

Abdul Baha

The prince within the prison walls.
Alone—an exile from his native land,
Condemned to cruel captivity
His crime was: That he loved.
An alien asylum was his hermitage,
In Acca, home of the desolate,
In Acca, site of history's fiercest wars,
From ancient ages down to modern years,
Where man has fought with fellow man,
Oft in the name of God, the Father of us all.
Here Abbas dwelt, and preached love.

With naught a soul around his cell to listen,
The prisoner preached love.

The grass blades stretched their scrawny necks to hear him,
While Abdul preached love.

The wriggly worms came forth at dusk to supper,
“These blades will make a sumptuous feast for us,”
When lo! withheld by some magnetic power they stopped,
For Abdul was preaching love.

The swallows rose at dawn to seek their breakfast,
Beheld the worms around the prison walls;
They dropped to earth, their helpless prey before them,
But something strange repelled them and they paused,
For Abdul was preaching love.

An eagle from his eyrie on high Libanus,
Went forth to seek wherewith to feed his young,
He swooped upon the swallows as they rested,
But quickly ceased as each called to his neighbor,
“Abdul Baha preaches love.”

The eagle told the good news to the raven,
The raven flew away to Irak's fields
And met a magpie; passed the message onward.
A secret with a magpie cannot rest,
And soon the magpies came from every country,
The first Mantik-ut-Tair for many years,
And each agreed to spread the good news elsewhere,
Around the world they'd go if needs to tell,
That Abbas was preaching love.

And soon the pilgrims gathered 'round the prisoner,
From lands anear and far came they to him,
And listened while the prisoner prince was preaching,
And heard the honeyed words from the master's lips.

O master, prithee only let me serve thee,
No greater gift would I than only this,
I'd leave my family, home and all possessions,
To be thy slave, forever if thou wilt.

Nay, nay, my son, the turnkey ever serves me
My smallest needs are quickly cared by him,
But go, return to home and family,
And preach this word: Love.

O gracious scion of Baha'ollah,
From Iran's land I've come to succor thee
Thy fellow countrymen would save thee,
Pray, tell me, what may be done for thee.

Return, my brother, to your native country,
The governor and the guards watch o'er me here,
While the Eternal One is ever watching.
Return, my brother and preach, Love.

O glorious son of a most glorious father,
From Albion afar I've come to thee,
My country waits the word, will war to save thee,
Command me, master, ready am I to go.

Nay, nay, think not of war nor slaughter,
Shed neither tears nor blood o'er career,
'Tis I hold Turkey in this gloomy prison,
Pray rather for her, held in such captives,
The only bonds are those of superstition,
Of ignorance and hate, envy and lust;
Freed from these passions, God is an asylum,
Who dwells with Him can ne'er a captive be.
Return, my friend, and peace be ever with thee,
Go preach this message: Love.

Beloved One, half 'round the world I've come,
My money, possessions, power lay at thy feet,
O flee with me to a land of hope and freedom,
There mayest thou preach, and have a safe retreat
Come, come, the ship is waiting now for thee
Rise, take thy cloak, and follow now with me.

Return, my brother, whate'er thy possessions be,
Add to their store by taking now from me,
The message that all mankind needs greatly,
And preach this message, Love.
Whilst as here I need not thy possessions
All Islam grovels at my feet,
'Tis I hold [there lasters?] shackled in this seat
'Tis they that need thy prayers and intercessions,
Return, and preach love.

Years past. Abbas Effendi was parting,
To leave the walls of Acca forevermore.
The pilgrims came from every land and country,
They gathered 'round his bed to see his face,
The glorious brightness lightened all about.
E'en angels from the near and further heavens,
Watched over him about to leave this world,
And as he passed this was the firm conviction,
Of man, of beast, of angel, plant or birds:
That Abdul lived love.