

The Greatest Holy Leaf (Bahiyiyh Khanum, daughter of Baha'u'llah)

Hiru no Hoshi

No. 250

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A bouquet of roses with green leaves and a brown bud. The roses are in various stages of bloom, with some showing pink and white petals. The background is white.

*O Leaf of
Paradise!*

*Loose your
tongue
at all times
in gratitude
for the*

*blessings of
the
Beloved of the
Worlds..."*

Bahiyyih Khanum

Mona came home from school one afternoon, while Mother was folding clothes.

“Mom, there was a homeless man sitting on the sidewalk as I was walking home from school just now. I felt so bad for him, but I didn’t know how to help, so I went over to a drink machine and bought the healthiest looking drink I could find. As I walk a little past him, I paused and put the unopened drink on the ground, and pretended to look for something in my bag, and then I walked off as if I had forgotten it. I wish I could have done more, but I didn’t want him to feel bad that a young girl had to help him...what do you think mom?”

“Well, I think you are demonstrating how you are a spiritual descendant of Bahiyyih Khanum.”

“Descendant, does that mean she is a relative of ours?” asked Asma who had walked by just in time to hear the conversation.

“Who is Bahiyyih Khanum?” asked Shahla.

“That name sounds familiar. She must be an aunt or something.” Put in Riaz.

“I remember” put in Mona. “Bahiyyih Khanum is the daughter of Baha’u’llah.”

“Wow, we are related to Baha’u’llah!!” Riaz shouted, jumping up and down.

Mother started laughing. “Easy, easy, guys! Sorry for the confusion. I said ‘spiritual descendant’. That means because of her kindness and generosity, Mona was acting like Bahiyyih Khanum.

“Baha’u’llah had a daughter?” Shahla asked, “That means she was Abdul-Baha’s sister right, mom?”

“Yes, very good Shahla! Bahiyyih was Abdul-Baha’s little sister.” explained Mother.

“Bahiyyih’s name means ‘the one who is filled with glory’. Bahiyyih lived with her Parents, her big brother Abdul-Baha, and her little brother Mihdi in Tehran, Persia (Iran), in a big house filled with many beautiful

things. But when she was still a little girl, only 6 years old, many of the Bab’is (followers of the Bab) were arrested and put to death. Baha’u’llah was



also arrested and put into a terrible prison, the Shiyah-Chal, by the Persian Government. Navvab, Baha'u'llah's wife took the three children and hid in the city, because people were coming into their beautiful house and breaking or stealing everything, and she was afraid they would hurt the children."

"Wow, that was mean of them," said Shahla, "why were they doing that?"

"Well, some bad people were telling lies and saying that the Bab`is had all tried to kill the king! So the people were attacking all the Bab`is and their families."

"Babies?" asked Anisa, "what babies?"

With that everyone started laughing at poor Anisa.

"Not babies, Anisa, Bab`is, the people that followed The Bab." laughed Riaz.

"So," continued Mother, "Baha'u'llah was in that terrible dark stinky prison for months and months, with a heavy chain over His shoulders. When He was finally released He could barely walk, but the whole Family, with many of the Babis, were forced to leave Persia in the middle of winter over snow covered mountains. The women and children rode in howdahs, little tents on top of the backs of mules. It was a cold and miserable trip because no one had warm enough clothes."



"Ahh, poor things." sighed Shahla, and Mona and Anisa nodded in agreement.

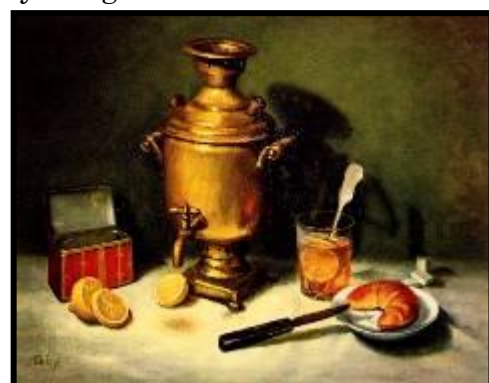
"They traveled almost three months until they arrived in Baghdad, where they could settle down and live peacefully for a few years."

"Bahiyiyh and Abdul-Baha helped their Mother with everything. Even though Bahiyiyh was only seven years old she would spend hours pulling up water from the well, and carrying it to the house."

