**IOS, THE SHEPHERD BOY**

Some Parables Concerning the Laws of the Spiritual Life

(These stories of Ios were told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to Lua Getsinger,

and are here transcribed from memory by May Maxwell:

Other stories about Ios can be found at: http://bahai-library.com/abdulbaha\_ios\_shepherd\_boy)

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In Persia, they have a great variety of delicious melons and it is the custom in this season to hold feasts and serve this abundant fruit to the guests. When the season came and the melons were ripe the King held a feast and invited many people. Ios was absent, engaged in some service, but presently the guests saw that there was one melon left uncut. Then they murmured among themselves saying, "You will see that this melon, which is no doubt very sweet and delicious, is reserved for the Beloved of the King," and soon the King sent for Ios, and cutting the melon gave him a piece saying "Thou, too, must partake of my feast. I have kept this melon for Thee." The King also took a piece, but when he tasted it he exclaimed, "This melon is as bitter as gall, how couldst thou eat it, Ios?" But the boy replied, "All my life I have received sweet from thy hand. Now, if thou dost give me bitter shall I refuse it? For bitter is sweet from the hands of my King."

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**The Bitter Melon**

(Story told by 'Abdu'l-Bahá; Julia Grundy, *Ten Days in the Light of 'Akká*, p. 103)

A master had a slave who was completely devoted to him. One day he gave the slave a melon which when cut open looked most ripe and delicious. The slave ate one piece, then another and another with great relish (the day being warm) until nearly the whole melon had disappeared. The master, picking up the last slice, tasted it, and found it exceedingly bitter and unpalatable. 'Why, it is very bitter! Did you not find it so?' he asked the servant. 'Yes, my master,' the slave replied, 'it was bitter and unpleasant, but I have tasted so much sweetness from thy hand that one bitter melon was not worth mentioning.'