

Bahá'u'lláh
The One Promised
in All Scriptures

God's Most Glorious
Gift to Humankind

Hushidar Hugh Motlagh, Ed.D.



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Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV)

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The Holy Bible, New King James Version (NKJ)

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Dedicated to

*Michael and Yvonne Thomas, who have
devoted so much of their time and talent to
spread the “Knowledge of Bahá’u’lláh”
—the Glory of God.*



For the earth shall be filled with the
knowledge of ***the glory of the Lord***, as
the waters cover the sea.

Habakkuk 2:14

Did I not tell you that if you have faith
you will see ***the glory of God?***

Christ (John 11:40 NEB)

As truly as I live, all the earth shall be
filled with ***the glory of the Lord***.

Numbers 14:21

Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and ***the glory of the Lord*** rises upon
you.”

Isaiah 60:1 NIV

He, verily, is come with His Kingdom,
and all the atoms cry aloud: ‘***Lo! The
Lord is come in His great majesty!***’

Bahá’u’lláh

“Blazon-His-Name” Series

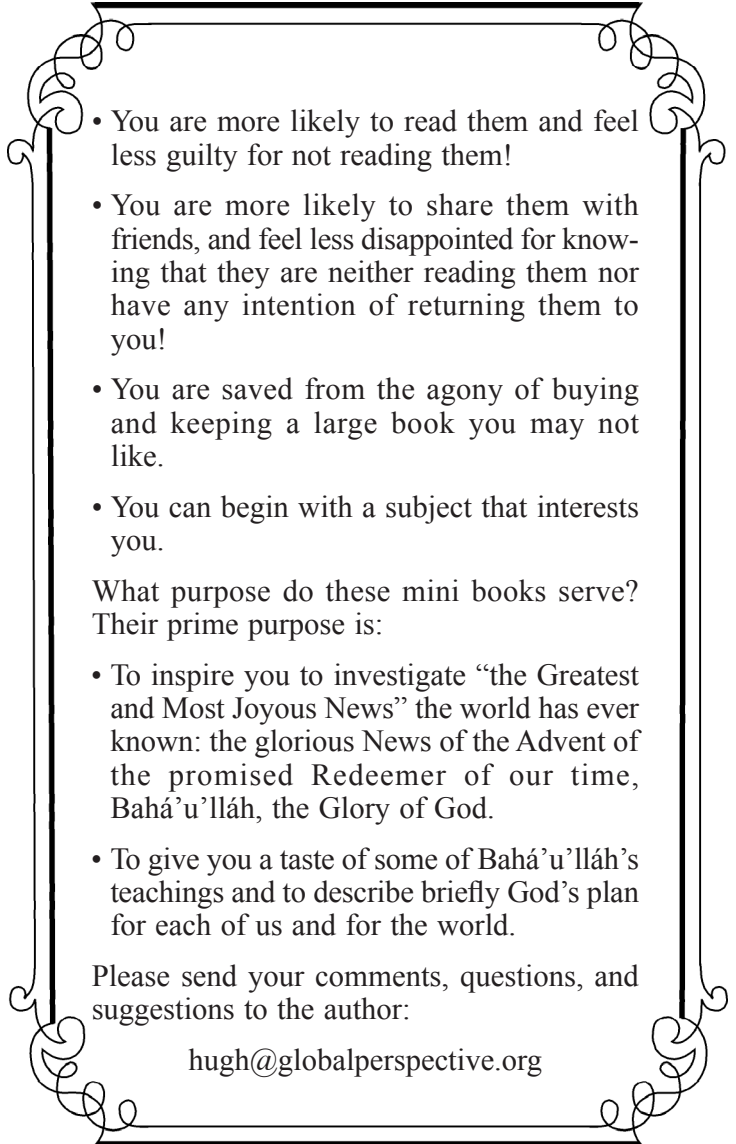
Mini Books

A Blessing for Busy People!

Dear Seeker of Knowledge:

This is the state of the western world: “There is so much to do and so little time to do it.” Many people fail to spare enough time for their families, let alone for reading a whole book on impractical and elusive subjects, such as who are we, why are we here, and what on earth are we doing? Life is too short to spend it in search of answers that may never be found.

This volume is written for those who can find a little time for their soul. It is one of a series of mini books on human purpose and destiny, written in response to the changing times. These books will make your life a little easier in a number of ways:

- 
- You are more likely to read them and feel less guilty for not reading them!
 - You are more likely to share them with friends, and feel less disappointed for knowing that they are neither reading them nor have any intention of returning them to you!
 - You are saved from the agony of buying and keeping a large book you may not like.
 - You can begin with a subject that interests you.

What purpose do these mini books serve?
Their prime purpose is:

- To inspire you to investigate “the Greatest and Most Joyous News” the world has ever known: the glorious News of the Advent of the promised Redeemer of our time, Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God.
- To give you a taste of some of Bahá’u’lláh’s teachings and to describe briefly God’s plan for each of us and for the world.

Please send your comments, questions, and suggestions to the author:

hugh@globalperspective.org

Time does not wait for anyone. We must choose our destiny, or “the relentless course of events” will make all the choices for us.

True wisdom lies in gathering the precious things out of each day as it goes by.



The Lord looks down from heaven...to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Psalms 14:2 NIV

If my people...will humble themselves and pray and seek my face...then will I hear from heaven...

II Chronicles 7:14 NIV

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1. ***Do You Really Know Who You Are?*** The glory and the joy of knowing yourself
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Evidence for Bahá'u'lláh and the Bahá'í Faith

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15. ***Evidence for Bahá'u'lláh***

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Behold! I shall come upon you like a thief!

17. ***By Their Fruits Ye Shall Know Them.***
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22. ***If There is One Way, Why Are There So Many Religions?***

23. ***Why Does God Test us and How?***

24. ***The Greatest Lesson of History***

25. ***If This is a New Day, Why are People Sleeping?***

26. ***You Are Invited.*** Are you dressed for the banquet of heaven?

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Part I

Who Is Bahá'u'lláh?

Hold Thou the hand of this seeker who hath set his face towards Thee, O my Lord, and draw him out of the depths of his vain imaginations, that the light of certainty may shine brightly above the horizon of his heart...¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Deny me not, O my Lord, what is with Thee, and suffer me not to be forgetful of what Thou didst desire in Thy days. Thou art, verily, the Almighty, the Most Exalted, the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.²

Bahá'u'lláh

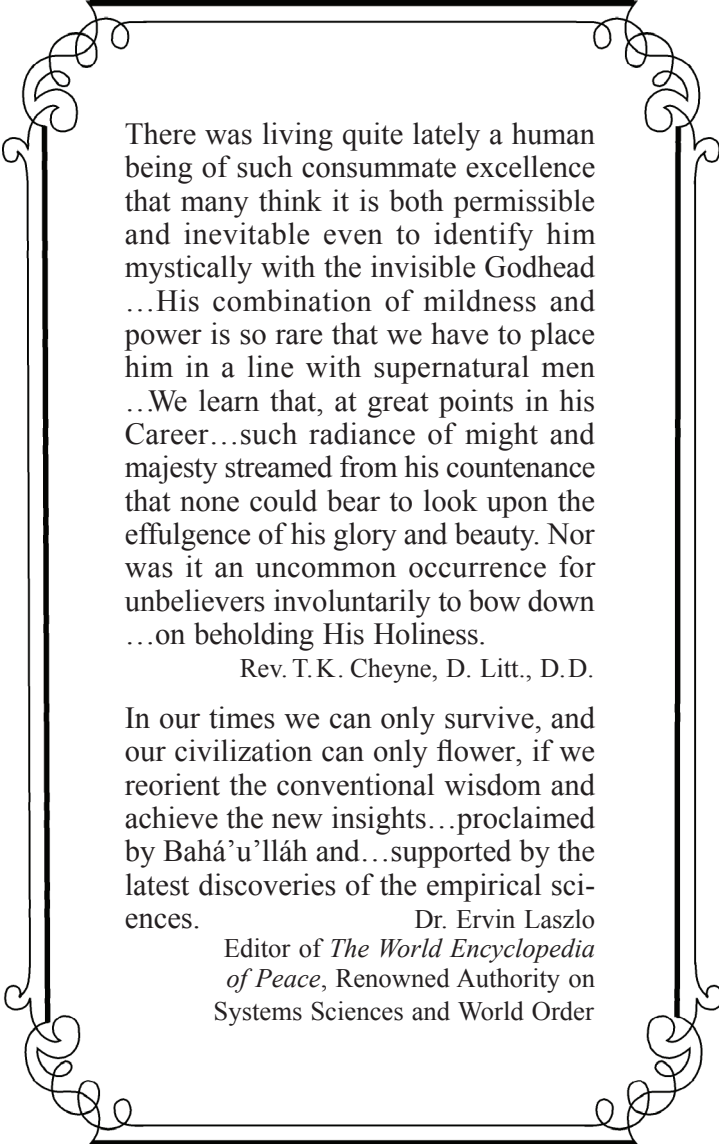
Tributes

What Do Others Say?

In this age of doubt and pessimism, most people are reluctant to listen to anyone who claims divine authority, who comes with such an ambitious plan: to remake the state of the world, and renew the souls of humankind. At the outset, they may need reassurance from others—from impartial thinkers. If that is how you feel, the following tributes may be helpful. All of them, except the last one, come from non-Bahá'ís:

Bahá'u'lláh was not only the supreme genius of the Bahá'í Movement; he was without question one of the supreme spiritual geniuses of history. There have been few in any age to compare with him in point of insight, vision, lofty thought and noble speech.

Dr. John Holmes, Minister



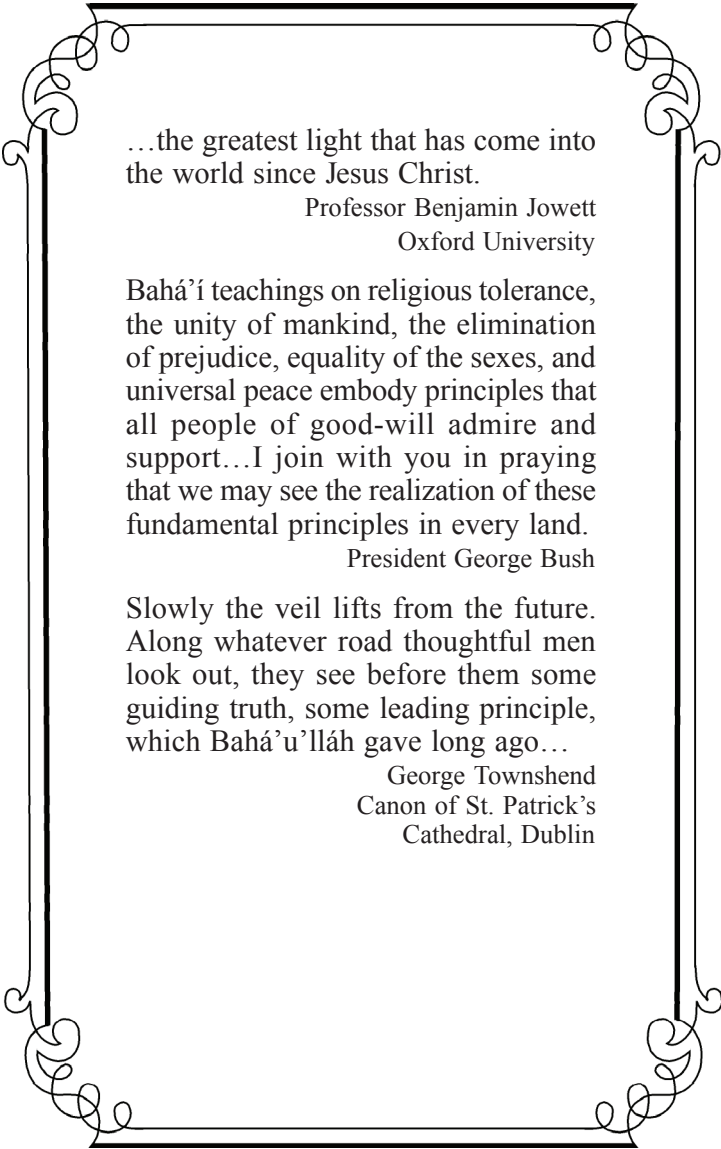
There was living quite lately a human being of such consummate excellence that many think it is both permissible and inevitable even to identify him mystically with the invisible Godhead ...His combination of mildness and power is so rare that we have to place him in a line with supernatural men ..We learn that, at great points in his Career...such radiance of might and majesty streamed from his countenance that none could bear to look upon the effulgence of his glory and beauty. Nor was it an uncommon occurrence for unbelievers involuntarily to bow down ...on beholding His Holiness.

Rev. T.K. Cheyne, D. Litt., D.D.

In our times we can only survive, and our civilization can only flower, if we reorient the conventional wisdom and achieve the new insights...proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh and...supported by the latest discoveries of the empirical sciences.

Dr. Ervin Laszlo

Editor of *The World Encyclopedia of Peace*, Renowned Authority on Systems Sciences and World Order



...the greatest light that has come into
the world since Jesus Christ.

Professor Benjamin Jowett
Oxford University

Bahá'í teachings on religious tolerance,
the unity of mankind, the elimination
of prejudice, equality of the sexes, and
universal peace embody principles that
all people of good-will admire and
support...I join with you in praying
that we may see the realization of these
fundamental principles in every land.

President George Bush

Slowly the veil lifts from the future.
Along whatever road thoughtful men
look out, they see before them some
guiding truth, some leading principle,
which Bahá'u'lláh gave long ago...

George Townshend
Canon of St. Patrick's
Cathedral, Dublin

1

Who Is Bahá'u'lláh?

What is Bahá'u'lláh's goal? And why should everyone know Him? All sacred Scriptures have promised the Advent of a World Teacher and Redeemer who will come to bring peace and a plan for a Kingdom that mirrors the one in heaven (Matt. 6:10). Bahá'u'lláh declares Himself to be that Redeemer. Consider the following brief references from the Bible about "the promise," and the references that follow them from Bahá'u'lláh (meaning *the Glory of God*) about Himself, "the Promised One:"

The Promise: ...the desire of all nations shall come... Haggai 2:7

The Fulfillment: He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty...Better is this for you than all ye possess.³ Bahá'u'lláh

The Promise: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father... Christ (Matt. 16:27)

The Fulfillment: I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory...⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

The Promise: I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also... Christ (John 14:3 NEB)

The Fulfillment: Lo! He is come...invested with conclusive proof and evidence.⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

The Promise: When the Lord...shall appear in His glory. Psalms 102:16

The Fulfillment: The Lord is come in His great glory!⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

The time foreordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled.⁷ Bahá'u'lláh

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh are known as ***Bahá'ís*** and their religion as ***the Bahá'í Faith***. The history

of the Bahá'í Faith dates back to 1844, when ***the Báb*** (the Gate of God)—Bahá'u'lláh's Herald—declared the dawning of a new age. The Báb faced severe rejection and persecution. He was imprisoned, exiled, and executed in 1850 by a firing squad of 750 soldiers!

In 1863 Bahá'u'lláh declared that He is the One promised by all the great Messengers and Redeemers of the past. ***The Bible predicts the Advent of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and the critical events of their lives more than a thousand times!*** (See the list of suggested readings at the end of this book.) Both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are buried in Israel, not far from Nazareth.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote the equivalent of a hundred volumes of Scriptures. His Works contain the divine Plan for creating a world of peace and prosperity, and a Blueprint to guide each of us toward our everlasting destiny. Bahá'u'lláh spoke with the same authority with which Jesus and all the other great Messengers and Redeemers spoke. He endured every conceivable pain and suffering, including 40 years of imprisonment and exile, to liberate humankind from ignorance and prejudice, and to help each of us attain our highest potential and our divine destiny.

We have borne it all [suffering] with the utmost willingness and resignation, so that the souls of men may be edified, and the Word of God be exalted...My grief exceedeth all the woes to which Jacob gave vent, and all the afflictions of Job are but a part of My sorrows!¹⁸ Bahá'u'lláh

Were I to recount to thee the tale of the things that have befallen Me, the souls and minds of men would be incapable of sustaining its weight. God Himself beareth Me witness.⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

Thou seest and knowest full well, O my God, how He hath been made to dwell within the most desolate of cities, so that He may build up the hearts of Thy servants, and hath been willing to suffer the most grievous abasement, that Thy creatures may be exalted.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

2

Where Does the Title “Bahá’u’lláh” Come From?

A name or title in another language looks “foreign.” Do you recognize this title: “Isa Masih”? You have heard its English equivalent many times. It is “Jesus Christ” in Arabic. What does it mean?

Jesus = God Saves
Christ = The Anointed One

*God saves through His
Anointed One called Jesus*

Let us now see what ***Bahá’u’lláh*** means:

Bahá = Glory
Alláh = God
Bahá’u’lláh = the Glory of God

*God manifests His Glory
through a new Mirror called Bahá’u’lláh*

In a former age, God spoke through a Mediator entitled: ***Christ (the Anointed One)***. In this age, He has spoken through another Mediator entitled ***Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)***. Bahá'u'lláh's name is found throughout the Bible from the Books of Moses to the Book of Revelation. Never before has the title of a divine Messenger and Redeemer been so clearly and repeatedly prophesied. Consider these few examples:

Did I not tell you that if you have faith, you will see ***the Glory of God?*** Christ (John 11:40 NIV)

Let us now replace “the Glory of God” with its equivalent “Bahá'u'lláh.”

Did I not tell you that if you have faith, you will see ***Bahá'u'lláh?***

What does the preceding verse teach us? It teaches us this truth: In order to see ***the Glory of God***, we must have faith—true faith in Jesus. Has the requirement of “having faith” always been in effect? Ponder what Jesus told the Jews:

If you believed Moses, you would believe Me... Christ (John 5:46 NKJ)

What condition must a Jew meet in order to “believe” Jesus? The only condition is that he must “believe” Moses. Can anyone “believe” Moses without having true faith in Him? Thus any Jew who rejects Jesus, by his attitude and action, proves that he is not truly Jewish, for he does not have faith in Moses.

Similarly, if the required condition for seeing “the Glory of God” is ***faith***, as Jesus declares, what will happen if this condition is not met, if faith is not found on the earth?

...when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth? Christ (Luke 18:8 NIV)

When the Son of Man comes, will He find believers who will have true faith in His instructions for finding Him and recognizing Him? Did not Jesus predict that people will respond to the news of His coming as they did in the days of Noah (Luke 17:26-27)? Did He not also compare the manner of His coming to that of a thief (Rev. 3:3)? To those who lack faith, the Glory of God remains as hidden as a thief in the night, and as unknown as the true identity of Noah was in His days.

To help us see Him and recognize His Glory—to detect the heavenly thief—Jesus asked us to remain awake and watchful because only the spiritually awakened can see the Glory of God in a humble human being.

That is the day when I come like a thief! Happy the man who stays awake... Christ (Rev. 16:15 NEB)

I beseech God, exalted be His glory, that He may graciously awaken the peoples of the earth...¹ Bahá'u'lláh

The prediction that we will actually be able to ***see*** the Glory of God is confirmed in other prophecies:

It shall be that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and **see My glory** [Glory of God].
Isaiah 66:18 NKJ

I will **display** [blazon] **My glory** among the nations...
Ezekiel 39:21 NIV

...**the glory of the Lord** will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. Isaiah 40:5 NIV

...**Bahá'u'lláh** will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it.

Seeing God or the Glory of God always occurs through the inner, not outer eyes because God and His Glory are spiritual, not physical. And yet today's technology allows "all mankind together" to see "the Glory of God"—His earthly temple.

Let us consider a few more prophecies:

For the Son of Man will come in the **glory** of His **Father** [God]... Christ (Matt. 16:27 NKJ)

The preceding prophecy conveys this Message: At His Second Advent, Jesus will be immersed in the Glory of God, and He will manifest or radiate that splendor to others.

