

Central Mountains
Bahá'í Newsletter
June 2010

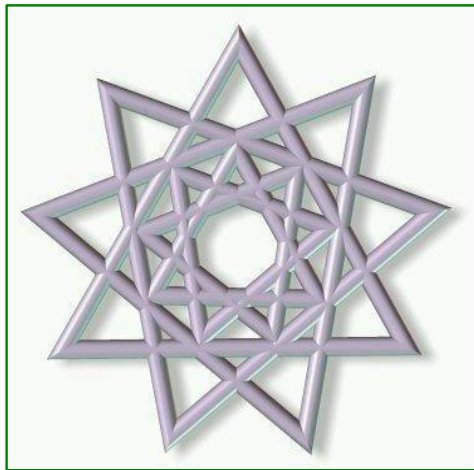
CALENDAR ITEMS

Sunday, June 6 – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting at the Bahá'í Center.

Sunday, June 13 – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting at the Bahá'í Center.

Sunday, June 20 – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting at the Bahá'í Center

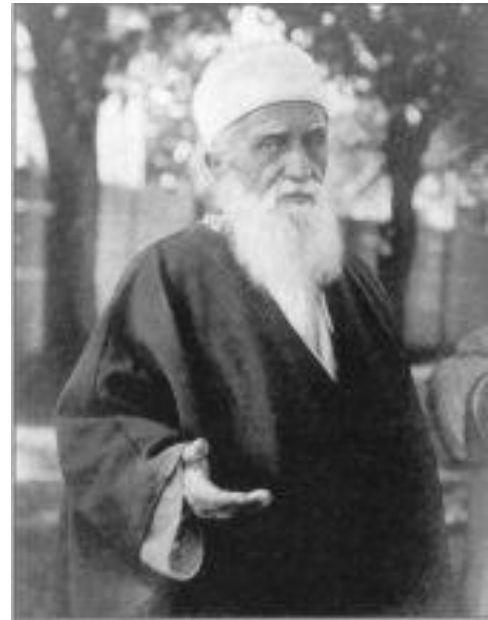
Sunday, June 27 – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting at the Bahá'í Center



YOU ARE INVITED!

You are warmly invited to join a study circle being hosted by the Bahá'í community. A study circle consists of Bahá'ís, their friends and individuals who are seeking to enrich their spiritual life through study of Sacred Writings, prayer, the purpose of life and the journey of the soul. The participants of the study circle meet regularly at a central location or at an individual's home to study the Sacred Writings and participate in service and extracurricular activities that bind the group together in fellowship.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Abdu'l-Bahá – Son of *Bahá'u'lláh*, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith. The story of his amazing life continues on the next page!

**WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
BAHÁ'Í CENTER**

The Western North Carolina Bahá'í Center is located at 5 Ravenscroft Drive in Asheville. To get there from downtown, turn south on Church Street off Patton Avenue. At Trinity Episcopal Church, turn right on Sawyer, then immediately veer left on Ravenscroft. The Center is on the right. You may park in the lot beside the building at night. Please call 251-1051 for more information.

BAHÁ'Í INFO ON THE WEB

Information about the Bahá'í Faith can be found at:

www.us.bahai.org

www.bcca.org/bahaivision

www.bahai.org

<http://www.education.usbnc.org/index.htm>

<http://www.wncbahai.org>

**IF YOU WANT TO SPEAK
WITH A BAHÁ'Í**

If you want to speak with a Bahá'í, please feel free to call Viki at 225-1744, Elaine at 670-7000 or David at 698-4969.

THE LIFE OF ABDU'L-BAHÁ (THE SERVANT OF GLORY) PART III

Last month's story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá closed with the captive exiles becoming closer to freedom from the treeless, dusty, fortress prison-city of Akká, on the north coast of Palestine, now Israel.

'Abdu'l-Bahá enlisted the aid of the Muftí of Akká, who was a deep admirer of Bahá'u'lláh, to persuade Bahá'u'lláh to leave the prison-city. After much pleading by the Muftí, Bahá'u'lláh consented, and a rented home in the nearby countryside was obtained by 'Abdu'l-Bahá. However, 'Abdu'l-Bahá and his family remained in Akká as the poor and needy there had come to depend on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's services to provide them with clothing, medicine, and anything that could alleviate their destitution. Later Bahá'u'lláh and other relatives moved to a grander home in the country that had been long vacant due to cholera outbreak. This home is called the Mansion of Bahjí (delight) and is today the center of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís from all over the world as Bahá'u'lláh's tomb and shrine are located next to the mansion. (Shown on page 1.)

