Story about Mirza Abu’l-Fadl Becoming a Bahai

Grade 2 Lesson 7

Today I am going to tell you the story of how Mirza Abu’l-Fadl, one of the early believers in the time of Bahau’llah, became a Bahai. Mirza Abu’l-Fadl was very well-known for his penetrating insight, his wealth of knowledge, and his ability to understand and explain complex spiritual ideas. In his youth, he studied in depth such subjects as mathematics, astronomy (study of the stars), philosophy, and the Arabic language, which he mastered in addition to his native Persian language. When he was still a young man, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl became a professor at one of the oldest universities in Tihran, the capital of Iran. **This is the story of how he, while in that city, gained a knowledge beyond any he had acquired in all his broad studies**- knowledge of the Revelation of Baha’u’llah, the Manifestation of God for this day.

One afternoon, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl and a few of his companions set out on donkeys to visit the countryside. One their way out of the city, one of the donkeys lost a shoe (Show picture of a horse/donkey shoe), and the party called at the nearest blacksmith’s shop to help. Does anyone know what a blacksmith is? (Show picture and explain). When the blacksmith, who had very little formal education, saw Mirza Abu’l-Fadl’s long beard and large turban, in that country those were considered symbols of his vast learning, **he asked whether the scholarly man might be willing to answer a question that had perplexed the blacksmith for some time**.

Before I tell you the rest of the story, it is important to know that when a Messenger of God comes to the world, His Teachings are pure and bring life to the souls, but over time, people change the words, and bring in ideas and traditions that are not taught by the Messengers of God themselves. This is what had happened at the time that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl was meeting the blacksmith.

So, the blacksmith asked Mirza Abu’l-Fadl, “Is it true,” began the blacksmith, referring to an old written religious tradition- one of those that had become changed by human beings- **“Is it true that each drop of rain is accompanied by an angel from heaven, and that this angel brings down the rain to the ground?**” “This is true,” Mirza Abu’l-Fadl responded, for it had long been believed by the people in that region that this was so- and remember that He had not yet become a Bahai. After a pause, the blacksmith begged to be allowed another question, to which Mirza Abu’l-Fadl gave his assent. **“Is it true,” the blacksmith asked once more, “that if there is a dog in a house no angel will ever visit that house?”** Again, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl responded in the affirmative, saying YES, for this too was a belief held by those who followed these written traditions. “**In that case,” commented the blacksmith, arriving at his point, “no rain should ever fall on a house where a dog is kept.”** Mirza Abu’l-Fadl had no answer. He left the shop embarrassed and angry, for he had been stumped by a blacksmith with no formal schooling!

Mirza Abu’l-Fadl had learned from his companions that the blacksmith was a Bahai. Now, it happened that he and the blacksmith shared a mutual friend, a local draper who had a shop in the bazaar that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl would sometimes visit. When the draper, who was also a Bahai, heard about the incident at the blacksmith’s, he invited Mirza Abu’l-Fadl to take part in some discussions. He accepted the invitation, and the meeting was arranged. In that meeting, Mirza Abu’l-Fadl posed numerous questions and raised many objections. **Each one was answered in such simple terms and in such a wise manner** that Mirza Abu’l-Fadl found himself at a loss, for he had though he could easily prove wrong the Bahai beliefs.

For several months Mirza Abu’l-Fadl continued to meet many different Bahais, some of them quite scholarly themselves.  **Finally, forever unable to deny the proofs offered by the followers of Baha’u’llah, he turned his heart in earnest to God and begged to be shown the truth.** Soon, he was overwhelmed with the truth of Baha’u’llah’s mission, and became, after nearly a year of protest, a staunch and steadfast believer and an avid teacher of the Cause.

The story of how Mirza Abu’l-Fadl came to recognize the truth of Baha’u’llah’s Revelation shows us how important it is to acquire knowledge not only through the study of God’s creation but also **through His Manifestation in the day in which we live.**