

... description: 1925, Rabb Box 6 Effie Baker  
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title: Record of My Visit to Haifa notes: ...

## **Record of My Visit to Haifa**

**William Sears**

**1925, Rabb Box 6 Effie Baker**

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## **Record of My Visit to Haifa**

**Effie Baker**

**March 13th- April 1st, 1925**

(These Notes were sent back to Haifa and corrected by Shoghi Effendi)

(Above in Effie E. Baker handwriting)

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**Letter No. 1, from Miss Effie S. Baker (“The Toymaker of Australia” while on pilgrimage to Haifa, Palestine to Melbourne Bahá’í Assembly.)**

March 29th, 1925

We have been in Haifa just a little over two weeks and the days and nights have been so crowded with wonderful things, it has been impossible to find time to write. It is getting quite late now but I must make a beginning as we think our boat leaves on Friday. We will not know until tomorrow whether we can get berths though. We will be very loathe to leave. It is heavenly to be on those dear people. One cannot realize what self-sacrifice means until one comes in contact with them. I must start and give you as best I can all that has transpired since I last wrote to you and posted by the “Jervic Bay.”

I think I wrote to Father and Mother and told them of our trip up the canal and so will just continue about landing at Port Sa’id. We reached there at daybreak on Thursday 12th March at 8:30 A. M. Martha (Root) came on board. We were surprised to see her. Her boat had been delayed so she waited for two or three days and came to meet us and then travel with us to Haifa. Three Persian Bahá’ís were with her and gave us a warm welcome.

It was lovely to see Martha and she in looking so well. We had breakfast on board and then went ashore. Had to go through the Customs House. After a lot of wrangling our luggage was put on conveyance and taken to the Hotel

where Martha was staying Here Monevor Khánum, the youngest daughter of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá and wife of Mírzá Aḥmad Yazdí came to meet us. She is very sweet and gave us such a beautiful welcome. After lunch Monover Khánum and a friend called on us again and some of the Bahá’ís (also). One Muḥammad Mustapha offered to accompany us as far as Kantara E. (that is the station you change at for Haifa) and see us safely into the train for Haifa.

We left Port Sa’íd at 6 P. M. and reached Kantara at 6.45 P.M. Here we had to go through the Customs and we saw what thought and kindness of heart Mírzá Mustapha had. He interpreted for us at the Customs and saw all our baggage loaded on the fen and finally had us a Kantara E. where we had to settle down anti wait till midnight for the Express to Haifa. He had to leave us at 9:30 P. M. to return to Port Sa’íd. He wanted to stay and see us safely off and then spend the night at the railway station and return early in the morning, but of fours° we would not let him.

We had a very good journey ad reached Haifa at 10 A.M. Friday (March 13th). Fugeta met us at the station. He is a bright, merry hearted little fellow and gave us a heart welcome. He certainly is a good Bahá’í General and soon had his little band of happy pilgrims marshalled and in order. We were installed into carriages and driven to the Pilgrim House in Persian Colony which is opposite the Master’s House. Here we received another warm welcome from an American Bahá’í, Mrs. Corinne True (Chicago). You would all just Love her.

Shoghi Effendi sent greetings to us and asked us to come and see him before lunch. We had a wonderful interview. To me it was a wonderful meeting. His step is quick and decisive also his manner of speech but the sweetness of his countenance and the bright alert expression of his eyes conveys to you a wonderful tenderness of heart Which radiates to you ouch graciousness and simplicity you feel at once at your ease, as if a weight has been removed from your heart and a great peace reigns. You feel a great happiness in his presence. Hs inquired about you all and Australia and New Zealand. He sold the essential point is to speak of and teach the principles but first and most of all live them. After giving principles, give the history of the cause. Ho promises to visit Australia. I said we would like him to cone, and his answer was, “Surely I will.” After lunch, Mrs. True took us for a walk down Carmel Read. The Holy Tombs are right opposite this road on the Mount Every night Just as it gets dark a wonderful light (electric) is lighted just above it.

Just after it was installed, some ships wore coming into port and they wore so confused with his new light. Looked on their chart and couldn’t pick it up. They had the Lighthouse on Mount Carmel and the one at ‘Akká, but not this one, so they were afraid to come in and stayed out at sea till daylight. They complained about the confusion, but the British Government instead of ordering the light to be removed had it marked on the chart.>

Saturday (March) 14th: We visited the. Holy Shrines with Mrs. True. ‘Abbás Kuli keeper of the Tombs, chanted the prayer of Visitation revealed by ‘Abdu’l-

Bahá. It was beautiful. Shoghi Effendi is endeavoring to keep these Shrines in the greatest simplicity. Everyone who is visiting says what wonderful improvements Shoghi Effendi has made with the laying out of the gardens. If you Could only see the rock made limestone that count Carmel is composed of, you would see what a stupendous work has been undertaken. He could only do one side because it was so expensive but four young Bahá'í men offered their services free and are working there excavating the stone and carrying soil. It is a labor of love, How everyone serves; all one sees is a lesson to all. They prepare at the Master's House food for eighty and ninety people each day. Each one doing his share with such love and joy.

At the Tomb we saw the tall cypress tree under Which Bahá'u'lláh pitched his tent and stayed for some time. In the afternoon we visited the Ladies of the Household.

The Greatest Holy Leaf, the Holy Mother and Holy Leaves are charming. So simple and sweet with hearts overflowing with love for you all, so eager to hear news of you. To see with what sweetness and patient submission they have borne all the trials and persecutions heaped upon them and not one trace of embitterment towards those who were the cause of their sufferings, is hard to comprehend. The only recompense to them in our faithfulness to the Cause so dear to their pure hearts. Let us make fresh efforts to bring the unity and concord and be the cause of comfort and promotion of humanity.

