

We all know what a Bahá'í is; what is an `Abdu'l-Bahá'í ?

Mea culpa, no other or institution is accountable for this student work. Almustafa and Almuhtada are reflections Kahlil Gibran created as Medium and Mirror to portray `Abdu'l-Bahá's light on his soul.



Kahlil Gibran, 29 years of age, when he met Abdu'l-Bahá.

My name is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My qualification is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My reality is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. My praise is 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Thralldom to the Blessed Perfection is my glorious and refulgent diadem, and servitude to all the human race my perpetual religion . . . No name, no title, no mention, no commendation have I, nor will ever have, except 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This is my longing. This is my greatest yearning. This is my eternal life. This is my everlasting glory.



`Abdu'l-Bahá, Arabic for Servant of the Glory

When this student was in high school more than 50 years ago, an elderly Baha'i woman by the name of Ruth Moffett came to our town to give a talk on the correlation between the laser (Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation) beam and the Baha'i teachings. She was 93 years of age at the time. She was quite amazing in her astute correlations of salient relationships between the laser beam, its intensity, focus, dazzling reality, manifold uses and the Bahá'í revelation. She became close friends with my mother, LaRue Keys. As a consequence of that evolving friendship, my mother accompanied Ruth on her second pilgrimage to the Holy Land as her assistant.



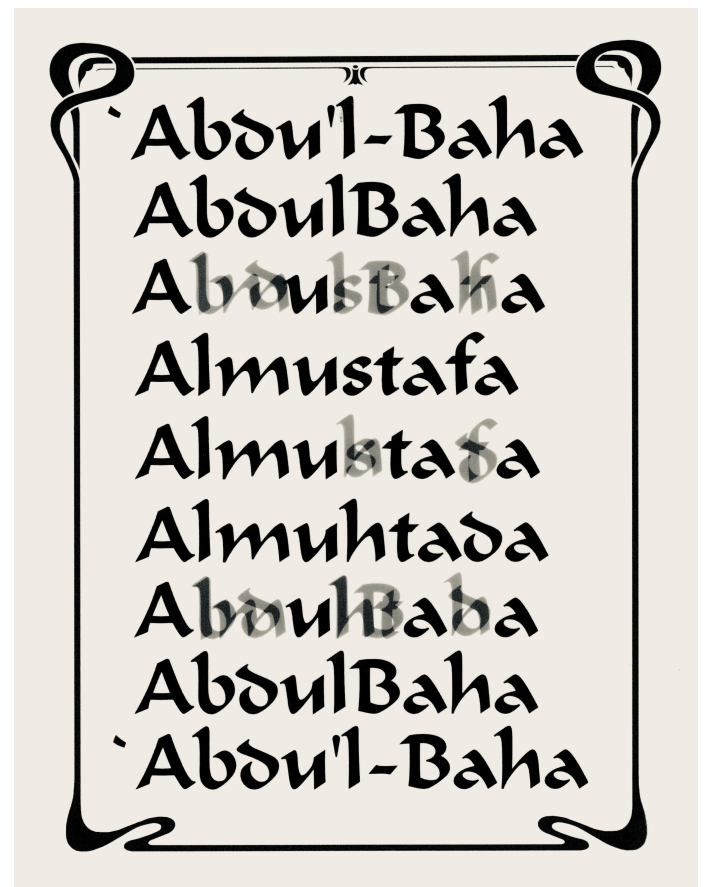
Ruth Moffett, 1973

Ruth had taught the Bahá'í faith through all of her life with many remarkable documented deeds. As it would follow, Ruth knew a significant number of well-known persons. She was a friend of Albert Einstein. When he would come to Chicago, they would get together at his hotel and say prayers. She knew George Washington Carver and talked with him about his inspiration for the creation of peanut butter from reading the Old Testament. And she also knew Kahlil Gibran.

