**The Unfriendly Governor**

from *'Abdu'l-Bahá* by H.M.Balyuzi, pp115-116

In the days of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Akká had had an official, in charge of the secretariat, named Mustafá Effendi, who was constantly inciting the Governor to make life unbearable for the Bahá'ís. And the Governor was not averse to using the occasion for personal gain. To his various stratagems 'Abdu'l-Bahá paid no attention. The Governor hit upon the idea of forcing the Bahá'í shopkeepers to close down. 'Abdu'l-Bahá forestalled him and advised them to stop trading. Baulked, the Governor called a meeting in his residence of the notables and the divines who were hostile towards the Bahá'ís. It was intended to concoct a plan of action. In the meantime, Sa'da'd-Dín Ramadán, the chief of the merchants, hurried to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He begged for money. Only money, he pleaded, would make the Governor give up his machinations; there was no time to lose. 'Abdu'l-Bahá kept him waiting, while he thought that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was filling up a purse with gold that he might take to the Governor. For his pains he had only a hard slap in the face from 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and was told not to tarry there, as money had already been sent to the Governor. But what the Governor of 'Akká received was a telegram from the Válí in Beirut, dismissing him and other officials. Three months later this ex-Governor was further humiliated and banished to Damascus. He had to leave his family behind in 'Akká. 'Abdu'l-Bahá provided both for him and his family; and in due time, meeting all the expenses, He arranged to reunite them. Thus did 'Abdu'l-Bahá treat the fallen adversary.

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from *The Chosen Highway* by Lady Blomfield, pp137-138

On one occasion an unfriendly Governor, hating these peaceful, honest Bahá'ís, thought of a plan for destroying their means of livelihood. He gave orders to the police: "There are fifteen shops owned by Bahá'ís; go tomorrow morning early, lock them up and bring the keys to me."

The Master called the Bahá'ís to Him that same evening and said: "Do not open your shops tomorrow, but wait and see what God will send to us."

The next morning, the Governor waited for the keys. Again he sent them. "Go," he said to the police, "and see if the shops are open." The police announced that the shops were closed.

He waited and waited; at ten o'clock all the shops were still unopened, those shops which were always accustomed to open and be ready for trade at seven o'clock. The Governor was greatly perplexed. His plan did not seem to be working as he had schemed.

The Muftí (the chief mullá) came to the Governor while he waited.

 "How are you?" said the Governor.

 "Quite well," was the reply, "but very sad; because of a telegram from Damascus, I am full of sorrow."

 "Show it to me," said the Governor.

To his consternation he saw that the telegram was from the Válí of Damascus, deposing him from his place as governor, and directing that he be conducted to by the police to Damascus.

In fear, sorrow, and amazement he went to his own house to make such preparations as was possible for the hurried and unlooked for journey.

The shops of the friends were saved.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, hearing of the misfortune which had befallen the Governor, went to visit him.

"You must not be sad because of this; everything in the world changes. Can I do anything for you?" He asked of the erstwhile Governor.

"Now that I am being taken away from them, there will be none to care for those I love. My dear family will be sad, lonely, and helpless, with nobody to counsel and aid them in their sore need."

"Do not be filled with grief, but tell me where you wish your family to go."

"If only they could go to Damascus?"

"Now, trust in me, and let you heart be lightened of its distress; I will gladly send an honorable escort with your wife and children to Damascus; you will find that they will be there soon after your own arrival."

The Master sent the family with a trustworthy escort, providing mules and everything needed for the comfort of the journey -- quite a formidable undertaking in those days. The command was worded: "Take these persons safely and with great respect to join the Governor at Damascus." A telegram was dispatched after they had set out: "I have sent your family to Damascus. They will very soon arrive in safety."

When they arrived in Damascus the Governor, being greatly rejoiced, inquired of the escort as to the cost of the journey.

"It is nothing; I am but obeying the command of the Master."

The Governor then wished to give the escort a present for himself."

"I desire no recompense; I am but obeying the Master's command, I can accept nothing."

When invited to stay the night for rest and refreshment, the reply was:

"I obey the Master's command to return without delay."

"Then I pray you take a letter, which I will write at once to the Master."

"O 'Abdu'l-Bahá," the letter read, "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."