Two years before the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, an English professor of Oriental studies was granted interviews with Him, and also met the Master, ('Abdu'l-Bahá) who was then 46. Professor Browne wrote this of his appearance: "Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more. A tall, strongly-built man holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, ...broad, powerful forehead indicating a strong intellect, combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk's, and strongly-marked but pleasing features - such were my impressions of 'Abbas Effendi, the Master...Subsequent conversation with him served to heighten the respect with which his appearance had from the first inspired me. One more eloquent of speech...more apt of illustration, more intimately acquainted with the sacred books...could... scarcely be found even amongst the eloquent, ready and subtle race to which he belongs. The qualities, combined with a bearing at once majestic and genial, made me cease to wonder at the influence and esteem which he enjoyed even beyond the circle of his father's followers. About the greatness of this man and his power, no one who had seen him could entertain a doubt."

Nine days after the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh (1892), the seal on His Will was broken and it was read to all. It clearly appointed 'Abdu'l-Bahá to lead and guard his Father's Cause, and to be the one authorized interpreter of the meaning of His teachings. One of the first actions 'Abdu'l-Bahá took was to purchase land on the side of Mt. Carmel, across the bay from Akká. His Beloved Father had pointed out to him the exact spot where a beautiful shrine should be built to entomb the sacred remains of His Herald, the martyred Báb, whose casket had remained in secret places in Irán to avoid desecration by enemies of the Faith. In 1899, the casket of The Báb was brought to the Holy Land, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá laid the cornerstone of the shrine.

Always, a great cause has great enemies. Bribes, intrigues and lies persuaded the officials of the repressive Turkish government to restrict 'Abdu'l-Bahá's freedoms. He was again confined to the limits of the prison-city from 1901 to 1908. However, the construction of the Shrine of the Báb was not halted as faithful followers carried on the work. In

Akká, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's daily work of attending the sick and the poor through the daytime was not interrupted, and he worked late into the night to keep up a voluminous correspondence with followers and inquirers from many lands. Sometimes he wrote as many as ninety letters a day. Approximately 27,000 letters from His pen have been collected and preserved in the World Center Bahá'í Archives.

In the winter of 1907, an inimical board of inquiry was sent by the central government to complete the continuing investigation of accusations against 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Upon their arrival, the governor of Akká, who was an admirer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was dismissed, and the board of inquiry took over the telephone and telegraph office to isolate Akká. The board's resolve was to execute 'Abdu'l-Bahá or to exile him to a remote and isolated destination. His friends and family were beside themselves with anxiety, but 'Abdu'l-Bahá remained calm, carrying on his daily activities of caring for the poor. He repaired his house, planted trees, and refused the offer from a steamship company to take him away from danger, saying, "The Báb did not run away, and I shall not run away." This surprised the inhabitants who were sure his days were numbered.

Suddenly the ship of the board of inquiry, which was harbored in the Bay of Akká, headed towards the open sea. They had received news that a bomb had nearly killed the sultán in Constantinople, and they were called back to the capitol to deal with a mounting revolution. In a short time, the sultán was forced to submit to the demand of revolutionaries, the constitution was reinstated, and all religious and political prisoners were freed. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was free to travel to Haifa, across the bay, to attend to the final steps of the basic construction of the Shrine of the Báb. The white marble arcade, granite columns, and gilded tile dome of the Shrine seen today were completed many years later by the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

On a spring evening in 1909, He laid with His own hands the sacred casket of the Báb in a vault in the center of the Shrine situated centrally on the slope of Mt. Carmel. He said, "Every brick of it was laid with the labor of love, and every inch of it was raised with tears of agony." He removed his turban, shoes and coat, and laid his head on the corner of the casket and wept so intensely that everyone there wept with him, remembering the sufferings and martyrdom of the Herald of Bahá'u'lláh.

Later, he moved his residence to Haifa, not far from the Shrine of the Báb, and never set foot in Akká again. He was now 65 years old, having lived forty years in the prison-city. With the gates of freedom opened, the number of pilgrims increased, as did the volume of his correspondence.

A life-long yearning of 'Abdu'l-Bahá had been to undertake long journeys to other lands to announce the world-uniting teachings of his beloved Father, and now the time seemed right. At the age of 67, he first went to Egypt in 1911, and then to Europe. In April 1912 he arrived in New York City harbor on a modest steamship, having refused the offer of reservations on the luxurious Titanic. A crowd of reporters and Bahá'ís thronged to greet him. He remarked that the skyscrapers of New York were the "minarets of the West."

(Next month's installment will describe the remarkable journey of 'Abdu'l-Bahá across the United States.)