The following prophecy also confirms the same message:

When **the Lord** shall...appear **in His glory**.
Psalms 102:16

"In His glory" is equal to "Glory of God" and "Glory of the Father." Again the idea of seeing

the Glory of God is implied in the preceding prophecies.

Some prophecies declare that the time will come when all humankind will know the new name:

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of *the glory of the Lord*, as the waters cover the sea.
Habakkuk 2:14 NIV

(For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of *Bahá'u'lláh*, as the waters cover the sea.)

...as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with *the glory of the Lord*. Numbers 14:21

(...as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with *Bahá'u'lláh*.)

...let *your* [God's] *glory* be over all the earth.
Psalms 57:11 NKJ

...I will fill this house [world, faith] with *glory*...
Haggai 2:7 NIV

The topic of “the new name” is examined in detail in another volume of this series: *Bahá'u'lláh: A New Name Everyone Should Know*. The abundance of biblical prophecies about Bahá'u'lláh and the critical events of His life is beyond belief. The number of such prophecies surpasses 1,800. (Refer to the list of suggested readings at the end of this book.)

I testify, O my God, that this is the Day whereon Thy testimony hath been fulfilled, and Thy clear tokens have been manifested, and Thine utterances have been revealed, and Thy signs

have been demonstrated...and Thy proof hath been perfected...Ordain, then, O my God, for me and for whosoever hath sought Thee what beseemeth the excellence of Thy glory and the greatness of Thy majesty. No God is there but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.²

Bahá'u'lláh

3

A Call to Christians

Bahá'u'lláh claims to have fulfilled all the prophecies of the Gospel concerning the return of Christ:

He, in truth, hath come unto the world in His most great glory, and all that hath been mentioned in the Gospel hath been fulfilled.¹

Bahá'u'lláh, in His time, sent Epistles to religious leaders in general and to Pope Pius IX in particular. None of them responded to His call. The following are a few sections from His Epistles. Read these verses repeatedly and ponder their meaning and authority:

O Pope! Rend the veils asunder. He Who is the Lord of Lords is come overshadowed with clouds, and the decree hath been fulfilled by

God, the Almighty, the Unrestrained...He, verily, hath again come down from Heaven even as He came down from it the first time.* Beware that thou dispute not with Him even as the Pharisees disputed with Him (Jesus) without a clear token or proof. On His right hand flow the living waters of grace, and on His left the choice Wine of justice, whilst before Him march the angels of Paradise, bearing the banners of His signs... Dwellest thou in palaces whilst He Who is the King of Revelation [Bahá'u'lláh] liveth in the most desolate of abodes?...Arise in the name of thy Lord, the God of Mercy, amidst the peoples of the earth, and seize thou the Cup of Life...

Call thou to remembrance Him Who was the Spirit [Jesus], Who when He came, the most learned of His age pronounced judgment against Him in His own country, whilst he who was only a fisherman [Peter] believed in Him. Take heed, then, ye men of understanding heart!...Consider those who opposed the Son [Jesus], when He came unto them with sovereignty and power. How many the Pharisees who were waiting to behold Him, and were lamenting over their separation from Him! And yet, when...His beauty was unveiled, they turned aside from Him and disputed with Him...None save a very few, who were destitute of any power amongst men, turned towards His face.²

* I have come down from heaven.

Christ (John 6:38 NIV)

Christ made this promise:

...the Son of man shall come in the glory of his
Father... Christ (Matt. 16:27)

Bahá'u'lláh declares that Christ's promise is fulfilled:

Blessed be the Lord Who is the Father! He, verily, is come unto the nations in His most great majesty. Turn your faces towards Him, O concourse of the righteous... 'Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!...' My body longeth for the cross, and Mine head waiteth the thrust of the spear, in the path of the All-Merciful, that the world may be purged from its transgressions...³

Unfortunately most Christians are unaware of Bahá'u'lláh's advent and the abundance of evidence He presents in support of His claim. Among Christian leaders and scholars, perhaps one in a thousand has read even a single book about Bahá'u'lláh. If they take time to investigate the monumental evidence for Him, they will see Him shine as brightly as the sun.

"A little boy wandered away from his mother while she was shopping in the mall. A security guard found him wandering around by himself and took him to the mall's main office. There the guards bought him ice cream and told him jokes to keep him amused. Finally, his distraught mother showed up. Sobbing, she gathered the child in her arms. He blissfully kept eating his ice cream. In response to her questions the boy simply said, 'I didn't know I was lost until I was found.'" Only when people are

found by Bahá'u'lláh, will they realize what they have been missing.

So far Bahá'u'lláh is unknown to most of the peoples of the world. As Christ predicted, what happened in the days of Noah is being repeated again:

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah's time."

Christ (Matt. 24:37 NAB)

The new Day has dawned, the Sun has risen and is shining with supreme splendor. But for most people, its glory is concealed behind the clouds:

That day will be...a day of...clouds...

Zeph. 1:15 NIV

He [the Promised One] was robed in a cloud
...his face was like the sun...

Rev. 10:1 NIV

I hope this book will scatter some of the clouds. I pray that it will awaken the conscience of Christians everywhere, because the cost of ignoring or denying the divine Call is too great to contemplate.

Bahá'u'lláh prays repeatedly for all those in search of truth and offers prayers they can say:

Unto Thee be praise, O Lord my God! I entreat Thee, by Thy signs that have encompassed the entire creation...to rend asunder the veils that shut me out from Thee, that I may...be immersed beneath the ocean of Thy nearness and pleasure.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Suffer me not, O my Lord, to be deprived of the knowledge of Thee in Thy days, and divest me

not of the robe of Thy guidance. Give me to drink of the river that is life indeed...that mine eyes may be opened, and my face be illumined, and my heart be assured, and my soul be enlightened, and my steps be made firm.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by this Fire which blazeth and rageth in the world of creation, to rend asunder the veils that have hindered me from appearing before the throne of Thy majesty, and from standing at the door of Thy gate. Do Thou ordain for me, O my Lord, every good thing Thou didst send down in Thy Book, and suffer me not to be far removed from the shelter of Thy mercy.

Powerful art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, the Most Generous.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

Part II

The Story of Bahá'u'lláh and His Herald, the Báb

The true beginning of wisdom is the desire to learn.

Wisdom of Solomon 6:17 NEB

The source of all learning is the knowledge of God, exalted be His Glory...¹

Bahá'u'lláh

I pray Thee, O Thou Who causest the dawn to appear...that Thou wilt grant that we may draw near unto what Thou didst destine for us by Thy favor and bounty, and to be far removed from whatsoever may be repugnant unto Thee. Give us, then, to drink from the hands of Thy grace every day and every moment of our lives of the waters that are life indeed, O Thou Who art the Most Merciful!²

Bahá'u'lláh

4

Who Was Bahá'u'lláh?

In examining the evidence for the One who has claimed to speak the Word of God, the most vital questions are these: Who was He? What was He like? How did He live? What happened to Him? Here are a few features of Bahá'u'lláh's life, adapted mostly from a book entitled *Some Answered Questions*:

Bahá'u'lláh was born in 1817, in Persia, to a rich and noble family. He died in 1892, as a prisoner and exile in the Holy Land. As an infant, He astonished His parents by His uniqueness and distinctions. His father related that He would never cry or scream. "You don't know," he said, "what a potential He has, how intelligent He is! He is like a flame of fire, and in His tender years superior to young people."³ Bahá'u'lláh's father was so captivated by Him that

he wrote a piece of poetry in his son's honor, inscribed it on a plaque, and hung it on the wall of a summer mansion in which Bahá'u'lláh lived. The content of the poetry shows that the father sensed the divine destiny of his Son:

When thou enterest the sacred abode of the Beloved say:

"I am at thy command.

This is the home of love; enter with reverence.

This is holy ground; remove thy shoes when thou enterest here."⁴

People were attracted by Bahá'u'lláh's many distinctions. He did not attend any school, yet astonished people by His wisdom and knowledge. Even His enemies testified to His greatness. Great thinkers flocked to His presence, asking Him their most difficult questions. They said, "This man is unique in all perfections."

He had an extraordinary power of attraction, which was felt by all. People always crowded around Him. Ministers and people of the Court would surround Him, and the children also were devoted to Him. When He was only thirteen or fourteen years old He became renowned for His learning. He would converse on any subject and solve any problem presented to Him. In large gatherings He would...explain intricate religious questions. All of them used to listen to Him with the greatest interest.⁵

He showed no interest in politics:

When Bahá'u'lláh was twenty two years old, His father died, and the Government wished Him to succeed to His father's position in the Ministry...but Bahá'u'lláh did not accept the offer. Then the Prime Minister said: "Leave him to himself. Such a position is unworthy of him. He has some higher aim in view. I cannot understand him, but I am convinced that he is destined for some lofty career. His thoughts are not like ours. Let him alone."⁶

Bahá'u'lláh was known especially for His generosity and love for the poor:

He was most generous, giving abundantly to the poor. None who came to Him were turned away. The doors of His house were open to all.⁷

One day Bahá'u'lláh sent 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His eldest Son, to inspect the work of the shepherds who were taking care of His sheep. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was a small child at the time, and the persecutions against Bahá'u'lláh and His family had not yet started. Bahá'u'lláh then had a good deal of land in the mountains and owned large herds of sheep. When the inspection was finished and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was ready to leave, the man who had accompanied Him said, "It is your father's custom to leave a gift for each shepherd." 'Abdu'l-Bahá became silent for a while, because He did not have anything to give them. The man, however, insisted that the shepherds were expecting something. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá had an idea that made Him very happy! He would give the shepherds the sheep they were taking care of! Bahá'u'lláh

was very much pleased when He heard about 'Abdu'l-Bahá's generous thoughts towards the shepherds. He humorously remarked that everyone had better take good care of 'Abdu'l-Bahá because someday He would give Himself away. Of course, this is exactly what 'Abdu'l-Bahá did for the rest of His life. He gave everything He had, each and every moment of His life, to humanity, to unite us and bring us true happiness.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh was also known for His courage to stand against the powerful who would abuse their power:

All classes of men marveled at His miraculous success in emerging unscathed from the most perilous encounters. Nothing short of Divine protection, they thought, could have ensured His safety on such occasions...In His constant association, during those days, with the highest dignitaries of the realm...He was never content simply to accede to the views they expressed or the claims they advanced. He would, at their gatherings, fearlessly champion the cause of truth, would assert the rights of the downtrodden, defending the weak and protecting the innocent.⁹

Bahá'u'lláh spent the early part of His life in the utmost joy and happiness. But He later became a target of prejudice and persecution. Thousands of fanatical believers rose against Him. Religious leaders were terrified of losing their power. They said, "This man intends to destroy religion, law, the nation, and the empire." (People made the same

accusations against Jesus.) He faced His enemies with the utmost courage, showing no weakness or fear.

Bahá'u'lláh endured nearly 40 years of imprisonment and exile, yet He never complained. No human being can imagine the extent of His sufferings. Among His sufferings was imprisonment in an infamous dungeon in Tíhrán, known as the Black Pit or Black Dungeon, where He was kept for four months. In that dungeon He endured every conceivable pain and anguish:

- ***Total darkness:*** The underground prison had neither lights nor windows.
- ***A terrible stench:*** About 150 of the worst criminals were thrown in that dark, deep, and damp dungeon with no air circulation or sanitary facilities. The ground was covered with several inches of filthy mud and mire.
- ***Hunger and thirst:*** For the first three days and nights Bahá'u'lláh received neither food nor water.
- ***Severe pain and lack of mobility:*** Bahá'u'lláh's feet were put in stocks, and on His neck was placed a chain so heavy that He was unable to hold Himself upright. To hold the weight of the chain, Bahá'u'lláh had to press His hands against the ground covered with slime up to His wrists. From the weight of the harsh metal, His neck became inflamed and injured.

- ***Little if any sleep***: Bahá'u'lláh could hardly sleep under those horrible conditions.
- ***Lack of clothes***: His outer garments were stripped away on His way to the prison.
- ***Illness***: Because of the unsanitary conditions, Bahá'u'lláh suffered grave illness.
- ***Being poisoned***: He also suffered from consuming poison placed in His food.
- ***Homelessness***: All His properties were confiscated.
- ***Loneliness***: “During this time none of His friends were able to get access to Him.”¹⁰
- ***Being surrounded by the worst criminals*** who had little if any hope of survival or freedom.
- ***Anxiety about His family***: Bahá'u'lláh's family members, including His young children, were left at the mercy of fanatical mobs, filled with rage and incited to seek revenge. (His Son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, was then 9 years old.)
- ***Deep grief and concern for His devoted and distinguished disciples***, who were being hunted down, tortured, and killed by enraged mobs outside the prison.
- ***Concern about the future***: From that prison Bahá'u'lláh was banished to strange lands. As foretold in a prophecy (Matt. 25:41-46), He became a stranger (an exile). Never again did He see His homeland.

- **Deep sorrow** for those who were rejecting God's choicest blessings and bounties.*

It was in this dungeon that Bahá'u'lláh expressed the first intimations of His Divine Mission:

One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: "Verily, We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth—men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy Name..."¹¹

Bahá'u'lláh repeatedly stated that He spoke only by God's command, and not of His own choosing. He declared:

Think ye, O people, that I hold within My grasp the control of God's ultimate Will and Purpose?...Had the ultimate destiny of God's Faith been in Mine hands, I would have never consented, even though for one moment, to manifest Myself unto you, nor would I have allowed one word to fall from My lips. Of this God Himself is, verily, a witness.¹²

This is but a leaf which the winds of the will of thy Lord, the Almighty, the All-Praised, have stirred. Can it be still when the tempestuous winds are blowing? Nay, by Him Who is the Lord of all Names and Attributes!¹³

* The Bible contains numerous prophecies that predict suffering for Jesus in His Second Advent. For a review of such prophecies, see *King of Kings*.

Bahá'u'lláh's arrest and imprisonment in that dungeon give us only a glimpse of the sufferings He endured for nearly 40 years in three different countries. How could anyone survive the scourge of such unrelenting pressures? How much pain can a human being endure? Why would God allow the One He loved the most to go through so much suffering? Did not Jesus endure similar ordeals?

Worldly friends, seeking their own good, appear to love one the other, whereas the true Friend [Bahá'u'lláh] hath loved and doth love you for your own sakes; indeed He hath suffered for your guidance countless afflictions. Be not disloyal to such a Friend, nay rather hasten unto Him.¹⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

The religious leaders feared Bahá'u'lláh's influence, so they had Him exiled to another land. They thought in a strange land His influence would die out. But the opposite happened. He attracted many more disciples. They exiled Him again and again. The results were the same—a spreading of His influence. Finally, they sent Him to the worst place they could find: a prison for murderers and thieves, located in a remote city ('Akká) with a dreadful climate and foul water. The sufferings Bahá'u'lláh endured in 'Akká surpassed even those He experienced in the Black Dungeon.

Bahá'u'lláh was placed in a barren, filthy room, while His followers were crowded into another, the floor of which was covered with mud. Ten soldiers were posted to stand guard over them.

To add further to their misery, the exiles, parched from a long day in the hot sun, soon found that the only water available to them was unfit for consumption. Mothers were unable to feed their babies, and infants cried for hours...

Under these conditions, all but ‘Abdu’l-Bahá [Bahá’u’lláh’s Son] and one other, fell ill. Within a matter of days three men died. The officials denied the prisoners permission to leave the citadel to bury them, and the guards demanded payment before removing the bodies. Bahá’u’lláh ordered that His prayer rug, the only item of any value that He possessed, be sold to cover the cost of the burial. The guards pocketed the money and buried the men in the clothes in which they died...

Three days after the exiles’ arrival, the Sultán’s edict was read aloud in the mosque. It sentenced Bahá’u’lláh, His family, and His companions to life imprisonment and expressly forbade the exiles to associate with one another or with local inhabitants.¹⁵

During Bahá’u’lláh’s imprisonment in ‘Akká, His young son was pacing the roof of the prison, “wrapped in devotions, when he fell through a skylight. Mortally wounded, his dying wish to his Father was that his life might be a ransom for those who were prevented from attaining Bahá’u’lláh’s presence.”¹⁶ In a prayer, Bahá’u’lláh speaks of the sacrifice of His son:

I have, O my Lord, offered up that which Thou hast given Me, that Thy servants may be quickened, and all that dwell on earth be united.¹⁷

Here Bahá'u'lláh explains why He accepted so much pain and suffering:

The Ancient Beauty [Bahá'u'lláh] hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner...that the whole world may attain unto true liberty. He hath drained to its dregs the cup of sorrow, that all the peoples of the earth may attain unto abiding joy, and be filled with gladness. This is of the mercy of your Lord, the Compassionate, the Most Merciful. We have accepted to be abased...that ye may be exalted, and have suffered manifold afflictions, that ye might prosper and flourish. He Who hath come to build anew the whole world, behold, how they...have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!¹⁸

Despite this severe repression, Bahá'u'lláh's influence continued to spread, His glory became more evident. From behind prison walls, He triumphed over all His enemies.

For if this idea...is of human origin, it will collapse; but if it is from God, you will never be able to put them [the believers] down, and you risk finding yourself at war with God.

Acts 5:38-39

When Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to the Holy Land, those aware of biblical prophecies suddenly realized

what had happened: Bahá'u'lláh's enemies had, unknowingly, become the very instruments for the fulfillment of prophecies about Him, because the Bible predicts repeatedly that the Redeemer of the Last Days will come to the Holy Land. Those who had wished to destroy Him became the means of His triumph. (For a review of these prophecies and many others, see *I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords*, and *King of Kings*.)

In 1868, while under arrest, Bahá'u'lláh addressed the kings and rulers of the earth, asking them to act with justice and to work for peace. With the exception of Queen Victoria, they ignored His call. He predicted their downfall and His own triumph.

Among these sovereigns was Napoleon III. Bahá'u'lláh asked him to investigate the reason for His imprisonment. The sovereign did not respond. Bahá'u'lláh sent a second letter, predicting his downfall. Soon thereafter, in 1870, war between Germany and France broke out. Everything seemed to be in Napoleon's favor, yet he was defeated, dishonored, and debased. According to *The Fall of Paris*:

History knows of perhaps no more startling instance of what the Greeks called peripateia, the terrible fall from prideful heights. Certainly no nation in modern times, so replete with apparent grandeur and opulent in material achievement, has ever been subjected to a worse humiliation in so short a time.¹⁹

Other sovereigns addressed by Bahá'u'lláh encountered similar fates. Every prediction that Bahá'u'lláh

made was fulfilled. These are discussed in a book titled *The Prisoner and the King*, by William Sears.

Bahá'u'lláh's greatness touched even those who did not follow Him. They wrote about His knowledge, His kindness, and His patience. They flocked to His presence and marveled at His wondrous works.

How often would one of His bitter enemies say to himself, "When I see Him, I will argue with Him and defeat Him in this way..." But when faced with Bahá'u'lláh, he would find himself speechless—unable to utter a word.

Bahá'u'lláh declared His willingness to be tested. To leave the religious leaders with no excuse, Bahá'u'lláh said that He was willing to perform any miracle that they requested. The only condition He set was that, after the miracle was performed, they would acknowledge the validity of His claim. The religious leaders declined to accept the condition. (God has always refused requests to perform miracles to prove His power, see Matt. 4:7. We cannot be sure why Bahá'u'lláh accepted this request. Perhaps one reason was that He knew it would be rejected.)

Bahá'u'lláh demonstrated His dependence on the divine and detachment from worldly desires by associating with the poor and the humble and avoiding the powerful and the pompous.²⁰ A famous figure wanted to meet Bahá'u'lláh. But to be seen with

Bahá'u'lláh meant danger. He sent a message asking to meet with Him secretly. In response, Bahá'u'lláh sent him a piece of poetry to this effect: “Unless you have a desire to sacrifice your life, don't come here. This is the way if you wish to meet Bahá. If you are unprepared for this journey, don't come, and don't bring trouble.” The man dared not take the risk of endangering his life and declined.

