

Abdu'l-Baha Who sent the horse-driven coach to convey us to Akka.

Meanwhile, we were conducted to the Shrine of the Bab, where the sacred

+F4 In 1910, the Shrine of the Bab comprised of six chambers only. There
+F4 was no proper road to the Shrine from the foot of the Carmel. There was
+F4 no garden surrounding the Shrine, only the Cypress which exists today were
+F4 there.

body of the Martyred-Prophet had been laid by the hand of Abdu'l-Baha to rest for evermore. When laying our foreheads on the threshold of that holy Shrine for praying, the peaceful atmosphere, the spirituality, the holiness that pervaded one's soul was indescribable.

The coach arrived and when we were being driven along the bay from Haifa to Akka, there were hardly any buildings on the way and we could see the blue Mediterranean all along the shore.

When we reached Akka the men were conveyed to the Khan-i-Avamid,

+F5 See "Baha'i Holy Places at the World Centre", p. 19.
whereas the women were sheltered in the holy household.

The day after our arrival we were conducted to a large room in the Master's house at Akka. After a few moments, the door opened and the Master entered with a smile, a divine smile that one would forget the world and its cares, those eyes in which were mirrored the wisdom and the love of God, a love which draws love from all, the describe that temple of grace and majesty is far beyond my task.

He enfolded each of us in His bosom "Khush amadid" (you are welcome) "Bismillah" (In the name of God) were the words with which He greeted us and motioned us to be seated. He enquired about the course and nature of our voyage to which one of the friends replied, that before reaching Suez, some part of our ship had caught fire and we were in danger of being drowned. Instantly Abdu'l-Baha declared "Musafir-i-ma gharq nami shavand" (Our visitors will not be drowned). He then inquired about the state of health of Bombay and Poona friends, and the progress of the Cause in India.

After having tea with us He dismissed us from His presence.

We were graciously allowed to stay under His shelter for a period of fifty days. We visited the Most Holy Shrine, the Shrine of Baha'u'llah, at Bahji, and in humble adoration prostrated on the threshold of the Holiest Baha'i tomb, what a bounty, what a grace, and at that moment, these Hidden Words flashed through my mind "The learned and the wise have for long years striven and failed to attain the presence of the All-Glorious ... Thou without the least effort didst attain thy goal, and without search has obtained the object of thy quest". In the Shrine itself, the flowers, the carpets, the soft lights, and the emptiness, imparting to the place an air of sacred simplicity and the godliness which the sacred, the precious, the luminous Remains of the Founder of the Baha'i Faith has bestowed on this Shrine. This holy Shrine in

Akka and the Shrines of His Forerunner and of the Centre of His Covenant in Haifa, shall in not distant future "Insha'llah" (please God), be the centre of pilgrimage for the people of the whole planet.

We were privileged to see the "Garden of Ridvan" where Baha'u'llah

+F6 See "Baha'i Holy Places at the World Centre", p. 20.

would make occasional visits, we were also shown the wooden bench under the mulberry tree where He sat.

We were shown the International Archives of the Cause, which were at that time housed in the room forming a part of the Master's House, among the precious relics and writings, were a couple of Baha'u'llah's reed-pens, in a wooden pen-case, material price of both not more than a few pence. But with those very pens what commotion did He raise into the very heart of the world. With those pens He issued the Proclamation of His mission to the crowned heads of the world and its ecclesiastical leaders.

Ya Baha'u'l-Abha, grant us the power, unworthy though we be, to spread Thy holy Cause and declare Thy Word to all mankind.

The other Holy Places, which, we have the privilege to see them today at the Baha'i World Centre, some of these did not exist at that period, some others were not in the possession of our Faith, while still others due to the then government's strict restrictions were unaccessible to the Baha'is.

Since Baha'u'llah set His blessed foot on the shores of Akka, "the most desolate of the cities of the world", the spiritual atmosphere which pervaded everything through the potency and spirit of the "King of kings", who had lived there for twenty-four years had changed it into Paradise.

The spacious hall in which we used to gather to attain Abdu'l-Baha's presence and hear Him speak was always full with pilgrims and the resident believers, and when questions were asked of Him, He without pre-meditation would not only reply to their questions, but elucidate the subjects also, in such wise that everyone would be contented and happy. Occasional visits were made by Abdu'l-Baha to the Khan-i-Avamid, where the pilgrims and very few resident-believers were lodged, sometimes He would dine with us, what a bounty it was to dine in the company of our beloved Master, the Centre of Baha'u'llah's Covenant and the Mystery of God. Once only we had the bounty of following Him in the streets, and that was when He was proceeding to the burial ground, to attend the funeral ceremony of the death of a resident-believer. The dignity and grace with which He would tread the streets, attracted the passers-by and caused them to gaze at His Countenance, when He was proceeding further through the copper-smith bazaar, it was amazing to see the copper-smiths, who were non-Baha'is, and busy with their work, when Abdu'l-Baha was passing by their shops, each in turn would bow and bend down and pay his respect to Him. It was indeed a remarkable sign of the triumph of Baha'u'llah and His Cause, that only four decades had elapsed since Baha'u'llah's arrival in Akka that Muslims and in a country governed

by Muslims, should show such honor and venerate His Beloved Son. Thus lived Abdu'l-Baha, Whom Baha'u'llah called the Master, the Master of the world.

Once when we were in the courtyard in Abdu'l-Baha's presence, as usual after giving us His counsels and words of wisdom, He said "Fi aman'u'llah" (In the protection of God), that was the leaving signal, when we were to depart. He, after a moment exclaimed "Pisar-i-Khosrov biya inja" (Khosrov's son come here), with bowed head I approached Him, the wealth of love that He showered me was abundant, so abundant, that till now that I am four score years old has intoxicated me. On the blessed day Abdu'l-Baha with hands outstretched, thrice embraced me, and each time He would embrace me, would repeat these words "Pisar-i-Khosrov nisti, pisar-i-man hasti" (You are My son, not Khosrov's son). He afterwards with a lovely smile bade me to go and join my fellow-travellers, returning to the Khan-i-Avamid. Would that the Almighty had given me the capacity to prove worthy of His tender affection and generosity by serving the Cause.

Finally would to God that it may be every Baha'i's good fortune and bounty to visit the Most Sacred Spots and Holy places at the Baha'i World Centre. Than this nothing better can I wish for the beloved friends throughout the world.

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