

A Gift of Flowers

(Illustrated by Malcolm Lee. Adapted from “The Blessed Beauty”)

In a small village in Adhirbáyján lived two young men who were both called Muhammad. To prevent getting in a muddle people called them Muhammad the



first and Muhammad the second.

They were both devoted to Bahá'u'lláh. When a group of people in the village decided to make the long journey to Akká to visit Bahá'u'lláh, the two Muhammads were overjoyed to be able to go.

To reach Akká from their village the friends had to cross deserts, mountains, rivers and plains. Their only method of transport was their own feet. The journey took a long, long time, but every moment was spent in the joy of knowing that soon they would meet their Beloved.

As they came closer, their feelings of joy grew and grew, until at last they came to the Prison City and were taken into the Presence of Bahá'u'lláh.

Their joy was overwhelming. At last they were with Bahá'u'lláh. But in the midst of their joy, the group of friends was filled with sorrow at seeing the terrible place where Bahá'u'lláh was living. The city was a grim stone fortress - nowhere could they see a blade of grass, there was no sign of a tree or leaf or flower. Everywhere was grey hard stone, and the filth of the dirty prison city. They knew how Bahá'u'lláh had always loved the countryside. How could He bear to stay in this dark and depressing place where it was so hot and stuffy?

One of the friends thought how wonderful it would be if Bahá'u'lláh would come to live in their village. They would do everything to make Him comfortable – everything would be clean, the air fresh and cool, the houses surrounded with trees and greenery. They asked Bahá'u'lláh if He would come. It was such a wonderful idea.

But Bahá'u'lláh explained that He was a prisoner. He could not leave the prison

in Akká.

The friends were astonished. How could Bahá'u'lláh be a prisoner? He was the King of all Kings! How could anyone prevent Him from going anywhere? The friends' eyes filled with tears at the thought of such a cruel thing.

All the way home they felt heartbroken because they had to leave Bahá'u'lláh locked up in that terrible place, and they thought and thought about what they could do to help. For months after they arrived home, they still prayed for something they could do to help. At last the two Muhammads had an idea. If they couldn't bring Bahá'u'lláh to their lovely village, they would take something from the village to Him as a gift. They would take some flowers. Carefully they set to work putting soil into pots, and they dug up some narcissus bulbs to plant and take for Bahá'u'lláh.

Clutching their plants they set out once more on the long journey to Akká. At times it was difficult to keep the plants watered, as they slowly walked across the dry lands. But as they drew nearer, again their hearts were lifted and filled with joy because they knew that they were to meet with their Beloved. Would the plants still be alive? Would the flowers come out at the right time for when they arrived? Would He be pleased with their gift? Although the way was long and hard, and sometimes dangerous, they kept their plants safe, and managed to water them even when they were thirsty themselves.

At last, tired but overjoyed, the two Muhammads arrived in Akká. The beautiful golden blossoms were as fragrant and fresh as they would have been at home, growing by the cool stream in the village. Bahá'u'lláh embraced them both and they wept with joy and pure devotion and love. Smiling, He accepted their gifts with gratitude.

