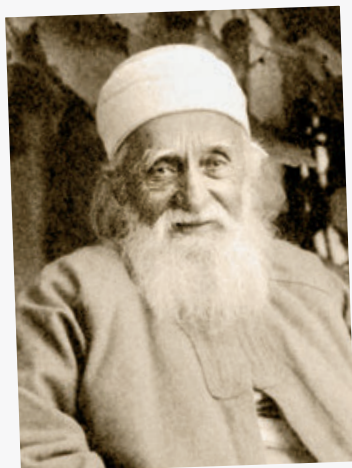


Knighting of Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás



A grand car was sent to carry 'Abdu'l-Bahá to his knighting ceremony, but he chose to travel in a simple wagon.

On a hot summer day in 1868, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, age 24, arrived in the filthy prison-city of 'Akká, Israel. He was with his father, Bahá'u'lláh, who had been exiled by government officials because of His Bahá'í teachings of peace. Bahá'u'lláh had done nothing wrong, yet He and His family were forced to live as prisoners. The citizens of 'Akká had been told that the Bahá'ís were criminals, and they treated them with hostility.

As time passed, however, the people grew to respect Bahá'ís. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who led the Bahá'í Faith after his father's passing in 1892, was well known for his generosity. He gave money, food, and clothing to those in need. If someone was sick, he called a doctor and paid the bill.

After about 40 years of imprisonment, 'Abdu'l-Bahá was finally freed. From 1910–1913, he traveled to Egypt, Europe, and North America, speaking about the Bahá'í Faith. In the U.S., he said, "Service to humanity is service to God." He also noted, "The most momentous question of this day is international peace . . ."

In 1914, soon after he returned to Israel, World War I began. The Turkish government ruled Israel and fought against Britain and other countries. The people of 'Akká and nearby Haifa feared for

their lives. Would their homes be bombed? Would they be able to get enough food and fresh water? Meanwhile, the Turkish commander threatened to kill 'Abdu'l-Bahá and destroy Bahá'u'lláh's tomb.

In spite of danger, 'Abdu'l-Bahá stayed calm. He helped families move to the safety of the countryside. He encouraged farmers to grow extra grain on land he owned. Some of the harvest was hidden in ancient Roman storage pits so the Turkish army wouldn't seize it. The grain helped feed the hungry people of 'Akká and Haifa when warships prevented food from reaching them.

Just before the end of the war in 1918, British troops forced the Turkish army out of Haifa. British General Allenby soon wrote to London, "Notify the world that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is safe." 'Abdu'l-Bahá helped feed the troops, along with the surviving citizens.

The British government was impressed with 'Abdu'l-Bahá's heroic actions during the war. On April 27, 1920, leaders gathered in Haifa to honor him. They sent a magnificent car for 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but he chose to ride in a simple wagon to the ceremony. There, at age 75, so near the city whose citizens had once rejected him, he was named Sir 'Abdu'l-Bahá 'Abbás, Knight of the British Empire.