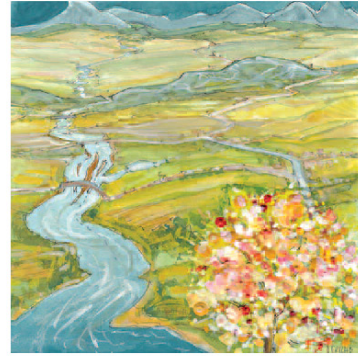


The following story is from the book

*The Central Figures*

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Two*



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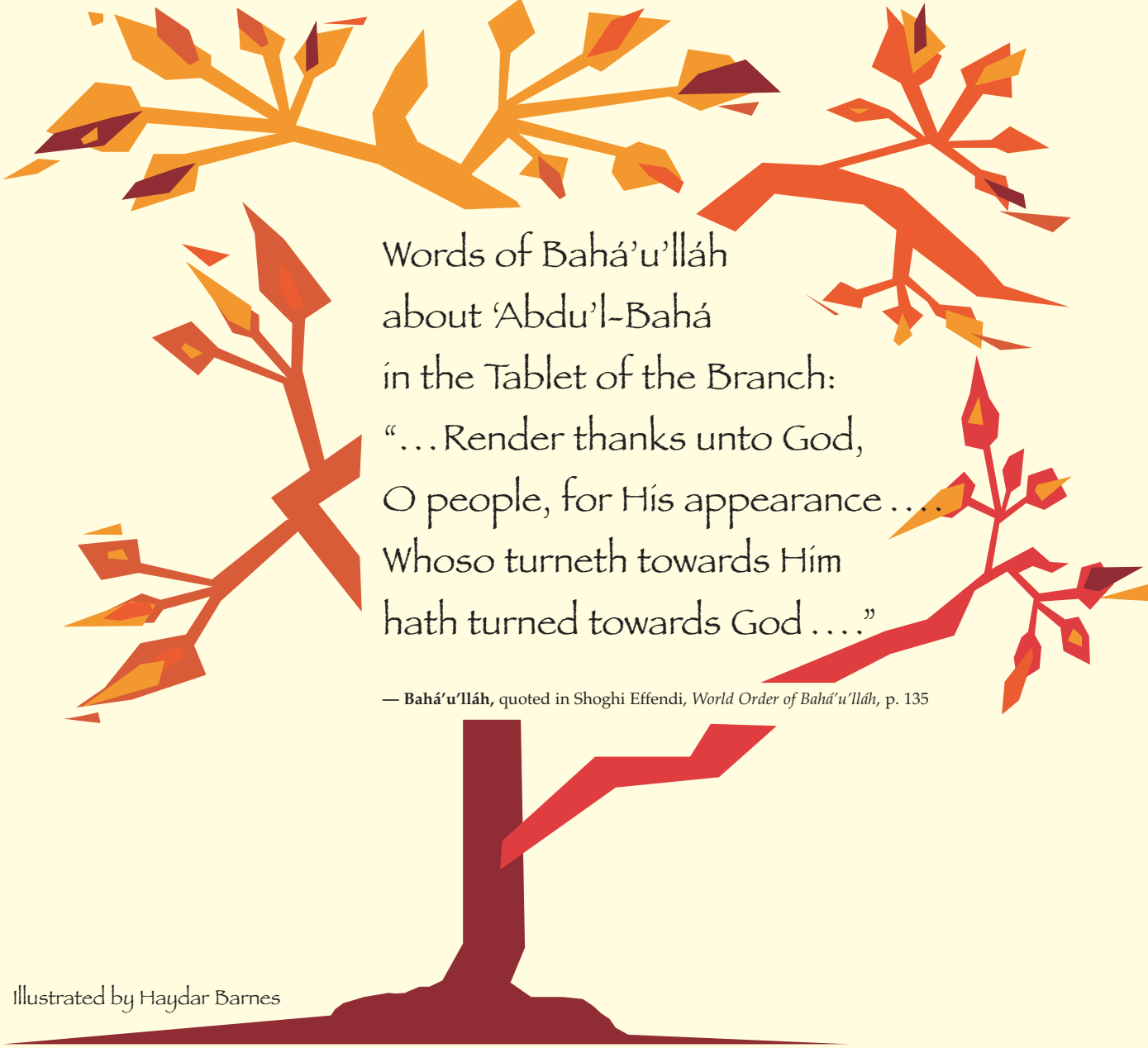
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Words of Bahá'u'lláh  
about 'Abdu'l-Bahá  
in the Tablet of the Branch:  
“...Render thanks unto God,  
O people, for His appearance . . . .  
Whoso turneth towards Him  
hath turned towards God . . . .”