Mr. Mountfort arrived this evening. He had been on a special mission for Shoghi Effendi. He has a charming manner and so full of fun. It was nice hearing him talk with Mrs. True and Martha.

Sunday (March) 15th: Went and spent the evening at Rúhá Khánum's home. It is not the Master's House. She gave us a beautiful talk about Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. She told us how the Master when war broke out started the cultivation of cereals in a village near the Jordan River where it flowed into the Sea of Galilee, (This land) belonged to him.

He grew barley, wheat, lentils, beans, etc", so that the poor could be fed. Rúhá Khánum's husband (Mírzá Jala) went there also 'Abdu'l-Bahá and during the hottest months he showed them how to irrigate and cultivate the soil. Spent three months there. He had the grain brought to Haifa and distributed to all classes, not only Bahá'ís. And incident where a woman came to the Master's House in the middle of the night, poor, ill and weak. He arose, had her brought in and attended to, found a woman to look after her, and. hired a room for her to live in. She lived three months, then passed away peacefully.

(Rúhá Khánum) told us how a Russian Bahá'í brought furs to make a coat for him ('Abdu'l-Bahá,), but he made twenty caps to keep old folks heads warm. Told us Bahá'u'lláh's wife was only daughter of 2nd Vizír of Sháh. She was very wealthy and had a wonderful trousseau. It was sold to buy food for them when they were exiled to Baghdád.. Her wedding dress was all embroidered with pure gold threads. She cut portions of it and sold it to the goldsmiths to procure

bread. (Rúhá Khánum told us) Purest Branch was two years old, and very ill and she had to leave him with her mother. He did not join them till he was nine years old. He was always very delicate. He used to write tablets as Bahá'u'lláh dictated them, when in prison at 'Akká.

He went the evening he met with his accident to Bahá'u'lláh, but Bahá'u'lláh said, "I will not need you tonight." He then went to tile roof top to pray and became so absorbed in his devotions that as he was chanting he fell down the opening to the stone floor below (we saw the place when we visited the prison). Bahá'u'lláh and his mother heard the noise and said "That is my Masdi; he has been sacrificed."

They went out and he was lying on the floor with his bones broken. They carried him to a room and put him on a couch. Bahá'u'lláh said to him that whatever he desired he would grant, but (the Purest Branch) said, "There is nothing that I desire but that the doors may be opened to the Friends," and Bahá'u'lláh said it should be as he wished. TV died twenty-four hours afterwards. They had nothing to procure necessities for his funeral except one of their carpets, so that was given to one of the soldiers to sell at one of the bazaars. They were not permitted to go to the funeral, four soldiers took the body and it was not till two years afterwards that they were allowed to visit his grave outside the city walls of 'Akká.

(Rúhá Khánum) told us of the great shock Shoghi Effendi received at the news of the Master's death. Rúhá Khánum said that about a fortnight before the Master's passing, he called Shoghi Effendi's mother and said for her to write and tell him to come home, that she was not to say anything to the other members of the family to alarm them. He also told his father who said, "Perhaps we had better telegraph, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá said "No" Shoghi Effendi's mother wrote but the letter did not reach him before the telegram that they sent when 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed. So as not to alarm him they had sent, "Master ill, come home quickly." Shoghi Effendi was in the library at Oxford studying when he was called to receive the telegram. He hastened to the office of Major Tudor-Pole. He was out but on his table was an open telegram announcing the passing of the Master. When the major returned, he found Shoghi Effendi lying unconscious on the floor. It was over a month before he could get his passport to start for the Holy Land.

In the afternoon, we visited the men's pilgrim House that is situated in Mount Carmel just near the Holy Shrines. We were invited to take part in a Bahá'í marriage celebration. We were all asked to speak about our different countries and how the work was progressing there, I conveyed your greetings to them all and they sent their love to you all. You cannot imagine the pleasure and joy they get when news comes from the friends of other countries. Their faces just shine with light and devotion.

I shall give you a full description of the wedding when I return. It would take a long time to write it but it was according to Eastern custom. The men and

woman do not meet together so we then went to the home of ‘Abbás Kuli (keeper of the Tomb) and visited the women and congratulated the bride. After partaking of tea we went with Rúḥá Khánúm and Túbá Khánúm to the Holy Shrines to pray. It is Father’s birthday today so I asked a special blessing on his work.

We had a talk with Mr. Mills and Mrs. True tonight.

Monday, (March) 16th: Had an interview with Shoghi Effendi. He again emphasized the fact of speaking on the principles whenever opportunity arises and then give short outline of history. In speaking of the Cause our great object admission is to create harmony and unity. If differences arise we must consult with another and when decision of a just settlement is arrived at, go to the ones with whom it has arisen and tell them the great kindness and love, advice them of your decision. Do not force or insist but leave it to them to meditate on, and then pray earnestly that they must see things in the right light.

Literature on the Cause must be distributed in a dignified and tactful manner. Must not be made cheap, not given out at dens, or put on park benches, It is necessary to be careful in giving our propaganda. Tells me not to visit America but to see the Friends in London and then return as soon as possible and help rather and Mother Dunn with the work in Australia. His heart is very glad at the progress of the Cause in Australia. We must make over; effort to continue the good work and not let him be discouraged. Wherever we are, he says, our object is to make a firm believer instead of just interesting a lot of people, it is not significant. We must concentrate our efforts to make a firm believer who will be capable of carrying on the work when we are not there. We must strive to study the teaching to impart Truth fluently and with conviction, not superficially. Must devote as much of our time as we can so that we may grasp the inner meanings of the Teachings and be able to satisfy without hesitation and referring to books questions asked.

