



# *Visits with 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

— A Generous Heart

For those who aspire  
to lasting change,

His example guides  
the way...

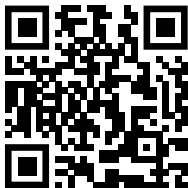
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## Learn more about 'Abdu'l-Bahá:



English



Français

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Other stories may also have been modified slightly.



## Introduction

A unique figure in human and religious history, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the perfect example in word and deed of all His Father, Bahá’u’lláh, taught.

After a lifetime of persecution and imprisonment for His religious beliefs, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá embarked in 1911 from the Holy Land on an extended trip to share His Father’s message in Egypt, Europe and North America, including nine days in Canada.

“The accounts of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s travels and of the effect He had on those who met Him are legion. Some went to extraordinary lengths to enter His presence—going by boat, by foot, or even under railway trains—and, by the urgency of their desire to see Him, imprinted themselves on the consciousness of future generations of adults

and children. The testimonies of those who were transformed by even a brief, sometimes near wordless encounter with their beloved Master remain deeply stirring. In the wide array of visitors He received—rich and poor, black and white, indigenous and émigré—the universal embrace of His Father’s Faith was unmistakably in evidence.”<sup>1</sup>

November 28, 2021, marks the one hundredth anniversary of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s passing. In His memory, friends the world over are sharing stories of His inspiring life as a gift with their families, neighbours and co-workers, with the conviction they will contribute to a spirit of hope in these turbulent times. As He assured us: “that which is confirmed is the oneness of the world of humanity. Every soul who serveth this oneness will undoubtedly be assisted and confirmed.”

<sup>1</sup> 5 December 2013 message of the Universal House of Justice



This scene you may see almost any day of the year in the streets of 'Akká... In the cold weather which is approaching, the poor will suffer, for, as in all cities, they are thinly clad. Some day at this season... you may see the poor of 'Akká gathered at one of the shops where clothes are sold, receiving cloaks from the Master. Upon many, especially the most infirm or crippled, he himself places the garment, adjusts it with his own hands, and strokes it approvingly, as if to say, 'There! Now you will do well.' There are five or six hundred poor in 'Akká, to all of whom he gives a warm garment each year.

Nor is it the beggars only that he remembers. Those respectable poor who cannot beg, but must suffer in silence—those whose daily labor will not support their families—to these he sends bread secretly.

If he hears of any one sick in the city—  
Moslem or Christian, or of any other sect, it  
matters not—he is each day at their bedside,  
or sends a trusty messenger. If a physician is  
needed, and the patient poor, he brings or  
sends one, and also the necessary medicine.  
If he finds a leaking roof or a broken  
window menacing health, he summons  
a workman, and waits himself to see the  
breach repaired. If any one is in trouble—  
if a son or a brother is thrown into prison,  
or he is threatened at law, or falls into any  
difficulty too heavy for him—it is to the  
Master that he straightway makes appeal  
for counsel or for aid. Indeed, for counsel all  
come to him, rich as well as poor.

This man who gives so freely must be rich,  
you think? No, far otherwise. Once his  
family was the wealthiest in all Persia. But  
this friend of the lowly, like the Galilean,

has been oppressed by the great. For fifty years he and his family have been exiles and prisoners. Their property has been confiscated and wasted, and but little has been left to him. Now that he has not much he must spend little for himself that he may give more to the poor. His garments are usually of cotton, and the cheapest that can be bought. Often his friends in Persia—for this man is indeed rich in friends... send him costly garments. These he wears once, out of respect for the sender; then he gives them away.

Such is Abbas Effendi, the Master of ‘Akká.

—“Abdu’l-Bahá, aka ‘The Master’”, by Jonathan Menon,  
<https://239days.com/2012/04/18/the-master/>





**D**uring His prison life in ‘Akka, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá often gave His bed to those who had none, and He always refused to own more than one coat. “Why should I have two,” He said, “when there are so many who have none?”

One day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was to entertain the Governor of ‘Akka. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s wife, Munirih, felt that His old coat was hardly good enough for this important visit. She wished very much that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá might have a better coat, but He never noticed what He wore, so long as it was clean. She wondered what she should do.

