

This is the story of the *'Abdu'l-Bahá With Flowers* image:

By Cary Enoch Reinstein, Omaha, Nebraska, *Revised 25 Mar. 2010*

In 1972, I took a close-up Kodachrome photo of a painting hanging in the home of Margaret Gallagher, an Auxiliary Board Member in Hayward, California. Then I went out to her garden and saw the bright backlit red flowers and double-exposed them onto the same frame. I made two nearly identical slides but one did not come out because it was overexposed. Several years later, I scanned a film negative copy of the original 35mm slide at 5400 dpi (285 MB) and restored it because the original was damaged beyond repair in a flood.

The painter's name was Mr. Samimi. See the last two pages of this document for information about him. I only photographed the topmost portion of it. The right half of the image is my original photograph by means of a double exposure.

When I was on pilgrimage in 1972, I brought a few hundred copies of the photo with me at the request of Hand of the Cause A. Q. Faizi. He gave them away during his many teaching trips around the world. Though he asked me to sign the backs of the photos, I never did because I preferred to remain anonymous. Among my treasures are hand-illuminated letters that Mr. Faizi wrote me in the 1970's that include a reference to this image and to three other images on my website. You can find them online at

<http://bahai-library.com/books/conqueror/excerpts.html> in an unpublished book of his letters by Shirley Macias.

Sometimes I make archival quality pigment ink prints as special gifts for friends and family. The high-quality JPG image on this website is contained in a ZIP file in three standard sizes along with a copy of this document. You can download the image and make your own prints using any service you wish or on your own inkjet printer. You will probably want a print of 8x10 inches or 11x14 inches. There are several quality printing sites most of which are easy to use. The images in the .ZIP file have been especially formatted with blank space top and bottom so they will print on standard sized photo paper **without** cropping. *If you wish to make a fine art quality print then use the file named Abdul-BahaWithFlowers-11x14.jpg.* It is identical to my original photograph.

Download location for this image

<http://www.enochsvision.com/abflowers.html>

Right-click and choose *Save Target As...* If your browser doesn't promptly begin to download it. The file contains three images and a copy of this PDF document. The download is in ZIP format because otherwise the browser would attempt to display the images which would take a very long time because of their large size (equivalent to a 35 megapixel digital camera).

Web page where you will find it:

<http://www.enochsvision.com/evg03bahaitemed.html>

My email: <mailto:caryenochr@enochsvision.com?subject=Comments about 'Abdu'l-Baha With Flowers>. Please do not publish my email address on any web page because that will probably cause it to attract spam.

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Subject: Mr. Faizi's letters

Cary Enoch Reinstein of Kirkland, Washington, kindly shared with me copies of his letters from Mr. Faizí. Mr. Reinstein is a very talented artist and photographer. Some of his work can now be found on his web page called "Welcome to Enoch's Vision Gallery" located at www.enochsvision.com and newbounty.new-era.net/bahaivision.

[Cary's inserted text - corrected web addresses

An online art gallery of my work: <http://www.enochsvision.com>

My Blog: <http://www.enochsvision.net> Refer to **Art and Imagery** topics on the blog for descriptions of this image.]

Bahá 15, 131 B.E. (March 1975) from Haifa

Dearly loved and always remembered friend. The days and even the moments we spent together in the precincts of the Shrines are very vividly remembered. Such memories give me joy and strength and take me to solitude where I raise my suppliant hands and pray for my dear ones who are suffering, are dispersed in the world and live the life of bitter tests and trials. The slides you showed still govern my feelings and I long for the approach of the day when I can visit you in your studio. It is my earnest hope that when such a blessed hour comes, I will find you solaced, strengthen and consoled. I pray that the divine confirmation pours on you to enable you to serve Him in many different ways. Rest assured, dearly loved and sorely tried brother, that all of us remember you with all our hearts and earnest wishes. Hoping this humble note will convey to you how much we love you.

Humbly, Faizí.

Ridván 132 (April 1975), Haifa

Lack of time and being very late in arrival to Haifa have perhaps made of me an impolite and ungrateful friend. When after nine months traveling in the Western Hemisphere and then Europe, I was so fatigued and exhausted that I had to undergo many treatments. Now I am better and resume working. First of all, I would like to thank you again and again for the three very beautiful colored photographs of the Shrine. They are most wonderful and occupy the most prominent place in a very small room where I seclude myself. You are indeed an artist with your camera. The friends have asked me about an arrangement by which they can order a postcard size or other sizes according to their tastes. I should be most obliged if you would kindly write to me. Thousands of thanks for your noble thoughts and very generous gifts to your humble admirer.

Faizí

May 22, 1975, Haifa.