This afternoon we went for a walk with Mrs. True. She took us to see an old olive tree planted by the Romans about 4000 years ago. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá used to sit very often under this tree. Had Afternoon tea with Holy mother and F’amily.

Tuesday, March 17th: Left for ‘Akká at 8:15 A.M. Passed the Kishon River where Elijah slew the priests of Baal. 400 in number I think. We visited the house where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lived. It is now a hospital. He was there four years and not allowed out of the walls of ‘Akká.

Then we went to the house where Bahá’u’lláh was for seven years. Then the Most Great Prison. This is being renovated and the part where Bahá’u’lláh, his family and followers were imprisoned is now a hospital for tubercular prisoners. The window of the room where Bahá’u’lláh was has been enlarged. I took a photo of it outside to show you the difference. We saw where they put the first night they arrived. We next went to the Pilgrim House at Bahjáh. Bahjáh is outside the city walls about one-half hour. The Pilgrim House is the one ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lives in, his half brother to still in Palace of Bahjáh. We visited

the Holy Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. Had tea, then visited Shrine again. In the house where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned for seven years we saw the room there Kitáb-e-Aqdas was written also the bath built in great love for Bahá'u'lláh by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Sleeping at Bahjáh Pilgrim House tonight.

Wednesday, March 18th: Margaret and I slept in the room at Pilgrim House where 'Abdu'l-Bahá revealed part of the "Divine Plan." Had breakfast, visited the Shrine and we repeated our Prayers in English. We then went to the Garden of Ridván which is about two miles from Bahjáh Palace. It is a beautiful little spot. We lunched under the two huge mulberry trees where Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá used to sit. Margaret photographed the seats. I took photo of the carriage (We would call it a wagonette - it holds nine people) 'Abdu'l-Bahá drove, in when he was knighted. We drove to the Ridván in it sad to the station. Sohiel who accompanied us (he is t grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of Rúháh, cousin of Manta Effendi) told us about the Master being knighted. It was not his wish but the British Government wished it, so 'Abdu'l-Bahá consented after refusing once or twice. He has a beautiful carriage someone presented to him but he did not wish any fuss so he drove in this waggonette to the Government Residents. He did not go by the main entrances just entered a little gate at the back. Everyone was waiting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to dive up in great pomp and ceremony. The walk to the Governors house was lined with soldiers ready to make the guard of honor when to every one's surprise, 'Abdu'l-Bahá quietly came in at the back ma took the seat allotted for him. He graciously received the paper knighthood and then, when the ceremony was over. Just went out the way he had come and drove off in his old carriage.

We saw the room where Bahá'u'lláh used to stay in the garden of Ridván. They have left it just as it was. We sat in there and felt such a wonderful peace and prayed for every one of us that we will be firm to His Cause and be the means of establishing it in our land. We returned to 'Akká and at 4 P.M. caught the train back to Haifa. Travelling 3rd class de lux as Fugeta put it. I walked through the streets of Haifa instead of going -home in a carriage. They are very quaint.

Thursday (March) 19th: Rúháh Khánúm visited us just after breakfast and gave us a beautiful talk on the life of the Master.

I find there is so much to write and tell you, I cannot possibly finish for the mail, so I will try and write you the rest of our visit to date when we are on the boat. We expect to leave Friday and April. All the Holy Family and Shoghi Effendi wished me to send their love in which we all join.

In His Name,

Your co-worker

(Signed) Effie (S. Baker)

**Letter Number 2, written by Miss Effie S. Baker (The Toymaker of Australia), to Melbourne Bahá'í Assembly, from her Notes taken in Haifa.**

S. S. Esperance Bay,

9th April 1925.

I finished me letter rather than abruptly to you on the 9th, March, as I wished to catch the mail or at least try to do so. I will start where I left off.

19th March: Rúḥá Khánum came to see us this morning and gave us a lovely talk on the life of the Master which I shall try to relate to you.

First she told us of her Aunt's (The Greatest Holy Leaf) account of the landing at 'Akká.

In 1868 the boat first came to Haifa. No landing, sea rough, the Turkish boat very dirty. They fixed up anything they could to try and make a little privacy for Bahá'u'lláh who was very sick. There was no accommodation on the boat for them. They were put into small boat from the ship and rowed near shore. They carried the woman and children on a chair. The people of 'Akká heard some prisoners were coming and along the seashore to see them arrive. They numbered about seventy altogether (We saw the room they were put in for the first night. It was a privilege. Fugeta told us they rarely show it now. Of course the prison authorities allow you permission to visit the part of the Barracks where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned, but you cannot go without a permit.)

The Governor of the prison had no idea there would be so many and he did not know where to put them. Had not place ready for so many. There was so water except foul stagnant water from a round (?) well in courtyard (which we also saw). They had to strain it through bits of cloth before they could drink it. They all got fever. Master nursed them. Greatest Holy Leaf couldn't drink, ill with fever. Many died just two months ago (Agha Ḥusayn, cook of Bahá'u'lláh) who was one of these seventy followers imprisoned with Bahá'u'lláh. (We met his son at the Pilgrim House at Bahjíh, pronounced Ba-ghee). Greatest Holy Leaf is only one left of those who went into prison with Bahá'u'lláh in 1868.

Shoghi Effendi had notes taken down from this man which are now in Persia for translation.