For nearly 50 years Bahá'u'lláh faced bitter enemies who killed thousands of His followers yet failed to destroy Him. Repeatedly they planned and plotted against Him, but to no avail.

Are these marks of distinction not similar to those found in the life of Jesus?

We must be just and acknowledge what an Educator this Glorious Being was, what marvelous signs were manifested by Him, and what power and might have been realized in the world through Him.²¹

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

My deeds done in my Father's name are my credentials.

Christ (John 10:25)

Accept the evidence of my deeds.

Christ (John 10:38)

Who Does Bahá'u'lláh Claim to Be?

Biblical prophecies indicate that at “the end of the age” a universal Redeemer will come to unite all

the religions and peoples of the earth under one God and one Faith. He will establish righteousness, peace, and justice:

The desired of all nations shall come...

Haggai 2:7

Lo, the Desired One is come with manifest dominion!²²

Bahá'u'lláh

Justice will dwell in the desert and righteousness live in the fertile field...My people will live in peaceful dwelling places, in secure homes, in undisturbed places of rest...how blessed you will be.

Isaiah 32:16-20

Bahá'u'lláh claims to be that universal Redeemer and unifier of the human race, the One expected and desired by all nations, the One who will bring righteousness, justice, peace, and prosperity.

Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed His mission in Epistles addressed to common people and to political and religious leaders. These Epistles have been published under the title *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*. The following is a brief passage from an Epistle addressed to the kings of that time; ponder the power and authority with which Bahá'u'lláh speaks:

Ye are but vassals, O Kings of the earth! He Who is the King of Kings hath appeared, arrayed in His most wondrous glory, and is summoning you unto Himself, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting. Take heed lest pride deter you from recognizing

the Source of Revelation; lest the things of this world shut you out as by a veil from Him Who is the Creator of heaven. Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty...

Forsake your palaces, and haste ye to gain admittance into His Kingdom. This, indeed, will profit you both in this world and in the next. To this testifieth the Lord of the realm on high, did ye but know it.²³

Bahá'u'lláh proclaims in the clearest, most certain, and most emphatic terms His station as the supreme Savior and Redeemer of the World, the Promised One of all ages and religions, *the return of Christ* to Christians, and *the Glory of the Lord* to the followers of both the Torah and the Gospel. He claims a station referred to throughout the Scriptures as *the Return of the Son in the Glory of His Father*, *the Lord of the Vineyard*, *the King of Glory*, *the Desire of all Nations*, *the Comforter*, *the Counselor*, and *the Prince of Peace*.²⁴

The followers of all great faiths expect a World-Redeemer who, at the last hour, will bring peace and prosperity to our planet. Zoroastrians refer to Him as “Sháh-Bahrám,” Buddhists as “the Buddha of universal fellowship,” and the Hindus as “the Most Great Spirit.” The Qur’án calls Him “the Great Announcement.”²⁵ Bahá'u'lláh declared that He fulfilled all these expectations and prophecies.

The following are further examples of the language and the manner in which Bahá'u'lláh declares His divine mission:

The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth...hath come to pass.²⁶

He that was hidden from mortal eyes is come! His all-conquering sovereignty is manifest; His all-encompassing splendor is revealed. Beware lest thou hesitate or halt.²⁷

This is the changeless Faith of God, eternal in the past, eternal in the future. Let him that seeketh, attain it; and as to him that hath refused to seek it—verily, God is Self-Sufficient, above any need of His creatures.²⁸

By the righteousness of the Almighty! Every hidden thing hath been manifested through the power of truth. All the favors of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men. Every single cup hath been borne round by the hand of the Well-Beloved. Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.²⁹

Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One...It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and un-biased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the

proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory...

The most grievous veil hath shut out the peoples of the earth from His glory, and hindered them from hearkening to His call. God grant that the light of unity may envelop the whole earth.³⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

Many Christians assume that Christ must come with His original name of Jesus. *King of Kings* presents many prophecies that point to a new name and specifically to ***the Glory of God***, which is the English translation of ***Bahá'u'lláh***. For instance, the following prophecy from Isaiah points not only to the rejection of the Redeemer of our time but also to a new name given to His servants or followers:

I called and you did not answer, I spoke and you did not listen; and you did what was wrong in my eyes and you chose what was against my will...the Lord God shall give you over to death; but ***his servants he shall call by another name***.

Isaiah 65:12-15

The Book of Revelation also points to a new name:

Him who overcomes...I will also write on him my ***new name***.

Rev. 3:12

To him who overcomes...I will also give him a white stone with ***a new name*** written on it.

Rev. 2:17

Christ said that He will come “in His Father’s glory” (Mark 8:38). Since His Father is God, His Father’s

glory equals “God’s Glory,” or “Glory of God,” which is the meaning of the word “Bahá’u’lláh.”

In His Epistle to Christians, Bahá’u’lláh declares Himself the One promised to come in the station of the Father:

He Who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty. Say,* Lo! The Father is come, and that which ye were promised in the Kingdom is fulfilled!³¹

The coming of a divine Being named “the Glory of God,” which is the equivalent of “Bahá’u’lláh,” is repeated throughout the Bible, yet it is seldom noticed:

As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with *the glory of the Lord*. Numbers 14:21

They will see *the glory of the Lord*, the splendor of our God. Isaiah 35:2

Did I not tell you that if you have faith you will see *the glory of God*? Christ (John 11:40)

...he shall come in his own glory and in his Father’s. Christ (Luke 9:26)

When the Lord...shall appear in his glory. Psalms 102:16

The Lord is come in his great glory.³²
Bahá’u’lláh

* Equivalent to the biblical phrase: *Thus says the Lord*.

In His Epistle to Christians, Bahá'u'lláh asks why they allow the name Bahá'u'lláh to serve as an obstacle in testing His claim. He reminds them that the people to whom Jesus was sent prayed constantly for their Redeemer's Advent. They expressed the deepest desire to meet Him. Yet when He came, only a few among them, mostly from the disfavored classes of society—the poor and the powerless, the simple and the sinners—recognized His divine glory. Why did the Jews' deep love for their adored and awaited Redeemer and Master *not* save them from denying Him? They read their Scriptures day and night. Why was their knowledge of no avail to them? Why did their repeated readings of the prophecies *not* guide them to truth?

You study the scriptures diligently, supposing that in having them you have eternal life; yet, although their testimony points to me, you refuse to come to me for that life.

Christ (John 5:39-40)

Bahá'u'lláh intimates that, without asking and resolving these questions, we cannot learn from the example of those who were once in our place, who thought that by ignoring or opposing Jesus they were doing the right thing, without ever suspecting that they were depriving themselves of the greatest gift that Heaven might bestow upon humans. Without pondering and resolving these questions, it is extremely difficult, even impossible, to overcome the many obstacles our traditional beliefs place before us. We will be as confused and perplexed as

our forebears who repeatedly rejected God's new Messengers:

You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. Acts 7:51-52

When you hear the name "Bahá'u'lláh," always remember its meaning: the Glory of God. The human being who lived on earth and called Himself Bahá'u'lláh was simply an instrument for manifesting "the Glory of God" in an earthly temple on an earthly plane. The following prayer from Bahá'u'lláh shows His submission and selflessness as a human being before God who created Him and crowned Him with His glory:

Glorified art Thou, O my God! Thou knowest that my sole aim in revealing Thy Cause hath been to reveal Thee and not my self, and to manifest Thy glory rather than my glory. In Thy path, and to attain Thy pleasure, I have scorned rest, joy, delight. At all times and under all conditions my gaze hath been fixed on Thy precepts, and mine eyes bent upon the things Thou hast bidden me observe in Thy Tablets. I have wakened every morning to the light of Thy praise and Thy remembrance, and reached every evening inhaling the fragrances of Thy mercy.³³

In the following passage, Bahá'u'lláh expresses His humility even before human beings, God's loved ones:

By Thy glory, O Lord of all being, and the Desire of all creation! I would love to lay My face upon every single spot of Thine earth, that perchance it might be honored by touching a spot ennobled by the footsteps of Thy loved ones!³⁴

What Other Proofs Establish the Validity of Bahá'u'lláh's Station?

- Bahá'u'lláh persisted in His claim to the end, without ever making the slightest compromise.
- He endured every conceivable adversity, humiliation, and pain for almost half a century with superhuman resolve, composure, and constancy.
- He revealed Scriptures for 40 years with no contradictions or changes of mind.
- He spiritualized and raised the ethical standards of millions of people from every race, creed, and culture.
- He revealed teachings extolled by some of the great thinkers of our time.
- He unified millions of people from diverse races, religions, and cultures.
- He wrote the equivalent of 100 volumes without research or revision.
- He revealed principles that harmonize religious and scientific truths—a task beyond the reach of the ablest thinkers.

- He and His Herald, the Báb, fulfilled hundreds of prophecies with perfect precision, including at least 18 biblical references that point to the precise year of their advents. (See the section, “***Books that Can Change Your Destiny***” at the end of this volume.)
- He lived a life pure, divine, and noble, far beyond the reach of any human being.
- He made predictions that have come true.
- He established a Faith that, despite constant and severe persecution, has endured and preserved its unity.

Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

Christ (Matt. 15:13)

These are the most reliable proofs—proofs that, unlike miracles, can be tested and verified. Taken together, these 12 distinguishing features set Bahá'u'lláh far above impostors; they point to His divine origin. No human being can accomplish such wonders on his own. These distinguishing features are the pieces to a jigsaw puzzle that only God could design and put together. No piece should be seen alone, but as a part of a whole picture. Like a tapestry of exquisite beauty and charm, the parts should be blended and viewed together. Every thread should be reviewed in the light of every other. Only then can the splendor of their divine distinction be fully manifested.

All the preceding proofs apply equally to the Báb. Thus we have not one, but two supreme Redeemers, each of them manifesting every sign of divine distinction.

God endows His great Messengers and Redeemers with a distinct spectrum of evidence that no human being can ever produce. He makes their souls shine like the sun among lighted lamps. Is it possible to mistake one for the other? The reason for not seeing the difference has always been and will always be with the beholders, who fail to look carefully (“watch”), who wear dark veils, or try to see the sun through many layers of clouds.

Glory be to Thee, O my God! Thou hearest Thine ardent lovers lamenting in their separation from Thee...Open Thou outwardly to their faces, O my Lord, the gates of Thy grace, that they may enter them by Thy leave and in conformity with Thy will, and may stand before the throne of Thy majesty, and catch the accents of Thy voice, and be illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy face.

Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. None can withstand the power of Thy sovereign might...Have mercy, then, upon Thy servants by Thy grace and bounty, and suffer them not to be kept back from the shores of the ocean of Thy nearness. If Thou abandonest them, who is there to befriend them; and if Thou putttest them far from Thee, who is he that can favor them? They have

none other Lord beside Thee, none to adore except Thyself. Deal Thou generously with them by Thy bountiful grace.

Thou, in truth, art the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Compassionate.³⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Happy is the man who hath recognized Thee, and discovered the sweetness of Thy fragrance, and set himself towards Thy kingdom... Great is the blessedness of him who hath acknowledged Thy most excellent majesty, and whom the veils that have shut out the nations from Thee have not hindered from directing his eyes towards Thee, O Thou Who art the King of eternity... Blessed, moreover, be the man that hath turned unto Thee, and woe betide him that hath turned his back upon Thee.

Praised be Thou, the Lord of the worlds!³⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

5

Who Was the Báb?

By studying the life and words of the Báb, we can discover every proof that God has bestowed on His great Messengers and Redeemers:

Thou art the Repository of all Our [God's] proofs
in this Day.¹ The Báb

On May 22, 1844, a young man entitled the Báb, meaning the “Gate” (the Gate of God) proclaimed that He was the One promised in all the Holy Scriptures. He declared the dawning of a new day in the religious history of humankind: a day of peace and unity, the age of the coming of the heavenly Kingdom to the earthly, the day of divine justice. Here is an invitation from the Báb to all seekers and lovers of truth:

Assuredly we are today living in the Days of God. These are the glorious days on the like of which the sun hath never risen in the past. These are the days which the people in bygone times eagerly expected. What hath then befallen you that ye are fast asleep? These are the days wherein God hath caused the Day-Star of Truth to shine resplendent. What hath then caused you to keep your silence? These are the appointed days which ye have been yearningly awaiting in the past—the days of the advent of divine justice.²

The Báb

Just as John the Baptist foretold the coming of One greater than Himself, so did the Báb. He referred to the One still to come by many titles, among them *Bahá'u'lláh* (Glory of God).

The Báb came from southern Persia, where God had promised to set His throne (Jer. 49:38). Within the brief span of His ministry (1844-1850), He attracted many followers, thousands of whom were massacred, mostly by order of fanatical religious leaders of Islam who feared the loss of their powers. The Báb Himself was imprisoned and finally executed in 1850.

The Báb's mission was primarily symbolic of the destruction of the old order; Bahá'u'lláh's mission was the creation of a new order to replace the old. One came to clear the way, the other to build.

All God's Messengers and Redeemers reveal the same signs of greatness. They manifest His light with full glory and splendor. If we can identify a

genuine diamond, we can use our knowledge to test and identify other diamonds. Otherwise, we may mistake a diamond for a stone and a stone for a diamond. Therefore we need standards. The best way to find the standard is to look at the lives of God's great Messengers and Redeemers to identify what distinguishes them above all others. The lives of Jesus and the Báb are astonishingly alike. ***Lord of Lords*** presents 83 parallels between the lives, the works, and the destinies of these two great Redeemers.

How Was the Báb Executed?

The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.
Christ (John 10:11)

The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto,
but to minister, and to give His life...
Christ (Matt. 20:28)

I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have
accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned
for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy
love. Sufficient witness unto me is God, the Ex-
alted, the Protector, the Ancient of Days.³
The Báb

I heard a Voice calling in my inmost being: "Do
thou sacrifice the thing which Thou lovest most
in the path of God..."⁴
The Báb

For assuredly ***whatsoever God hath decreed for Me shall come to pass*** and naught else save that

which God hath ordained for us shall ever touch us. ***Woe betide him from whose hands floweth evil***, and blessed the man from whose hands floweth good.⁵ The Báb

Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! ***Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!***

Christ (Matt. 18:7)

The Báb was martyred in July of 1850, a few months short of His 31st birthday. His martyrdom is one of the best documented and most incredible events in religious history. It was observed by an estimated audience of 10,000 and recorded by writers of various religious persuasions, and even by the official historian of the state that ordered the execution.

Before reviewing the story of the Báb's martyrdom, it may be helpful to ask: Why does God allow suffering for His loved ones? Why did Jesus and the Báb offer up their lives? An essential feature of the design of creation is that every worthy achievement must be preceded or accompanied by a sacrifice. Whether it is raising well-behaved children, getting a degree, staying healthy, losing weight, or eliminating racism, sexism, or poverty, some degree of sacrifice is required.

In order to grow and multiply, and to bear flowers and fruits, the seed must sacrifice itself:

Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Christ (John 12:24)

What is by far the greatest achievement? It is educating humanity; it is elevating the human spirit to everlasting hope and happiness; it is leading the soul from the kingdom of earth to the Kingdom of Heaven. Can such a glorious purpose be achieved without sacrifice?

Human beings are best inspired by models who show their devotion and sincerity by their example. The first ones to offer perfect examples of devotion, nobility, and self-sacrifice are God's chosen Messengers. If they, with all their perfections and powers, submitted themselves to the law of sacrifice, are we not inspired to do the same?

I have set you an example: you are to do as I have done for you. Christ (John 13:15)

I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Christ (John 10:11)

To most of us, self-sacrifice has negative connotations. It implies losing or giving something away. That is a misconception. Self-sacrifice involves no loss; it is the process by which short-term interests are exchanged for long-term dividends. It is like exchanging junk bonds for reliable and late-maturing bonds, or junk food for healthy food. Self-sacrifice is the catalyst of perfection; it is the yeast that elevates the human spirit by breaking down apathy, inertia, complacency, pride, self-glory, and attachment to the world. It is the price that must be paid for a lasting and genuine happiness.

God's ways are often opposite to ours. By His standard, we must lose to gain; we must give to obtain;

we must be humble to be exalted; we must be least to be greatest; we must die to live.

...how can My way accord with thine?⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

Behold how contrary are the ways of the Manifestations of God [great Messengers], as ordained by the King of creation, to the ways and desires of men!⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

All the great Messengers and Redeemers have endured pain and suffering. The only difference is this: some of them became martyrs, others were *living* martyrs. Death does not necessarily impose the gravest suffering. In some ways, life can be far more painful than death. Bahá'u'lláh's life was of this kind. Martyrdom attracts our attention because, in addition to being tragic, it is dramatic. The deaths of Jesus Christ and the Báb were of this kind.

In the circumstances surrounding the Báb's death we can discern evidence of a divine power at work. Should we use that evidence as proof of His station? Definitely not! Then what purpose should it serve? Only this: *It should elevate us from apathy to awareness. It is not evidence in itself, but a call for us to investigate the evidence.* For instance, you know that you will be asleep at 7:00 a.m. You set your clock to awaken you at that time to be ready for an invited guest. In the state of sleep, you are unaware of the imminent arrival of the guest. *When you awaken, you begin to see and hear. That is the only purpose miracles should serve.* You do not welcome your guest because of the alarm clock,

you welcome him because you see him and recognize him with your own eyes.

With these points in mind, let us proceed with the story of the Báb's martyrdom. The Persian government wanted to make the execution of the Báb a lesson to all citizens, especially to His followers. Hence, a decision was made to make it a public event. But, as we shall see, God had a different plan.

Just before the time of the execution, the Báb was in prison speaking to a disciple. A government official came to the Báb's prison cell and told Him to come to the public square for the impending execution. The Báb asked for a little time to finish His conversation with the disciple, but the official would not comply. The Báb offered this warning: "Not until I have said to him all those things that I wish to say, can any earthly power silence Me. Though all the world be armed against Me, yet shall they be powerless to deter Me from fulfilling, to the last word, My intention."⁸ The official ignored the warning and took the Báb (along with a young disciple who wanted to die with Him) to the public square to be shot by a regiment of 750 soldiers, standing in three lines ready to fire.

The regiment was headed by an Armenian colonel, Sâm Khán, who had no animosity toward the Báb and no interest in executing two young men for their religious beliefs. To absolve himself of responsibility, he went to the Báb and said, "I profess the Christian Faith and entertain no ill will against you. If your Cause be the Cause of Truth, enable me to

free myself from the obligation to shed your blood.”⁹

The Báb replied, “Follow your instructions, and if your intention be sincere, the Almighty is surely able to relieve you from your perplexity.”¹⁰

The martyrdom of the Báb and His disciple was planned with precision. To give people a good view of the event, the officials suspended the Báb and His disciple above the ground by placing two heavy ropes under their armpits and tying the ropes to a heavy nail driven into a thick wall. The Báb’s disciple pleaded to be placed in such a position that his body would shield that of his Master. He was suspended so that his head rested on his Master’s chest.

At about 10:00 a.m., the gaze of thousands of onlookers was fixed on the two young men suspended in the air. The first of the three lines of soldiers, 250 of them, were ordered to fire. They fired, then knelt so that the second and then the third lines of soldiers could fire. The firing of 750 bullets created a great cloud of smoke that obscured the people’s vision. (The smoke came from the gun powder used in those days.) For a few minutes, the people were blinded, but when the smoke cleared, they could see no trace of the Báb. His disciple was standing unharmed on the ground just below the suspension point.

It is hard to imagine the uproar, the astonishment, and the confusion that seized the onlookers, especially the government officials. The nervous and

puzzled officials frantically searched for the Báb. Where do you think He was found? In His original prison cell, completing His unfinished conversation with His disciple.

The man who located Him was the same man who had taken Him for execution. When he arrived, the Báb was ready. His face radiated with unruffled calm. He welcomed the official by saying, “Now you may proceed to fulfill your intention.”¹¹ The guard was so shaken by what he saw that he refused to take the Báb a second time. He left the scene and resigned from his position.