"Do you guys know what a samovar is?" asked Mother.

"It's a fancy tea pot right, mom?" answered Mona.

Mother smiled, "Something like that. It is a tall heavy pot that brews tea. One day a lady came to visit with Baha'u'llah's family. Bahiyiyh carried the heavy Samovar upstairs to where the guest was, and when the water was boiled she made the tea and served it to the lady in tiny crystal glasses. Later after the lady had left Baha'u'llah smiled at His little daughter and told her the lady had become a Baha'i because of her service at the samovar!"



“Bahiyiyh always worked so hard to help her family. Especially during the two years that Baha’u’llah went away into the mountains.

During that time Bahiyiyh became friends with a little Arab girl she called Habibati, which means ‘my dear one’. In those days girls were not taught to read and write, only boys. But of course Baha’u’llah had made sure His daughter was well educated. So Bahiyiyh taught little Habibati to read and write. Bahiyiyh never forgot her little friend all through her difficult life.”

“Oh, yeah, Baha’u’llah and His family were sent to the Prison city of Akka, weren’t they. That must be what made her life difficult.” said Asma.

“Sadly, yes”, continued Mother. “Bahiyiyh had become a beautiful young woman and now everyone referred to her as Bahiyiyh Khanum, khanum means ‘lady’.

Baha’u’llah’s family had always helped everyone in the city, whether they were rich or poor, Arab, Persian, Jew or Christian. But the cruel rulers were

afraid the people liked Baha’u’llah too much, and would stop listening to them, so they sent Baha’u’llah and His Family far away from Baghdad to the Prison City of Akka, in Palestine, which is now Israel.

Everyone in Baghdad was so sorry to see this Holy Family leave. Little Habibati was very sad to say good-by to her good friend Bahiyiyh Khanum.

“Wow, to have to go to prison when you were just a young girl must have been terrible!” said Mona, and the other children nodded in agreement.

“Abdul-Baha was a young man too then, right,” said Riaz, “The Prison was not just hard for the girls!”

“It was terrible for all the Friends, who had done nothing but try and bring peace and happiness to everyone around them.” continued Mother. “They had to go by a small boat over the terrible, rough, Mediterranean Sea. Bahiyiyh Khanum got very sick from thirst and hunger.



When they finally arrived at the prison city, they could see angry, shouting people waiting for them. The people had been told that the Bahai`s were evil people, and they didn`t want them to land there. They hated the Bahai`s already, and they had never met them.

When the Friends entered the terrible smelly prison, it was so awful that Bahiyiyh Khanum fainted and had to be carried inside. They tried to revive her with some water, but it was such black smelly water that she fainted again.”

“Wow, that`s terrible, why did such awful things have to happen to her?” asked Mona.

Mother smiled and went on to explain, “Years later, when Bahiyiyh Khanum was talking about this time to some visitors, she told them that even with all those hardships, they were all very happy. They used to pray and sing songs of joy, because they were all so glad that they had not been separated from Baha`u`llah. Abdul-Baha used to tell the Friends not to sing so loudly and happily as it would make the guards angry! So that means that it is not our circumstances that make us happy or sad, but how we feel inside.”

“I don`t know if I could be happy in such a terrible place!” said Riaz.

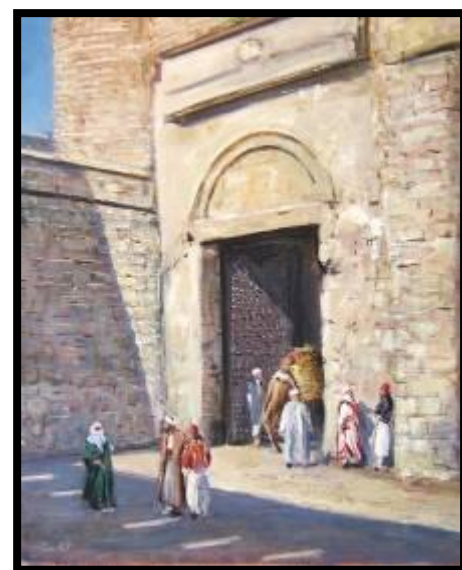
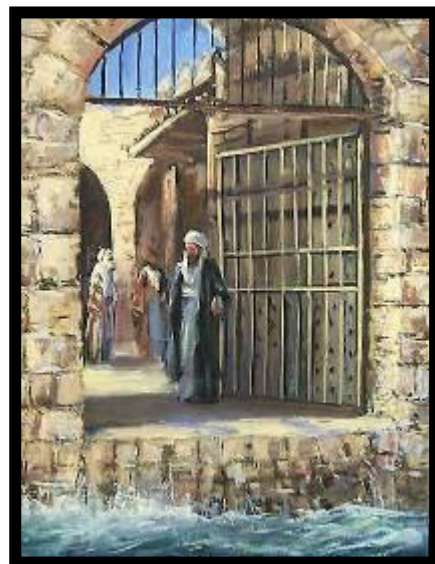
“If we trust in God, and remember that God will make everything all right...we can be patient and happy. I think.” said Asma wisely.