Gibran disclosed to her that he wrote the Prophet inspired by `Abdu'l-Bahá. Gibran confided to her that he had worries about covert agents of the Lebanon government attacking him because of his political and religious positions not being in line with government and public position within Lebanon. He was becoming one of the Lebanon's most famous personages. His legitimate suspicions and concerns are historically documented in the biographies about him.

Gibran had written and published three books in Arabic prior to meeting `Abdu'l-Bahá in 1912.

Gibran informed Ruth Moffett that `Abdu'l-Bahá advised him not to write openly about the Bahá'í Faith or `Abdu'l-Bahá himself. Therefore, he decided to should write about it discreetly, as a poet.



Gibran informed Ruth Moffett that he left a clue as to who The Prophet was written about. He said that he changed the consonants in `Abdu'l-Bahá's name and left the vowels all in the original position as the indicator, `Abdu'l-Bahá name was encrypted as Almustafa.

In Gibran's international masterpiece, The Prophet, which has been translated into hundreds of languages, he tells the story of a divinely kind and wise man on the day of departure from among populous who has come to love him. Almustafa's story conveys very profoundly the sense of gratitude and loss analogous to the American Baha'i community's feelings of `Abdu'l-Bahá's impending departure from New York where Gibran lived, thus concluding His sojourn among us for 239 days. The impact and power of that sojourn is conveyed by this documentary video, The Luminous Journey.

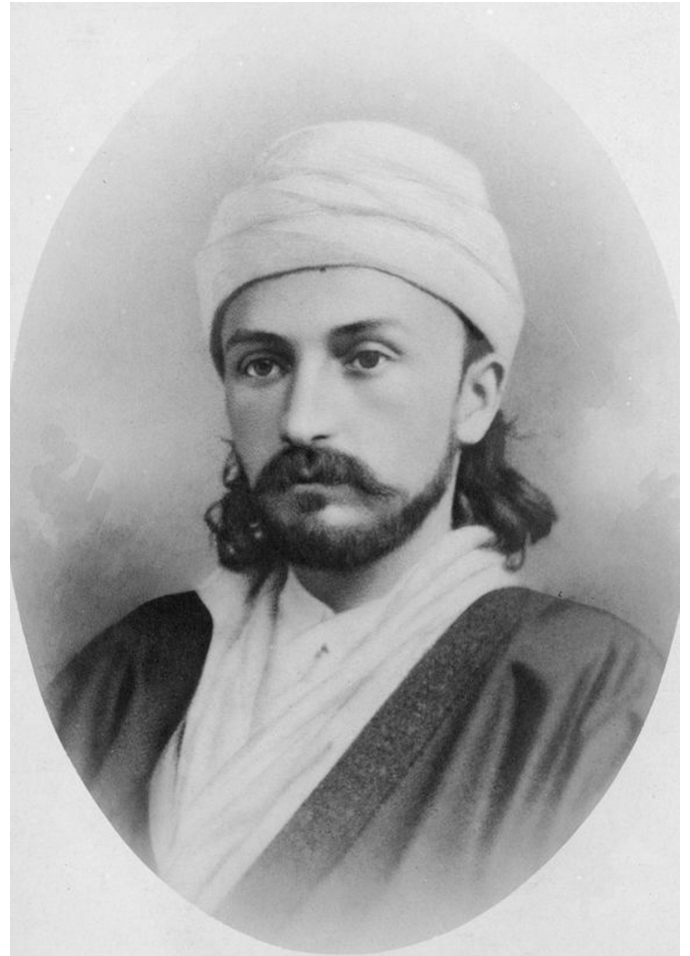
<https://youtu.be/KfT-g7tpDil?feature=shared>

When Ruth shared this story about Almustafa's name with the Keys family, this student went to the family collection of Gibran books and examined each of them for other personal names.



Kahlil Gibran's writings have always held a place of high regard in the Keys family. We read from him at our funerals, at our weddings, and the times of great import. In his book *The Voice of the Master*, which describes the master's death and how afterwards his disciple comes forward and begins to speak with the "voice of the master" that character's name is Almuhtada. I found the same vowels in the same positions.

