

Uncle Samad

Adapted from (Stories About Baha'i Funds page 31), by Gloria Faizi

In 1952, the Guardian sent a message to the Bahá'í World and called upon them to contribute to construction of the beautiful superstructure that was planned to be built over the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel. In his letter he emphasized the importance of this undertaking, reminded them of the sacrifice of the Báb in giving His life for the Cause of God, and encouraged them to give all they could for the beautification of His Shrine.

Travelling teachers were sent by the National Spiritual Assembly to remote parts of the country to make sure that Bahá'ís everywhere had heard the glad tidings and were given the opportunity to participate in the construction of this unique building.

Late one night, the Bahá'ís of a small village got together to hear a visitor explain about the precious superstructure that was going to be built over the Shrine of the Báb. He told them of the Guardian's message to the Baha'is of the World.

After the meeting, the members of the Local Spiritual Assembly and the visitor sat together to read the donations and count the contributions that had been made. When one of the pledges was read, the room fell silent. Someone said, "There's been a mistake. Uncle Samad cannot possibly have a hundred tumans to give." At that time a hundred tumans was a lot of money to contribute. They thought that since Uncle Samad was illiterate he had asked someone to write the pledge for him and that person made a mistake."

"Who's Uncle Samad?" asked the visitor, and this is what he heard: Uncle Samad was a devoted Bahá'í, over the age of sixty, who was quite poor. All that he possessed was a donkey. He would load his donkey with small items of inexpensive goods, which he would take on credit from shopkeepers who trusted him; then he would go to the smaller towns and villages to sell these goods. Coming back from his rounds, he would pay his debts to the shopkeepers and live on the marginal profit he had made from his sales. And now Uncle Samad had pledged to give a hundred túmáns for the Shrine of the Báb! Surely there must be a mistake. The donation was not included in the total amount gathered that night. The Local Spiritual Assembly would investigate the mistake.

The next morning the visitor was sitting with the host in whose house the meeting had been held, when there was a knock on the door. Uncle Samad had come to give his

hundred túmáns. "I know it is not much," he said, "but I hope it will be accepted by Bahà'u'llah."

The host asked, "How can you possibly afford to give this much? We all know you have nothing but a donkey." "You are right," smiled Uncle Samad. "I sold my donkey this morning for a hundred túmáns." The host looked at him in sheer astonishment. "Surely", he said, "God did not expect you to do such a thing. How will you earn your living now?" There was a trace of impatience in Uncle Samad's voice as he replied, "I still have my two legs, haven't I? I can carry the goods on my own back." Then he added in a softer tone, "The Báb gave His life for this Cause and our Guardian has asked us to give all we can for His Shrine; how can a servant refuse the request of His Lord?" And, as he rose to go, he added, "Please don't worry; Baha'u'llah will take care of me."

Two years later the visitor found himself in the same village once more and ran into Uncle Samad. He asked him about his life. Uncle Samad laughed out loud. "What did I tell you?" he said, "God has looked after me very well. I gave Him a donkey and He gave me a mule. Now I can carry a lot of stuff around and am earning much more than I did before."

Uncle Samad had seen the opportunity of a lifetime and had seized it without hesitation! He had known the secret of right living.

Our beloved Guardian has shared this secret with us:

*"We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by the fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good - **this is the secret of right living.**"*