**The Merchant who wanted to become a Bahá'í**

a story about sincerity

The Master once told a pilgrim the following story. He was concluding an interview by telling of the time when He was travelling with a party which included a merchant. When the caravan halted in a certain village, quite a few people gathered around to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The travelers later continued their journey and when the stopped in another village in another town the same things happened, and then it happened again. The merchant noticed this very obvious love and respect, which were showered on the Master. So the merchant took 'Abdu'l-Bahá aside and told Him he wished to become a Bahá'í.

When the Master asked him why he desired this, he replied, without apparent shame. "You are a Bahá'í, and wherever you go, great crowds of people flock out to meet you, while no one comes to meet me; so I wish to become a Bahá'í."

'Abdu'l-Bahá probed deeper. He asked the merchant if that was the real reason. Whereupon the merchant replied with candor, "I also think it will help my business, as I will have all these people come to meet me."

It was then that the merchant was told very frankly, "Do not become a Bahá'í. It is better for you to remain as you are."

*Vignettes from the Life of 'Abdu'l-*Bahá by Honnold, p31

Adapted from Pemberton, *A Modern Pilgrimage to Palestine*, pp 99-100