“One very sad thing did happen to them while they were in the prison. Bahiyiyh Khanum`s little brother, Mihdi was up on the roof of the prison one day, saying prayers, and he slipped and fell through the open skylight, and a crate below pierced his ribs, he was so badly hurt that he died the next day.”

“Ahhhh...” said all of the children.

“Baha`u`llah told everyone that Mihdi`s spirit was now free of the pains and sorrows of this world, and that because Midhi was so pure he would achieve great things, even after his death. Because of Midi`s sacrifice the gates of the prison would be open.”

“Wow! And did that happen?” asked Shahla.



“Well, just a few months after Mirza Mihdi (Mirza it is like ‘Mr.’ or ‘Sir’ or in Japanese ‘san’) died, Baha’u’llah’s family was allowed to move to a house inside the Prison City, to the House of Abud. They were still prisoners, and could not leave the city, but it was so much nicer than the prison cell.”

“Yahhhh!” shouted all the children.

“Bahiyiyh Khanum stayed very busy there, because every day the women and children of Akka would come and see her, and ask her advice and help. They all loved her very much.

Everyone kept expecting her to get married and start her own family, but she told Baha’u’llah she didn’t want to marry, that she wanted to spend her whole life serving everyone, and that is just what she did.



She always worked very hard to make sure everyone had something to eat. During the war she even cooked food for hundreds of people because there was nowhere else they could get food.

Bahiyiyh Khanum not only cared for all of the people in Akka, but also for the people from faraway lands (pilgrims) that would come to see Baha’u’llah and Abdul-Baha. People from all around the world grew to love her. Baha’u’llah showed us how special she really was...A male member of Baha’u’llah’s family was called a ‘branch’ and a female was called a ‘leaf’, but because of her great services Baha’u’llah gave her the title, “The Greatest Holy Leaf”.

“There is one more great service Bahiyiyh Khanum performed during her life. She kept a very great secret.”

“WHAT SECRET!” the children all wanted to know.

“Bahiyiyh Khanum had been a little girl when the Bab was martyred. The enemies of the Bab did not want His body to be buried where people could find it. So they threw His body into a ditch. But the Friends secretly took it away, placed it in a casket, and for many years it was hidden. Eventually these sacred remains were secretly transported to Akka and were hidden in the last place the enemies of the Bab would look for it.”

“Bahiyih Khanum would often sit in her room for hours quietly praying looking towards one certain spot, and no one guessed that she had such a great secret hidden in her room.

“I know, I know!” shouted Shahla, “The Bab’s casket was hidden there! Right, Mom?”

“Really?” said Riaz, “that sounds kind of creepy having a coffin in her room, like in a ghost story.”

“Riaz!” shouted Mona! “That’s disrespectful!”

“So her room was like a Shrine, a holy place.” Put in Asma, “If you think of it that way it doesn’t sound creepy.”

Riaz looked skeptical.

Mother laughed, “Riaz when you are big you can go to Israel, and see Bahiyih Khanum’s room, and the Shrine of the Bab, and see if it feels ‘creepy’”

“Finally,” continued Mother, “when Abdul-Baha and Bahiyih Khanum were quite old....it was safe enough to put the blessed remains of the Bab into their final resting place in the Shrine that Abdul-Baha had built on Mount Carmel. Today, thousands and thousands of people come each year to pray at this Shrine....and it couldn’t have happened without Bahiyih Khanum’s faithfulness.