Master was about twenty-five years old when he went into prison. Prison was foul and dirty. Conditions are altered now. We really couldn't realize it. After two years, the Barracks were wanted for soldiers, so they were removed to a house where they stayed four months, then house (which we visited) in which Bahá'u'lláh was kept seven years. The followers were there too.

In beginning it was only one house. "Abdu'l-Bahá had to live in room with Mother and Greatest Holy Leaf. After leaving Barracks 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Mother had to live in room with his Uncle, her brother.

Bahá'u'lláh wished 'Abdu'l-Bahá to marry. There was no room so the next door neighbor who owned the house they lived in, saw why marriage could not take place. He had a room in his house made with den connecting to Bahá'u'lláh's house, and prepared it for 'Abdu'l-Bahá and offered it. It was accepted and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was married. "My mother was called by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "What Bahá'u'lláh wished me to do, I will do."

When taken out of prison some Azeles came. They were much against the Clause. Took 'Abdu'l-Bahá first and for three nights put him in dungeon with chains. Then they took him to interview Bahá'u'lláh. He tried to hide the chains from his Mother's sight. Pleaded with them when they took Bahá'u'lláh to put him in the upper room and not the dungeon. They agreed, He went into the dungeon himself and became ill from being in such a foul, damp place.

The last time he was brought before court, he was commanded not to leave 'Akká. He said to them, "I have news to make you happy. I am very happy this order is given. Now I really will have a good rest. My imprisonment is not my sorrow but the unfaithfulness of my followers." She (Rúhí Khánum) then told us how he used to go and visit Bahá'u'lláh after he was allowed the freedom of the surrounding few miles of 'Akká and then want to live in Palace of Bahjíh, four or five miles out of the city. He used to go and see Bahá'u'lláh every Friday. Would put on old Aba and go on foot, chanting prayers, praying slowly as if walking to his Beloved. Would rest in shade of old aquaduct with stone for a pillow (we saw the spot on way to Bahjíh). Bahá'u'lláh would only from early morning at his window watching for him and as soon as he saw in ho would send the friends and pilgrims to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá, sayings "The Master comes. Go and meet him!" It was a beautiful sight to see them meet. Such wonderful love, such kindness 'Abdu'l-Bahá would recount his work to Bahá'u'lláh. Then Bahá'u'lláh would direct his next week's work. Bahá'u'lláh would say, "How happy you make me. You bring might and happiness to my heart." Then Bahá'u'lláh would tell them all to leave the room and he and the Master would have a private talk for a while.

Bahá'u'lláh received so many letters. He would give them to 'Abdu'l-Bahá to answer. 'Abdu'l-Bahá would bring the ); flowers and read them to him. Bahá'u'lláh would be pleased and raise 'Abdu'l-Bahá for the way in which he answered them. Rúhí Khánum told how 'Abdu'l-Bahá would go to a room in Inn (across from house where Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned for seven years) called Master's drawing room. Here he would receive people, Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís and give them advice both spiritually and materially. At twelve o'clock would come and have lunch with Bahá'u'lláh and tell him all that transpired during the morning. Would go to the Barracks in the afternoon and write in little room (sentry box for soldier). Had no room where he could go to write privately. He would come back and again so and visit and help people. (Rauha Khánum) spoke of the pilgrims coming on foot and the journey taking four and sometimes six months to complete. There were nine pilgrims once who came this way (Ismael, Bahá'u'lláh 's Gardener) who is still living was one of them).



They were very poor, nothing else to offer, they brought a white lily in a basin or pot and carried it on their heads, each taking their turn. Bahá'u'lláh said when they offered it to him, "It was the best present kings or queens could ever get," though the valley of Bahjíh was full of lilies, it was their love that counted.

In the afternoon we spent some time with the Holy Family Greatest Holy Leaf who had a cold is little better. Dr. Esselmont is better also.

Friday 20th March: Shoghi Effendi sent for Margaret and myself and he had a talk with us regarding work in Australia. He wishes me to proceed to London with the party and visit the Friends there. Said it would be encouragement to them to meet a friend all the way from Australia. Does not wish me to proceed to America, there is no necessity for me to go. He wishes me to return to Australia and continue to work with Father and Mother Dunn a have done before and spread the teachings in Australia. He looks with Great expectations to Australia. Speaking on getting in touch with the Source, he said:

1st, We must have purity of intention.

2nd, We must have detachment.

3rd, We trust have concentration.

Afterward I went down town with Mrs. True and on the way met Ḥusayn Rúhí who had just arrived by train from Jerusalem. Had come up for the week end to celebrate Naw-Rúz Feast. He related his father's life story for us just after lunch which shall try to give as he gave it.

"My father Ḥájí Mullá 'Alí of Tabriz accepted the Cause when Bahá'u'lláh was in Adrianople. He witnessed the martyrdom of The Báb. He was a teacher of religion (a mullah. A leader of the Shi'ite sect from Suffi School (Suffi's discovered the date of The Báb's coming) and thought himself Greater than any theologian in Persia. (He was very learned and proud). He came to Nosul where he met a man, a believer (who afterward became a nac (?). My father was sitting in his shop. He offered to the man a cup of coffee and told him about the teachings, but my father said it was not worth while arguing with him, so he took my father to his father (Mírzá Honeer) and he in turn took him to Jinábí Zain (one of the old believers) who was a copier of tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and also the Master. What he wrote was true (or correct – never any mistakes. His writings are very valuable now. They are perfect.)

When in father want to him he said: It is no good talking (They knew each other as teachers of religion). My father said he had scan writings of The Báb and thought he could write just as well. Said he wanted to see writings of Bahá'u'lláh. Jinábí Zain gave him the Íqán. My father went to his hotel to read it. (He) spent whole night reading. At dawn he took a cup of tea, went to Jinábí Zain and said, "Tell me where is the One who revealed this Where is He! He is God! These are the wards of God! He (Jinábí Zain) said, He is in Adrianople. My father went to see Bahá'u'lláh and became a believer.