In the meantime, the Christian colonel, who had been looking for any reason to excuse himself from the ominous task, could not have been more jubilant. He saw this as a sure sign from God and immediately withdrew his soldiers and swore never again to engage in that task, even if his refusal led to his death.

A second regiment was ordered into action. Now two hours had passed. It was about noon. Because of the seemingly miraculous event, the Báb had a more receptive audience. He had a chance to address the people:

Had you believed in Me, O wayward generation, every one of you would have followed the example of this youth [the disciple who wanted to die with Him]...The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you.¹²

Everything was now ready. The second regiment took position and was ordered to fire. This time the bullets reached their targets. The two bodies were so shattered and riddled with bullets that they were blended into one mass of mangled flesh and bone, except for the face of the Báb, which remained untouched by the bullets.

Unto God do I commit Mine affair...Naught shall touch Me besides that which God, My Lord, hath pre-ordained for Me. In Him have I placed My whole trust...¹³

The Báb

I am well pleased to lay down My life in Thy path and ere long to return to Thy presence. Unto Thee be praise in the heavens and on the earth.¹⁴

The Báb

Glory be unto Thee, O my God. Thou art well aware that I have proclaimed Thy Word and have not failed in the mission Thou didst enjoin upon me.¹⁵

The Báb

I, verily, have not fallen short of My duty to admonish...people, and to devise means whereby they may turn towards God, their Lord, and believe in God, their Creator.¹⁶

The Báb

The One called the Desire of nations, the Savior and Redeemer of humankind, Lord of Lords and King of Kings, was made a sacrifice for the world. This is the way it has been and may always be:

You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They

even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. Acts 7:51-52

Great spirits have always encountered opposition from mediocre minds. Albert Einstein

The sacrifices made by the Báb and Jesus present us with two dramatic examples by which God teaches us lessons of detachment and dedication. He allows the Ones He loves most to become sacrificial Lambs. The few examples of self-sacrifice by God's chosen Messengers have had, and will continue to have, far more influence in elevating the human spirit than countless books of commandments and counsels.

How did this seemingly incredible event occur? The only explanation offered is that some bullets hit the rope first and severed it, thus allowing the Báb and His disciple to fall to the ground. Did God intervene or was it merely a coincidence? We have the choice to come to either conclusion.

Who Does the Báb Claim to Be?

O My servants! This is God's appointed Day which the merciful Lord hath promised you in His Book.¹⁷ The Báb

The station of the Báb is similar to that of Bahá'u'lláh: He was also an independent Messenger, and the Founder of a new Faith with His own Scriptures. Although He expressed absolute humility before Bahá'u'lláh, He too came in the station

of the Lord. That is the honor and title that God bestowed on Him:

O peoples of the earth! Give ear unto God's holy Voice...Whom the Almighty hath graciously chosen for His Own Self. He is indeed none other than the True One, Whom God hath entrusted with this Mission from the midst of the Burning Bush.¹⁸ The Báb

Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth.¹⁹ The Báb

Did the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh know each other? Only on a spiritual level. Bahá'u'lláh was a devoted follower of the Báb, who endangered His own life and suffered torture to promote the Báb's Message.

The twin Redeemers never met, yet their love for each other was boundless, to the extent that each was willing to die for the other. Only God can create such an intimate bond between two seeming strangers. The spiritual connection between the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, their total awareness of one another without physical means, and their absolute devotion to each other present further evidence of their divine origin. In the history of humankind, we can find such an intimate and spiritual connection only between John the Baptist and Jesus.

The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh manifest one Spirit. The oneness refers to the heavenly light, and not to the human mirror, which reflects the light:

Indeed He [Bahá'u'lláh] is I and I am He.²⁰
The Báb

In spite of His supreme station, the Báb expressed absolute humility towards Bahá'u'lláh. No one has ever praised and glorified another as much as the Báb praised and glorified Bahá'u'lláh:

Indeed any man whose eye gazeth upon His Words with true faith well deserveth Paradise; and one whose conscience beareth witness unto His Words with true faith shall abide in Paradise and attain the presence of God; and one whose tongue giveth utterance to His Words with true faith shall have his abode in Paradise, wherein he will be seized with ecstasy in praise and glorification of God, the Ever-Abiding.²¹ The Báb

Similarly the Báb expressed His lowliness before God:

Verily no God is there but God; His is the kingdom of heaven and earth...and He [the Báb] Who speaketh at the bidding of His Lord is but the First to worship Him.²² The Báb

How do great Messengers relate to each other and to God? In two ways or on two levels: the station of separation and the station of oneness. Consider every one of God's Messengers as a brilliant light bulb in an exquisite chandelier. Each bulb radiates separately, and yet is connected with every other bulb through the light it radiates and through the one electrical system from which it draws power. Similarly, each Messenger relates to God and to every other Messenger in two ways: In one way, He remains a separate Being; in another, He is one with God and every other Messenger. Here Christ speaks in the state or station of oneness:

My Father and I are one. Christ (John 10:30)

He who has seen me, has seen the Father.
Christ (John 14:9)

And here He speaks in the state or station of separation:

My Father is greater than I. Christ (John 14:29)

Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. Christ (Matt. 19:17 NIV)

In the following verses, first the lighted bulb (the Báb) speaks as “Me,” then the source of the light in the bulb (God) speaks as “I:”

The Lord hath, in truth, inspired Me: Verily, verily, I am God, He besides Whom there is none other God, and I am indeed the Ancient of Days.²³
The Báb

Bahá'u'lláh also refers to the two stations:

When I contemplate, O My God, the relationship that bindeth me to Thee, I am moved to proclaim to all created things, “Verily, I am God!”; and when I consider my own self, lo, I find it coarser than clay!²⁴
Bahá'u'lláh

The Báb declares that “by the leave of God” He conversed with Moses “from the midst of the Burning Bush:”

Indeed We conversed with Moses by the leave of God from the midst of the Burning Bush in the Sinai and revealed an infinitesimal glimmer of Thy Light upon the Mystic Mount and its dwellers.²⁵
The Báb

He claims to speak only the Word of God and to abide only by His Will as did Jesus:

We [the divine Spirit] have in truth sent Thee [the Báb] forth unto all men, by the leave of God, invested with Our signs and reinforced by Our unsurpassed sovereignty. He [the Báb] is indeed the appointed Bearer of the Trust of God.²⁶ The Báb

He also declares to be “the first” and “the last” “the beginning” and “the end” as does Jesus:

I [God] have appointed Thee [the Báb] to be the Beginning and the End, the Seen and the Hidden. Verily We are the All-Knowing.²⁷ The Báb

The Báb revealed hundreds of prayers. Here is a brief example:

Bestow on me, O my Lord, Thy gracious bounty and benevolent gifts and grant me that which beseemeth the sublimity of Thy glory. Aid me, O my Lord, to achieve a singular victory. Open Thou the door of unfailing success before me and grant that the things Thou hast promised may be close at hand. Thou art in truth potent over all things.

Refresh my heart, O my God, with the living waters of Thy love and give me a draught, O my Master, from the chalice of Thy tender mercy ...Do Thou graciously forgive me for the things that I have wrought in Thy holy presence, and look not upon me with the glance of justice, but rather deliver me through Thy grace, treat me

with Thy mercy and deal with me according to Thy bountiful favors, as is worthy of Thy glory. Thou art the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Glorious, the Bestower of favors and gifts, the Lord of grace abounding. Verily no God is there but Thee. Thou art the All-Possessing, the Most High.²⁸

Part III

Thy Kingdom Come

Matt. 6:10

God's Plan for a New World

Assist Thou Thy servants, O my Lord, to
recognize Thy unity and to declare Thy
oneness, that all may gather together
around what Thou didst desire in this
Day...¹

Bahá'u'lláh

6

What is Bahá'u'lláh's Ultimate Purpose?

Our Creator has promised to reshape the world, to make “everything new:”

*...the old order of things has passed
away...I am making everything new!*

Christ (Rev. 21:4-5 NIV)

*...soon will the present day order be rolled
up, and a new one spread
out in its stead...²*

Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh's ultimate purpose is to bring this divided world together, to unify all nations, religions, and peoples. He has already accomplished this goal on a scale never before achieved. The Bahá'í Faith is

sweeping across the world, unifying its citizens into one global family. It is now the second most widely spread religion in the world, after Christianity.

All of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are aimed at promoting a global vision: seeing the earth as our home and the human race as members of one harmonious family.

He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.³

Bahá'u'lláh

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you. Gather ye together, and for the sake of God resolve to root out whatever is the source of contention amongst you. Then will the effulgence of the world's great Luminary envelop the whole earth, and its inhabitants become the citizens of one city, and the occupants of one and the same throne. This wronged One hath, ever since the early days of His life, cherished none other desire but this, and will continue to entertain no wish except this wish. There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Let not man glory in this that he loveth his country, let him rather glory in this that he loveth his kind.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

What Specific Teachings Does Bahá'u'lláh Bring for Restoring the Social and Spiritual State of the World?

Here are some of the principles proclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh:

- The time has come to recognize and revere the truth of all great religions. This is an essential step toward harmony, unity, and peace.
- Religious prejudice is a most destructive and deadly spiritual disease. It is better to have no religion than have one that divides and breeds prejudice.
- Equality of men and women.
- Education of children is the key to a secure and peaceful world. Schools must teach both knowledge and nobility.
- Religion must make sense, be reasonable and in harmony with science.
- Using physical features—gender, race, or appearance—to feel superior to others is a sheer illusion. For we are spiritual beings: We are souls, not cells.
- Love of God is the source of all true joys and pleasures, and the most powerful unifying force in the universe.
- Equal rights for all the peoples of the world.

- Racism is a spiritual disease. Love of God is the perfect remedy against it.
- A just distribution of wealth to eliminate poverty.
- Working in the spirit of love and service is as noble as glorifying God.
- A universal auxiliary language for all nations.
- An enduring peace sustained by a federation of nations.

A Few Basic Facts of the Bahá'í Faith

Time and place of origin: 1844, Persia

Herald: The Báb (Báb'u'lláh), meaning the “Gate of God”

Founder: Bahá'u'lláh, meaning “the Glory of God”

Successors: ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, also known as the Master; Shoghi Effendi, also known as the Guardian

The Governing Body: The Universal House of Justice

The Bahá'í World Center: Haifa, Israel, on the slopes of Mt. Carmel

Bahá'í population: About six million

Localities where Bahá'ís reside: over 127,000

Local Spiritual Assemblies: Over 11,700

National Spiritual Assemblies: 182

Languages in which Bahá'í literature has been published: Over 800

Indigenous tribes, races, and ethnic groups: Over 2,000

A Prayer for Unity

O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

7

What is Bahá'u'lláh's Plan for Restoring the Moral and Spiritual State of the World?

Many people today feel depressed, anxious, stressed, and despondent. One out of every five persons suffers from some kind of mental disorder. Countless others are considered “normal,” but they only muddle through life, like a swimmer who barely stays afloat. And still many others seem to enjoy life, but without ever tasting the true joys that God has planned for them.

We were not made to suffer but to live in a state of utmost joy and happiness. What then is the prime reason for human suffering, for our failure to live

in a state of happiness? God made us of a substance that can survive and flourish only in the light of His love. Without His love, life is a long, cold, and gloomy winter with no light visible at the end. The prime reason for suffering, for living a life of quiet desperation, for failing to live in a state of utmost joy and happiness, is the remoteness of a soul from its Creator:

O SON OF BEING!

Thy Paradise is My love; thy heavenly home, reunion with Me. Enter therein and tarry not. This is that which hath been destined for thee in Our kingdom above and Our exalted Dominion.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

O SON OF SPIRIT!

There is no peace for thee save by renouncing thyself and turning unto Me; for it behooveth thee to glory in My name, not in thine own; to put thy trust in Me and not in thyself, since I desire to be loved alone and above all that is.²

Bahá'u'lláh

Today the love of God is missing in the heart of humankind. Jesus predicted the spiritual state of our time. He said that “the love of most will grow cold” (Matt. 24:12).

The first question we should ask is this: Why did we come into this world? Our Creator has given us a clear, categorical, and concise answer to this question. He declares that we have come into this world for this reason and this purpose only: To know and love our Creator, and to love one another. This goal or purpose is a process, not a fixed point. It is a

journey that never ends. If we are not on this glorious journey, then we are living in vain; if we are not advancing along this frontier, then we are wasting our precious lives.

The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence.³ Bahá'u'lláh

The most beloved of people before God are... those who have surpassed others in their love for God, exalted be His glory.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Great is the blessedness awaiting thee, inasmuch as thou hast adorned thine heart with the ornament of the love of thy Lord, the All-Glorious, the All-Praised. He that hath attained this station in this day, all good shall be his.⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

Ye were created to show love one to another...⁶
Bahá'u'lláh

What is the secret of happiness? It is intimacy with God. It is falling in love with the One who made us. ***Intimacy with God is the only secure foundation for a peaceful life and a peaceful planet.***

Bahá'u'lláh has proved capable of bringing peoples of every creed and culture—from Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and evangelical Christians to atheists—closer and closer to God. By bringing them closer to God, He has also brought them closer together.

Love of God is the most powerful force in the universe. In an instant, it can turn bitter enemies into dear friends. It can transform grief into joy, fear

into courage, despair into hope. Love of God breaks all barriers. It can energize us to love life and all people unconditionally. It dispels all shadows of prejudice. His love shifts our perspective from the physical to the spiritual, from me to us, and from now to eternity.

Such a supreme power of transformation can only come from God. The restoration of this power to the heart of millions is the first and foremost fruit of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. It is a clear evidence of His divine authority.

Once this power is restored to the heart of human-kind, "all things become new" (Rev. 21:5), beautiful, and possible. Our hidden potentials will begin to bloom and flourish. The world will turn into an enchanting garden of joy and peace.

Many people live from week to week, as if their purpose in life is to deposit a specific number of paychecks in their bank accounts, and to finally be deposited in an expensive coffin, crowned with a beautiful tombstone! How many millions of lives are being wasted by this illusion. No, the gift of life is too precious and noble to be wasted on worldly gains and possessions. It is the most glorious creation in the universe.

Many people indicate that they "believe" in God. What does that really mean? It is simply an acknowledgment that God exists. Consider this example. You believe you have a mayor in your town. Does that mean that you also love him, or even care whether he is dead or alive? *What matters is not*

simply believing, but loving and being intimate with God. What matters is our distance from the Soul of the universe. Are we light years away from God, or do we constantly bask in His light? This is the question that really matters. Believing in God, without falling in love with Him, is as good as believing in Santa Claus.

How can we tell that we are truly intimate with God? Consider the following standards:

- One sure sign of our love for God is our love for one another, and indeed for all creation—from the earth to the great galaxies. The one who loves God cannot hurt a heart or harm the earth!
- Another sure sign of our love for God is our love for truth and knowledge. For God is the Sun who manifests Himself in the light of truth and knowledge—reflected to us through His great Messengers and Teachers. Can we love God, but ignore the Ones who bring us His Message? Can we love the sun, but close our eyes to its light?
- Another sure sign of our love for God is the state of our soul when we pray. Do we pray out of duty or out of love? Are the praying times, our happiest times?

God has sent a new Teacher with a new name to teach us and to help us get as close to Him as a baby is to her mother. With this firm foundation—the love of God—in our heart, there is virtually

nothing that will be impossible to us. Love of God is the supreme remedy for our ailing world. No one can provide this remedy except God Himself. This is the reason that He has once again sent a new Teacher to shed His glory on our divided world and despondent souls.

The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it not. Make My love thy treasure and cherish it even as thy very sight and life.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

Lauded be Thy name, O my God and the God of all things, my Glory and the Glory of all things, my Desire and the Desire of all things, my Strength and the Strength of all things, my King and the King of all things, my Possessor and the Possessor of all things, my Aim and the Aim of all things, my Mover and the Mover of all things! Suffer me not, I implore Thee, to be kept back from the ocean of Thy tender mercies, nor to be far removed from the shores of nearness to Thee.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

O God!...the remembrance of Thee is a healing medicine to the hearts of such as have drawn nigh unto Thy court; nearness to Thee is the true life of them who are Thy lovers; Thy presence is the ardent desire of such as yearn to behold Thy face; remoteness from Thee is a torment to those that have acknowledged Thy oneness, and separation from Thee is death unto them that have recognized Thy truth!⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

Glory be to Thee, O my God! Thou hearest Thine ardent lovers lamenting in their separation from Thee...Open Thou outwardly to their faces, O my Lord, the gates of Thy grace, that they may enter them by Thy leave and in conformity with Thy will, and may stand before the throne of Thy majesty, and catch the accents of Thy voice, and be illumined with the splendors of the light of Thy face.

Potent art Thou to do what pleaseth Thee. None can withstand the power of Thy sovereign might.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh



What is the “Essence” of Bahá’u’lláh’s Teachings?

An impartial search for truth is the “essence” of Bahá’u’lláh’s “rose garden” distilled from His teachings:

The essence of all that We have revealed for thee is Justice, is for man to free himself from idle fancy and imitation, discern with the eye of oneness His glorious handiwork, and look into all things with a searching eye.¹ Bahá’u’lláh

What is the virtue that gives birth to everything good and worthy? What is the attribute that unleashes the ever-flowing springs of peace and joy? That attribute is a thirst for truth, it is a love for knowledge. It is a desire to “look into all things

with a searching eye” in the light of justice, for the sheer pleasure of knowing the truth.

When we look at a rose, we see it as it really is—we are impartial. We appreciate its beauty and fragrance, but also notice the thorns around the stem. Why do we see the rose as it really is? Because we are impartial, we have no preconceived notions about roses, we are not carrying a load of “idle fancies”—untested assumptions or personal needs and desires—either in favor or against roses.

Now compare the way we judge a rose with the way we judge religion. Consider the emotions that just a name, such as Jesus, Muhammad, or Moses can arouse in zealous believers. Consider also the millions of lives that have been sacrificed at the altar of untested assumptions and illusions—idle fancies—for the sake of those sacred names!

The first priority in our life is to choose our spiritual destiny in the light of reason and understanding. This is the reason we came to this world. ***This choice is too great to be left to chance, tradition, conformity, or inaction.***

How can we discover our divine destiny? How can we find our place in God’s plan? Only by making these ***Twin Virtues*** the guiding light of our lives:

- Constantly striving to expand our knowledge, to discover the meaning and purpose of our lives. This should be our lifelong adventure.
- Constantly praying to God and asking for His blessings to help us succeed in our journey of

the search for truth. He has a plan for each of us. Only by praying can we discover that plan.

To attain a worthy goal, the first requirement is a deep desire to search for truth, to seek knowledge. It is said that the root cause of all evils is ignorance. Without the light of knowledge all we can do is to grope in the darkness. Whether we seek peace of mind or peace among nations, the solution is the same: the first step is to search for truth.

Our journey toward God begins with this first step, and yet most people fail to take it. They ignore an invitation to read even a “mini book” that may change their destiny for all eternity, that may open their heart to God’s most glorious gifts and blessings. They find ample time to seek earthly treasures, but not enough time to search for truth.

If everyone practiced the Twin Virtues of “***seeking knowledge, and praying***” we would see the emergence of a spiritual revolution on a scale humankind has never before witnessed. We would advance spiritually into a New Age as different as our world is from an Ice Age.

What will happen if all the peoples of the world pray persistently for heavenly blessings?

O Thou Whose face is the object of my adoration
...Whose love is the cause of my being, Whose
mention is my solace, Whose nearness is my
desire, Whose presence is my dearest wish and
highest aspiration, I entreat Thee not to withhold
from me the things Thou didst ordain for the

chosen ones among Thy servants. Supply me, then, with the good of this world and of the next.