Finally, she decided that she would have a new coat made for Him and on the morning of the visit she would put out the new one instead of the old. She felt He would surely never notice the difference. So, she ordered a fine and rather expensive coat to be made by a tailor. And on the important day she laid it

where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would be sure to find it.

But when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá got ready to dress, He noticed right away that something was wrong. So He went searching through the house. He called, “Where is my coat? Where is my coat? Someone has left me a coat which is not mine!”

Munirih tried to explain what had happened, but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Who always thought of others before Himself, said, “But think of this! For the price of this coat you can buy five such as I ordinarily use, and do you think I would spend so much money upon a coat which only I shall wear? If you think I need a new one, very well, but send this one back and for the same price have the tailor make me five such as I usually wear. Then, you see, I shall not only have a new one for myself, but I shall also have four more to give away.”

—*The Oriental Rose*, by Mary Hanford Ford, pp. 164-165



Two ladies from Scotland had written (to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s host in England) asking if it were possible that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would spare them one evening. They accepted my invitation to dinner. Having come straight from the train, and being about to return the same night, every moment was precious.

The Master received them with His warm, simple welcome, and they spontaneously, rather than consciously, made more reverent curtsies than if in the presence of the ordinary great personages of the earth. Everybody was feeling elated at the prospect of a wonderful evening, unmarred by the presence of any but the most intimate and the most comprehending of the friends.

Not more than half an hour had passed, when, to our dismay, a persistent person

pushed past the servitors, and strode into our midst. Seating himself, and lighting a cigarette without invitation, he proceeded to say that he intended writing an article for some paper about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, arrogantly asking for “Some telling points, don’t you know.” He talked without a pause in a far from polite manner.

We were speechless and aghast at the intrusion of this insufferable and altogether unpleasant bore, spoiling our golden hour!

Presently ‘Abdu’l-Bahá rose and, making a sign to the man to follow Him, went to His own private room.

We looked at one another. The bore had gone, yes, but alas! so also had the Master! Being the hostess, I was perturbed and perplexed. Could nothing be done? Then I

went to the door of the audience room and said to the secretary: “Will you kindly say to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that the ladies with whom the appointment had been made are awaiting His pleasure.”

I returned to the guests and we awaited the result.

Almost immediately we heard steps approaching along the corridor. They came across the hall to the door. The sound of kind farewell words reached us. Then the closing of the door, and the Beloved came back.

“Oh, Master!” we said.

Pausing near the door, He looked at us each in turn, with a look of deep, grave meaning. “You were making that poor man uncomfortable, so strongly desiring his

absence; I took him away to make him feel happy.”

Truly ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s thoughts and ways were far removed from ours!

—*The Chosen Highway*, by Lady Blomfield, pp. 162-163

*Do not be satisfied until  
each one with whom you are  
concerned is to you as a  
member of your family.*

—‘Abdu’l-Bahá in London, p. 91



‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s generosity was natural to Him already in childhood. A story is recorded of the time when, as a youngster, He went to the mountains to see the thousands of sheep which His Father then owned. The shepherds, wishing to honour their young guest, gave Him a feast. Before ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was taken home at the close of the day, the head shepherd advised Him that it was customary under the circumstances to leave a present for the shepherds. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told the man He had nothing to give. Yet the shepherd persisted that He must give something. Whereupon the Master gave them all the sheep.

We are told that when Bahá’u’lláh heard about this incident, He laughed and commented, “We will have to protect ‘Abdu’l-Bahá from Himself—some day He will give Himself away!”

—*Vignettes from the Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, by Annamarie Honnold, p. 69



## **A Prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá**

**O** Thou compassionate Lord, Thou Who art generous and able! We are servants of Thine sheltered beneath Thy providence. Cast Thy glance of favor upon us. Give light to our eyes, hearing to our ears, and understanding and love to our hearts. Render our souls joyous and happy through Thy glad tidings. O Lord! Point out to us the pathway of Thy kingdom and resuscitate all of us through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Bestow upon us life everlasting and confer upon us never-ending honor. Unify mankind and illumine the world of humanity. May we all follow Thy pathway, long for Thy good pleasure and seek the mysteries of Thy kingdom. O God! Unite us and connect our hearts with Thy indissoluble bond. Verily, Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Kind One and Thou art the Almighty.



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