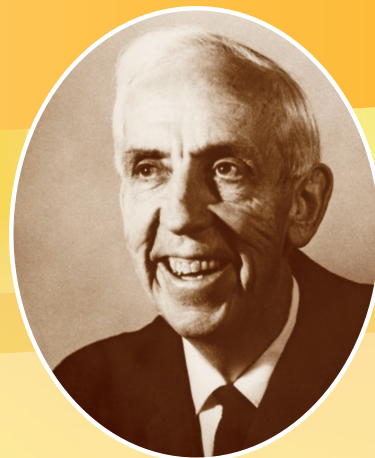


# SHINING LAMP

A Bahá'í who served humanity with radiance

**Curtis Kelsey** (1894–1970)



**T**hrough the darkness, Curtis Kelsey watched a spotlight shine from the slopes of Mount Carmel in Haifa, Israel. The Shrine of the Báb lit up the mountain. A second beam twinkled across the bay, lighting the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí. Curtis had traveled all the way from the U.S. to bring light to these holiest places on Earth for Bahá'ís, and his huge task was now complete.

## Independent Spirit

Born in Utah, U.S., in 1894, Curtis loved exploring nature and working with his hands. As a young man, he got a job laying pipelines for his father's company. But he soon developed typhoid fever, which caused intense headaches, and he had to stop working.

One evening, Curtis cried out in terrible pain. To his astonishment, the room filled with majestic music. Unable to find its source, he was overcome with wonder. Then the music faded. Amazingly, his headache disappeared. His mother was a Bahá'í, and she tried to help him understand the mysterious incident. The experience transformed him, and he embraced the Bahá'í Faith.

## Illumined Service

From then on, Curtis had a new purpose. He studied the Bahá'í teachings and shared them with others. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the head of the Faith, invited him to serve in Haifa, Curtis jumped at the opportunity. He arrived in September 1921 and was thrilled to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Curtis said, "There are

no words to describe the majesty of this personage that came through the door . . ."

Curtis was humbled to be trusted with installing lights at the holy shrines. He worked with a Persian electrician named Husayn-i-Kahrubá'í. They spoke different languages, but they happily used gestures to communicate.

Helping 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a highlight in Curtis's life. One day, Curtis asked him about the mysterious music that cured him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "You heard music of the Kingdom and it caused your spiritual awakening."\*

All too soon, heartbreak struck. At 1:00 a.m. on November 28, 1921, Curtis woke to pounding on his door. 'Abdu'l-Bahá had passed away. He rushed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá's room to grieve with the family. Later, he had the honor of taking photos at 'Abdu'l-Bahá's funeral, which ten thousand people attended.

Curtis lovingly continued his assignment and finished in April 1922. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's grandson, Shoghi Effendi, thanked Curtis for his wonderful service to the Faith.

For the rest of his life, Curtis continued to serve and lift people's spirits. He returned to his father's business and eventually became the head of the company. But his highest priority was sharing the Bahá'í Faith. He said, "Each day as you live grows happier and more enjoyable, and you look forward to . . . the glorious things that are ahead for all of us and for humanity."

Curtis passed away on February 20, 1970. Until the end of his life, he remembered the love he felt from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and he tried to share that love with others.