of the difficulties the first Christians had in visiting John the Baptist while in prison. They were greatly persecuted and ridiculed for it. Then he showed how good and really necessary were these tests. As an illustration he compared a ship on the sea, tossed about by the wind and the waves, laden with cargo. No one on that ship, perhaps, is even comfortable, but the ship, nevertheless, brought food to the people and thus was the cause of life. So man must have the winds and waves of test in order that life be brought to the people. As no food could be had unless the wind and waves brought it, so no spiritual food can be had without the first workers in the Cause suffer tests. One point he particularly made was that in Jesus’ time the people came to test Jesus, but they did not know that He came to test them instead of their testing Him.

OUR SECOND DAY IN ‘AKKÁ

At six o’clock yesterday afternoon the Master came to our room to call on us and gave us very beautiful teachings and then said some of the officials of ‘Akká had come to call on him, so he could not take tea with us. We saw no more of him until this morning. Monevah Khánum came for us at 7:30 to come to the early morning gathering of the family, when tea is served and all chant from the Holy Utterances. A very dear little boy, the son of Ḥusayn Yazdí, only about six years old, chanted so sweetly. He came in so noiselessly, kneeling near the door, and sat with hands folded, listening until the Master requested him to chant. Then the Master praised him greatly and called him to come to him and gave him a handful of flowers. After visiting with the women of the household, the Master’s sister, the mother and four daughters and two Russian pilgrims from ‘Ishqabád for half an hour or so, we went to breakfast with Monevah Khánum. {{p18}}

THE TEMPLE IN AMERICA

In the course of an hour the Master sent for me to come to him and bring with me the letters and photographs which I had brought from America. Monevah Khánum took me to a room into which I had not been and there he was waiting for me. I gave him the numerous letters and then the photographs which he enjoyed greatly and said they were a most acceptable present to him. The roll of names for the Temple lay beside me, wrapped in a piece of wrapping paper, and before I had gotten to it to give it to him, he said that was for the Mashrek-el-Askar. {{p19}}

After I had explained the long list of names to him, he patted me on the back and said I had done well and ever after this I was to be his daughter just as if I were Monevah Khánum, his own daughter. His satisfaction at the work we have done toward the Temple seemed to fill him with great joy. I asked him about the location and he said it must be built away from the stores and business portion of the city. Then the lay of the city was explained to him and the question was asked whether it was advisable to locate back from the business portion or on the lake side and he replied the lake shore would be more beautiful for the location, as it must be in a very beautiful place. We must have as large a piece of land as we could get. Then he went into another room and brought to me a ground plan and said it must be like that. First the building, with nine sides, in the middle; then a circular court about that; leading from this circle were to be nine avenues; between each a garden, and in the middle of each garden a fountain of water. He said it would take much to build the Temple, but we must have meetings about the work, labor hard and pray to God and He would bless our efforts. The question of the design of the architecture of the building was asked and Mr. Remey's kind offer to help us in this was mentioned. He said several must consult together and not simply one person's plans accepted. He said the Temple was the greatest matter today for the upbuilding of the Cause. {{p20}}

When asked what was the means of bringing the greatest unity among the believers, he said:

First, the character of the teachers, and

Second, the work for the Temple.

The teachers must so live that their deeds would teach the people even if they did not teach by word of mouth. The teachers are of the first importance; their lives must be examples.

The Master gave glorious promises for the Chicago believers. He said very great souls should come from our Assembly, teachers who would not only enlighten America but other countries like China and Japan and the whole world. He said he was pleased with the work in Chicago — it was “khaili khoob.”

OUR THIRD DAY AT ‘AKKÁ, MARCH 1, 1907

We arose very early this morning to join the Master's family in their meeting. After the chanting was finished and each one had been served a cup of tea, we went back to our rooms. The Master had some Syrian bread and a little cheese served him and a cup of tea. This was his entire breakfast. We were served a nice breakfast about 8 o'clock and when nearly through eating Monevah Khánum came to us to know if we desired to see the Master giving to the poor, as was his custom every Friday morning. When we went to our windows which overlook a big court yard, we saw between two and three hundred men, women and children gathered. Such a motley crowd one can see {{p23}} only in these parts. There

were blind, lame, cripples and very feeble persons, the poorest clad collection of people almost that the earth contains. One man had his clothing made of a patched quilt, an old woman had gunny sacking for a cloak; children were so ragged that their clothing would scarcely stay on them.