Bahá'u'llah said to him to go to Tabriz, and go to Egypt and stay until they would meet again some Where in Syria. My father went, and a few year later Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to 'Akká and my father had the pleasure of meeting him once again. My father was the first one to take the teachings in the Ottoman Empire. He was sent by Bahá'u'lláh. My father returned to 'Akká and then went on to Baghdád, leaving believers in each village. I was two years old when my father went to Aleppo and from there to Aintab in Khurdestan (a few miles from Aleppo) There he received a tablet from Bahá'u'lláh in which he plainly told him that it was time to stop teaching and that he must go to the place in which he had to drink the cup which he was, longing for. So my father (I was told by a certain Bahá'í) left taking no food or clothes. He went to Diarbakr in Khurdistan. The place which he had frequented as a merchant of indigo and carpets. There my father used to go to the Armenian church to teach the priests. Same time attended mosques and explained Qur'án. The people doubted his belief and finally discovered he was a Báb term only known then as follower of The Báb). They set some people to meet him at the gate of the city, who knocked him to the ground. I was informed by one who had seen that (which was related to me word for word by the Master) and began to break his bones with cudgels. They broke the bones of his arms, legs, robbed him of his belt of money and left him alone. At that night a caravan going into the city heard him moaning. They brought two boards and carried him into the town to the room in which he used to live. It happened that three believers were coming from Baghdád on the way to the Holy Land (whose names I didn't quite get, but they were soothing like these. He put it thus: No. 1 Darvish Aba, No. 2 Hájí Núr, No. 3, All-Isphan.) Some people informed them that one, a Bábí whose bones were broken was in an Inn and wanted to see them.

"My father told them, a related by Hájí Núr, that two of them should so on and one remain with him. His advice was carried out because the caravan was on the move toward 'Akká. My father said to man who remained with him that he would depart at dawn, and that he should take him to a certain spot just by the gate of Mardin (one of the gates of Diarbakr) and bury him there.

I finally discovered that this spot is the last place in the country at which Bahá'u'llah stopped on his way to Constantinople. The way I discovered my Father Tomb: I had supplicated that I might be permitted to build the tomb of my father at Diarbakr. Reply was like this, "You are permitted to go provided facility or things are all right"

On the day of the arrival of the reply, I had \$500.00. I was a teacher in school and it was not possible for me to go then as the school session was not finished. I was glad I had the money but I did not realize necessity of keeping it, and when vacation came I had spent it. This annoyed me. I didn't know why I had spent it. I had to continue another year. I supplicated again. The reply came. "You are permitted to go at once before his grave is lost in ruins."

At time of reply I had no money but at the end of session I had \$500.00, so I started for 'Akká taking my family with me. I left (as guests at the Holy Home

my mother, aunty, wife and little child). I asked the Master to give me a letter to No. 2 Heji-Núr (who was at Aintub at that time as a watchmaker) because he knew where the grave was. He had visited it on his way back to Persia. MThe Master also gave me something to inscribe on the Tomb which reads as follows: “Verily the tranquil soul Heji Mullá ‘Alí had drunk the cup of Eternity from the hand of the Water Giver of – away from his home, while he was spreading the fragrances of God, and devoted to the Beauty of God.”

Master told me before I left that I would find my father’s grave. I want to Aintab and to make a long story short, took my friend No. 2 Hájí-Núr to Diarbakr. He took me to whereabouts of grave and for four hours we were searching in not more than ten square yards for grave. I said the Master said I was going to discover it, better let us go and find a grave digger and ask if he knew about it. Seeing an old grave digger for over 40 years. I was glad to hear this. I asked him if he could show me any graves of Persians in that part of the country. He said there are only two, pointing to first one, he said this was made over 15 years ago, but the other only five years ago. Being there more than seventeen years of age, I know the first was my father’s. I began to clear away the debris and looking on it I read this inscription:

“He is Alloha-Abba

This is the tomb or grave of

Hájí Mullá ‘Alí of Tabris”

I discovered the man who put this on my father’s grave was a believer (working at Persian Consulate). He had put it on his own account and expense and was the man who had stayed with my father and had seen to his burial. I brought masons and built the tomb. On the day that the Tomb was finished the wife of the Governor of the city died and as the funeral processions passed my father’s Tomb, the people stopped and recited introduction of Qur’án. Quite surprised to see a boy from Egypt in Diarbakr (not less than twenty days from Cairo) building Tomb of his father. I gave them a drink made from liquorice-root in the name of my father.

When I returned with the picture of my father’s Tomb for the Master, he took it and kissed it and passed it to the believers present and then related the martyrdom of my father word for word as the grave-digger had related it to me.

In afternoon, Martha (Root) and I went for a walk and present and went to the Holy Shrines. Went and had afternoon tea with the Holy Leaves and saw the Greatest Holy Leaf for a while.

Saturday, 21st March: Naw-Rúz Feast today. It in the beginning of the New Year of the Bahá’í Calendar. Had a visit with the Ladies of the Holy Household. Holy Mother gave us a Persian silk handkerchief and ringstone blessed by the Master.

Went to new Pilgrim House and partook in another wedding festivity. These

two weddings are the first to be celebrated since ascension of the Master. After visiting Shrines we came to see drawing room. She is very pretty and he is very good looking also. They were not so shy as the First ones were.

