One day King Maḥmúd decided to go on a royal tour of his kingdom. Preparations began immediately and within a few days the magnificent procession was ready to leave. Ministers, ambassadors, and a great many people of prominence, all wearing their finest clothes, set out with the King, together with his guards and attendants. The King’s faithful servant Ayáz rode by his side, at the very front of the procession.

Each evening the splendid party made camp and the wonderful imperial tent was set up for the King. This tent was the most beautiful tent that anyone had ever seen. Woven from silk of the highest quality, it was decorated with hundreds of jewels and precious stones, which sparkled so brightly in the lamp-light that the light of the moon and stars paled in comparison. Each night the King and his companions feasted and sang. Each morning when the tent was taken down, the jewels were collected and put in a box in the King’s carriage. And so the royal procession went on its way, the King looking contentedly over his peaceful and prosperous kingdom, his companions happily riding and talking during the day, and feasting and singing at night.

One afternoon the King and his entourage were passing through some especially beautiful countryside. So beautiful was it that the King was overcome with a feeling of generosity. He took the jewels from the box and scattered them on the roadside for his companions. As he continued on his way, they all scrambled in great confusion, forgetful of their duties, trying to gather up the precious stones—all that is, except Ayáz. “Look at Ayáz,” they muttered to one another. “He is so proud and arrogant. He cannot even be bothered to pick up any of the jewels that the King has tossed on the roadside.”

“How is it, Ayáz”, the King asked him, “that you do not join the others to gather up my jewels? Are they not precious? Do you not value the things that were mine?”

“Oh, My King,” replied Ayáz. “I have always valued the very least thing that is yours. But to be near you and gaze on your face is more than sufficient for me. Why should I leave your side to scramble for that which you have thrown away?”

And the loyal and steadfast Ayáz rode on by the side of his grateful master, ever vigilant in serving his beloved King.

**Alternative story (I have heard it referred to as "one of 'Abdu'l-Baha's favourite stories" - but haven't seen that documented in a reliable source.  It's a little more straight forward, and would lend itself well to either a play, or puppet makings.**

Once there was a king who had many spiritual qualities and whose deeds were based on justice and loving-kindness. He often envied the dervish who had renounced the world and appeared to be free from the cares of this material life, for he roamed the country, slept in any place when night fell and chanted the praises of his Lord during the day. He lived in poverty, yet thought he owned the whole world. His only possessions were his clothes and a basket in which he carried the food donated by his well-wishers. The king was attracted to this way of life.

Once he invited a well-known dervish to his palace, sat at his feet and begged him for some lessons about detachment. The dervish was delighted with the invitation. He stayed a few days in the palace and whenever the king was free preached the virtues of a mendicant’s life to him. At last the king was converted. One day, dressed in the garb of a poor man, he left his palace in the company of the dervish. They had walked together some distance when the dervish realized that he had left his basket behind in the palace. This disturbed him greatly and, informing the king that he could not go without his basket, he begged permission to return for it. But the king admonished him, saying that he himself had left behind his palaces, his wealth and power, whereas the dervish, who had preached for a lifetime the virtues of detachment, had at last been tested and was found to be attached to this world—his small basket.

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