Two or three of the men believers were with the Master. The people were required to arrange themselves orderly about two sides of the court and the Master began near the gate giving into the hand of each some piece of money and then each was required to pass out. It was a sight never to be forgotten to see the Master going from one to another, saying some word of praise or kindness to encourage each. With some he would stop to inquire into their health and he would pat them on the back, these poor, dirty-looking creatures, and once in a while we would see him send some one away empty handed and he would reprimand him for his laziness. How clear and musical his voice sounded as he went from one to another, giving and praising! The men accompanying him kept order in great kindness, but firmness, and saw that each passed on as soon as he had received from the Master. Where, O where on this globe can one duplicate such a scene as is enacted every Friday morning in the court yard of the Master of 'Akká, who. is himself a state prisoner to the Turkish government and has lived in prison or in exile since he was nine years of age! {{p24}}

It is the Muḥammadan Sabbath and we have heard all day from the Moslem minarets the loud chanting of the Musselmen. But saw we any one gathering the poor, the lame, the blind and halt in his own court yard and giving to them freely of what God had bestowed upon him and living with the bare necessities himself? If this is not the resurrection of the pure spirit of the humble Nazarene of 1900 years ago, then we need not look elsewhere, for its every appearance stamps it as such. Even the condition and costumes of the beggars bespeak the return.

After this crowd had departed, I chanced to pass by the Master's door and I saw he was lying on his bed, very tired, but he saw me and would have his daughter bring me in and he said: "These are my friends; my friends. Some of them are my enemies, but they think I do not know it, because they appear friendly, and to them I am very kind, for one must love his enemies and do good to them." The Master explained that there really was not work for the poor of 'Akká, only two avenues being open for them to earn, one by fishing and the other by carrying heavy loads. Yesterday, and for two or three days, the sea has raged madly so that no fishing could be done, and it requires great strength to carry heavy loads. He knows the impostors and will not encourage mendicancy, and as he passes them he rebukes them for laziness and idleness and tells them where they can go to obtain work. He said humanity was one great {{p25}} whole and they must help and sympathize with each other and develop the laws of attraction between the hearts. He said, "Look at this great universe with the sun, moon and planets all revolving in harmony; it is because of the great laws of attraction holding and binding them. Man must work to increase this love for his kind."

The work done by the Chicago Assembly of Teaching in providing the Bahá'í home for Mrs. Holcomb's three grandchildren was described to the Master and he was greatly delighted, saying in English and with much force, "Beautiful! Beautiful!" He said to look after the orphans was one of the very first works for the believers. The orphans are God's children and a great test to the people. I asked him if the grandmother should keep the children with her and he said while they were small, and then the believers should take them into their homes, train, educate them and teach them the Revelation. I explained that the Temple movement of this winter seemed to be brought about by our arising to help these orphans, and he smiled and said yes, God blesses us for doing good works every time.

After this he excused himself to attend to a large pile of Tablets he had been writing. Not one moment of the day is wasted by this Mighty Man of God.

At 12:30 he came for us to come to dinner with him. He had been to the Muḥammadan Mosque in the meantime. At the meal the {{p26}} explanation of the cloven tongues of fire descending upon the disciples after the crucifixion, and their being able to speak all tongues, was asked. The son-in-law took it down and Monevah will see that it is correct and give it to me for the believers.

I asked the Master if the fruit was the mystery of the tree that bore it and he said no, it was the mystery of the earth; that there was a germ or little forms of life in the soil, which was acted upon by the water and fed by the earth, and this was taken up by the roots, the trees having a circulation. The leaves expose the sap of the tree to the sun and this colors the fruit. A tree will bear fruit if the leaves are cut off, but it will be poor and colorless.

During the afternoon the Master's sister and the oldest daughter came to call on us in our room which is very large and pleasant, with windows overlooking the sea. We asked her to tell us a little of her experiences in the lifetime of the Blessed Perfection. She was only six years old when their exile began and she said her mother had the greatest suffering, for she had little children. When they were exiled to 'Akká, seventy-seven were put onto a steamer that was so dirty that it made them all very ill. They were given no food for four days and slept on deck. Only the Master and the Blessed Perfection could summon up courage to sit down and rest. The others were so distressed by the filth that they walked up and down the boat all the {{p27}} time. After four days they reached a city and two or three of the men were allowed to go in and buy some food. One believer was very ill and they wished to cook a little broth for him, but the captain of the boat would not allow even that, so they had to go without. When they landed they were taken in small boats to 'Akká and all the seventy-seven were put into a small prison, the door locked on them and no food provided for them. The Master's sister said in the midst of such fearful calamities they were so happy to be in 'Akká, even in prison with no food, just because they were not separated from the Blessed Perfection. The women were not prisoners but went into exile and imprisonment in order to be with Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá — that was more than food or comfort.

After a short visit the Master's sister left us and said she would come often if only she could speak English with us. Some one came in a few moments later and brought Madame Scaramucci and me each a little bottle of attar of roses from the Master's sister.