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in Shoghi Effendi, *World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 135

Illustrated by Haydar Barnes



One day, behind the hot stone walls of the prison city of ‘Akká, Bahá’u’lláh said, “I have not gazed on verdure for nine years.” It had been nine years since He had rested His eyes on green and growing things. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew how much His Father longed for the countryside. He was determined to gain for Him His heart’s desire.

First, it seemed impossible to get permission for a prisoner to leave the city. However, Bahá’u’lláh had lived among the inhabitants of ‘Akká for nine years. He had already won them over with His love and good will. Even the mutaṣarrif, the governor, longed to see Bahá’u’lláh happy and comfortable. Eventually, he said that Bahá’u’lláh was free to pass beyond the prison walls whenever He wished. He could find a home in the countryside nearby.

# Waiting for the Master

Written by Jean Gould  
Photography by Pepper Oldziej



The best wishes of the people of 'Akká were in hand. 'Abdu'l-Bahá set to work immediately to find a suitable place. First, He was able to arrange for the Blessed Beauty to live at Mazra'ih, a lovely home surrounded by vegetable gardens and orange groves. But by 1879, two years later, that beautiful house was no longer big enough. Bahá'u'lláh's family was large, and there were many pilgrims. 'Abdu'l-Bahá set out to find a bigger home. He discovered Bahjí, the beautiful palace that Bahá'u'lláh called the Lofty Mansion.

At Bahjí, Bahá'u'lláh met with the believers and revealed His Writings. 'Abdu'l-Bahá continued to live in 'Akká. There He met with the many officials and countless other people. He made sure that no one interfered with His Father's Revelation. No one was allowed to disrupt His peace and comfort. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ever His Father's Shield. Bahá'u'lláh often said, "It is the Master who is able to endure all of these demands and still see to the comfort of the believers."

The Mansion of Mazra'ih





The Mansion of Bahjí

Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were often separated by the miles between 'Akká and Bahjí and Their many tasks. But nothing could interfere with the love between the Lord of the Age and His eldest Son. Mírzá Maḥmud had been with Bahá'u'lláh for many years. He knew about this love. He said, "Many a time I was in the presence of Bahá'u'lláh when the Master was also present. Because of His presence, Bahá'u'lláh would be filled with the utmost joy and gladness. One could see His blessed countenance beaming with delight . . . so lovingly that no words could describe it . . ."

One day Bahá'u'lláh made plans to visit the Garden of Junaynih on the plain north of 'Akká. All the pilgrims and the Bahá'ís living at Bahjí were invited to go along. Naturally, they rushed to accept the invitation. A picnic in the garden in the presence of the Blessed Beauty was the greatest of all delights.





At dawn, the pilgrims faced the room where Bahá'u'lláh waited. They began their prayers and devotions. At sunrise they gathered outside the gate of the Mansion. Within the hour, His steps could be heard on the stairs. At once He appeared, blessing them with the gift of His presence.

A gentle white donkey carried the Lord of the Age along the road to the garden, while His followers walked beside Him. Hāji Khávar was a tall man. Thus he won the privilege of holding the umbrella over the Blessed Beauty. This way he could protect Him from the savage desert sun.

Even the heat of the desert sun can be defeated under the trees in a garden planted for the love of God. Here the air was fresh. Birdsongs and the perfume of flowers rode the air currents. The music of flowing water could also be heard. Soon the lovely picnic was spread before the believers. Soon the Heavenly Words poured into their hearts.

But something was missing. Something more was needed to complete their perfect day. They watched and waited.

Suddenly the Blessed Beauty stopped His words. He turned towards the plain of 'Akká. "The Master," He said. "The Master is coming. Go and welcome Him. Hasten. Hasten to attend Him."

#### **The Mansion of Bahjí**

The pilgrims scrambled to obey. Sure enough, they saw Him walking, walking the road from 'Akká to His Father. 'Abdu'l-Bahá refused to ride into the presence of the King of Kings. Strongly and steadily He approached. He was tall and straight as an arrow. His shoulders were broad and powerful. In a moment He was upon them, greeting the pilgrims. He clasped their hands in His. He smiled warmly upon them. Always, always, He continued His forward movement along the path to His Beloved.

Once in His Father's presence, He bowed His beautiful head. His deep blue eyes blazed with a fierce love, a complete understanding, an unbounded joy.

"Now," said the Blessed Beauty. "Now this garden has become truly most delightful."★

**'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Master**

Photo of 'Abdu'l-Bahá from the Archives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

