

Grade 1 Lesson 19

Trustworthiness

Years ago, in the early days of the Faith, there were only a small number of Bahá'ís, spread out over several countries. They faced many challenges, and often wrote to Bahá'u'lláh, and later to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the Holy Land, conveying news of the progress of the Faith and posing various questions.

Their letters travelled over long distances before reaching their destination, and Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá would answer each one with great love and care. The beautiful verses that flowed from Their pens were as precious gifts to the believers that received them. Their words of encouragement strengthened those early Bahá'ís and cheered their hearts. And so it was crucial that this stream of communication not be disrupted.

During one of the darkest periods in the history of the Faith, its enemies rose up against 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Jealous of His growing influence, they hoped to bring about His exile, or worse still, His execution.

Spies were planted all around His house, and He was kept under constant watch. How pleased His enemies would have been if they could have stopped the flow of correspondence and broken the link between 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the devoted friends; how much more if they could have stolen some document that could be used to mislead the authorities!

'Abdu'l-Bahá, however, was not deterred. He could often be seen late into the night, writing by the light of His lamp; for He had ensured a secure means for the receipt and dispatch of mail, a task that could only be given to the most trusted of believers.

There lived in the area a man named Siyyid Muḥammad-Taqi Manshádi. He had come from Persia when he was fairly young and had established a small business in Haifa. There, he welcomed to his home the many friends who visited the Holy Land.

He helped them in making travel arrangements and became known for his unwavering reliability. So dependable was he that his home had become a center through which passed nearly all of the mail for the Bahá'ís in the Holy Land and the responses sent abroad. Everyone knew that he could be trusted to make sure each piece of mail was delivered promptly and securely.

Of course the enemies of the Faith knew this as well, and so Siyyid Muḥammad-Taqi Manshádi was in great danger. 'Abdu'l-Bahá could see that they would use every means possible to harm the Cause. They would no doubt try to intercept the mail, and Muḥammad-Taqi would soon become the target of their schemings.

So what do you think 'Abdu'l-Bahá did? Such confidence did He have in Muḥammad-Taqi that He did not want to let go of his valuable services. So He sent him to safety in nearby Port Said in Egypt and arranged for others, that His enemies would not suspect, to carry mail back and forth to him. And there, in Port Said, Muḥammad-Taqi continued to dispatch and receive mail for Bahá'ís in distant lands as he had always done, never faltering in the trust 'Abdu'l-Bahá had placed in him. So it was that even in the darkest of times, the light of guidance that shone forth from the Holy Land continued to reach the friends in the most remote places.