

Home of Baha - Ollah

Acre, Syria November 21<sup>st</sup> 1914

Dear friends!

I could not wish for a better day because from 2 P. M. till sunset the Beloved was entertaining his distinguished guest, Sheik - or Rais in the garden of Rizwan. According to the happy inexpressible nature of Abul Gasem this was the Rizwan day and the flowers and the trees and the fruits had a full view of their Lord. It was a quiet afternoon and saw the 3 or 4 Tarsastrian farmers of Jerdous none of the believers were there. When the carriage arrived at the gate of the latter garden the Master asked Isfandeyar to stop. He alighted and entered the flowery spot to meet the friends and we continued our short drive to Rizwan. Abul Gasem welcomed us with hearty enough hospitality but he was not quite himself till we assured him that the Beloved will join us presently. He invited me to sit under the tree of mandarines and help myself of the luscious fruits as much as I could, but no sooner I tried to accommodate myself than the Master came and the opportunity, at least for the present slipped out of my hands. Rugs were spread over the sofas and the Master and his guest sat on them, discoursing now on poetry, and anon on the spiritual beauty of Divine Love and the value of lasting friendships. Before their eyes the fountain was playing and under the cool shade of mulberry trees they drank their tea and ate ruby-grained pomegranates served by the faithful gardener. The weather was now cloudy with a few pearly drops of rain and again the sun shone through the interstices of the trees. The two swift streams on both sides of the garden rolled on as though conscious of the presence of the Master and the birds perched on the tall <sup>branches</sup> sang their songs of praise and glorification. Before leaving this enchanting spot we visited the room of Baha - Ollah always laden with the sweet smell of flowers and walked through its avenues and byways. It is very hard to write much about the Rizwan because its delicate atmosphere can never be translated into words and its indelible, soothing spirit must be rather felt than described. The Beloved said to the

Zoroastrian believers and Ahul Gaseem:—"God has prepared for you the means of happiness and pleasure. You are living and working in such gardens which are blessed with the Feet of Baha-Allah. Many a day he has passed in these gardens, many a feast has been held here. It is a most hallowed ground! You cannot realize how the people are being tormented and suffering. But praise be to God you are under the protection of the Blessed Perfection and are spending your days with the utmost peacefulness. Ahul Gaseem gave me a big bouquet of roses and I ~~was~~ sorry that I could not find a way to share them with you. On our way back the Beloved entertained us with two more stories about one of the Turkish governors and we laughed over it heartily. When we reached home we found the friends awaiting the coming of their Lord. With a sign of welcome to each he ascended the stairs to rest in his room. Having refreshed he came down. From the top of the stairs he observed me writing:—"Gracious! Masha-Allah! Thou art always busy. It is time that thou shouldst take a rest, when everybody is lying idle!" He exclaimed. I said:—"I cannot sit around idle. I have lots to do all the time." "How terribly earnest thou art. What <sup>art</sup> thou ~~art~~ writing now?" "Just now I am writing the Diary?" "Dost thou write even the ordinary events of the day?" "I wish I had space to write everything connected with the Master, for nothing is ordinary when related to him." "When I went to America I observed that the public taste in writing and speaking is towards simplicity, therefore I try to express the ideas in plain language. Many great events in the life of the Blessed Perfection are not recorded by any historian because no one was thinking about these things. I have heard those things from his own lips." I was going to ask him to tell us some of those events but a few strangers came in and our meeting came to an end.

This evening we had Pilau and meat and the Beloved spoke in detail on the recent two Parliaments of Persia and their constitutional inadequacy to meet the exigencies of time. Khasro was serving at the table and the Master said: "He is competent to do most anything. He is a Jack-of-all-trades. Praise be to God that he is confirmed in service and is busy by day and by night." Then as he neared him he smote

This morning I was delighted to have tea in the room of the Beloved. These days he gives always his place to Sheikh - or Rais and shows ~~the~~ him extraordinary respect. The subject of his talk was Syria and its geographical, historical and religious position in the world. "Syria" he said "has an important position strategically. Ancient nations conquering this country extended the boundary of their empire to all the then known parts of the world, ~~such as~~ the Greeks, the Romans, the Arabs and the Turks. <sup>successively conquered this country and each in turn became a world power</sup> Because it is the connecting link between Asia and Europe and Africa its importance cannot be overestimated. Geographically it is placed in the equatorial line; not in the tropic of cancer nor in the tropic of capricorn but in the most temperate zone. Consequently during winter these shores are not frozen at all. The highest degree of cold is 4 or 5 degrees above zero and the thermometer never rises in summer above 32 or 33 degrees <sup>degrees</sup> but in Constantinople in the winter season it goes below zero <sup>by 12</sup> and in heat above 40. <sup>But</sup> here the temperature is very moderate. On the other hand it is a world's museum, it has everything in miniature. All that you find in this earth, you will also find its prototype on a small scale in Syria. For example the world is encircled by great oceans. Syria is situated between two seas, the Mediterranean and the red seas. There are lofty summits of mountains in other countries, Syria boasts proudly of Lebanon, the chief summits being Jabel Makmel nearly 10,200 feet and Jabel Sannin about 8,400 feet high. The snows, the streams, the verdant forests, the richness and grandeur of these mountains have been made always by the Hebrews the emblem of wealth, of majesty and of glory. In Europe and India there are mountains <sup>whose peaks are</sup> perennially covered with snows. here we have Mount Hermon, called Sion (Deut 11. 48) Sirion and Shenir (Deut 33. 9) in the old Testament and now "Jebel - esh - Sheikh", mountain of the Sheikh or old man. This Mountain is called the Mont blanc or the Himalaya of Palestine. It rises 9,200 feet above the sea. Its snowy tops are endowed with an unearthly grandeur and perpetual whiteness - an image of purity. When you leave

this mountain for about 36 miles you reach the valley of Tiberias several hundred feet below sea level and in summer unbearably hot. In other countries there are lovely large <sup>salt and fresh water</sup> lakes; here one finds the Lake of Galilee with its fresh water, 680 feet below the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea with an area of 400 square miles, lying as it does, about 1,300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean, with such a salty water that no creatures can ever live in it. The water is so buoyant that it is possible to lie upon the surface almost as on a <sup>coast</sup> and it is difficult to swim in it, as the feet tend to fly up. Similarly one finds in Syria all kinds of mines which have <sup>been</sup> left virgin for many ages. All the trees of the hot climate such as <sup>date</sup> ~~palms~~ and the trees of the cold climate such as walnut are reared in Syria. Likewise the plants and the herbs <sup>and the flora</sup> of all the world are picked up from its fertile and rich plains. Thus if a person travels well <sup>through</sup> out all Syria, it is as though he has seen all the world.

But as regards its religious importance it is enough to say that it is the Holy Land, the Blessed Spot, the land of Promise and the birthplace of Christ and all the Israelitish prophets. Here are the mountains of Sinai, Seir, Zion, Horeb, Carmel, Tivon and all the other sacred places. Consider how beloved is this land in the estimation of God that addressing Moses <sup>he</sup> said: - "Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground". The holiness of this ground was thus prefigured by the Lord thousands of years ago, knowing well that some day, towards the consummation of ages He will make Himself manifest in this land to all the people of the world. Ponder how blessed and holy was this ground that even Moses was ordered to put off his shoes and walk thereon reverently. Thus it is evident from every standpoint that this Land of Palestine is beloved by the Lord and all his elect. We must consider it a great privilege that we are allowed to live here in these latter days and see with our own eyes the gradual fulfillment of all the prophecies."