Thou, truly, art the King of all men. There is no God but Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.² Bahá'u'lláh

What will happen if all the peoples of the world make these Twin Virtues—seeking knowledge, and praying for God’s blessings—the guiding light of their lives? What will happen if they discern with “the eye of oneness” God’s glorious creation? They will arrive at this truth: We, the residents of this planet, are one people—one great family—with one destiny. The lines that seem to separate us will suddenly vanish as surely as shadows are dispelled by the sun. Consider this example. Suppose you have several “lost” brothers and sisters. Then one day you decide to search for them, and you suddenly discover that they are all your neighbors! That is what happens to anyone who recognizes Bahá'u'lláh, to anyone who embraces His glory and spreads that glory to others. ***The Glory of God is the light that dispels all shadows.*** It is the only power that can bring people together and unite them in the light of love.

Bahá'u'lláh has proven more than six million times that He has this power. That is the number of people who have been transformed by His “great power and glory” (Matt. 24:30). Eventually, all people will discover the truths that Bahá'u'lláh proclaims. That will be the most glorious day in history.

Slowly the veil lifts from the future. Along whatever road thoughtful men look out they see before them some guiding truth, some leading principle, which Bahá'u'lláh gave long ago...

George Townshend

Canon of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin

To reach that promised moment, much work needs to be done. Only a few people are awake at dawn. Getting up early is not popular. Ours is the dawn of a new age. Only a few ambitious and adventurous souls are awake. They are "the Dawnbreakers." At this critical moment, they are responding to the heavenly call: awakening others and spreading the News of the coming of the Kingdom. In time, others will wake up. The circle of the enlightened will continue to expand until, in due time, it will encompass the entire human race.

At this point in history, the duty that our Creator has assigned to each of us is to make an effort to know Bahá'u'lláh and then to spread the news of His coming to every seeking soul. The more we strive, the sooner we will achieve our ultimate goal: our divine destiny.

Arise, and serve Him Who is the Desire of all nations, Who hath created you through a word from Him, and ordained you to be, for all time, the emblems of His sovereignty.³ Bahá'u'lláh

It behooveth you, in this day, to proclaim aloud the Most Great Name [Bahá'u'lláh] among the nations. Prefer ye to be silent, whilst every stone and every tree shouteth aloud: "The Lord is come in His great glory!"⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Seize the time, therefore, ere the glory of the divine springtime hath spent itself, and the Bird of Eternity ceased to warble its melody... This is My counsel unto thee and unto the beloved of God. Whosoever wisheth, let him turn thereunto; whosoever wisheth, let him turn away. God, verily, is independent of him...⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

I implore Thee, by Thy name which Thou hast raised up above every other name, and hast caused to overshadow all that are in heaven and all that are on earth, to cast not away him that hath turned towards Thee, and to deny him not the wonders of Thy grace and the hidden evidences of Thy mercy. Let the hands of Thine omnipotence kindle in his heart a lamp that will enable him to shine brightly in Thy days... that Thou mayest behold him sanctified as Thou wishest and as beseemeth Thy majesty and glory.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

9

How Does God Renew Our Soul?

What is the power that can transform the heart of humankind and create a new world? To answer the preceding question, we must ask: What is the root cause of every problem?

The backbone of almost every issue, the root cause of almost every problem is spiritual. Just as our bodies survive by breathing fresh air, so can our spirit and civilization survive by the fragrant breeze of virtues—love, kindness, charity, honesty, sympathy, and understanding. Consider the problem of poverty. How can we produce an abundance of wealth and then spread it fairly to eliminate poverty? Can we achieve this noble purpose without an abundant harvest of virtues—honesty, fairness,

kindness, and compassion? What happens to a country or a company run by thieves? Consider the environment. Can we love our Creator, but abuse His creation?

Every issue imaginable has a spiritual root. Even the question of physical health has spiritual roots. Consider a physician who sees every patient as a gift from God and as an opportunity to make a difference. Now compare him with a greedy gold digger who views every patient as a source of extra income.

Further, what is the level of peace, joy, and contentment in someone who loves God versus someone who loves gold? What does **God** say to us?

Thou dost wish for gold and I desire thy freedom from it. Thou thinkest thyself rich in its possession, and I recognize thy wealth in thy sanctity therefrom. By My life! This is My knowledge, and that is thy fancy; how can My way accord with thine?¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Bestow My wealth upon My poor, that in heaven thou mayest draw from stores of unfading splendor and treasures of imperishable glory.²

Bahá'u'lláh

What does **gold** say to us?

I am your savior and your god. I am your comfort and your joy. I am your hope and your dream. Sacrifice everything for my sake. Look for me everywhere with all your heart and mind. Seek me and save me all the days of your

life. I will pamper you, give you power, and make you proud. Protect me from thieves. Keep me safe. For everyone dreams of having me. I am your servant, but also your master. Without me, you are nothing. Love me then, worship me, and be proud of having me. But let me remind you that I am not really yours. I belong to mother earth. I am in your custody for just a little while. Today I am at your service, tomorrow I may serve a stranger, perhaps even one of your enemies. I am loyal only to the one who holds me.

What is the difference between a God-lover and a gold-lover in terms of joy, peace, and contentment? The difference is beyond estimation. When the stock market crashes, so do the hopes and dreams of gold-lovers. But God is a constant. The earth may vanish, but not His love; the sun may darken, but not the light of Heaven. Is it then wise to build one's everlasting destiny on sand?

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Christ (Matt. 6:19-21 NIV)

The days of your life are far spent, O people, and your end is fast approaching...Delight not yourselves in the things of the world and its vain ornaments, neither set your hopes on them. Let your reliance be on the remembrance of God, the Most Exalted, the Most Great.³ Bahá'u'lláh

The generations that have gone on before you—whither are they fled? And those round whom in life circled the fairest and the loveliest of the land, where now are they? Profit by their example, O people, and be not of them that are gone astray.

Others ere long will lay hands on what ye possess, and enter into your habitations. Incline your ears to My words, and be not numbered among the foolish.

For every one of you his paramount duty is to choose for himself that on which no other may infringe and none usurp from him. Such a thing—and to this the Almighty is My witness—is the love of God, could ye but perceive it.

Build ye for yourselves such houses as the rain and floods can never destroy, which shall protect you from the changes and chances of this life. This is the instruction of Him Whom the world hath wronged and forsaken.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Without true faith in God, we cannot have justice, peace and security. Love of God and respect for His authority are the twin pillars of our survival and civilization. This is the reason why God sends a new religion in every age to renew our soul and reinforce our love for virtues. This is the reason Bahá'u'lláh has come.

Praise be to Thee, O Lord my God! I implore Thee, by Thy Name which none hath befittingly recognized...to make my heart to be a receptacle of Thy love and of remembrance of Thee. Knit

it, then, to Thy most great Ocean, that from it may flow out the living waters of Thy wisdom and the crystal streams of Thy glorification and praise.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

I beg of Thee, O my God, by Thy most exalted Word...to ordain that my choice be conformed to Thy choice and my wish to Thy wish, that I may be entirely content with that which Thou didst desire, and be wholly satisfied with what Thou didst destine for me by Thy bounteousness and favor. Potent art Thou to do as Thou willest. Thou, in very truth, art the All-Glorious, the All-Wise.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

Part IV

Some Reasons for Continuing Your Search

I am he who is sore athirst, O my Lord! Give me to drink of the living waters of Thy grace. I am but a poor creature; reveal unto me the tokens of Thy riches...

I beseech Thee, O my Lord, by Thy mercy that hath surpassed the entire creation, and Thy generosity that hath embraced all created things, to cause me to turn my face wholly towards Thee, and to seek Thy shelter, and to be steadfast in my love for Thee. Write down, then, for me what Thou didst ordain for them who love Thee. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou pleasest. No God is there beside Thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the All-Bountiful.

Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds!¹

Bahá'u'lláh

10

I Am Satisfied With My Life. I Have My Own Religion. Why Should I Take the Time to Know Bahá'u'lláh?

Our Creator has a plan and a place in that plan for each of us. He does not leave our destiny to chance.

For I know the plans I have for you...plans to give you hope and a future. Jeremiah 29:11 NIV

The One who loves each of us knows how we can attain true happiness, how we can cultivate our spiritual potential. Since He has given us the gift of freedom of choice, all He will do, according to His perfect plan, is simply to invite us and inspire

us to respond to His call. All He will do is to remind us of the consequences of accepting or ignoring His plan, and then leave us alone to choose our destiny: either according to His Will or our own wishes.

What would you do if you invited some guests for dinner, but they did not come? Would you bring them by force? No, God does not force us, but motivates us to take His invitation seriously. He teaches us that choosing to follow either His plan or our desire will lead us to very different destinations. In the parable of the Heavenly Banquet, Jesus teaches us this lesson of justice: Only those who accept God's invitation here in this life will receive the honor of being invited to His Heavenly Banquet hereafter in the next life (Matt. 25:1-13). Our Creator invites us again and again. He knows we must hear His call many times before we respond. There are hundreds of invitations like these:

Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life.

Christ (Rev. 22:17 NIV)

He Who was in heaven hath come. He, verily, is the One Whom ye were promised in the Books of God, the Holy, the Almighty, the All-Praised... Turn with your hearts in the direction of your Lord, the Forgiving, the Generous.² Bahá'u'lláh
Come...let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Isaiah 2:5 NIV

Blessed are those...who walk in the light of your presence...

Isaiah 89:15 NIV

The light hath shone on thee...free thyself from the veils of idle fancies and enter into My court, that thou mayest be fit for everlasting life and worthy to meet Me. Thus may death not come upon thee, neither weariness nor trouble.³

Bahá'u'lláh

O My servants! There shineth nothing else in Mine heart except the unfading light of the Morn of Divine guidance, and out of My mouth proceedeth naught but the essence of truth, which the Lord your God hath revealed. Follow not, therefore, your earthly desires, and violate not the Covenant of God, nor break your pledge to Him. With firm determination, with the whole affection of your heart, and with the full force of your words, turn ye unto Him, and walk not in the ways of the foolish.⁴

Bahá'u'lláh

Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day offereth you, and deprive not yourselves of the liberal effusions of His grace. I beseech God that He may graciously enable every one of you to adorn himself, in this blessed Day, with the ornament of pure and holy deeds. He, verily, doeth whatsoever He willeth.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

This question seems reasonable: Is it wise to ignore an invitation from our Creator to know His latest Messenger and Teacher—the One He has sent to strengthen our faith, to give us everlasting life and the joy of knowing, loving and drawing ever-closer to God? Can any honor compare with accepting such an invitation?

Be ready...to let Him [the Promised Redeemer of our time] in the moment He arrives and knocks.

Christ (Luke 12:36)

Blessed are they that judge with fairness, and blessed they that turn towards Him!⁶ Bahá'u'lláh

Blessed is the man that hath, on the wings of longing, soared towards God, the Lord of the Judgment Day.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

Our Creator wants all of us in His heavenly Kingdom. But He will not force anyone into submission. He honors our freedom and gives us a chance to respond to His invitation or to ignore it. The choice is ours.

Cast me not out, I implore Thee, of the presence of Thy grace, neither do Thou withhold from me the outpourings of Thy generosity and bounty. Ordain for me, O my Lord, what Thou hast ordained for them that love Thee, and write down for me what Thou hast written down for Thy chosen ones. My gaze hath, at all times, been fixed on the horizon of Thy gracious providence, and mine eyes bent upon the court of Thy tender mercies. Do with me as beseemeth Thee. No God is there but Thee, the God of power, the God of glory, Whose help is implored by all men.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

Enable, then, Thy servants, O my God, to recognize the Day-Star that hath shone forth above the horizon of Thine irrevocable decree and purpose, and suffer them not to be deprived of

the Paradise which Thou, by Thy name, the All-Glorious, hast called into being in the heavens of Thine exalted omnipotence. Cause them, moreover, O my God, to hearken to Thy most sweet voice, that they may all hasten to recognize Thy unity and acknowledge Thy oneness, O Thou Who art the Beloved of the hearts of all that yearn after Thee, and the Object of the adoration of such as have known Thee!⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! I implore Thee...to send down upon me and upon all that have sought Thy face that which beseemeth Thy generosity and bountiful grace, and is worthy of Thy bestowals and favors. Poor and desolate I am, O my Lord! Immerse me in the ocean of Thy wealth; athirst, suffer me to drink from the living waters of Thy loving-kindness...

Thou art, verily, the Help in Peril, the Inaccessible, the Almighty, the Most Bountiful.¹⁰

Bahá'u'lláh

11

What is the Spiritual Profile of Those Who Recognize Bahá'u'lláh?

Millions of seekers from all continents have recognized Bahá'u'lláh as the promised Redeemer of their Scriptures. In the Bahá'í community, there is a cross-section of people from humble peasants in Africa and the Amazon to great scientists and religious leaders and scholars from Europe, Australia, and America. (See Part VI for statements from several Christian leaders who have recognized Bahá'u'lláh and resigned from their positions in the church.)

What is the spiritual profile of the seekers who acknowledge Bahá'u'lláh? The following are their most common characteristics:

- It is known that like attracts like. We are mostly attracted to people who are like us and give us more of what we already have. ***The seekers who investigate the Bahá'í message are already spiritual-minded, but they want to become even more spiritual.*** They sense a need to find a religion and associate with believers who satisfy their desire to grow spiritually. Some of them indicate that before knowing Bahá'u'lláh, they prayed fervently and tearfully and asked God repeatedly to help them find the truth, to guide them in His ways. They diligently practiced this instruction from Jesus: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4). When such seekers discover the Bahá'í Faith, study the Bahá'í Scriptures, and meet like-minded believers in the Bahá'í community, they know that God has answered their prayers.
- Another quality of such seekers is their ***spiritual independence***. They do not feel that they must believe what their parents, pastors, or rabbis expect them to believe. They are willing to face this reality: one's birth within a given religion should not limit one's search for truth merely within the confines of that religion. Such seekers consider themselves fully competent and able to tell the difference between the divine and the deceptive. They refuse to place their divine destiny in the hands of “authority figures” who may have vested interests in maintaining the status quo.

- ***They value the spirit of their Scriptures*** more than its “letters.” They seek and cherish the pearls of truth within the words and verses.
- ***They are spiritually sensitive.*** They trust their inner guide or instinct to help them know the difference between truth and falsehood, the genuine and the fictitious.
- ***They place great value on their spiritual destiny.*** Although they are as busy as anyone else, somehow they “find” time to study and seek new knowledge. They are willing to sacrifice their worldly wishes and comforts for their spiritual aspirations. They know that what really matters and endures is the state of their soul, not the state of their savings.
- Finally, because of their spiritual sensitivity, such seekers often ***feel dissatisfied with what they receive in their places of worship.*** Their dissatisfaction and high expectations make them receptive to new ideas. Consequently, when they hear the News of the return of their Lord, they are more likely to investigate it. Their deep love for God and their longing for truth leads them to “the desired One” and the desire of their heart: a more intimate relationship with God.

The Gospel clearly shows that the preceding profile also describes the people who recognized Jesus in His First Advent. Today’s Christians who accept the invitation to investigate the Second Advent of Jesus are identical with the Jews who accepted that invitation to investigate the First Advent of Jesus.

They have an identical profile. The same holds true with the Jews and Christians who ignored, or are now ignoring, that invitation. How can we know? Both the Gospel and the stories of early Christians provide us with the evidence. Further, we know that human nature does not change from age to age. History has repeated itself many times. It is repeating itself once again because most people are ignoring the costly and precious lessons that previous generations have left for us. Without knowing, those living in the twenty first century are walking in the footsteps of those who lived in the first century. It seems that nothing has changed!

It would be fascinating to read the stories of the thousands of seekers who recognize Bahá'u'lláh every year throughout the world. Let us see how three of them were led to Him:

I was born into a strict, devout, Catholic family. We said the rosary daily and went to Mass several times a week. I have aunts and uncles who are nuns and priests. It was considered a great family honor to have one of your children grow up to become a nun or priest. As a child, I prayed earnestly to God, promising to devote my life to His service. I fully expected to be a nun when I reached maturity.

As I grew older, I began to see inconsistencies between what I was taught to believe and what the Bible seemed to be saying. By age 12, a great agitation brewed within my soul. I knew I believed in God, Jesus and the Bible, but could not believe in the dogmas and doctrines of the

Church. I could not attend Sunday school or Mass happily, as I once had. I could no longer say the liturgical prayers or listen to sermons that did not make sense. I felt lost and confused. Attending Mass only heightened my distress. Unable to speak with my family, I secretly quit going to Church, hiding in the forest near my home instead.

In my search to become more intimate with God, after I left home at age 17, I decided to visit every church and denomination. Each weekend I would go either to a new church, temple or synagogue or return to the one that had sparked my interest. I read every piece of spiritual literature I could find. My thirst for understanding knew no bounds. My search for truth went on for many years. I saw God everywhere and nowhere.

One day, when I was 24, I was listening to the evening news and felt deeply saddened by the state of the world. When the news was over, with a heavy heart, I began to earnestly pray. As I prayed, a thought occurred to me that only through the coming of someone special, another Christ figure, could the world ever have any hope for healing. It seemed that if Bible promises were to come true, Christ must come soon, or there would be nothing left for Him to return to, because a Godless world would surely destroy all that was here. I prayed that if this was the appointed time of His coming, and if it was His Will, would God please find me worthy and allow me to know Him.

That prayer was answered within a week when I met a Bahá'í for the first time. Everything he said rang true. That night, he lent me two books: *The Book of Certitude* and *Some Answered Questions*. I read them and have been a believer ever since.

Jeanne M. McGinley



I left New Zealand aged 30 to explore some of the world for a year and to attempt to determine a purpose for my life.

I had rejected Christianity because of its failure to offer logical answers to the many questions I had regarding my beliefs. I could not accept the Christian doctrine that most of the people who rejected a particular set of Christian beliefs were completely wrong and condemned to hell. The religious philosophy that I found most attractive was Buddhism with its emphasis on the impermanence of the world and detachment from material possessions...

I discovered the Bahá'í Faith by "coincidence". One Sunday evening, following a visit to my friends, I was hitchhiking back to my home. I was standing beside the main road south of Dublin when darkness fell. I was looking around for somewhere to sleep in the nearby field when a car surprised me by stopping. The driver was very interested in hearing about my experiences of traveling through Asia and of living in Israel. He began to tell me of some social principles such as equality of men and women, etc. that I

had accepted long ago. Then he mentioned a strange name that puzzled me. I got him to write it on a piece of paper. I was surprised that after years of searching I had not come across the name of Bahá'u'lláh before.

The driver, the first of many Bahá'ís I was to meet, was on his way home, but he decided to make a diversion to introduce me to an Irish Baha'i couple. Within six weeks I had read all the books I could find on the Baha'i Faith, attended a Baha'i summer school and heard many fascinating talks.

Despite finding the Bahá'í Writings very logical, I was reluctant and even suspicious about becoming a member of any religion. I was well aware of the trouble and conflict caused by the followers of the many religions in the world, and the dangerous practices and beliefs of some cults. However, the teaching of Bahá'u'lláh touched my heart and helped me resolve all my questions concerning the purpose of our lives and our final destiny. Knowing that I could leave at any time if I discovered something I did not like or could not accept, I joined the Bahá'í Faith.

Twenty four years later, I am even more firmly convinced that Bahá'u'lláh is the One He claims to be, that He has the power to lift us spiritually, and that He has the plan that will bring peace and prosperity to our divided and spiritually impoverished world.

Michael W. Thomas



I grew up in a dysfunctional family, attended a Catholic school, and was taught by the tune of the yard stick and tin edged ruler. My father, an alcoholic and diabetic, drank himself to death by his 39th year. I considered religion a sham and felt no need for a spiritual life.

After graduating from high school, I was drafted into the military. The horrors of what I witnessed in war affected me deeply. Without any sense of spirituality, I considered life nothing more than a fruitless game.

I went on to college after the war, but dropped out before completing my degree. I had several brushes with the law, which ended with a prison sentence. While in prison, I began to study the Bible, reading it several times over. One night, as I prayed on bended knees, I pleaded with God to show me the light of truth. He did! As I prayed, I stared at a light above my head. Suddenly I saw the face of Jesus with His crown of thorns.

