

## BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS

### 9. 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ – THE PERFECT EXAMPLE

(Adapted from “The Eternal Covenant” by Lowell Johnson)

Tell the children how happy you are to see them. Have them sit comfortably and then ask one or two children to say an opening prayer.

Today we are going to remember that 'Abdu'l-Bahá' is our perfect Example. One of the names given to him was the Exemplar, which means example.

Sing together “Look at me, be like me, be as I am. 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá”

Bahá'u'lláh was a Prophet from God. He was very, very special. He brought us the laws and teachings that tell us how God wants us to live. He wrote many Tablets and prayers, but they are not always very easy to understand. His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá who spent many years of his life with Bahá'u'lláh lived the Bahá'í life and helped to explain Bahá'u'lláh's teachings. That is why he was called Exemplar.

When Bahá'u'lláh passed away He left His Faith in the hands of His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He was named the Centre of His Covenant, the promise between God and humanity. Everyone was told to turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and to obey him. If there were things in Bahá'u'lláh's teachings that the people could not understand, they were told to ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá to explain them.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was born on the very night that the Báb Declared His mission on 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1844. When he was just 8 years old his Father, Bahá'u'lláh, was thrown into the terrible prison of Tehran called the Black Pit and it was indeed a terrible and loathsome place. One day a servant brought 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the prison to see his Father. He was so shocked that the memory of it stayed with him for ever.

When he was still a child in the city of Baghdad, he recognised that Bahá'u'lláh was the Promised One from God, and for the rest of his life he served his Father. That is why he was also given another name, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, which means servant of Bahá (Bahá'u'lláh).

He accompanied Bahá'u'lláh on His long journeys, from prison to prison. From Tehran to Baghdad, from Baghdad to Istanbul, from Istanbul to Adrianople, and finally from Adrianople to 'Akká, in the Holy Land. He was imprisoned with Bahá'u'lláh, and tried to make his Father's life a little bit easier. When Bahá'u'lláh passed away, 'Abdu'l-Bahá still remained a prisoner of the Turkish government for another 16 years.

During this long imprisonment he met the people who came to visit him in prison and advised them on how to live a good life, and helped them to solve their difficulties. His fame spread and later Bahá'ís from as far as North America came to visit him.

## **BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS**

'Abdu'l-Bahá worked tirelessly for the progress of the Bahá'í Faith. He wrote thousands of letters, prayers and poems in Persian, Arabic and Turkish. Many of these have been translated into English so we can still be guided by his wise words. He explained his Father's laws and principles and explained how they could be followed in everyday life. He visited many big cities in Europe and North America where he spoke to people of every race. His talks were written down so these too give us guidance.

He visited the poor and helped them in many ways. People came to him with their troubles and he advised them.

He encouraged the Bahá'ís to build the first Temple which was in the then Russian city of Ishqabad, near the Iranian border. He laid the foundation stone for the Temple in Chicago. He had the remains of the Báb safely transferred from Iran to Palestine, and buried in the building which he had built in Haifa, on the slopes of Mount Carmel. This spot had been chosen by Bahá'u'lláh as the final resting place of the Báb.

'Abdu'l-Bahá did all this work with love, courtesy, patience, kindness and justice. He was the Perfect Exemplar of his Father's Faith and the stainless mirror reflecting His light.

By studying the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his writings we can learn how God wants us to be. When we are sad or worried we need to ask ourselves, "What would 'Abdu'l-Bahá do?"

### **ACTIVITIES**

All Groups make and colour a decorative border round the picture of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Tell the children that if they stick this picture onto a piece of thin card when they get home, they can hang it up on the wall.

### **TO FINISH**

Have the children tidy up the room and put the furniture back where it belongs, if they have moved it. Sing again "Look at me....." Have some prayers. Remind the children to remember 'Abdu'l-Bahá when they meet with a problem.

**BAHÁ'Í CHILDREN'S CLASS LESSONS**

77 'ABDU'L-BAHA. Make a lovely border round this picture.

