

Abdu'l-Bahá and the unjust governor of 'Akká

During the days the Master lived in 'Akká, there was a governor who, time and time again, tried to harm the Bahá'ís. On one occasion he came up with a plan to destroy their means of livelihood: he ordered his guards to close down the shops of all the Bahá'ís and to bring him the keys. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá learned of the governor's plan and advised the friends not to open their shops the next day. He told them to wait and see what God would ordain.

Imagine the governor's surprise when he heard that his guards could not bring him the keys because the shops had not been opened. But before he could think of what to do next, something unexpected happened. A telegram arrived from his superiors dismissing him from his post as governor of the city. And so the shops of the Bahá'ís were saved.

The ex-governor was ordered to leave 'Akká and go to another city called Damascus. He did not know what to do. He had to leave quickly and alone. What would happen to his family? Who would help someone who had lost the favor of the government? The Master heard the news and went to see him. He showered the unhappy man with great kindness, as if he had never been an enemy of the Faith. Not once did He mention his past wrongdoings. Instead, He offered to help him in whatever way possible. The ex-governor was worried about leaving his wife and children behind. 'Abdu'l-Bahá assured him that He would take care of the matter. Later He arranged for a comfortable trip, provided someone reliable to accompany the wife and children, paid for all the expenses, and sent the family on its way to Damascus.

When the ex-governor was reunited with his family, he rejoiced. With a heart filled with gratitude, he turned to the man who had traveled with his family and asked him about the cost of the journey. The man explained that it had been paid by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Then the ex-governor offered him a present for his kindness and diligence during the journey. But he would not accept the present; he said that he was merely obeying 'Abdu'l-Bahá and did not wish to receive anything for his services. The ex-governor then asked the man to stay the night as a guest in his home. He said, however, that he was eager to follow the instructions of the Master, Who had told him to return to 'Akká without delay. The ex-governor asked the man to wait at least long enough for him to write a letter to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This he accepted and upon his return to 'Akká delivered the letter to the Master. The letter read: "O 'Abdu'l-Bahá, I pray you pardon me. I did not understand. I did not know you. I have wrought you great evil. You have rewarded me with great good."