“First Baha’u’llah, and then many years later, Abdul-Baha passed on to the next world. And still Bahiyih Khanum continued to care for everyone. She was the one who helped Shoghi Effendi so much after Abul-Baha died.”

“Sho....gi....efin.....di??” said Anisa, mispronouncing the name badly. “Who is that?” she asked.

Mother raised her eyebrows and looked around the room to see who could answer.

“The Guardian, the one who looked after the Bahai’s after Abdul-Baha died!” spoke up Mona.

“He was Abdul-Baha’s grandson.” Added Asma.

“Bahiyih Khanum helped Shoghi Effendi take care of the Friends all over the world,” continued Mother. “She was always busy sending them letters of encouragement, and helping the Guardian any way she could.



All of her life she continued to take care of everyone, the people of the neighborhood, as well as people from distant lands that would come to visit the Holy Land.



When she died a monument was made for her in the Baha'i gardens. And today people from all over the world come to say prayers at her shrine."

"So", ended Mother, "that is why, because of her generosity and kindness I referred to Mona as Bahiyyih Khanum's spiritual descendant. I meant she was acting like Bahiyyih Khanum taught us to act."

"That was a really long story, for a simple statement!" said Riaz.

"RIAZ!" shouted the other four children. "We like the story, be quiet!" they all agreed!

"Now, now, now, no fighting guys. It was a long story, and I know all of you have homework to do, so let's get busy shall we." said Mother.

"Ahhh, on second thought," smiled Riaz sheepishly, "how about another story mom!" Riaz hated homework.

"Why then should we sorrow over earthly hindrances when we have done what we possible could, and when we are sure that this, our little service, will certainly be acceptable in His Sight?" Bahiyyih Khanum

*The beautiful paintings of Akka' and Bahiyyih Khanum were done by Steven Pashal, who generously agreed to let us use them.

*Please read more beautiful stories of Bahiyyih Khanum in *Stories of the Greatest Holy Leaf by Jacqueline Mehrabi



Quiz

1. How did Mona help the homeless man?

2. Who is Bahiyyih Khanum's father?

3. Where was Bahiyyih Khanum born?

4. Why did Bahiyyih Khanum's family have to leave Persia?

5. Where were they sent?

6. After living in Baghdad for some years, where were they sent to?

7. What was Akka like, was it a nice place?

8. Who was Mirza Mihdi?

9. What great secret did Bahiyyih Khanum keep hidden in her room?

How did you do? Did you get them all right?



The answers are on the Parents' Page.

TRUTHFULNESS

Now it is time for us to take a special journey to help us remember what we have learned so far. First, let's prepare for our journey. Close your eyes and be still. Take a deep breath, hold it, and blow it out. Do it one more time. Squeeze your arms, and let them loose. Squeeze your legs, then let them loose.

You are playing outside when your mother tells you to come and meet a special visitor. You go to the door and find a magical friend. This friend talks directly to your heart. It is a special friend, who reminds you that everyone is special. This friend will be with you on your shoulder all day. Everywhere you go, the friend will remind you not to laugh when someone falls down. The friend reminds you to clap when someone does a good job, and to smile at people. The special friend also lets you know when you are doing well, encouraging you as you go. But most of all your friend reminds you to be truthful.

You see someone who looks very different from you. You smile and say hello. Next, you see that a child is crying, you reach out your hand to help. This child is very polite, and now you have made a new friend. This makes you so happy.

You go home. And mother is asking you who ate the last cookie. She sounds upset, but your special friend reminds you about being honest. You tell your mother that it was you. Your mother smiles and says, "thank you for being truthful." You decide the next time you want a cookie, you will ask. Your special friend smiles at you, so very proud.

When you open your eyes, the special friend will become invisible, but you will still be able to feel guided every day.