Sunday, 22nd March: Visited the home of Mírzá Anayatullah Esphani. He showed us wonderful pictures of funeral of “‘Abdu’l-Bahá. We had a lovely time there

In afternoon, visited Mírzá Badi‘ Bushruhi’s home. He is Governor of the province and such a fine man. His wife is very sweet and charming. They put on the phone record of the Master’s voice. It was wonderful.

Went next to visit the Holy Family. The Greatest Holy Leaf is much better. We went in to see her and she gave us each a Bahá’í ring. Then we went in to see the room where “‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away. His White Fez lay on the pillow. One felt in the Holy Presence and we all knelt at the bedside and prayed.

We are leaving in morning for a four day tour of Palestine. Mrs. Blundell is kindly taking me. She has hired a seven-seated Studebaker car and a Bahá’í Mr. Yannous(?) is to arrange the tour. It is his business taking parties on these tours. He has a line of cars called the ‘Jerusalem Express’. As this car has just returned to Haifa with a party we are to go straight to Jerusalem tomorrow and return in Nazareth and Tiborias way on the return journey. I will give you the trip from leaving Haifa till return.

Monday, 23rd March: Left Haifa at 9 A.M for Jerusalem. Passing the plain of Jezrial where River Kishon flows into the Sea.

This is the river where Elijah slew the priests of Baal, 400 in number, I think.

We are now 21(?) miles from Haifa speeding mountain side and looking down on plain of Ecdernelon. It looks very fertile land and is under cultivation. On the hill side are anemones, blue corn flowers and a pink flower resembling exalis. Passing a village called Jaffa – near Nazareth. The reading are while and winding(?). Meet canal trains, Arabs driving herds of cattle. Flocks of sheep and goats. The country is hilly and mountainous and very stony. They are composed of volcanic shala. Passing home of Jezabel and Ahab; See Mount Tabor and Little Hermon. Can see Jordan Valley in distance and Mount Jebrah, where King Saul was killed. Passing village-jewish settlement. Plain of Esdraelon, cultivated and looks so green with young crops. Arabs ploughing with oxen and primitive wooden ploughs. Plenty of storks in fields. They have red bills, heads, neck and part of body white, wings partly white and partly black, black tail. Very handsome birds. Not allowed to kill them as they keep fields free from grubs, etc. We keep passing small Arab villages. Passing scene of British camp during war. Old tractors lying about. One viewing the stony mountainous districts all around can understand “the high places” spoken of so often in the Bible. Passing Arabs drawing water from well at roadside to water their flocks – very picturesque. All along the way you see women in the fields weeding the crops. They have a very hard life, have to help in the fields and do

the house work and look after the children. Passing the Hill of Dotham where Joseph was sold by his brethren. Passing Arab village of Sileh. Plenty of fig and olive trees, can get a glimpse of Mediterranean Sea from here, also Plain of Sharon in distance. Passing lentil fields – an old Roman aqua duct and hills of old Samaria. Can see ruined gate of town of Samaria built by King Ahab. Reached Nablus (new city). The old name is Shechem. It is associated with earliest 'period of Jewish settlement in Palestine. Here Abraham pitched his tent on entering the country to set up the first altar to Jehovah. Joshua led Israelites after miraculous passage of the Jordan and on slopes of Mount Girizim and Ebal recited the Laws of Moses. Also from Mount Girizim and Ebal were pronounced blessings and cursings. They are high barren and rugged looking. Here the Samaritans owe to keep the Passover (which takes place beginning April. They offer the sacrifices on Mt. Girizim).

We lunched and left Nablus at 1:20 P. M. Passing Tomb of Joseph and remains of house of woman of Samaria whom Jesus met at Jacob's Well. They are building an orthodox church over this well, but it is only partly erected, cannot finish an account of lack of funds. Passing stone erected to show the boundary between Samaria and district of Jerusalem. Here we are beginning to see vineyards. Passing village of Shingel or St. Giles, founded in time of Crusades. British and Turks fought a battle here during the last war. Passing Villages we are now passing are mostly Christian faith, much cleaner and prosperous looking than the Arab villages. The lake Birziet (called well of oil) is surrounded by hills, all the sides of which are terraced and olive trees growing on them. The hills just seem to be layers of toney strata. The people build up the terraces to keep the soil from washing away. Each house here has its oil press and little underground well to store the oil, hence its name. Passing Shiloh where the Ark of the Covenant stood. People used to visit it annually. Bethel (ancient) Here Jacob had his vision (ladder from heaven with angels ascending and descending).

Ancient Beiroth where the parents of Jesus returning from Jerusalem to their home missed him. They had to return to Jerusalem to look for him and found him teaching in the Temple. Saw American friends (quakers) Mission School. Fine buildings. Can now see in distance two towns on Mount of Olives, and part of city of Jerusalem to the right. Passing Bedouin Arabs moving camps. Can see high hills with Mosque. It is Tomb of Prophet Samuel and called Mizpah. Minaret on it was destroyed by British during war. They have rebuilt it. Passing landing place for aeroplanes, English mail service between Cairo and Baghdad. Passing ruins, excavation of House of Saul. Ancient Nob (place of good vision). Can see garden of Gethsemane. Passing Damascus Gate. We are outside of the old city and will be staying at the Hotel Casa Nova in the Modern Christian portion of the city. Reached hotel at 3:30 P.M. Had a little rest then Mr. Tannous who is our guide came to take us to see the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is situated in North-western corner of old city. All is so quaint and interesting. One has forgotten modern civilization. We are gazing on scenes hoar, antiquated those in authority no doubt are doing their utmost to keep its original state. You can see by its vaulted bazaars, narrow winding streets, steep