It is well documented throughout the Bahá'í history that the Baha'i's love to call `Abdu'l-Bahá the Master. This is because his Father, Bahá'u'lláh, referred to him by the title, the Master. So the voice of the master identifies `Abdu'l-Bahá on two levels. He took the duties and service to the Manifestation of God as his life work. He mastered His own self. He was a master servant. It is a historical note, at the age of nine years, Abbás, asked his Father if He would make him a servant. Bahá'u'lláh consented.



`Abdu'l-Bahá's passport photograph to allow transportation to the prison city of Akká.

As an adult, 23 years of age, `Abdu'l-Bahá accepted voluntarily imprisonment with no sentence against him that he might continue to serve his Father during His incarceration for Bahá'í religious writings. When the governor officials declined to allow `Abdu'l-Bahá to join his father in the impending extension of exile and imprisonment `Abdu'l-Bahá petitioned higher government officials, and was declined. He further sought and requested assistance from past government officials who regarded him highly for help, including the previous governor of Adriánople. Eventually `Abdu'l-Bahá's case was won, that he might be exiled and imprisoned with Bahá'u'lláh. When the time came for the intensification of Bahá'u'lláh's exile from Adrianople to the to the unknown destination (Akka prison, the horrible infamous penal colony of the Ottoman Empire), the government would not pay for the transportation of His family who wished to be with Him. As a result, `Abdu'l-Bahá had to pay his and the family's way to prison.

After Bahá'u'lláh's death in 1892, because of His son's profound humility, fidelity to the Baha'i principles, and service to humanity, He is identified by Bahá'u'lláh's writings as the Most Great Branch, as the Mystery of God, as the Exemplar of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings (the perfect Baha'i mirror), the Interpreter, the Center of the Covenant of the Baha'i Cause in Bahá'u'lláh's will and testament, the Kitab-i-Ahd.

Bahá'u'lláh counsels us on how to become Bahá'í:
"Be generous in prosperity, and thankful in adversity. Be worthy of the trust of thy neighbor, and look upon him with a bright and friendly face. Be a treasure to the poor, an admonisher to the rich, an answerer to the cry of the needy, a preserver of the sanctity of thy pledge. Be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be unjust to no man, and show all meekness to all men. Be as a lamp unto them that walk in darkness, a joy to the sorrowful, a sea for the thirsty, a haven for the distressed, an upholder and defender of the victim of oppression. Let integrity and uprightness distinguish all thine acts. Be a home for the stranger, a balm to the suffering, a tower of strength for the fugitive. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be an ornament to the countenance of truth, a crown to the brow of fidelity, a pillar of the temple of righteousness, a breath of life to the body of mankind, an ensign of the hosts of justice, a luminary above the horizon of virtue, a dew to the soil of the human heart, an ark on the ocean of knowledge, a sun in the heaven of bounty, a gem on the diadem of wisdom, a shining light in the firmament of thy generation, a fruit upon the tree of humility. We pray God to protect thee from the heat of jealousy and the cold of hatred."

As you study the life of `Abdu'l-Bahá, you will find He was all of these ideals.

`Abdu'l-Bahá's imprisonment lasted for 40 years until the Young Turks Revolution, in 1908, freed all all religious and political prisoners.

Eighteen years after the Bahá'u'lláh's passing in 1892, `Abdu'l-Bahá, at sixty-six years of age, recognized His obligation to come to the western world to convey the importance of his Father's teachings and the occurrence of His presence on earth.

Kahlil Gibran met `Abdu'l-Bahá when He came to the United States in 1912. They met on many occasions. Gibran did two drawings of `Abdu'l-Bahá. The drawing that is well known publicly is provided above.

The lesser known portrait was a quick practice sketch made before the formal portrait. This photograph image was a gift to our family that Ruth Moffat possessed.



