

All That Is Best In Life

based on an account told by 'Abdu'l-Baha
from *Memorials of the Faithful*, pp. 40-42
used in Book 2, Lesson 5

pronunciation help

Mirza

mere (rhymes with here) + **zaw**
(rhymes with law)

Mahmud

mah (rhymes with man, followed by a long "h" sound) + **mood** (rhymes with food)

Pronunciation help

Aqa

awe (rhymes with law) + **gaw**
(rhymes with law)

Rida

re (rhymes with red) + **zaw**
(rhymes with law)

Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida were like lamps - lamps lit with God's love. They served others in every imaginable way. Their services were many - too many to count.

Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida wanted nothing more than to be close to Baha'u'llah and to make Him and His followers happy. They wanted to live in Baghdad because that's where Baha'u'llah was living. But they had no money for a house. They could only afford to live in a single room with seven others who also wanted to be near Baha'u'llah. There was hardly room for them to move around in this

small room. But still, they were so happy to be close to Baha'u'llah that they thought they were in heaven.

Sometimes they would chant prayers all through the night. They would chant prayers until the sun would rise. During the day, they would go out and work. By nightfall, all



together they would have earned a few coins that they would spend on their evening meal.

Some days one would earn a few coins, while the other would not be able to earn anything. On these days, the one who had some money would buy whatever small amount of food that he could afford, and share it with the other seven. Even on these days they were perfectly content with their simple life. Even on these days they were really happy.



When Baha'u'llah left Baghdad and set out for Constantinople, a great caravan of people, including Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida, went with Him. The caravan traveled a distance of 50 kilometers each day, and rested at night. The travelers faced many hardships. Sometimes they had no food, and many of them fell sick during the journey.

Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida walked in front of Baha'u'llah's carriage the entire way. After each day's journey, both were always tired and weak. But as soon as the caravan would stop to rest for the night, Mirza Mahmud and Aqa

original stories

Rida would begin preparing dinner for everyone.



Once everyone had eaten, the two would collect and wash all the dishes and cookware. Most often this would take them until midnight. Not until this work was finished would they rest. There were times when they had no more than two or three hours of sleep at night. Then, at daybreak they would wake up, pack everything, and set out again, on foot, in front of the Bahá'u'lláh's carriage.

What an important service they were able to give. What an honor they had - to walk close beside Baha'u'llah - from the start of the

journey, at Baghdad, to the end, in Constantinople.

Aqa Rida and Mirza Mahmud shined with God's love. They were detached from everything but God. These two great men showed us all that is best in life. They made everyone happy. They



provided whatever anyone asked for. They never hurt or offended anyone. They were trustworthy, loyal, and truthful.

Because of these things Baha'u'llah showered His love on them. He always asked after them and they were always able to spend time with him. He would always tell them how happy He was with them.

Example Discussion Questions for Story

- › In the story, Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida lived with little comforts of home and their own room. What special qualities did they have? (answer: detachment) Detachment is one of the qualities of being a “true seeker”.
- › Do you know what detachment means? (most will probably say that they don't). It means that we can live without the things we want, but are not necessary to have.
- › If you were with Mirza Mahmud and Aqa Rida, what do you think you would miss most? (e.g. own room, lots of sleep in a comfortable bed, different kinds of food, etc.)
- › Do you think they also missed the same things as you? If so, why do you think they just didn't leave and go live in a comfortable house?
- › Think of some things that you really really want. Do you think you will be prepared to give up some of your other favorite things to get that special thing? If you are prepared to give them up, then that means you are detached from them.