alleyways, stone-paved, planked on each side with ancient architecture that no change has taken place for centuries. It is indeed very picturesque but lack of cleanliness detracts from the scene somewhat. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was originally a group of small separate churches rising in the holy site in the 4th century and afterwards received its present form from Crusaders who built one large Romanesque Church to embrace the chapel covering holy sites. In this church which is circular in form are separate chapels allotted to different sects of Christianity. Orthodox Greek, Roman Catholic Armenians, Coptic PO (?) and Fc (?) It is the same of many different rituals and ceremonies and endless sectarian strifes. On entering the door you see the altar of stone of motion in which Jesus and the piece of stone which Jesus was anointed after crucifixion. The Tomb of Joseph of Aramanthea and Nicodemus hewn out of the rock. The place where Mary met Jesus and thought the gardener (had taken him away). The prison where Jesus awaited his trial. Place where family of prisoner visited them. Pillar on which Jesus sat and Jews mocked him. Place where soldiers sash lots for his garments. Place where suppose St. Helena found crosses, nails and crown of thorns. Tomb of legions soldier who pierced Jesus' side. Calvary where Jesus was nailed to cross and crucified. Painting by Murillo, his masterpiece of Christ and his Mother. This is a wonderful place of work. It depicts the Holy Mother holding her hand under the head of Jesus and gazing into his face just after he has been taken from the cross. The portrayal of the serene calm, physically beautiful face of the dead Christ, the look of anguish and untold grief in the face of the mother as she gazes at her son's lifeless form is indeed a masterpiece of art. The statue of the Virgin Mary, this too, is a wonderful work of art. The face is beautiful. She seems to be in a kneeling posture. Is included in glass case, her robe from neck to knee is literally covered with jewels. Her arms from wrist to shoulder, with bracelets. Enormous jewels over her head, watch chains, watches modals, etc., covering whole figure. They have been gifts of people who have come to pray to her for healing and the value is estimated at five million pounds. Here is wealth untold meeting your gaze while just outside the doors of the edifice holding this wealth your eye meets the scenes of abject poverty and misery and much of it caused in the name of religion. It is one certainly that has lost its life-giving properties.

Next went to Russian Church where we saw part of the old wall old Solomon and fate where Jesus left city carrying cross.

26th March: Visiting Mosque of Omar in area known as 'The Haram (The August Sanctuary)'. The two principle edifices being "Dome of the Rock" on a raised platform in the middle and the Mosque of Al Aqsa against the south wall. On the left along east wall the double portals of Golden Gate appear. On every side trees break the prospect which lends a peculiar charm to the scene. The site is one of the oldest in the world. Its sanctity dates from the earliest times. Its identity with the sites of Solomon's Temple is beyond dispute. This too, is the spot according to universal belief on which "Daniel built there an altar to the Lord and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings (2 Samuel 24th)" The Mosque of Al Aqsa built in commemoration of Prophets miraculous ascension.

It is said that Muḥammad was miraculously caught up in the clouds while riding his charger and then landed at this spot.

Returned and had lunch, then started for Mount of Olives. Passed hospice built by certain German Emperor, now residence of Sir Robert Samuels, Governor of Palestine appointed by British after war. Can see Dead Sea from here. Visited Carmelite Convent. Here we entered a courtyard supposed to be the spot where Jesus gave the disciples the Lord's Prayer. Saw on walls surrounding this courtyard the prayer in thirty-four different languages. Nuns of this convent never see anyone after they enter it. Visiting Church of Nativity. Passing Plain, where King David meet Philistines on way to Bethlehem. Bethlehem is five and one-half miles south of Jerusalem. Birthplace of Jesus and of King David. It stands 2500 feet above sea level and has about 6000 inhabitants mostly Christians. It is the scene of the story in the book of Ruth and in Old Testament times is famous for association with House of David. Can see Mountains of Hoab and Hills of Judea. Passing Rachel's Tomb. See fields of Boaz where Ruth gleaned and where shepherds received message of the "New Born King". Church of the Nativity is the outstanding monument of Bethlehem and is built over the spot where the Inn stood that Jesus' parents came to and where he was born in the stable and put in the manger. Built by Constantine in 330 A. D. Church consists of a nave with double aisles, of a wide transept, and semi-circular aspect. The nave and aisles are separated from one another by four rows of monolithic columns surrounded by Corinthian capitals. Like Church of the Holy Sepulchre it is shared by several communities, orthodox, Greek, Armenians, Coptic, etc. Went down a sort of underground grotto where you are shown, what is believed to be the spot where the star showed through the stable roof, then the spot where the manger was (of course all these places have altars erected on them). We were much amused here. Saw a politician sitting with handcuffs beside him. Our guide told us they have to keep one there all the time to keep peace between the Greek, Armenians, Roman Catholic Coptic, etc. One sect does not dare put his foot on portions of another sect or there will be a fight.

We are going to see the Dead Sea, Passing Bethany, home of Mary and Martha, Lazuras, Simon the leper. Can see old original road on our right. The road to Jericho on which we are travelling was prevented by thieves (it is a very lonely road winding round the hill sides, no habitation anywhere) and robbers and is very unsafe to travel. But since under British control this has been put down and it is quite safe now. Jericho is 18 miles distant. Roads in along aides of the Hills of Judea. They are mostly composed or strata s of lime stone, and are very barren as no rain fall here.

