

SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

JOHN BOSCH (1855–1946): "Full of Light"

John Bosch was a man of few words, but his warmth and kindness made people feel at ease. When he spoke of spiritual things, his blue eyes lit up with joy. In fact, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, leader of the Bahá'í Faith in the early 1900s, called John "Núrání," which means "full of light" in Persian.

John was born in 1855 in Switzerland. Sadly, his mother died when he was nine. He came to the U.S. in 1879, and his jobs included working on a railroad and farming. Then he studied winemaking in Europe. When he returned, he found great success in the California wine business. He also bought farmland, and he raised goats as a hobby.

Spiritual truth deeply interested John. In 1903, he began attending Bahá'í meetings. As he embraced the Bahá'í teachings, he learned that alcoholic drinks are prohibited for Bahá'ís. He wrote to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, asking for advice about his career in the wine business. 'Abdu'l-Bahá advised him to gradually change his focus, so John did, working with the properties he owned.



One of the Family

Though they had exchanged letters, John longed to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá in person. In 1912, during 'Abdu'l-Bahá's journey in North America, John traveled across the country to New York to see him. He brought questions, and though he forgot to ask them, in time 'Abdu'l-Bahá answered them all.

John was concerned that he couldn't speak eloquently about the Bahá'í Faith. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá told him, "With you it is not words or the movement of the lips; with you it is the heart that speaks." They had tea together, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "You are now one of the family. You may come and go as you please."*

John spent as much time as he could with 'Abdu'l-Bahá in New York, Washington, D.C., and Chicago. John said, "You always felt a nearness to Him even when He was far across the room." 'Abdu'l-

Bahá treated John with affection. During a car ride to one of his speaking engagements, 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid his head on John's shoulder and fell asleep. John stayed as quiet as a mouse to avoid waking him.



John Bosch and his wife, Louise (bottom left), gave their property as a gift to the Bahá'í community.

About two years later, John married Louise Stapfer. In 1921, they traveled to Haifa, Israel, after 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to John, "I am longing to see you." John was overjoyed to see him again. But two weeks into their visit, 'Abdu'l-Bahá passed away. John and Louise stayed in Haifa to mourn with the family for 40 days.

Enduring Contribution

John and Louise loved to serve the Faith together. They offered their property in Geyserville, California, as a Bahá'í school. It opened in 1927, and their joyful hospitality helped the school grow and flourish.

John passed away on July 22, 1946. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson and successor, Shoghi Effendi, praised him as "dearly-beloved, great-hearted, high-minded . . ."

The Geyserville school closed after about 45 years, and a new one, Bosch Bahá'í School, opened near Santa Cruz. Nestled in a redwood forest, it continues to share the Bahá'í message of peace and unity.