From then on my life changed direction. While still in prison, I completed two degrees in Bible studies. Later I accepted a position as pastor of a Christian church. Although I felt honored to be a pastor, I wanted to be even closer to people.

Sometime later, I went back to college, majored in public safety, and worked for the State of Maryland. It was during this time that I discovered Bahá'u'lláh in the prophecies.

I believe that God has led me, step-by-step, to a spiritual awakening—rich in purpose. I feel so honored to know Bahá'u'lláh, to be able to promote unity and peace, and to make a difference during my brief journey in this world.

Joe Killeen

Prayers from Bahá'u'lláh

Suffer me, O my God, to draw nigh unto Thee, and to abide within the precincts of Thy court, for remoteness from Thee hath well-nigh consumed me. Cause me to rest under the shadow of the wings of Thy grace, for the flame of my separation from Thee hath melted my heart within me. Draw me nearer unto the river that is life indeed, for my soul burneth with thirst in its ceaseless search after Thee. My sighs, O my God, proclaim the bitterness of mine anguish, and the tears I shed attest my love for Thee.¹

I beseech Thee...to grant that we may be numbered among them that have recognized Thee and acknowledged Thy sovereignty in Thy days. Help us then to quaff, O my God, from the fingers of mercy the living waters of Thy loving-kindness, that we may utterly forget all else except Thee, and be occupied only with Thy Self. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou willest. No God is there beside Thee, the Mighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Glorified be Thy name, O Thou Who art the King of all Kings!²

12

Why Have People Always Rejected Their Expected Redeemers?

Knowing the answer to this question—Why do people always deny their Redeemers?—is absolutely essential for every seeker of truth. It helps us understand human nature. It reveals how people like us have behaved in similar circumstances in the past. It helps us to draw from the collective experience and wisdom of many generations.

What virtues does a person need to investigate the news of the Advent of a Messenger from God? The first virtue is a passionate love for truth. Is this virtue found in abundance? Not according to Jesus. Consider His prediction about the spiritual state of the people of our time:

..the love of most [people] will grow cold.

Christ (Matt. 24:12 NIV)

Would the people who have lost their love for truth, search for truth? Consider also this prediction:

...many will turn away from the faith...

Christ (Matt. 24:10 NIV)

What can be expected from those who have no faith, but think they do; those who have no love for truth, but think they are the source of all truth? Do such believers have the wisdom and the humility to learn from the lessons of history, and to admit that they are as incompetent in interpreting the true meaning of prophecies as the Jews were 2,000 years ago and still are?

Every divine Messenger and Redeemer has been rejected by most of the people. Among those Messengers, Noah is a classic example. Jesus used that example to warn Christians that history will once again repeat itself:

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah's time. Christ (Matt. 24:37 NAB)

St. Paul predicted that the Christians of this age will listen to their Bible teachers who will tell them not the truth, but what their "itching ears" would like to hear (II Tim 4:3). Test yourself by St. Paul's standard. Would you prefer to listen to a Bible teacher who predicts that God will suddenly destroy all the "evil people" and then lift you from the earth to heaven to live forever in peace and joy? Or would you prefer to listen to a Bible teacher who

predicts that God will send a Plan that will bring heaven to earth, a Plan for a new Kingdom, but you are the one who must build it little by little with patience, hard work, and perhaps even some pain and suffering? Which would you prefer? A humble Redeemer who is tortured and sent to prison, or a powerful Redeemer who sends His enemies to prison, and perhaps even destroys them as if they were weeds or mere mosquitoes?

Suppose you wanted to teach some of your neighbors about Jesus. What obstacles would you face? If you are adventurous, carry out this experiment and see what happens: invite them to a party and tell them about Jesus. But before sending the invitation cards, make sure you are ready to face the consequences, perhaps even leaving your neighborhood! Now consider how much more difficult it would be to teach your neighbors not about a well-known and trusted figure such as Jesus, but about a total stranger—Bahá'u'lláh?

To help Christians recognize Him at His Second Advent, Jesus offered many warnings. Let us consider one of them:

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with *dissipation* [love for pleasure], *drunkenness* [unawareness] and the *anxieties of life*, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap. For it will come upon all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.

Luke 21:34-36 NIV

As we can see, Jesus referred to three obstacles or traps. See if, without knowing, you have been caught unawares by one of them!

- The trap of pressures, anxieties, and demands of daily living. Are you willing to set aside about half an hour a day from your busy schedule to investigate Bahá'u'lláh's Message? If you are, then you have not been caught by this trap. This is a very positive sign.
- The trap of "drunkenness," that of falling into a state of unawareness, complacency, and apathy. Are you truly aware of the awesome claim Bahá'u'lláh makes and the consequences of investigating or ignoring His claim? How can you test your sense of awareness? How would you know? You would know by observing your response to the news of Bahá'u'lláh's coming. Only an urgent response would allow you to avoid this trap. Any hesitation in pursuing your search is a sign of being in the trap of unawareness.
- The trap of worldly pleasures. Most people are so tightly caught in the first trap (daily demands and pressures) that they feel an urgent need to escape from it. How do they cope with the pressures? They try to find some worldly pleasures that would help them forget the stress of their monotonous and demanding life. So they run away from one trap only to fall into another!

The three traps—spiritual apathy and unawareness, pressures of a demanding life, and love for pleasure—are closely linked. The one who falls into

one of them will most likely fall into all of them. But how would you convince anyone that he is in a trap? Even getting someone's attention to read a mini book like this is a challenge!

Don't let that day catch you unaware, as in a trap.
Christ (Luke 21:34)

Glory be to Thee, O King of eternity...I pray Thee...to number me with such as have rid themselves from everything except Thyself, and have set themselves towards Thee...¹
Bahá'u'lláh

I have laid hold, O my Lord, on the handle of Thy bounty, and clung steadfastly to the hem of the robe of Thy favor. Send down, then, upon me, out of the clouds of Thy generosity, what will purge out from me the remembrance of any one except Thee, and make me able to turn unto Him Who is the Object of the adoration of all mankind...²
Bahá'u'lláh

13

What Can We Learn from History?

Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. George Santayna

It is easy to find safety in numbers. It is easy to fall into the trap of self-satisfaction and pride. It is easy to say, “I am special. I am an open-minded and impartial seeker of truth.” But is there a test that can give us an objective picture of our soul? Is there a way that can enhance our exposure to reality and teach us lessons of humility? Yes, the test and the way that can help us achieve all these objectives is to step back in time and compare ourselves with those who were in our place long ago, who faced the same challenge we are facing today: Knowing a Redeemer when He has not received full recognition—when to many people He is still a stranger.

Taking this step will teach us a virtue that will lead us to true knowledge. It will make us truly humble and prepare us for the most glorious journey of our life.

In the path of the search for truth humility is the first requirement. Without it nothing of significance can be achieved. In God's Kingdom, the key to greatness is humility and the door to abasement is pride:

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Christ (Matt. 23:12 NIV)

For the Lord...crowns *the humble* with salvation.

Psalms 149:4 NIV

Seek the Lord, all you *humble* of the land...seek *humility*; perhaps you will be sheltered on the day of the Lord's anger.

Zephaniah 2:3 NIV

Suppose you wanted to raise a baby. What would you do? Would you not want to study at least a book on child development to learn how you can best nourish your baby and protect him from disease and danger? Compare the birth of a new religion to the birth of a baby. By learning about the early years of *past* religions, we can learn much about the early years of a *new* religion. Consider this statement from a Christian publication:

Why are Christendom's first 400 years of history so important? For the same reason that the first few years of a child's life are important—because they are the formative years when the foundation is laid for the future personality of the individual.¹

What lessons can we learn about the early years of Christianity? One lesson is that most people are not receptive to new ideas. They reject God's greatest gift—the One who comes to save them:

He [Jesus] came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. John 1:11

Can Bible interpreters find any evidence that Jesus gave the believers the authority or the right to interpret prophecies? Do the Bible scholars who speak with confidence concerning the meaning of prophecies remember the following verses? Do they heed their counsels?

...no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. II Peter 1:20 NIV

Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. I Cor. 4:5 NIV

Can those who have their eyes on the sky find any support for being literal-minded? Can they find a single verse like the following to support their stance?

...the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. II Cor. 3:6 NIV

...the things that come from the Spirit of God... are spiritually discerned. I Cor. 2:14 NIV

Is it not possible that misconceptions similar to the ones that have occupied the Jewish mind for 2,000 years, are now occupying the Christian mind? Cannot the spiritual weaknesses that have dominated

the Jewish heart dominate the Christian heart? Are we not told that the people of this age would rather hear myths and illusions than the truth?

They will turn their ears away from the truth
and turn aside to myths. II Tim. 4:4 NIV

Are the people of this age more discerning than those of past ages? Are they superior to those who lived in Noah's time? Will they pay attention to (watch for) the news of the coming of their Lord, or will they allow their worldly needs and desires to draw their attention away from their divine destiny? Why did Jesus say:

The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah's time. Christ (Matt. 24:37 NAB)

Will the priests and rulers of this age welcome their Lord?

The priests did not say, "Where is the Lord?"
...the rulers also transgressed against Me...
Jeremiah 2:8

In that day...O my people, your leaders [will]
cause you to err, and confuse—the course of
your path. Isaiah 3:7, 12 AB

...many that are first shall be last; and the last
first. Christ (Mark 10:31)

Are the people of this age open-minded? Will they open their heart and soul the moment they hear their Lord's knocking?

Be ready...to let Him in the moment He arrives
and knocks. Christ (Luke 12:35-36 NEB)

Will the masses of Christians accept the Lord's invitation to His feast, or will they look for excuses?

A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, "Come, for all things are now ready." ***But they all with one accord began to make excuses.*** The first said to him, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused." And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused." Still another said, "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come."

Christ (Luke 14:16-20 NKJ)

Lauded be Thy name, O my God! I entreat Thee...to blot out from my heart all idle fancies and vain imaginings, that with all my affections I may turn unto Thee, O Thou Lord of all mankind!

I am Thy servant...O my God! I have laid hold on the handle of Thy grace, and clung to the cord of Thy tender mercy. Ordain for me the good things that are with Thee, and nourish me from the Table Thou didst send down out of the clouds of Thy bounty and the heaven of Thy favor.

Thou, in very truth, art the Lord of the worlds, and the God of all that are in heaven and all that are on earth.²

Bah' u' lláh

14

Why Should I Take Time to Choose My Destiny?

The world offers us many choices. All of them have only short-term consequences except one: the spiritual path that we choose. This choice determines our everlasting destiny.

Jesus asked us to give priority to our spiritual life. He said: “Seek ye first the kingdom of God” (Matt. 6:33). Many of us do just the opposite. We put the earthly kingdom first. This world is so greedy, it can consume every moment of our lives, and then ask for more! The consequence of submitting to daily demands is this: what matters most in our lives gets little if any attention. To overcome the worldly attractions, we must constantly remind ourselves of these self-evident truths:

- We are only passengers on earth.
- Our permanent home is heaven.
- But we must build that home during our earthly life.
- And we only have a little time to build it.

To liberate our soul from the gripping temptations of this world, we must search for an equally powerful force. The following reminders may have the required power, provided we make them a part of our daily devotions:

As long as it is day [the time to make a difference], we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.

Christ (John 9:4 NIV)

Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near.

Isaiah 55:6

Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to you while you may be found; surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.

Psalms 32:6 NIV

When we embark on a journey, we pay close attention to the highway signs for fear of getting lost. Do we also pay close attention to the heavenly signs, the ones we receive in our spiritual journey? If we did, we would all reach our divine destiny, we would know where we are and where we are going as surely as we would on a highway with clear signs.

Some eminent authors and scholars, such as Dr. Robert Schuller, Dr. James Dobson, and Dr. Wayne

Dyer ask us to remain open, sensitive, and receptive to the events and experiences of our lives. They indicate that what we call “coincidence” is often a clue or a sign to attract our attention, to help us notice God’s plan for us. They encourage us to remain sensitive to these clues to see if we can discern a pattern or purpose (syn-chronicity) in certain doors opening, others closing. As Dr. Wayne Dyer notes:

The basics of belief in synchronicity are that every single life has a purpose and a deeper meaning than we are generally aware of. Behind all form is an intelligence that is exquisitely perfect, and that works in a synchronized fashion. Everything happens for a purpose, and the puzzle pieces of life fit together perfectly...the more we loosen up and allow ourselves to flow in the energy system of the universe, the more we experience this phenomenon.¹

God’s guidance comes to us in subtle ways. Only by paying “close attention” can we notice a pattern and a purpose in the events of our lives, can we discern the guiding hand of God.

To help us know Him the second time, Jesus emphasized one word more than any other. Repeatedly He said: **Watch!** What kind of events need watching? Dramatic or subtle, those that require close attention, or those that require no attention?

Blessed—happy, fortunate and to be envied—are those servants whom the Master [Jesus] finds **awake** and **alert** and **watching** when He comes.

Christ (Luke 12:37 AB)

What I say to you, I say to everyone: “**Watch!**”

Christ (Mark 13:37 NIV)

What does Jesus mean? He means: ***Pay close attention, watch for the signs you are given to guide you to your divine destiny.*** Hearing about the advent of Bahá'u'lláh from a friend or receiving this book by “coincidence” may be one of those heavenly signs you are given in your spiritual journey. The sign reads:

Say: O peoples of the earth! By the righteousness of God! Whatever ye have been promised in the Books of your Lord, the Ruler of the Day of Return, hath appeared and been made manifest. Beware lest the changes and chances of the world hold you back from Him Who is the Sovereign Truth. Ere long will everything visible perish and only that which hath been revealed by God, the Lord of lords, shall endure.²

Bahá'u'lláh

One way we can follow Jesus' instruction is to “**watch,**” or pay attention to the way God speaks through His great Messengers and Redeemers. For “as the heavens are higher than the earth,” so are His thoughts higher than our thoughts (Isa. 55:9-11). If we can tell the difference between the earth and heaven, so can we tell the difference between the Word of God and the word of man. If we pay close attention, we can discern in every verse of Bahá'u'lláh's Scriptures—equal to a hundred volumes—the heavenly distinction, the divine authority. In every verse He has spoken, the Glory of God shines with the brightness of the sun:

The Hour which We had concealed from the knowledge of the peoples of the earth and of the favored angels hath come to pass.³ Bahá'u'lláh

...all the atoms cry aloud: “Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!”⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

O My servants! My holy, My divinely ordained Revelation may be likened unto an ocean in whose depths are concealed innumerable pearls of great price, of surpassing luster. It is the duty of every seeker to bestir himself and strive to attain the shores of this ocean, so that he may, in proportion to the eagerness of his search and the efforts he hath exerted, partake of such benefits as have been pre-ordained in God's irrevocable and hidden Tablets...O My servants! The one true God is My witness! This most great, this fathomless and surging Ocean is near, astonishingly near, unto you. Behold it is closer to you than your life-vein! Swift as the twinkling of an eye ye can, if ye but wish it, reach and partake of this imperishable favor, this God-given grace, this incorruptible gift, this most potent and unspeakably glorious bounty.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Freedom of choice is one of God's most precious gifts to us. We all have the freedom to ignore His Signs or to explore them.

...I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. Christ (Rev. 3:8 NIV)

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses...
that I have set before you life and death...Now
choose life...the Lord is your life...

Deut. 30:19-20 NIV

While You Have a Chance

Life moves forward, destiny does not wait, opportunity does not last forever. "We have eternity to celebrate our victories, but only a few hours to win them." Time is the treasure of your life. Exchange it for virtues, not for gold. The only jewels that are truly yours are the jewels in your soul.

The time is coming when you will long to see
one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will
not see it.

Christ (Luke 17:22)

Seize, O friends, the chance which this Day
offereth you, and deprive not yourselves...of
His grace.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

Imperishable glory I have chosen for thee...
While there is yet time, return, and lose not thy
chance.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

Seize thy chance, for it will come to thee no
more.⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be
full.

John 16:24 NKJ

The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all
who call upon Him in truth.

Psalms 145:18 NKJ

Since Thou hast revealed Thy grace, O my God, deter not Thy servants from directing their eyes towards it. Consider not, O my God, their... concerns and their works. Consider the greatness of Thy glory, and the plenteousness of Thy gifts, and the power of Thy might, and the excellence of Thy favors. I swear by Thy glory! Wert Thou to look upon them with the eye of justice, all would deserve Thy wrath and the rod of Thine anger. Hold Thou Thy creatures, O my God, with the hands of Thy grace, and make Thou known unto them what is best for them of all the things that have been created in the kingdom of Thine invention.⁹

Bahá'u'lláh

Part V

A Call to Christians

Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, like men waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

Christ (Luke 12:35-56 NIV)

O people of the Gospel! They who were not in the Kingdom have now entered it, whilst We behold you, in this day, tarrying at the gate. Rend the veils asunder by the power of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bounteous, and enter, then, in My name My Kingdom. Thus biddeth you He Who desireth for you everlasting life. He, verily, is potent over all things. Blessed are those who have recognized the Light and hastened unto it. They, verily, dwell in the Kingdom, and partake of the food and drink of God's chosen ones.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

15

Christians Are Invited

Almost twenty centuries ago Christ declared, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). The “Me” has once again come to take us to the Father. It is *the same* “Me” but with a new name (Isa. 62:1-3; Rev. 2:17). He offers us *the same* life, and leads us in *the same* way and to *the same* Father.

Jesus blessed those who would be invited to His spiritual banquet (Rev. 19:9). That promise is now fulfilled. That honor is now offered to all banquet lovers:

All the favors of God have been sent down, as a token of His grace. The waters of everlasting life have, in their fullness, been proffered unto men. Every single cup hath been borne round

by the hand of the Well-Beloved. Draw near, and tarry not, though it be for one short moment.²

Bahá'u'lláh

This is the Day whereon the rushing waters of everlasting life have gushed out of the Will of the All-Merciful. Haste ye, with your hearts and souls...³

Bahá'u'lláh

O peoples of the earth! Give ear unto God's holy Voice...Whom the Almighty hath graciously chosen for His Own Self. He is indeed none other than the True One...⁴

The Báb

Bahá'u'lláh clearly declares that if we deny Him in His new name, we have also denied all the Messengers and Redeemers of the past. That, of course, includes Jesus Christ. If we lose Bahá'u'lláh, we have also lost Christ. For if the "Me" is the same, how can we deny one and accept the other? How can we reject one and keep the other? If the "Me" is the same, how can we know one and not know the other? To those who denied Him, Jesus said:

If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?

John 5:46-47

The Jews rejected Jesus because they did not know *why* they believed in Moses. If they knew, they would apply *the same* standards to Jesus. If a person has seen the light, he can recognize it from whatever source it may come. If the Jews had truly seen the light of God in Moses, they could have seen it also in Jesus.

There is only one God. Once again He has made Himself manifest in a new Mirror known as Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. There is only one Sun, in whatever mirror it may shine. We should not look at the glass or the frame but at the light. We should think of the reasons why we believe in Jesus. If we use ***the same standards, and the same reasons***, then we will see the same Light, not once, but twice, not only in Bahá'u'lláh, but also in the Báb.

Jesus used “the parable of the talents” to help us banish our fears (Matt. 25:14-30). Do you remember what happened to the servant who said, “I was afraid”? He was sent to a place of darkness, where there is continuous grief and anger. That parable was spoken especially for anyone who may have fear of loving a new name, who may prefer his comfort zone over the Will of his Master, who fails to use his God-given potential to create peace, prosperity, and harmony on this weary and war-torn planet.

O My friends that dwell upon the dust! Haste forth unto your celestial habitation. Announce unto yourselves the joyful tidings: “He Who is the Best-Beloved is come! He hath crowned Himself with the glory of God’s Revelation, and hath unlocked to the face of men the doors of His ancient Paradise.” Let all eyes rejoice, and let every ear be gladdened, for now is the time to gaze on His beauty, now is the fit time to hearken to His voice. Proclaim unto every longing lover: “Behold, your Well-Beloved hath

come...!”...“Lo, the Adored One hath appeared arrayed in the fullness of His glory!” O lovers of His beauty! Turn the anguish of your separation from Him into the joy of an everlasting reunion, and let the sweetness of His presence dissolve the bitterness of your remoteness from His court.

