

**THE ORIENTAL ROSE, OR, THE
TEACHINGS OF ABDUL BAHA
WHICH TRACE THE CHART OF
"THE SHINING PATHWAY"**

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The Oriental rose, or, The teachings of Abdul Baha which trace the chart of "the shining pathway" by Mary Hanford Ford

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UNIV. OF
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360777

FOREWORD.

In the preparation of the present volume I have been deeply indebted to M. Nicolas, Secretary of the Persian Legation in Paris, who has written a biography entitled *Seyed Ali Mohammed, dit le Bab*, which is indicative of profound research in both the Persian and Arabic tongues. It is, however, lacking in discrimination, as it uses the untruthful and partisan Mohammedan memorials of the Bab, as of equal authority with those written by his friends, and it is therefore necessary to cull its pages. As the book has not been translated into English, I have taken the liberty of borrowing frankly from its contents, in much that touches upon the story of the Bab and Kurret ul Ainc. I must also express my obligations to Gobineau's famous monograph upon the Bab.

It would be impossible, however, to put into words the treasure of what I owe to my own visit to Acca, and to the long line of traveling Americans returning from that prison city, each of whom perhaps has added a color, an outline or a bit of sunshine to the *ensemble* of the booklet here offered; may I hope it has

caught some fragrance of sweet rich roses, of sandalwood and myrrh?

All the travelers have come back like pilgrims of a new hope, bubbling and overflowing with the ideas, impressions and suggestions drawn from their visit to this inspiring spiritual center, and their contact with Abdul Baha. Each has illustrated the reply given by the Servant of God to the questioner who asked him: "Why do all the guests who visit you come away with shining countenances?"

He said with his beautiful smile; "I cannot tell you, but in all those upon whom I look, I see only my Father's Face."

THE AUTHOR.

THE ORIENTAL ROSE OR "The Shining Pathway"

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF THE BAB.

Have you ever heard of Abbas Effendi? He is known to his followers as Abdul Baha, which means the Servant of God. He has been for many years a political prisoner in Acca, the ancient prison city of the Turkish Sultan, but his name is beginning to be whispered everywhere as a symbol of the love which frees, which warms the heart and stirs the world to betterment.

Acca was once known as *Acre*, and its walls frown upon the traveler as darkly as in the day when Richard Coeur de Lion stormed them with his tumultuous crusaders; but since the restoration of the constitution in Turkey and the abdication of Abdul Hamid, openings have been cut in these strong defenses, and the gates are no longer closed and barred.

In the August which followed the wonderful

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July day that gave the turbaned people the franchise, Abdul Hamid issued a strange decree, setting free every prisoner held that day within the confines of the empire, and thus Abbas Effendi was liberated.

He had been confined within the walls of Acca since 1868, and had been a prisoner since he was a boy of nine, and perhaps even the promulgation of the constitution would not have broken his bonds. He said to an American guest:

"Whenever I thought of freedom I could not but remember the many sufferers languishing in prison, so I was not able to pray for my own liberation, I must pray for the freedom of all, and I was made happy because at last liberty was granted to every imprisoned one as well as to myself."

For thirty years Abdul Baha has not been confined within prison walls, but simply within the limits of the town of Acca, and since 1892 he has been the center of the great Bahaist movement that has brought light to the Orient and the Occident.

For many decades troops of pilgrims have poured into Acca from all parts of the world; western merchant and Oriental dreamer have jostled one another in the streets of the prison city seeking the great message of peace and

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unity, of loving service that has quickened the heart of mankind from the center of oppression.

In spite of the surveillance of the suspicious Turkish police the mansion of Abdul Baha has sheltered countless foreign guests, and English, German, French and American pilgrims have left its generous portals to carry back to their own rushing and progressive commonwealths a sense of the splendor of life that they had never before suspected.

The house of Abbas Effendi is an Oriental structure built round a court, and its situation just beside the sea wall of Acca gives its upper chambers a wonderful outlook over the Mediterranean. Upon the roof is the simple apartment, furnished with the merest necessaries, which the Teacher of man occupies during the greater part of the year. It frequently contains no bed, for Abdul Baha is continually giving away this necessity of civilized existence. It is impossible to buy a bed in Acca, and so, when this lover of his kind during his morning walk finds a fever stricken sufferer tossing upon the bare ground, he straightway sends him his bed, and lies upon the hard floor himself until some one discovers his plight and provides him with a new one.

Let no one commiserate him too much in such

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a sacrifice, however, for Abdul Baha's body is of such slight import to him, that he probably sleeps as sweetly on the uncovered boards as on his narrow cot, and nothing would drive slumber from his eyes so quickly as the consciousness that another needed his couch.

To understand the mission of Abdul Baha and its significance to the world, we must go back to the year of his birth in 1844, and to the Persian city of Shiraz, where, in that same year Mohammed Ali first cried his message into the listening air, and received his title of the Bab or Gate. He was accepted immediately by many followers, as the eagerly expected "Mahdi." Mohammedan tradition had lovingly preserved the holy legend of the Twelfth Imaum, who had disappeared two hundred and sixty years after the coming of Mohammed, and whose return was promised in a thousand years. The expiration of that period brought the date 1260 of the Islamic chronology, which corresponds with 1844 of our era.

In Chicago a temple is in process of erection to which funds have been contributed by all the religions of the world, and yet its building is in the hands of Americans. It is to be called the Maszhrak el Azcar, which means the Dawning Place of Prayer, and is the result of the widespread movement which the Bab initiated