

Home of Abdul Baha

Mount Carmel, Haifa Syria

May 24th 1915

Dear friends!

Another occasion arose this afternoon in the Pilgrim's Home and the Beloved gave another urgent and emphatic talk on the necessity of the acquirement of trades and crafts by all the young Bahais. He said in part, "The parents must exert their utmost effort; - thus their children may learn trades and professions. The first and primal thing that is essential for every young man is a trade. This is supremely an industrial age and the man who has not specialized himself in some line, will be crippled on every side and hampered on every step in his pursuit of ^a livelihood. No sooner the children have laid the foundation of their theoretic ^{and primary} knowledge in the school-rooms they must be sent to the workshops to learn the applied and practical sciences. This is of course not a universal necessity for there will be found always some well-to-do families who by providing a complete course of academic, intellectual and philosophic education for their sons and daughters will enable them to shoulder in its proper time the civic, moral, ^{and} spiritual responsibilities of the growing communities, giving wings to the birds of ideals and raising the general tone of the mass by noble utterances and heaven-glittering thoughts.

"In this dispensation ^{to study and} art is prayer, work is considered as worship. For this reason it is said: 'the tradespeople are the friends of God'. Reflect for a moment how blessed is art or trade that its acquirement or ^{there} occupation is regarded as prayer. Through the educational laws of 'attention' and 'suggestion', encourage and incite the children to characterize themselves with merciful ethics, spiritual qualities, praiseworthy deeds and moral principles. Study well their moods and feelings and through the many pleasurable enterprises direct them into inspiring channels. Do not lose an opportunity in cultivating in their minds a sense of the beautiful and the perfect.

"When we were imprisoned in the barrack, one day, the Blessed Perfection spoke about the necessity of industrial education ^{of} the believers of God

and their descendants. This was before the revelation of the Book of Akdas where the command of industrial education was laid down. When I heard his words I addressed myself: What can I do to learn a trade? I am in the prison. I come out. There are no arts and trades school in Acca. After much inquiry I found there was a mat-weaver in the town and I sent for him and stipulated with him for a certain sum to teach me his trade. He installed his ^{simple} weaving machine in one of the prison rooms and for six months I was an apprentice under the direction of my master. The first mat that I wove with my own hands I spread under the feet of the Blessed Perfection.

"God confirms and assists those souls who obey and follow His laws and commandments. Obedience ~~to~~ ^{of} the divine statutes is conducive to eternal life. The very thought that he has carried out one of the principles of God will grant him joy and pure happiness; he will soar in the spiritual realms of the Almighty and advance toward the heaven of bliss.

"I am solicitous about the conditions of the friends of God and am ^{concerned} with their steady progress. I love them and wish for them unlimited development. Others do not worry themselves about it nor are they anxious. They say: Why should we bother ourselves about the conditions of those that do not concern us. But I am not so constituted. I must look after your welfare and speak to you about those things which would exalt your stations.

"The mothers and fathers must not leave any stone unturned in the thorough education of their children according to their aptitudes and potentialities. Day and night they must exert themselves. One moment of negligence is culpable. If they have not received a technical and manual education in their childhood, when they grow up they will be poor, miserable, homeless, shelterless, hopeless, walking all nights in the streets or at the best sleeping in public lodging ^{houses} and becoming imbued with the sinful and unpardonable quality of leggary and mendicacy, either directly or indirectly.

"God has created man noble, how can he degrade this station of divine ^{nobility} by leggary? He has made him of the pure essence of spiritual wealth, how does he dare to alloy it by the base metal of mendicacy?

one minute of negligence on the part of the mothers may cost the children years of pains and sufferings. Manual training, technical education, industrial efficiency must be the object of every mother in raising her sons and daughters. The mothers must not spoil the children by showering upon them too many ^{endearing} words. They may better decrease the numbers of 'my darling', 'my lambkin', 'my dove', 'my sweet baby', 'my fragrant narcissus', 'light of my eyes', 'my heart', 'my beauty' and many other such affectionate titles copiously indulged in by fond mothers — and increase the quality of education and the quantity of instruction given to the growing minds and spirits of their children. If possible they must go over their lessons every night and help them in every way to pass through the trying and important period of adolescence. They must watch their habits and sympathetically find out and stop the source of their evil customs. As far as it lies in their powers they must not let them associate with bad and immoral companions and both by examples and advice teach them to avail ^{themselves} of the friendships of the worthies and the communion of the pure.

"In short, the explicit command of Baha Ollah is that every child, whether rich or poor, aristocrat or democrat, high or low must learn a trade, an art or a craft. This law must be incorporated in the constitution of every school. Supposing that a person is not in need, that economically speaking he is rich, even he, for the sake of a obedience to the blessed command must acquire a profession. A Bahai must correlate his actions, words and affairs with the basic principles of the Blessed Perfection. If he sees that the former agrees with the latter, he may feel quite sure that he is on the right track. All our difficulties arise from the fact that our deeds do not correspond with the good pleasure of Baha Ollah. With the presence of such ^a condition, it is passing strange that we still hope for benefic results. Is this possible? We have sown the wind and we must inevitably reap the whirlwind. We have repeatedly experienced that those actions which have not been found approvable by the Blessed Perfection have yielded no good results and have always terminated by undesirable results. We have not been warned nor have we taken

Consequently, if we desire to succeed in this life we must conform all our deeds, thoughts and habits with the good-pleasure of Baha Ollah. We must suppose Him as alive and sitting in His room and we, standing in His Divine Presence and if we explained to Him our aims and purposes, would He have been pleased with them or not? Would He have addressed us: 'Well done! This is good?' Now the Blessed Perfection is not in our midst but we have with us His Teachings and Exhortations. Therefore we must correspond them with those heavenly instructions and keep them ever before our minds."

This morning the Beloved was in the garden, passing a pleasant hour in trimming the trees and giving valuable hints to Esmael Aga in exterminating the harmful insects which are destroying the verdure and freshness ~~of the trees~~. Then he went out to call on Zakki Bey because he ~~was~~ ^{is} going to leave today for Jerusalem. From the hotel they walked together to the store of Mirza Anayetuallah and there they continued their warm conversation till noon. At the corner of the road they bade farewell to each other, the Master kissing ^{his} face two or three times and showering upon him his protective blessings. When we reached home he ascended the stairs and after a few minutes I heard his voice calling out to me. I ran out and saw him standing near the door with a pair of his own shoes in his hand. "Come up and try these on thy feet, if they fit thou canst have them." I tried but they were too small. "I see thy feet are larger than mine. Give them back to me," he said and stretched out his blessed hand to take the shoes. "My Lord! these are new mine. I would like to keep them ^{for}, surely they will fit other feet than mine, ~~but who~~ will be made supremely happy and blessed to possess them as a precious relic." He laughed over my blundering speech and said in Turkish. "Paki Ala" - very good - and retired to his room. I descended the stairs ^{with} joyful spirit, kissed and hugged the shoes many times. I shall wait meanwhile till I meet the worthy soul to wear them, not for always but only on very rare occasions.