In the practice sketch, this student sees to the right of `Abdu'l-Bahá's face another subtle collection of facial features. You can also see below a diagonal cross. Adjacent to the cross you can see an outline of a pear or other fruit. The left lower corner of the sketch shows a earlier fragment figure of a human partially seated or kneeling.



The halo that Gibran perceived about `Abdu'l-Bahá's head denotes and documents Gibran's disposition towards `Abdu'l-Bahá.

The following are excerpts of Juliet Thompson's narrative relayed by Marzieh Gail, published in World Order magazine of activities and contact between `Abdu'l-Bahá and Gibran and later events: "A Syrian brought him to see me--can't even remember his name. Kahlil always said I was his first friend in New York. We became very, very great friends, and all of his books--The Madman, The Forerunner, The Son of Man, The Prophet--I heard in manuscript. He always gave me his books. I liked The Prophet best. I don't believe that there was any connection between 'Abdu'l-Baha and The Prophet. But he told me that he thought of the 'Abdu'l-Baha all through. He said that he was going to write another book with 'Abdu'l-Baha as the center and all the contemporaries of 'Abdu'l-Baha speaking. He died before he wrote it. He told me definitely that [the book] The Son of Man was influenced by 'Abdu'l-Baha.

"Time passed. I told him (Kahlil) the Master was coming. He asked me if I would request the Master to sit for him. The Master gave him one hour at 6:30

one morning. He made an outstanding head. It doesn't look like the Master — very faint likeness. Great power through the shoulders. A great radiance in the face. It's not a portrait of the Master but it's the work of a great artist. I do consider him a great artist.

"He was very modest and retiring in his personal life. He'd never met the Master before, and that began his friendship. He simply adored the Master. He was with Him whenever he could be. He would come over here to this house (48 West 10th) to see the Master. In Boston, he was often with the Master. All that's sort of blurred because it's so long ago. He told me two stories that I thought priceless: One day when he was driving with the Master in Boston, 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: 'Why do they build their houses with flat roofs?' Kahlil didn't answer for a moment, and then the Master answered Himself: 'Because they themselves are domeless.' Another time he was with the Master when two women came in. They were women of fashion, and they asked trifling questions. One of them wanted to know whether she was going to be married again. The Master was pacing the floor. Drawing in His breath, expelling it, His eyes turning from side to side. When they left, 'Gilded dirt!' He said. (It is noted Abdu'l-Baha and Gibran knew Arabic. This was likely the language of their conversation. `Abdu'l-Bahá never made casual disparaging remarks about anyone. His words could have been gilded earth, or gilded soil, or gilded dust, which Gibran verbally translated to Juliet as gilded dirt.)

"The Master went away and Kahlil settled down into writing his books. But he often talked of Him, most sympathetically and most lovingly. But the only thing was, he couldn't accept an intermediary for himself. He wanted his direct contact.

"Then one night, years afterward, the Master's motion picture was going to be shown at the Bahá'í Center.... He sat beside me on the front row and he saw the Master come to life again for him in that picture. And he began to sob. We had asked him to speak a few words that night. When the time came for him to speak, he controlled himself and jumped up on the platform and then, my dear, still weeping before us all he said : 'I declare that 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Manifestation of God for this day!' Of course he got it wrong — but.... He was weeping and he didn't say anything more. He got down and he sat beside me, and he kept on sobbing and sobbing and sobbing. Seeing the picture — it brought it all back. He took my two hands and said, 'You have opened for me a door tonight.' Then he fled the hall.