Behold how the manifold grace of God, which is being showered from the clouds of Divine glory, hath, in this day, encompassed the world. For whereas in days past every lover besought and searched after his Beloved, it is the Beloved Himself Who now is calling His lovers and is inviting them to attain His presence. Take heed lest ye forfeit so precious a favor; beware lest ye belittle so remarkable a token of His grace. Abandon not the incorruptible benefits, and be not content with that which perisheth. Lift up the veil that obscureth your vision, and dispel the darkness with which it is enveloped, that ye may gaze on the naked beauty of the Beloved's face, may behold that which no eye hath beheld, and hear that which no ear hath heard.⁵

Bahá'u'lláh

Independent Search for Truth

Should we be afraid of being deceived? Of course we should be! Should we also be afraid of losing Bahá'u'lláh? Of course we should be! How can we overcome both fears? Only by seeking knowledge and enlightenment, only by searching until we find

the truth, only if we trust our own eyes, and not the eyes of any other human being, no matter how many books he has published and how many sermons he has delivered. What is required for seeing God? “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt. 5:8). Did Jesus ever say, “Blessed are the scholars and great orators, for they are the first to see the light”? Of course, we should respect religious leaders and scholars. But we should not allow them to decide for us what the truth is. They should not choose our destiny.

God’s Messengers and Redeemers are so infinitely distinguished above others that every “eye” can see their divine glory and distinction. No one needs special glasses or binoculars. Can any eye fail to see the sun?

God reveals the truth to the heart. If the heart has any impurities—such as concern for safety and status—it beclouds the mind. Instead of asking someone else if Bahá’u’lláh is from God, we should ask God! Would He not respond to our call if we pray sincerely? Is God less dependable than our friends, neighbors, parents, priest, pastor, or rabbi?

...whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing,
ye shall receive. Christ (Matt. 21:22)

As long as we approach Bahá’u’lláh with conditions—such as “Why didn’t He do this or that?”—we will be unable to find the truth. Remember that all the interpretations offered by scholars are subject to errors.

Bahá'u'lláh asks us **not** to look at the things we have, such as the assumptions, expectations, illusions, and false interpretations that the human mind has generated and passed from generation to generation. He invites us to look at what **God** presents to us as evidence of His chosen One, His beloved and suffering servant Bahá'u'lláh:

...man can never hope to attain unto the knowledge of the All-Glorious...unless and until he ceases to regard the words and deeds of mortal men as a standard for the true understanding and recognition of God and His Prophets.⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

God...is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. ***Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you.*** This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it.⁷

Bahá'u'lláh

The people at the time of Jesus had the same problem. They looked only at what their family and culture had given them. They regarded what they were taught by fallible human beings as the standard of truth:

You judge by worldly standards...you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men.

Christ (Mark 8:15, 33)

When we accept, without investigation, the traditions of our family and culture as the truth, when

we ask others to judge the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh for us and then follow their verdict, we have, according to the Gospel, submitted our eternal destiny to spiritual slavery; we have thrown back to God the gift of freedom that He gave us. We have shown ingratitude for His most sublime gift: our freedom of choice. When we choose someone else's opinion, we become his spiritual slave! Consider this exchange of thoughts between Jesus and conformers of His time (John 8:32-41):

Jesus: The truth will set you free.

Pharisees: We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?

Jesus: If you were Abraham's children then you would do the things Abraham did... Abraham did not do such things. ***You are doing the things your own father does.***

As the conversation implies, those who denied Jesus were merely slaves of their fathers. Is it not a fact that 90 to 99 percent of people believe what their parents told them to believe? Is not this a kind of spiritual slavery? This is what can happen to those who follow the path of conformity without watching and searching:

How often the most insignificant of men have acknowledged the truth, while the most learned have remained wrapt in veils. Thus in every Dispensation a number of souls enter the fire by reason of their following in the footsteps of others.⁸

The Báb

In the court of divine justice, no one can resign from his God-given responsibility. No one can say, “I am a bad judge! I am not qualified to know the truth.” God has given every human being the gift of mind with which to understand and reason. We must depend on that gift.

And Paul, as his manner was...reasoned with them [non-Christians] out of the scriptures...

Acts 17:2

As a Christian author notes:

Jesus Himself used the same approach with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. He rebuked them for not realizing that the prophets had clearly foretold that the Messiah would be rejected by His people and would be crucified. In fact, His language was rather harsh, showing that each of us is responsible to know what the prophets have said. Jesus told them:

“How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. Christ (Luke 24:25-27 NIV)⁹

A Mission Statement

Each of us should speak and reason with our soul, saying:

“If I were born to a Jewish family, I would be Jewish. If I were born to a Buddhist family, I would be Buddhist. If I were born to a Muslim family, I would be Muslim. Strange as it seems, if I were born to a culture in which everyone worshipped idols, I too would very likely follow suit! Should then my future destiny for all eternity be determined by the accident of my birth to my particular parents? How then can I discover my divine destiny? How can I choose what God has planned for me? By obeying His instructions:”

Seek and ye shall find (Matt. 7:7)

Test the Spirits (I John 4:1 NIV)

...whatever you ask the Father in My name He will give you. Christ (John 16:23 NKJ)

Watch therefore, and pray always... Christ (Luke 21:36 NKJ)

I beseech Thee, O Thou Who art my Companion in my lowliness, to rain down upon Thy loved ones from the clouds of Thy mercy that which will cause them to be satisfied with Thy pleasure, and will enable them to turn unto Thee and to be detached from all else except Thee. Ordain, then, for them every good conceived by Thee and predestined in Thy Book. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, He Whom nothing whatsoever can frustrate.¹⁰ Bahá'u'lláh

The Day of Advent Like Any Other Day

The Day of Resurrection is a day on which the sun riseth and setteth like unto any other day ... That Day is indeed an infinitely mighty Day, for in it the Divine Tree [God's Messenger] proclaimeth from eternity unto eternity, 'Verily, I am God. No God is there but Me.' Yet those who are veiled believe that He is one like unto them, and they refuse even to call Him a believer... Their hearts are deprived of the power of true insight, and thus they cannot see, while those endowed with the eyes of the spirit circle like moths round the Light of Truth until they are consumed. It is for this reason that ***the Day of Resurrection [the time of the coming of God's Messengers] is said to be the greatest of all days, yet it is like unto any other day.***¹¹

The Báb

Christ's statement that at His return people will act the way they acted at Noah's time confirms the Báb's statement that the day of Advent is like any other day:

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark.

Christ (Luke 17:26-27 NIV)

Like a Trap

The following warning further confirms that the day of the Advent is like any other day:

Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly *like a trap*. Christ (Luke 21:34)

How does a trap work? By being concealed. Who falls into a trap? The person who fails to watch, who fails to pay close attention and to investigate. After a person falls into a physical trap, he will know it. This does not hold true with a psychological trap. A person may remain in a psychological trap for a lifetime without being aware. Consider a swindler who sets a trap for your money. If you fail to watch, and you fall into his trap, you will recognize the scheme only when it is too late. That is exactly what happened to people in Noah's time. They had no idea that they were trapped by complacency, fear, pride, apathy, lack of faith, worldliness, drunkenness, unawareness, and ignorance. The same is happening today. People find all kinds of excuses to avoid facing the reality that God has sent a new Messenger and Redeemer endowed with undeniable evidence. Each of those excuses is a trap that the individual sets for himself to remain in the darkness of remoteness from God.

Still another trap is:

...the appearance of that immortal Beauty [God's Messenger] in the image of mortal man, with

such human limitations as eating and drinking, poverty and riches, glory and abasement, sleeping and waking, and such other things as cast doubt in the minds of men, and cause them to turn away.¹² Bahá'u'lláh

As these holy Persons were subject to such needs and wants, the people were, consequently, lost in the wilds of misgivings and doubts, and were afflicted with bewilderment and perplexity. How, they wondered, could such a person be sent down from God, assert His ascendancy over all the peoples and kindreds of the earth, and claim Himself to be the goal of all creation...and yet be subject to such trivial things?¹³ Bahá'u'lláh

Jesus promised to come *on* the clouds and *with* the clouds (Matt. 24:30, Rev. 10:1). He has now fulfilled His promise. He has come not only *with* the clouds of His physical form but also *on* the clouds of human fantasy—age-old illusions and assumptions—that rise out of human imagination, and obscure their blazing light and supreme splendor. Only by rising above the clouds can we see the Sun. Only by tearing the veil of negligence and unawareness can we attain true liberty.

O MY FRIEND!

Thou art the day-star of the heavens of My holiness, let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendor. Rend asunder the veil of heedlessness, that from behind the clouds thou mayest emerge resplendent and array all things with the apparel of life.¹⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Like a Thief

The heavenly “thief” always comes with earthly “veils” and “clouds” to conceal Himself from strangers:

Were I to remove the veil, all would recognize
Me as their Best Beloved, and no one would
deny Me.¹⁵ The Báb

Who are the strangers? They are the ones who love their comfort zones, who cling to what they have, even if it is a life of spiritual starvation, misery, and despair, even if it is a decayed and crumbling social order, even if it leads them to remoteness from God. They are the people who would rather sleep, snore, and dream, than see the splendid dawn. God never drags anyone out of his warm, cozy bed. He wants His creatures to discover Him and see Him wrapped in His earthly “veils” and “clouds.” If He removed the veil, if He came out of the clouds, all the beauty and grandeur of His design—the excitement, the suspense, the drama, and the distinctions—would instantly end forever. Fear, rather than freedom, would become the hallmark of human life. Secrecy is an absolutely essential feature of the design of creation. It is like the cement that holds a bridge together. If it is removed, everything falls apart.

What type of people should enter the heavenly banquet? What kind of people would God like to attract? Only those who prefer the spectacle of dawn to the comfort of snoring and dreaming. Only *they* will hear His Voice!

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

Christ (John 18:37)

Open your ears that ye may hearken unto the word of God...¹⁶

Bahá'u'lláh

God extends His cup only to the thirsty:

To him who is thirsty I will give to drink...

Christ (Rev. 22:6)

What does Jesus mean by saying, "He who belongs to God hears what God says" (John 8:47)? He means hearing and recognizing the Word of God requires special virtues. Only by acquiring those virtues can we hear and recognize His Word. Only by cultivating an unclouded heart and mind can we see the Sun. In an Epistle to the Shah of Persia, the Báb wrote:

Were the veil to be removed from thine eye thou wouldst crawl unto Me on thy breast, even through the snow, from fear of the chastisement of God which is swift and near at hand.¹⁷

If people really knew the consequences of cruelty, or any other evil act, they would not dare do wrong. Good deeds would spring not out of a true heart but from a terrified heart. The dignity and honor of being human and enjoying freedom would be lost forever.

The design of creation is perfect. It will never change. As long as there is the sun, there will be clouds. The same kind of closed-and-literal minded people who were wrapped in the clouds of their illusions, who saw their Messiah crucified, witnessed Him *once again*, denied the divine Spirit in Him

once again, and saw Him pierced **once again**—this time not with nails but with hundreds of bullets. The clouds of misconceptions and illusions, theological theories and traditions have always prevented people from beholding the splendors of the Sun.

To see how such clouds can conceal the truth, obscure one's vision, and destroy the pristine purity and power of fruits as the ultimate proof of God's Word, consider the following discussion between a Christian who attempts to convince a Jew that his expected One (the First Advent) has come, and a Bahá'í who speaks with a Christian to convince him that his expected One (the Second Advent) has also come.

Christian: The Messiah has already come!

Jew: I don't believe you. How can you tell?

Bahá'í: Christ has already come again.

Christian: I don't believe. How can you tell?

Christian: Jesus fulfilled all the prophecies.

Jew: Prophecies indicate that when our Messiah comes, He will liberate us. He will make us the envy of the nations. Do you remember what happened to us under Hitler?

Bahá'í: Bahá'u'lláh fulfilled all the prophecies.

Christian: Jesus indicates that He will come from the sky and every eye will see Him. When did you see Him come?

Christian: Jesus was a true king—a *spiritual* king.

Jew: You are changing the prophecies. They refer *only* to a king, but not to a *spiritual* king.

Bahá'í: Jesus came from a *spiritual heaven* and everyone with an *inner* eye saw him.

Christian: You are changing the prophecies. They refer *only* to heaven, but not to a *spiritual heaven*.



Christian: The way God speaks is different from the way we speak. To understand His Word, you must be open-minded and look at the big picture.

Jew: I am open-minded. But I take the Word of God as it is.

Bahá'í: The way God speaks is unique. To understand His Language, you must be spiritual-minded. You must heed the lessons of history.

Christian: I am loyal to the Bible. I do not spiritualize the Word of God. I follow His Word literally. I am sure Jesus will come from the sky.

Seven Standards of Testing the Truth

How can we break the preceding deadlock? How can we resolve the conflict? We can best resolve by depending on the following testable standards. We can come to a dependable decision:

1

By descending from the clouds of theological theories and traditions to the solid ground of God's luscious vineyard.

By listening to Jesus' instructions that *a tree can best be known by its fruits*.

By looking at the life of Jesus, the Báb, and Bahá'u'lláh to see if they lived *a life of absolute purity and perfection*, if they produced good fruits.

2

By looking at their *Words* to see if they manifest *divine authority*, for the way God speaks is distinctly different from the way humans speak.

3

By looking at the thoughts and *teachings* that their Words contain in order to see if they promote *unity, love, peace, and justice*.

4

By examining their *Scriptures* to see if they *glorify God and the Ones He has sent before them*.

5

By looking at their *influence on the world* to see if they could have accomplished all those spiritual wonders on their own without divine assistance.

6

By examining their works to see if *they advocate rational thinking and reasoning as a means of*

knowing and testing the truth rather than relying on tradition, conformity, and blind thinking.

7

By examining the fulfillment of literal prophecies in their lives.

Simply by using the preceding seven standards, we can clearly discern their divine distinction. ***Fulfillment of hundreds of literal prophecies in their lives will only confirm what we have already discovered.***

Knowing the Truth by God's Standards, Not Human Judgment

To recognize Bahá'u'lláh and His supreme and celestial splendor, we should look at Him with our heart and soul. If we look without attachment to what we have, we will suddenly see Him glow with a brightness and a brilliance we have never witnessed before. We will see Him emerge from behind the clouds and shine like a heavenly chandelier with countless points of light.

To discern the Glory of God in Bahá'u'lláh, “Look not...at the things ye possess.”¹⁸

Look at His Word—the Word of God. Look at the 1,800 biblical prophecies He and His Herald, the Báb, fulfilled.

Ponder the 15,000 Epistles Bahá'u'lláh wrote without pause of pen, each of them as brilliant as every other.

Learn about the countless lives He elevated. Consider the hearts and homes that radiate with His light in every clime and country throughout the expanse of the globe.

Investigate the thousands of mysteries He has resolved, whether about here or about the hereafter, whether about creating a new World Order on earth or about preparing the soul for its everlasting journey home—to God’s many mansions in heaven.

Ponder His thousands of days of suffering in prison and the many nights of loneliness He spent upon the mountains of Kurdistan in a desolate and remote land.

Remember the countless thousands of foes and false friends who surrounded Him with their swords from every side, and yet were powerless before His blazing glory and majesty.

Think of the thousands of times He could have been killed, yet He was not.

Consider His humility and absolute submission before God.

Learn about His love for an old woman who wanted to throw a stone at Him and was prevented by others. But Bahá’u’lláh asked them to allow her to attain her heart’s desire.

Study the lives of the people who entered Bahá’u’lláh’s presence with the sole intention of arguing and proving Him wrong, but found themselves speechless and impotent in His presence.

Consider His willingness to sacrifice His beloved and youthful son for the peace of the world.

Ponder His superhuman endurance, His awesome powers to sustain pressure without breaking down.

Remember His nights in chain in the Black Dungeon and His days of anguish in the Most Great Prison in 'Akká, the most desolate city in the world.

Think of the authority with which He advanced His claim, and the certainty with which He spoke the Word of God, without seeking any glory or honor for Himself.

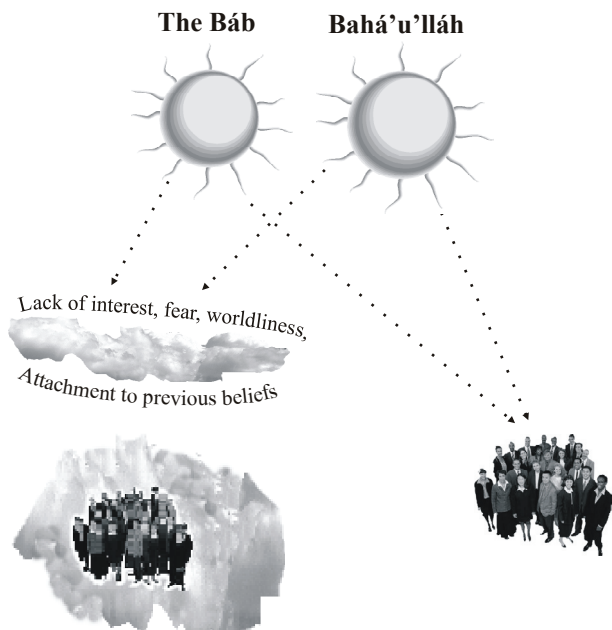
Consider His unshakable and unswerving love for humankind, even for His bitter enemies.

Set your eyes on such a celestial and awesome Chandelier with infinite points of light shining like the stars of heaven.

Now what will happen if you take your eyes off these points of light? You will see nothing but darkness. What will happen if you focus at a given point in space, and see only fogs and drifting clouds? You will say, "There is no chandelier." You will deny its very existence. You will deny it simply because the chandelier is not where you happen to be looking. According to the Gospel: "**Unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time**" (Heb. 9:28). Will He appear also to those who fail to look for Him? What will the people who fail to look for Bahá'u'lláh be able to see? They will be in the position of those who, instead of looking at the chandelier, focus their eyes on a few patches of

clouds, on a few prophecies they believe God must fulfill *the way they understand them!* Could you think of anything more unreasonable?

**The heaven of divine Revelation
from which the Word of God descends**



***To see the glory of the sun we
must walk away from under
the clouds, otherwise:***

You may look and look, but
you will never see. Acts 28:26

In the following statement, Bahá'u'lláh likens the seekers of truth to “birds,” religion to “the rose-garden,” and Himself to “a Flower” that has begun to bloom:

Hear Me, ye mortal birds! In the Rose Garden of changeless splendor a Flower hath begun to bloom, compared to which every other flower is but a thorn, and before the brightness of Whose glory the very essence of beauty must pale and wither. Arise, therefore, and, with the whole enthusiasm of your hearts, with all the eagerness of your souls, the full fervor of your will, and the concentrated efforts of your entire being, strive to attain the paradise of His presence, and endeavor to inhale the fragrance of the incorruptible Flower, to breathe the sweet savors of holiness, and to obtain a portion of this perfume of celestial glory. Whoso followeth this counsel will break his chains asunder...will attain unto his heart's desire, and will surrender his soul into the hands of his Beloved. Bursting through his cage, he will, even as the bird of the spirit, wing his flight to his holy and everlasting nest.

Night hath succeeded day, and day hath succeeded night, and the hours and moments of your lives have come and gone, and yet none of you hath, for one instant, consented to detach himself from that which perisheth. Bestir yourselves, that the brief moments that are still yours may not be dissipated and lost. Even as the swiftness of lightning your days shall pass, and your bodies shall be laid to rest beneath a canopy

of dust. What can ye then achieve? How can ye atone for your past failure?¹⁹ Bahá'u'lláh

Let me invite all Christians who are attached to the name Jesus Christ to set aside their fears, and to recognize that Christ and Bahá'u'lláh are one. You will find them both shining with the same brightness, beauty, and brilliance. Do not allow age-old assumptions and illusions, generated and spread by human beings, to deprive you of the incredible and everlasting rewards of turning your heart and soul to Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God, this most precious, exalted, and glorious gift that God is offering you.