The older daughter remained for a little visit with us and told us of poor Nabíl. He loved Bahá'u'lláh so much that, after His departure, he said he could not stay in this world. For three months he was so disconsolate. At last he wrote a beautiful poem, telling all that was in his heart, and gave it to a believer to give to the Master, but this believer forgot to give it right away. All that night the family heard some one {{p28}} walking about the Holy Tomb and chanting prayers. The next morning he went to the sea, and leaving his clothes on shore, drowned himself. No one knew of it and they searched for him all over the mountains and around. Then his clothing was found and in four days his body was washed up and it was identified. When the poem was read by the Master, it was learned that he had decided he could stay on earth no longer—he loved and yearned so for Bahá'u'lláh.

One of the daughters dressed Arna as a Persian women and took her down in the streets of 'Akká and up into the pinnacle of the Mosque where the men go to pray and chant. Madame Scaramucci had a call from the Master, but it was such a busy day he did not come to us. After supper the women of the family were gathered in their parlor and desired us to join them. While there the Master came in and said we were blessed indeed to be able to come to 'Akká. There are two kinds of visits, one in which the person comes very thirsty and the water will taste very sweet to him; the other in which the person is not thirsty and the water-will be bitter. The latter visit would much better not be made. We could not now realize what our visit meant; it was like a seed which would sprout and grow later and bear fruits that would endure throughout eternity. {{p29}}

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1907

Arising early I went into the living room where the Master meets

with his family every morning, between six and seven o'clock. The widow of one of the martyrs sits on the floor in the Persian style and makes and serves the tea every morning. Her husband was one of three brothers who were imprisoned for this Cause. For days they had no news about them. One day they heard a great noise in the street and looking out they saw three heads placed on long poles and being carried through the streets, and when in front of their home they tossed these heads into their mother's room. She wiped them off with water and then threw them back saying, "What I have given to God I will not take back." This woman who made the tea had been married only one year to one of these brothers. Having lost all of her relatives through the persecution, and Persian women having no openings for self-support, the Master took her into his household. What a wonderful household this is — over forty people living

here in one home, some black, some white, Arabic, Persian, Burmanese, Italian, Russian and now English and American! Not a loud command is heard and not one word of dispute; not one word of fault finding. Every one goes about as if on tip toes. When they enter your room their slippers are left before the door and they come in with stocking feet and remain standing until you invite {{p30}} them to sit down. All the family and the servants gather in this one room every morning and chant the Holy Utterances and drink a cup of Persian tea. After this we go to our various rooms, and for the guests a breakfast is served later. The two little Arabic girls who are serving in the Master's home, and are being educated by him, came in about ten o'clock and had an English lesson from Arna. They are trained to do housework and also go to school to an Italian teacher whom the Master hires to teach the children of his household.

At the table the question of the meaning of Babel and the

confounding of tongues was asked and the Master said it meant the confusion of ideas, each one having his own idea and this brought destruction. Also, the meaning of Babylon was asked and the Master said Babylon signified the old religions, as Jerusalem signified the New Dispensation. A comparison of the words in English similar to many Persian words was made by the Master and he said the Persians were the old Aryan race starting beyond the Euxine Sea. As they increased they pushed west to Persia, then to Constantinople; from there over Europe and then to America. The origin of the North American Indian was asked and the Master said they came from the eastern side of Asia when the land between western America and Asia (Siberia) was connected. There has been much more land than there is now. {{p31}}

When the Master came to call on us about six o'clock in the evening, Madame Scaramucci asked him if she might remain his guest until Monday. He replied yes-he would love to keep us for a month, but that the present Governor of 'Akká is not his friend and it was better that we remain a short time. He said we would better all depart together, as we had come together (Madame Scaramucci, my daughter Arna and myself) . Then he said there were two kinds of visits, one the temporal which sooner or later must terminate, and the other the spiritual which never terminates throughout eternity. Once he had a guest for eleven years. Although that was a long visit, yet it finally came to an end. The temporal visit has no effect unless it be the spiritual also.

A LESSON ON THE SEEING OF A HALO ABOUT THE MASTER

The Master said there were four kinds of light; the light from

the lamp was one; but because the face of a man does not give out light as the lamp does, is man less than the lamp or greater? Some worms give off a light — is man or the worm greater? Man does not give out such a light, but man has the kingdom of the mind and it is the light of this kingdom which some see when they love a person very much, and they mistake it for a material light when it is not. This comes from the emotional nature and is an imagination.

Then there is the Light of the {{p32}} Holy Spirit possessed by God's Chosen Ones. The minds of men cannot comprehend this Light — thus they martyr those who come with this Light. But time proves that their Light was the true Light and that the light of the minds of the men of their time was limited. They comprehend the past, present and future and see things as they will be when accomplished. St. John, on the Isle of Patmos, seeing into the future, foretold what would come to pass in this present Day. There is no time to this Light — it knows all things.

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