さあ、これからすてきな旅に出ましょう。先に準備をしましょう。目を閉じて。気を静めて。息をすって、はいて。もう一度すって、はいて。腕をぎゅっとして、力をぬいて。足をぎゅっとして、力をぬいて。

あなたは外で遊んでいます。そこであなたの母はあなたに新しい特別な友達を紹介しました。この特別な友達は魔法の友達で、あなたの心にちょくせつ話しますので、この友達はみんなの特別さを教えてくれます。この友達はあなたのかたに乗り一緒にどこでも行きます。こけたひとをバカにしない事とか、がんばる人を応援する事などを教えてくれます。そしてもちろん、あなたに対してもこの特別な友達はきちんとほめてくれます。特にあなたが正直な気持ちで他の人を扱う時。

自分と見かけが全く違う人を見てあなたは素直に微笑みあいさつをします。泣いて困っている子を見てあなたは手を差し伸べます。その子はとても礼儀正しい子であなたたちはすぐに友達になりました。



あなたはとても嬉しい気持ちになって家に帰ります。でもお母さんは少しおこっているみたい。最後のクッキーを誰が食べたのですか?と聞かれドキッとします。でもあなたの特別な友達があなたに正直に答えるようにと言います。自分が食べたことをきちんとお母さんに言います。そしてお母さんは正直に答えてくれてありがとう、と微笑んでくれました。あなたは思います、今度からはクッキーを勝手に取らず、先に聞いてから食べよう。自分は

正直な方がいいと感じるのです。特別な友達もとても喜んでいるみたい。

あなたが目を開けると、この魔法の友達は透明になります。でも心の中でいつも導いてくれるとやくそくをしてくれます。

用意ができたなら目をあけてください。

～正直～

CD Case Stained Glass

Materials:

Plastic CD cover (front cover only)

Printed picture of flower, etc.

Black nail polish (gold or silver), for the outline

Gold nail polish (or any color), for the frame

Nail polish remover, in case of mistakes

Colored markers, for coloring

Quotation, nicely printed to size

Tape

Paper Clip

Method:

Separate front and back of CD cover and remove paper so you have an empty piece of plastic.

Tape your picture to the back of the CD cover.

Paint the outline of the picture with the black nail polish on the front of the frame (practice on blank paper first).

When dry turn over and remove picture paper.

Color in the outline from the back of the CD using the colored markers.

Paint the frame (in the front) with the colored nail polish.

Cut the Quotation to fit the inside of the back of the CD.

Tape it in.

Tape the paper clip to the back of the CD case, so it can be hung up.