Some time ago after my return from my nine-month trip, I wrote you a letter and as yet have no reply. I am worried about your health, therefore I write again and request you to be so kind as to tell me about your dear self.

I have fixed the three beautiful colored pictures of the Shrine and the Garden of Ridván in a small room of my house. Many of the friends come and appreciate the uniqueness of such artistic reproduction. I pray that you are very busy and also consecrate much of your time in the service of our precious Cause.

At present I am busy preparing lessons for the summer schools of Europe. I hope and pray that I will prove worthy of this invitation. Wherever I go, be sure that you are always in my thoughts and prayers. Hoping that you will feel the warmth of my supplications, I am yours ever truly.

Faizí

July 15, 1975, Copenhagen, Denmark.

In the last days of my sojourn in Haifa I had the joy of receiving your photo, beautiful letter and the great news. As I had been over and over again worried about you, the receipt of this much loved letter dispelled the clouds from my aching heart and I feel grateful and happy. As to the three very beautiful photos you sent me and my request to have some more, but not very large size, I would venture to request you to make for me fifty copies, colored and the size of the envelope which carries this letter. I will be extremely honored and happy to pay the amount, whatever you write me, to the Fund in Haifa for the construction of the Universal House of Justice's Seat on Mount Carmel. This, I hope will be approved by you and we can jointly make the hearts of many friends all around the world very happy. I send you the enclosed as the expression of my best wishes for your great event. I hope and pray that both of you will be very happy and, as we say in Persian, "will whiten beard and hair together." Hoping this note will convey to you the amount of joy and love that I feel and the assurance of prayers for both of you. I am and will remain yours, ever faithfully.
September 1, 1975, Brussels, Luxemburg, Summer School

Dearly loved friends: The good news reached me when I was in the midst of the summer schools in Europe. Now I am at the end of the seventh one and have two days of rest. Therefore I hasten to thank you for your beautiful card, unique in beauty. I pray that you will be happy and, as we say in Persian, will whiten beard and hair together. May the grace of Bahá'u'lláh make every minute of your life together a fountainhead of joy, service to the Cause and servitude to His friends. I remain, yours ever truly. Faizí.
October 9, 1975

It is always a joy to receive some news from you. You can't imagine how grateful and delighted I am that you are well settled and both of you enjoy to service the Cause which both of you love so dearly, support so courageously, and propagate with all your talent and vigor. Your letter brought me much joy. I am grateful that you left the door open for me to ask you to send me more photos.
March 28, 1977, Solomon Islands, Pacific.

My very precious friends. Your dear letter followed me in the East and in the islands of the Pacific and here reached me and made me very happy and grateful. The birth of Nabíl was great news. I hope and pray that he will always be under the love, protection and the guidance of Bahá'u'lláh. He, I am sure, will be a great source of joy and hope to you and the friends. How I long to reach California, once in my world trips, and embrace Nabíl as hard as he permits. The card is most beautiful. I like it very much and have shown it to many friends in all the islands I passed through. I will surely protect it among my art souvenirs in Haifa and pray you will produce such spiritual beauties which open the eyes, comfort the hearts and solace the eye. I wish you all the best in your career and your services to our precious Cause. This humble note will fly to you from the Pacific Ocean and will carry to you oceans of my love and waves of my supplications. Yours ever in His servitude. Faizí.

(Note: Nabíl refers to my son, Nicholas Nabíl, who was born 30 January 1977.)

This document is located at
<http://bahai-library.com/books/conqueror/excerpts.html>

Pictures and Portraits of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

[T]hough he sees no objection to people having portraits of the Master in their homes, if it gives them pleasure, he prefers that for distribution and for purchase, they should confine themselves to His photographs, as these are, of course, a much more perfect likeness of Him.

Letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi, dated July 11, 1942, to an individual believer, in *Representation of the Manifestations of God and the Master in Portraits, Photographs, and Dramatic Presentations*, compiled by Universal House of Justice Research Department, 1987

Although the House of Justice does not wish to prohibit the use of photographs and drawings of the Master they should be used most sparingly and always in a dignified context in keeping with the station of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. It is felt that drawings of the Master executed in a cartoon style and showing rays of light emanating from His head are not appropriate and should be discouraged.

Letter from the Universal House of Justice, dated November 27, 1978, to a National Spiritual Assembly, in *Representation of the Manifestations of God and the Master in Portraits*.

Source: *Developing Distinctive Bahá'í Communities* — 2007

“Ministry of Flowers”

'Abdu'l-Bahá's personal wants were few. He worked late and early. Two simple meals a day sufficed Him. His wardrobe consisted of a very few garments of inexpensive material. He could not bear to live in luxury while others were in want. *He had a great love for children, for flowers, and for the beauties of nature.* Every morning about six or seven, the family party used to gather to partake of the morning tea together, and while the Master sipped His tea, the little children of the household chanted prayers. Mr. Thornton Chase writes of these children: -- "Such children I have never seen, so courteous, unselfish, thoughtful for others, unobtrusive, intelligent, and swiftly self-denying in the little things that children love. ..."