Passing Apostles Spring where Jesus and disciples rested on way from Jerusalem, wayside in at this spot. Passed Inn of Good Samaritan, Reached Dead Sea. It is ten miles wide and 47 miles long over 1200 feet below sea level. Its water is very bitter and salt to taste. River Jordan flows into it three farther up from where we ar standing. Can see village of Modern Jericho in distances. Looks like, oasis in desert it is so green. We are at bank of Jordan River where Jesus was supposed

to have been baptized. Plenty of Poplar and Tamarack trees growing along its banks. Water very muddy colored (turbulent stream here) Passing through modern Jericho. Here are banana and orange groves everywhere. Visited site of old town. Jericho was scene of victory of Israelites in Palestine. Sacked by Joshua. Subsequently rebuilt and forced part of inheritance of Benjamin. It was here that Elisha performed the miracle of rendering the bitter spring sweet (the people told him they had found water but it was bitter so he put a handful of salt in it and it turned sweet). People from all parts come here to draw water from it. When British Government have built a long oblong cement basin around it. You can see it bubbling up gushing out at one end of basin. This basin fills up and then they left it out to irrigate the land round about. That is why it is so green. When we were inspecting the walls of old Jericho I found a piece of broken pottery embedded in the mud, etc., evidently used in those days.

Of the old town there is little to see beyond the excavations of the German Oriental Society which laid bare braces of the old masonry and walls. The walls were composed of irregular stones and sand (o no 'Fonder they fell down when the High Priests and People marches round them blowing trumpets, etc).

We then started for the return to Jerusalem and reached there at 7:30 P. M.

March 25th: Lord Balfour is entering Jerusalem this morning and much bitterness Arab community. They are making a stop work demonstration to show disapproval of the Jews coming into Palestine. Lord Balfour is coming in connection with opening of a Jewish University. For fear of trouble our guide advises not to leave Hotel till comes. No cars or vehicles to run in streets and shops closed. Mr. Tannous who is a Bahá'í and has lived here all his life has warned us for our safety. We are having a novel experience. Stayed in all morning. No demonstration, so are continuing our tour. We called on Houssain Rúhí (Inspector of Education) then returned to Hotel to prepare to leave for Nablus where we will spend the night. We heard guns firing just before or at noon and thought perhaps a riot had occurred but not so. Found it is the beginning of Muḥammadan feast. It starts with new moon. The first who sees it has to get a witness and then they go and tell High Priest. A gun is fired to let the rest of the community know.

At 4:30 P. M. we are starting for Nablus. It was a wonderful drive from Jerusalem to Nablus. Looking down on the Plains with some of the rich red soil just followed, some under crops, the different variety of cereals and giving contrasting hues or green. Hills outlines with winding terraces of white stones, patches of sombre gray green of olive, the brighter tint of fig and almond trees was a site not to be forgotten. The sun's genial rays giving over varied tones added to the panorama before our eyes. Great patches on the hill sides of scarlet and blue and pink flowers causing a riot, of color and hard to depict. It gave the impression of a huge Persian carpet, rich in coloring and of wonderful, tracery spread to meet our gaze.



26th March: After a good night's rest, we are leaving for Tiberias. Again reach Nazareth. See the Church of Melchites which is claimed to be the Synagogue Jesus taught. From Plain south east of Nazareth is the dome shaped Mount Tabor. Can see Horn of Hittim where Christ gave the sermon on the Mount. Plain where he fed 5000 and 7000 people. At noon reached Tiberias on Sea of Galilee. It is 681 feet below sea level and lies on west bank of Sea of Galilee.

Scene of miracle of Canal (St. John 2). It built of basalt a black looking stone like blue stone and this gives it a very sombre appearance. It is very old and street very crooked, narrow and dirty. Had lunch in Municipal Gardens outside of city. Had a row in boat on the Lake on Sea or Galleli. We then went to Bethsaida. Passed home of Mary Magdalene, home of Jonah. We then returned to Tiberias, back to Nazareth and then to Haifa. Travelling from Nazareth to Haifa we get the view of the other side of Mount Carmel famed from Old Testament time for its beauty. It is one of the most attractive regions of Palestine. Its highest point is 1800 feet the miracle of Elijah took place (The offering the sacrifice, the place of burning recorded in 1 King 18) with priests or Baal. The River Kishon in the Plain below winding its way to the Sea where Elijah slew the Priests of Baal 400 in number.

Haifa is situated on the other side of slope of Mt. Carmel and has 34000 inhabitants. So you see it is not a small place. We reached there at 5 P. M.

Mother will see this by narrative that "Smart Aleck" plied the guide with a few questions and put them down tersely and have just written up the events as I could remember, so if we made a few mistakes in recording, excuse them. It has been quite a long task writing this. The boat has been rolling a good deal. I wish to post it on board tonight so that it will go straight away.

This Journey to Jerusalem has left a lasting impression for one has indeed seen the full demonstration of the words of The Báb. "You have the forms and credits but have lost the spirit of your religion." One recognizes how necessary it was for the appearance of the Father Himself to come and purify the channels of spiritual thought from the superstitions of man-made creeds and dogmas. One's return to Haifa was certainly a return to a pure crystal spring of spiritual thought, effervescent with life and energy turbulent muddy streams and stagnant pools polluted with sectarian strife, superstitions and human ideas and thoughts, absolutely void of essential life giving properties "The Love of God."

It was a happy home coming to be once again with the dear souls whose lives are one continual sacrifice and service to humanity.

I think I shall end this now as it will be quite, perhaps more than you can read at one time. All the Holy Family, Shoghi Effendi and the Friends wished me to convey their love to you whenever I write. Mrs. Blundell and family and Margaret also join me in love to you. It won't be so long before I return to be with you once more. Love to you all.

Yours, in His Name,

Your loving co-worker,  
(Signed) Effie S. Baker.

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