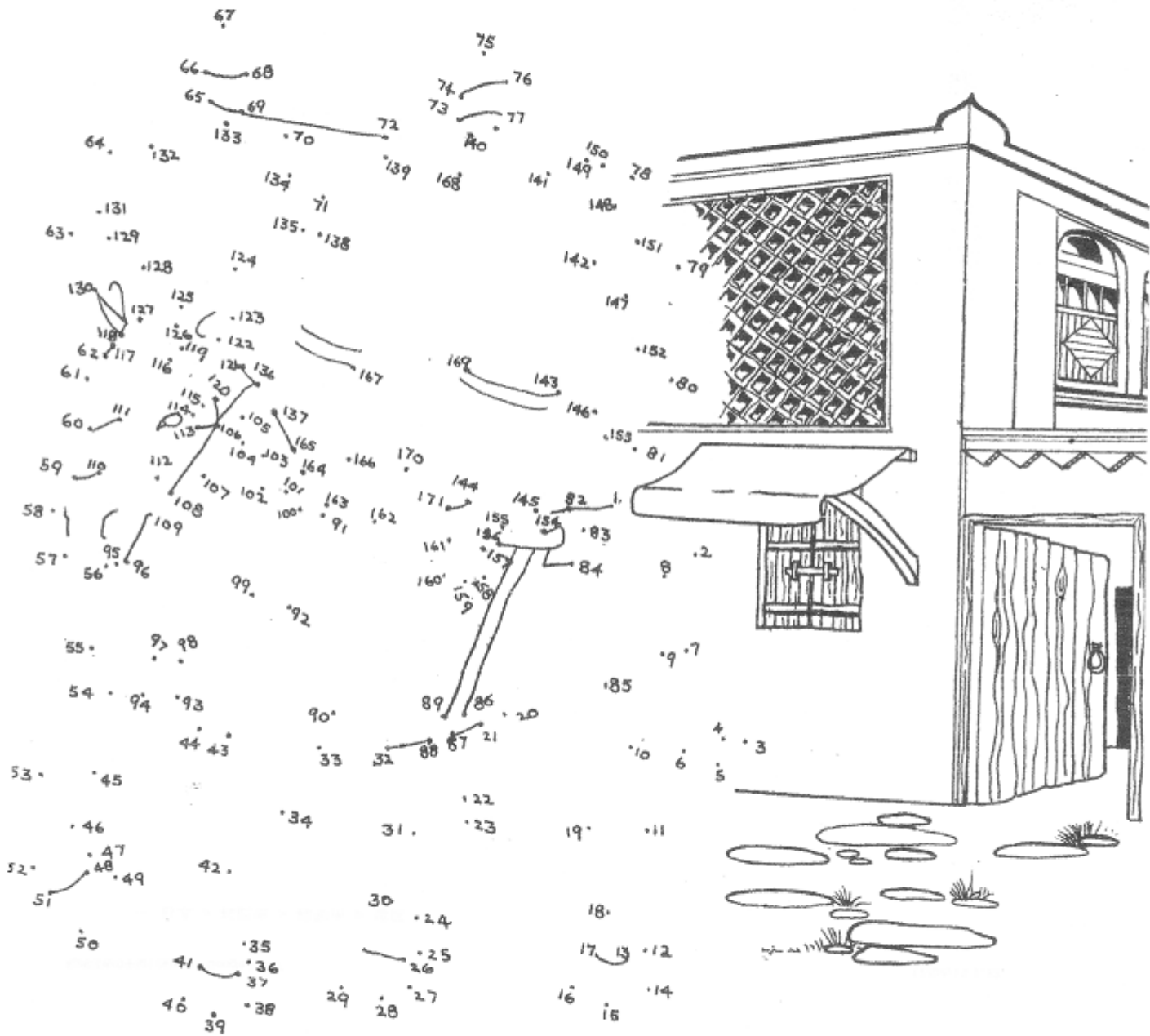


Dot to Dot

Start at 1 (by the window shade) go to 171...

Follow the dots... and what do you see?

What Bahiyyih Khanum traveled on?



Spring School



Parents Page

The theme of this issue is Service. Let us meditate on these few verses and strive to teach our children that our purpose on earth is to know and worship God, and to serve mankind. Every decision we make in our lives should be based on 'Will this help or hinder my path of service?'

"That one indeed is a man who, today, dedicateth himself to the service of the entire human race." Baha'u'llah (Tablets of Baha'u'llah)

"Faith is the magnet which draws the confirmations of the Merciful One. Service is the magnet which attracts the heavenly strength. I hope thou wilt attain both."

-Abdu'l-Bahá (Tablets of Abdul-Baha)

"This wronged servant has spent His days and nights.....urging the peoples to service." Abdul-Baha (Will and Testament of Abdul-Baha)

"There is no greater result than bonds of service in the Divine kingdom and attainment to the good-pleasure of the Lord. Therefore I desire that your hearts may be directed to the kingdom of God, that your intentions may be pure and sincere, your purposes turned towards altruistic accomplishment unmindful of your own welfare; nay, rather may all your intentions centre in the welfare of humanity, and may you seek to sacrifice yourselves in the pathway of devotion to mankind." Abdul-Baha (Divine Art of Living)

"Service is prayer." Abdul-Baha (Paris Talks)

And finally, Bahiyyih Khanun's humble little thought.

"Why then should we sorrow over earthly hindrances when we have done what we possible could, and when we are sure that this, our little service, will certainly be acceptable in His Sight?"

Bahiyyih Khanum



Answers to the Quiz

1)She bought him a healthy drink and left it for him. 2)Baha'u'llah. 3)Persia 4)The Babis were persecuted and the Holy Family was exiled. 5) Baghdad 6)Akka 7) Akka was a terrible prison. 8) Bahiyyih's younger brother who died in Akka. 9) The casket of the Bab.



If you have stories of your children learning a virtue or anything connected to the Faith, please send them to us, so we can have stories of “A little boy in Yamaguchi” or “A little girl in Akita”. You can either write the story yourself or send the details and we will write the story. Either English or Japanese is fine. We also are waiting for pictures of Children’s Classes from your community; or drawings from your children. Please send all stories and pictures to hirunohoshi@gmail.com or vb7mb7@bma.biglobe.ne.jp

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