

The Sheltering Branch

by

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“... This Branch of Holiness; well is it with him that hath sought His shelter and abideth beneath His shadow.”
Bahá'u'lláh. ~George Ronald

How to kill prejudice – Pages 35 to 37

In spite of His own immaculate perfection, the Master never turned away from the despised and the rejected, but rather transformed them with His regal touch. Florence Khánum tells in her book of her reaction to some of the people she saw in her travels. (It must be remembered that she was Boston-educated, which means that she took a rather conservative view of the rest of mankind). She writes of a little servant:

“I ... discovered to my amazement and shock, that the expression of her eyes was more wild and uncivilized than the eyes of our domestic animals in America! Such as the eyes of our horses, our dogs, our cats, which usually give back a reflection of our love and affection, while this young girl's eyes did not!”

She grew somewhat afraid of the local people, and then one day she saw a native woman coming along the roofed-over stone corridor, and she wanted to run away. Just then ‘Abdu'l-Bahá approached with one of His daughters:

“I saw the woman pause, bow, and greet the Master. He replied graciously, and spoke sweetly, and as He passed, pressed a coin into her hand. She burst forth into phrases of evident joy and gratitude, and went away. I lingered, to ask the Master's daughter: ‘What did she say? Who is she?’

“She is the daughter of a desert chief, and she has suffered very much.’

“Is she a Bahá'í?’

“No; but she loves the Master very much. He has been kind to her.’

“What did she say to Him?’

“She said she would pray for Him.’

“And what did the Master say?’

“He thanked her.’

“In my American-trained mind, at first I thought: ‘How presumptuous for that dirty-looking, half-savage-looking woman to tell the Master she would pray for Him!’ And then, as the sweetness and humility of His reply astonished me, another experience of His spiritual grandeur overwhelmed my soul.”

Abdu’l-Bahá was to say:

“... there is need of a superior power to overcome human prejudices; a power which nothing in the world of mankind can withstand and which will overshadow the effect of all other forces at work in human conditions. That irresistible power is the love of God.”¹

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¹ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá: *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 68.