

Visits with 'Abdu'l-Bahá

— These Children Are Pearls

For those who aspire
to lasting change,

His example guides
the way...



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Learn more about 'Abdu'l-Bahá:



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The Diary of Juliet Thompson, with a preface by Marzieh Gail. ©
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Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, collected and edited by
Annamarie Honnold. © George Ronald, Publisher, 1982

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.”¹

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.”

¹ *5 December 2013 message of the Universal House of Justice*



Dorothy Baker was instrumental in the building of the governing bodies of the Bahá'í Faith. She made every effort to mirror divine attributes and, in the end, gave her life in service.

Dorothy Baker had the honor of meeting 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a young girl. It was Dorothy's grandmother who took her to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá during His travels in the West. Arriving at a house that she had never visited before, Dorothy entered a crowded room. Many people were talking quietly and reverently while waiting for 'Abdu'l-Bahá to speak. The Master smiled as Dorothy and her grandmother came in and motioned to the young girl to sit near Him. Eager, but with some hesitation, she made her way across the room. Without looking up from the floor, she carefully walked past all the other guests to reach the footstool near His feet.

As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá began to speak, Dorothy sat with her eyes cast down, staring at her black shoes. She did not have the courage to look at Him. But soon her fear was gone. She felt attracted to the warmth of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s loving presence. His radiance was magnetic. Without even realizing that she had moved, Dorothy found herself turned in His direction, with her elbows on her knees and her chin in her hands, gazing up at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s luminous face.

Dorothy could never remember what ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spoke about that day. All she could remember was His kind face, His melodious voice, and the warmth of His presence. His loving eyes seemed to tell her of the spiritual worlds of God. In time, the love of God that had been ignited in her heart grew so strong that she decided to write to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. She begged Him that

she might be allowed to serve Him and the Cause of His Father, Bahá'u'lláh. In His answer to Dorothy, 'Abdu'l-Bahá praised her goal, assured her of God's bounties, and expressed the hope that she would succeed in her desire. And, indeed, Dorothy dedicated her entire life to serving God and humanity.

—*Teaching Children's Classes, Grade 1; Ruhi Institute Book 3,*
p. 128



One of the early Westerners to visit ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in the Holy Land was Juliet Thompson, a young artist from New York City. She told the following story:

Tea was brought to the room where we were gathered—in the customary little clear glasses—and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá served those present with His own hands.

Seating Himself again on the divan, He called the four children who were with us. Then, with a lavish tenderness, a super abundance of overflowing love, such as could only have come from the very Center and Source of Love, He drew all four to His knees, clasped them in His arms, which enclosed them all, gathered and pressed and crushed them to His Heart of hearts. Then He set them down on the floor and, rising, Himself brought their tea to them.

Words absolutely fail me when I try to express the divine picture I saw then. With the Christ-love radiating from Him with the most intense sweetness I have yet witnessed, He stooped to the floor Himself to serve the little children, the children of the East and the children of the West. He sat on the floor in their midst, He put sugar into their tea, stirred it and fed it to them, all the while smiling celestially, an infinite tenderness playing on the great Immortal Face like white light. I cannot express it!

—*The Diary of Juliet Thompson*, pp. 40-41



Leroy Ioas, a young boy in 1912, was blessed to meet the Master on His visit to Chicago. One day, on the way to the Plaza Hotel to hear ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, he decided to buy Him some flowers. Though he had but little money, he managed to find a large bouquet of flowers which he himself especially liked—white carnations! But in approaching the hotel, he had a change of heart: he would not give ‘Abdu’l-Bahá those flowers after all, he told his father. His dad was genuinely perplexed. Why, when the Master so loved flowers? Young Leroy gave his answer: “I come to the Master offering Him my heart, and I do not want Him to think I want any favours. He knows what’s in a person’s heart, and that is all I have to offer.”

With that for an answer Leroy’s father went upstairs and presented the flowers to ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. How the Master enjoyed them! Their fragrance delighted Him, and He buried His face in their midst, as He was inclined to do.

During the talk, Leroy sat quietly at ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s feet and listened to His wise and loving words. After the talk, the Master stood up and shook hands with each guest. To each He gave one white carnation. Finally, only a few remained. Leroy, standing behind ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, thought, “Gee, I wish He would turn around and give me one of those flowers!”

Then, suddenly, the Master turned around and fixed His gaze on Leroy. His face radiated love and His eyes were full of kindness. And did He hand him a white carnation? No. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá gave Leroy something even more precious. He was wearing a beautiful red rose on His coat. He pulled it off and presented it to the young boy. Leroy’s heart leaped with joy. The Master did know what was in his heart!

—*Vignettes from the Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, by Annamarie Honnold, pp. 98-99



While staying at a stately home in New York City, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá played host to some boys from the poorest neighborhoods in the city. He greeted each as they arrived, sometime with a handclasp, sometime an arm across a shoulder, but always with such smiles and laughter it almost seemed that He was a boy with them. Certainly, there was no suggestion of stiffness or awkwardness in their unaccustomed surroundings. Among the last to enter the room was a colored lad of about thirteen years. He was quite dark and, being the only boy of his race among them, he evidently feared that he might not be welcome. When ‘Abdu’l-Bahá saw him, His face lighted up with a heavenly smile. He raised His hand and exclaimed in a loud voice so that none could fail to hear; that here was a black rose.

The room fell into instant silence. The black face became illumined with a happiness and love hardly of this world. The other boys looked at him with new eyes. I venture to say that he had been called a black-many things, but never before a black rose.

—*Portals to Freedom*, by Howard Colby Ives, p. 65

*The hearts of all children are
of the utmost purity.*

—*The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, by 'Abdu'l-Bahá,
Talk given April 24, 1912



The Master loved children. It was observed that ‘many of His talks were given as He sat with His arm encircling one of them.’ To parents He would speak in the following vein: ‘Give this child a good education; make every effort that it may have the best you can afford, so that it may be enabled to enjoy the advantage of this glorious age. Do all you can to encourage spirituality in them.’

—*Vignettes from the Life of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, by Annamarie Honnold, p. 140



A Prayer by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

O Thou kind Lord! These lovely children are the handiwork of the fingers of Thy might and the wondrous signs of Thy greatness. O God! Protect these children, graciously assist them to be educated and enable them to render service to the world of humanity. O God! These children are pearls, cause them to be nurtured within the shell of Thy loving-kindness.

Thou art the Bountiful, the All-Loving.

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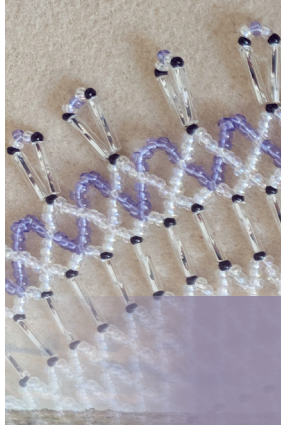
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