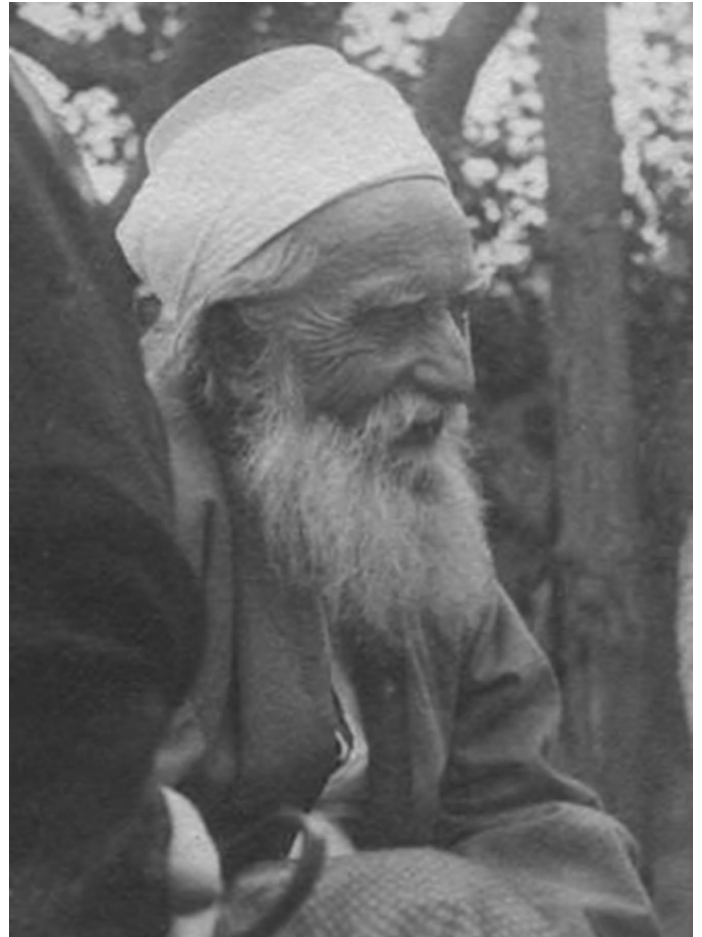
"I never heard anything about it again. He never referred to it again."

Many years ago, my brother, Clint, and I would talk about Gibran and his relationship to the Baha'i faith. Some of Clint's research brought him to the conclusion that Gibran thought so highly of `Abdu'l-Bahá, that he could not imagine any person greater. It is true `Abdu'l-Bahá's humility was profound beyond measure. Clint's perception of Gibran's understanding extended further. He proposed that Gibran thought `Abdu'l-Bahá was deflecting peoples recognition of His own high station by saying He was there on behalf of the Glory of the Father, Bahá'u'lláh.

So this student's perspective is that Khalil Gibran is an **`Abdu'l-Bahá'í**, rather than coming ah the conclusion that he was emotionally overwrought and he didn't know what he's saying that night. I take him at his word. He did not use words carelessly. He used words profoundly and effectively. He wrote at least three books straight from his heart, conveying the impact of `Abdu'l-Bahá had on his soul and his life. To lessen his words and decide he didn't know what his words meant is disrespectful. Furthermore, this student believes that everything will be made right for Kahlil Gibran because of his dedication to beauty, truth, meaning, authenticity, the value of human suffering, and his services to humanity. Please God, may `Abdu'l-Bahá, the son, usher him into the presence of the Father.

It is of note that Juliet Thompson showed respect to Gibran by not inquiring about his declaration statement that night and left it to him to discuss it if he desired to.

When this student considers how `Abdu'l-Bahá felt about Kahlil Gibran, this joyful image comes to mind.



`Abdu'l-Bahá in his loving guidance advised us "Be happy, don't be unhappy, follow your heart."

written by elderly Baha'i student
Clyde Arthur Keys, 2026

Kahlil Gibran, as a young man, photograph
available at Getty images

https://bahaipedia.org/Ruth_Moffett

[Ruth Moffett - Bahaipedia, an encyclopedia about the Bahá'í Faith](#)

World Order article: **Juliet Remembers Gibran: As told to Marzieh Gail**

<https://bahai-library.com/>

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