-- *In Galilee*, p. 51.

The "ministry of flowers" was a feature of the life at 'Akká, of which every pilgrim brought away fragrant memories. Mrs. Lucas writes: -- "When the Master inhales the odor of flowers, it is wonderful to see him. It seems as though the perfume of the hyacinths were telling him something as he buries his face in the flowers. It is like the effort of the ear to hear a beautiful harmony, a concentrated attention!"

-- *A Brief Account of My Visit to 'Akká*, pp. 25-26.

He loved to present beautiful and sweet-smelling flowers to His numerous visitors.

(Dr. J.E. Esslemont, *Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 57)

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

BAHÁ'Í WORLD CENTRE

Department of the Secretariat

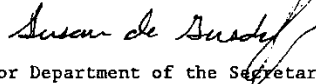
16 November 1997

The National Spiritual Assembly
of the Bahá'ís of Cyprus

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Universal House of Justice has received your email message of 1 October 1997 regarding the portrait of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which hangs in the Haifa Pilgrim House. The portrait was painted by Mr. Reza Samimi, a Persian Bahá'í who passed away in 1991. Although the Bahá'í World Centre has very little information available about the portrait itself, we have enclosed a photocopy of an obituary on Mr. Samimi that appeared in the British newspaper the *Independent*. For further information you may wish to contact Mr. Samimi's estate, the address of which is provided below.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,



For Department of the Secretariat

The Estate of Mr. Reza Samimi
c/o Mr. Mehrdad Samimi
6 Sunrise Hill Road
Orinda, CA 94563
U.S.A.

Enclosure

JAN 29 1991

OBITUARIES



Reza Samimi (right) at work on a portrait of King Faisal II of Iraq, c1953. King Faisal was assassinated in the military coup d'état of 1958

Reza Samimi

REZA SAMIMI was a distinguished artist, happiest at portraiture, but also adept in landscape-painting and flower studies. In all his work he applied his brush evenly, achieving smooth surfaces with a slightly matt finish. His old character studies, his nudes, his still-life flowers and fruit, as well as his straight portraits demonstrate his skill.

Samimi was born in Meshad, Persia, in 1919 and showed great talent at an early age. His technique, especially in his treatment of light, owed much to Wright of Derby and he saw Rembrandt as his mentor and paragon. During his formative years in the early Thirties he paid no heed to the avant-garde movements that were throwing academic traditions into disarray in the French salons. He was resolutely wedded to his own

strictly representational style, which survived as the true character of his work through his lifetime.

In 1947, at the age of 28, Samimi went to Tehran and in that year he received his first important commission — a portrait of Princess Chams Pahlavi, sister of the Shah. It was not until 1951 that he went to Paris to study the various controversial schools of painting and make what he could of the contemporary artistic scene.

In 1952 his pictures were hung in the Adademy at Tehran and this led to a commission for the portrait of the ambassador of Iraq in Tehran. Following this he was invited to Baghdad to paint King Faisal II and a number of distinguished Iraqi citizens.

His next royal subject was King Saud of Saudi Arabia, followed by

the beautiful Princess Soraya. He was now recognised as a royal court painter and the following year he was commanded to paint a full-length portrait of the Shah of Iran and another of Queen Farah. In 1958 he painted a portrait of President Eisenhower and in 1960 he held his second exhibition in Paris and continued each year until 1967. He twice exhibited in Cannes and at the Whitgift Galleries in Croydon. Some of his portraits were also hung at the annual Royal Society of Portrait Painters' exhibition at the Mall — Galleries in London.

Samimi resided for a number of years in Cannes before moving to Monte Carlo in 1970. In 1973 he gave an exhibition in Jacksonville, Florida, and another in New York in 1975. In 1975 he was commissioned to paint the interior of the

new Roman Catholic cathedral in Liverpool for Pope Paul VI.

A spectacular commission in 1981 was a full-length portrait of Princess Grace of Monaco. This portrait was exhibited in Japan with other paintings by Samimi. His latest important commission was from Sir John Swan, Premier of Bermuda. While he was in Bermuda he was inundated with commissions from various notable personalities which necessitated a number of journeys to the island.

Reza Samimi was small of stature, lightly built and possessed of a ready sense of humour. Painting was his life and he devoted himself entirely to it.

A. W. John Simmons

Reza Samimi, painter, born Meshad Persia 1919, died Monte Carlo 7 January 1991.

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