Ask yourself this question: If Bahá'u'lláh is indeed the Glory of God, if He is the source of everlasting life, then would it be wise to exchange Him for all the wealth of the world?

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?

Christ (Mark 8:36 NKJ)

O ye that thirst after Him! Strip yourselves of every earthly affection, and hasten to embrace your Beloved. With a zest that none can equal make haste to attain unto Him. The Flower, thus far hidden from the sight of men, is unveiled to your eyes. In the open radiance of His glory He standeth before you. His voice summoneth all the holy and sanctified beings to come and be united with Him. Happy is he that turneth thereunto; well is it with him that hath attained, and gazed on the light of so wondrous a countenance.²⁰ Bahá'u'lláh



By the righteousness of the one true God! The very breath of these souls [true believers] is in itself richer than all the treasures of the earth. Happy is the man that hath attained thereunto, and woe betide the heedless.²¹ Bahá'u'lláh



God...is My witness, O people! I am come to you with a Revelation from the Lord, your God, the Lord of your fathers of old. Look not, O people, at the things ye possess. Look rather at the things God hath sent down unto you. This, surely, will be better for you than the whole of creation, could ye but perceive it...consider the testimony of God and His proof which are in your possession, and compare them unto the Revelation sent down unto you in this Day, that the truth, the infallible truth, may be indubitably manifested unto you...What would it profit man, if he were to fail to recognize the Revelation of God? Nothing whatever. To this Mine own Self, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient, the All-Wise, will testify.²² Bahá'u'lláh



Verily this is none other than the sovereign Truth; it is the Path which God hath laid out for all that are in heaven and on earth. Let him then

who will, take for himself the right path unto his Lord. Verily this is the true Faith of God... This is indeed the eternal Truth which God, the Ancient of Days, hath revealed unto His omnipotent Word—He Who hath been raised up from the midst of the Burning Bush.²³ The Báb



O concourse of Christians! We have, on a previous occasion, revealed Ourselves unto you, and ye recognized Me not. This is yet another occasion vouchsafed unto you. This is the Day of God; turn ye unto Him...The Beloved One loveth not that ye be consumed with the fire of your desires. Were ye to be shut out as by a veil from Him, this would be for no other reason than your own waywardness and ignorance. Ye make mention of Me, and know Me not. Ye call upon Me, and are heedless of My Revelation...

O people of the Gospel! They who were not in the Kingdom have now entered it, whilst We behold you, in this day, tarrying at the gate. Rend the veils asunder by the power of your Lord, the Almighty, the All-Bounteous, and enter, then, in My name My Kingdom. Thus biddeth you He Who desireth for you everlasting life...

We behold you, O children of the Kingdom, in darkness. This, verily, beseemeth you not. Are ye, in the face of the Light, fearful because of your deeds? Direct yourselves towards Him... Verily, He (Jesus) said: "Come ye after Me, and

I will make you to become fishers of men.” In this day, however, We say: “Come ye after Me, that We may make you to become quickeners of mankind.”

We, verily, have come for your sakes, and have borne the misfortunes of the world for your salvation. Flee ye the One Who hath sacrificed His life that ye may be quickened? Fear God, O followers of the Spirit (Jesus), and walk not in the footsteps of every divine that hath gone far astray...Open the doors of your hearts. He Who is the Spirit (Jesus) verily, standeth before them. Wherefore keep ye afar from Him Who hath purposed to draw you nigh unto a Resplendent Spot? Say: We, in truth, have opened unto you the gates of the Kingdom. Will ye bar the doors of your houses in My face? This indeed is naught but a grievous error.²⁴

Bahá'u'lláh



May the peace of God rest upon the sincere among His servants. All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.²⁵

The Báb



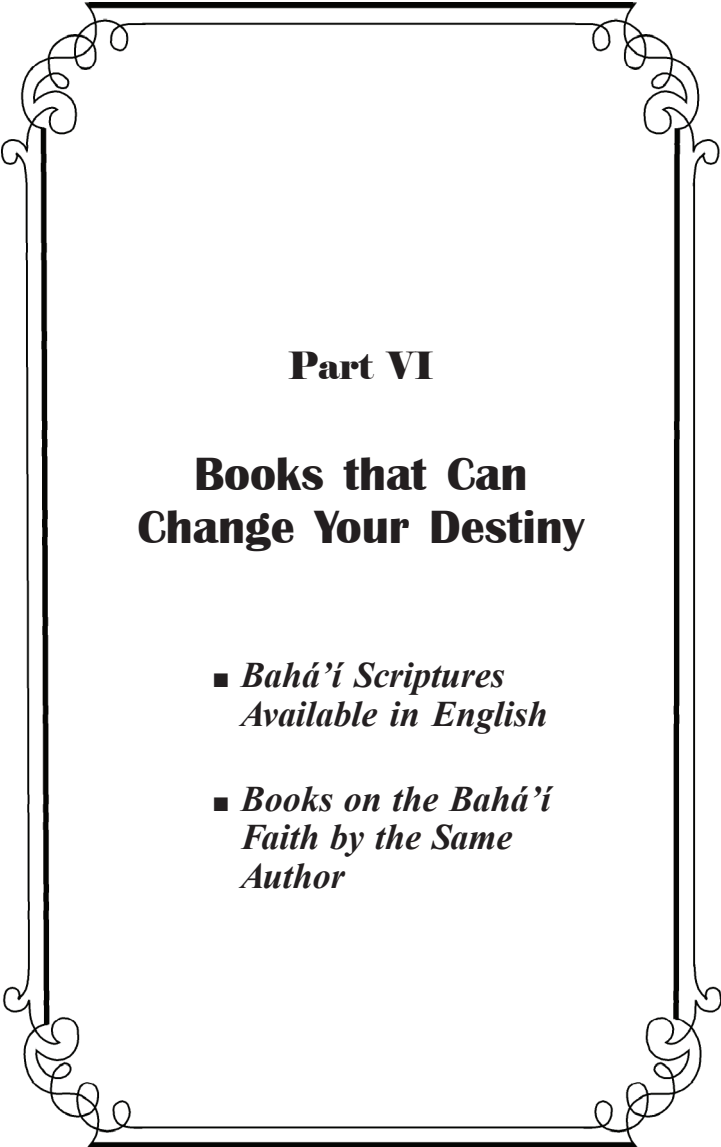
Blessed is he that hath set himself towards Thee...Blessed is he who with all his affections hath turned to the Dawning-Place of Thy Revelation and the Fountain-Head of Thine inspiration. Blessed is he that hath expended in Thy path

what Thou didst bestow upon him through Thy bounty and favor. Blessed is he who, in his sore longing after Thee, hath cast away all else except Thyself. Blessed is he who hath enjoyed intimate communion with Thee, and rid himself of all attachment to any one save Thee.

I beseech Thee, O my Lord...to ordain for every one what becometh Thee and beseemeth Thine exaltation.

Thy might, in truth, is equal to all things.²⁶

Bahá'u'lláh



Part VI

Books that Can Change Your Destiny

- *Bahá'í Scriptures
Available in English*
- *Books on the Bahá'í
Faith by the Same
Author*

**Bahá'í Scriptures
Available in English**

Bahá'u'lláh's Works

Seek ye out the book of Jehovah and read...

Isaiah 34:16

Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

The most complete and comprehensive reference on Bahá'u'lláh's Works available in English. This book, which is a compilation from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, covers a wide spectrum of precepts ranging from the purpose of man's creation, his duty and destiny, to the manifold mysteries of divine Wisdom.

Prayers and Meditations By Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'u'lláh has left a rich repository of prayers pertaining to every human hope and aspiration, dream or desire. Thus, in this dispensation, the seekers of serenity, guidance, and inspiration can select and recite prayers and meditations revealed and blessed by the Pen of the Redeemer of the age, the revealer of divine Purpose.

Bahá'u'lláh has also written many prayers expressing His own supplication and servitude before God. Such prayers offer an intimate knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's own self—His indomitable spirit, His unswerving love for the Creator and for humanity, His steadfastness in His claim, His determination before the onrush of adversities, His absolute trust in God, and His loving counsel to all those athirst for truth.

The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh

No other of Bahá'u'lláh's works so succinctly offers the reader as complete and as representative a sample of the ethical fruits of the new Revelation as *The Hidden Words*. It is a small book filled with gems, a treasure-house of celestial Wisdom, a divine guide to the unfoldment and ennoblement of the human spirit.

All the requirements for attaining purity and self-fulfillment are stated in the most exquisite and lofty language. Everything that the soul must seek or surrender, everything that a spiritual seeker must know or must do to direct the course of his or her spiritual destiny is concisely and clearly revealed and set forth by the pen of the Supreme Messenger—the Revealer of hidden wisdom and divine mysteries.

The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys

Perhaps the most mystical of Bahá'u'lláh's works available in English. It unfolds and enumerates the stages of seeker's journey towards God; revealing, in a language at once poetic and perplexing, his potential for attaining perfection and nobility, and his sublime and celestial destiny, if he but turns to the light instead of darkness, seeks the gems of divine wisdom instead of the perishable joys of flesh, and undertakes to tread the long but wondrous and enchanting path of purification and illumination.

Epistle to the Son of the Wolf

Addressed to a cruel and cunning Muslim clergyman who, along with his father, inflicted death, distress, and torment on some of Bahá'u'lláh's most beloved and most distinguished disciples. Though addressed to a symbol of denial, it is a call to humanity as a whole. This weighty volume covers and clarifies many illuminating and inspiring arrays of precepts.

The Summons of the Lord of Hosts

Contains some of Bahá'u'lláh's Epistles or Tablets addressed to the kings and rulers of the world, to its religious leaders, and to humanity in general. These Tablets comprise Bahá'u'lláh's most emphatic words on His claim and on His station as the supreme Savior of humankind, the King of Kings,

the Glory of the Lord, the Desire of the Nations, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Lord of the Vineyard, Christ returned in the Glory of the Father, the Inaugurator of the Cycle of Fulfillment, and the Promised One of all ages and religions.

***The Book of Certitude*✧**

This book responds to questions raised by a seeker of truth. It unseals “the sealed Wine of mysteries,” and unveils the symbolism and the essence of all the scriptures of the past, indicates how the seeker of truth can rise above the prevailing perplexity and confusion, how he or she can move from doubt to certitude, and from unbelief to belief.

It offers proofs of divine Revelation, portrays in a moving language man’s refusal to accept and acknowledge, in every age, the gift of divine Guidance, and conveys in a unique tone and style the dramatic story of the unfoldment of the perennial Faith of God, the unveiling of the eternal Truth.

✧Also known as *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*.

***Other Bahá'í Writings
Available in English***

By Bahá'u'lláh:

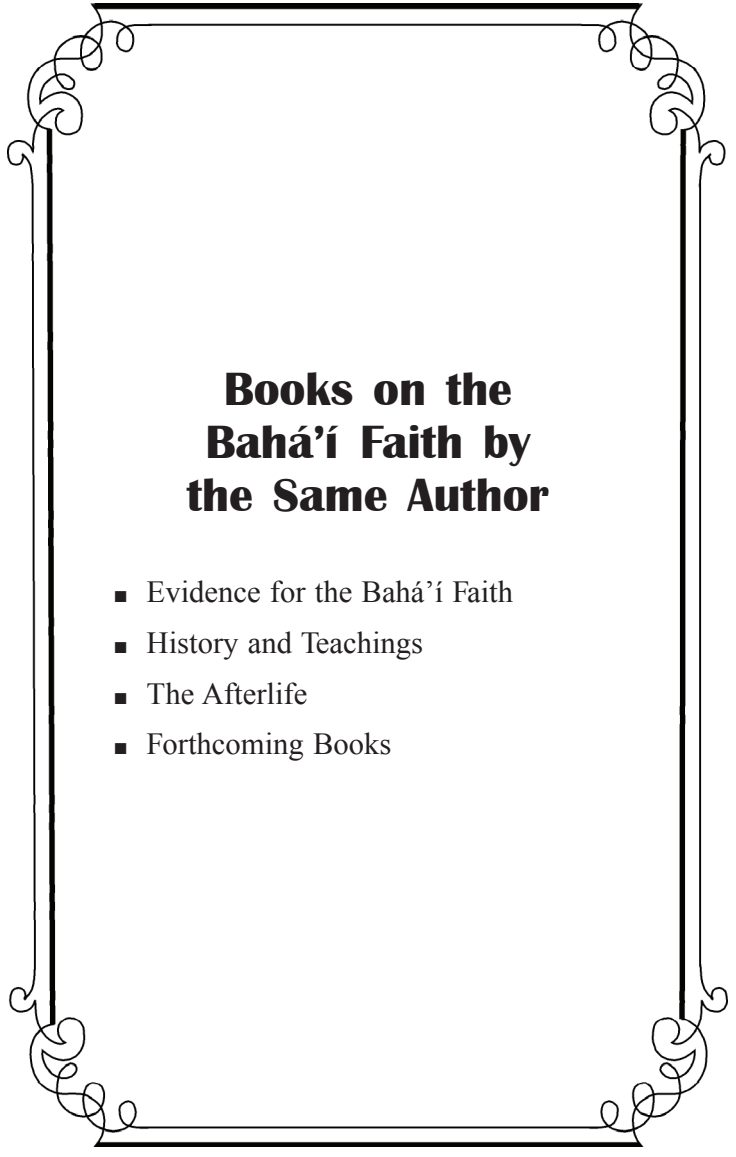
*The Most Holy Book
Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh
Gems of Divine Mysteries
Tabernacle of Unity*

By the Báb:

Selections from the Writings of the Báb

By 'Abdu'l-Bahá:

*Some Answered Questions
Foundations of World Unity
The Secret of Divine Civilization
Paris Talks
Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá
The Promulgation of Universal Peace
A Traveller's Narrative*



Books on the Bahá'í Faith by the Same Author

- Evidence for the Bahá'í Faith
- History and Teachings
- The Afterlife
- Forthcoming Books

Evidence for the Bahá'í Faith



I Shall Come Again

522 Pages
Volume I

***That is the day when I come like a thief.
Happy the man who stays awake.
Christ (Rev. 16:15)***

***Do not let Him find you sleeping. What I
say to you, I say to everyone: "Watch!"
Christ (Mark 13:36)***

Did you know that the Bible contains 16 time prophecies concerning the year of the Second Advent? No wonder so many scholars discovered the same date. Did you also know that all those 16 prophecies point to the same year: 1844? ***Bahá'ís believe that the promise of the Second Advent has***

already been fulfilled, precisely as predicted. Christ did return in 1844, ***“like a thief,”*** in a way that ***the News of His coming did not draw much attention.*** And as the Book of Revelation predicts, God gave Him a new name: ***Bahá'u'lláh***, meaning ***the Glory of God.***

Obviously ***we expect you to be very skeptical***, but we invite you ***to stay spiritually awake, to “watch,” to pay close attention, and to investigate this most glorious News.*** How can you do this? Start your search by examining the evidence presented in ***I Shall Come Again***, the first of a six-volume series on the fulfillment of biblical prophecies by ***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God.***

I Shall Come Again, written after three decades of research, takes you step by step through 16 prophecies that point to 1844, and hundreds of other prophecies, concerning the return of Christ. It proves how these prophecies, without exception, were fulfilled by ***Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*** and His martyred Herald, ***the Báb (the Gate)***, who appeared in 1844. ***I Shall Come Again*** is one of the most fascinating books of our time. If you have faith in God's promises and a desire to know the truth, you will receive incomparable joy and hope from reading it.

History shows that no false prophet has ever been able to prove his claim by the evidence of fulfilled prophecies. Christian scholars often regard Hebrew prophecies as the most conclusive and convincing evidence of Jesus' divine Mission.

Let us consider a statement from Dr. Norman Geisler, president of Southern Evangelical Seminary, “who has published countless articles in academic journals and has authored over fifty books, including *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*.” Dr. Geisler makes the following statement concerning the prophecies that point to the First Advent of Jesus:

Some have suggested...that the prophecies were accidentally fulfilled in Jesus. In other words, he happened to be in the right place at the right time...If there is a God who is in control of the universe, as we have said, then chance is ruled out. Furthermore, it is unlikely that these events would have converged in the life of one man. Mathematicians have calculated the probability of 16 predictions being fulfilled in one man at 1 in 10^{45} ...

But it is not just a logical improbability that rules out this theory [of chance]; it is the moral implausibility of an all-powerful and all-knowing God letting things get out of control so that all his plans for prophetic fulfillment are ruined by someone who just happened to be in the right place at the right time. God cannot lie, nor can he break a promise (Heb. 6:18). So we must conclude that he did not allow his prophetic promises to be thwarted by chance. All the evidence points to Jesus as the divinely appointed fulfillment of the Messianic prophecies. He was God’s man confirmed by God’s signs. In brief, if God made the predictions to be fulfilled in the

life of Christ, then he would not allow them to be fulfilled in the life of any other. The God of truth would not allow a lie to be confirmed as true.

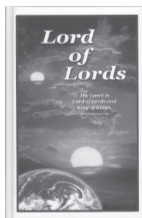
Imagine if the News of the Return of Jesus is true and you choose not to investigate and not to know Him! Imagine also if the News of His Return is true and your investigation leads you to recognize Him!

I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also.

Christ (John 14:3)

“He, verily, is come with His Kingdom, and all the atoms cry aloud: ‘Lo! The Lord is come in His great majesty!’” “Behold how He hath come down from the heaven of His grace, girded with power and invested with sovereignty. Is there any doubt concerning His signs?”

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)



Lord of Lords

634 Pages

Volume II

This volume presents hundreds of biblical prophecies concerning the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith—the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá—as well as Shoghi Effendi (the Guardian of the Bahá'í

Faith), the Universal House of Justice (the supreme administrative body in the Bahá'í Faith), the Bahá'ís (the followers of Bahá'u'lláh), the Bahá'í teachings, and the Book of Bahá'í Laws (*The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*).

Lord of Lords presents six fulfillments for Daniel's prophecy of 1335, and shows their connection to the Bahá'í Faith. The book also presents **86 similarities between Jesus and the Báb**, who is called "***One like a Son of Man.***"

Christian scholars often apply the statistical laws to the prophecies of Hebrew Scriptures to prove the divine station of Jesus. ***Lord of Lords*** applies the same laws to the prophecies of both Hebrew and Christian Scriptures to prove the divine station of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

Lord of Lords shows that the probability of biblical prophecies coming true in the Bahá'í Faith by chance alone is about 1 in 10^{80} . The number 10^{80} is equal to the number of atoms in the known universe! What does this evidence indicate? ***It indicates that if anyone could pick a specific atom in the universe by chance, he could then claim that the biblical prophecies fulfilled in the Bahá'í Faith also happened by chance!*** The proof presented in this volume is so compelling it can convince even the most skeptic seeker!

...the desire of all nations shall come...

Haggai 2:7

He who is the Desired One is come in His transcendent majesty...Better is this for you than all ye possess. Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father...
Christ (Matt. 16:27)

I have come in the shadows of the clouds of glory, and am invested by God with invincible sovereignty.
Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)



King of Kings

510 Pages

Volume III

This is the third of the six-volume series. This volume also presents hundreds of biblical prophecies concerning the advent of the Bahá'í Faith. Four of its chapters show that, contrary to what most people—both Christians and Jews—believe, ***the Bible predicts suffering and severe persecution for the Redeemer of our time.*** *King of Kings* also presents many prophecies, in the course of two chapters, to show that according to both Testaments, the title of the Redeemer of our age (known to Christians as the Second Coming of Christ and to the Jews as the Messiah) is “***the Glory of God***,” the English translation of the original title “***Bahá'u'lláh***.”

A chapter discusses the many reasons why people deny and persecute their promised Messenger and Redeemer in every age, and then later claim that if they had lived at the time of His Advent they would not be among the deniers!

Many Christians expect the coming of the Anti-christ. ***King of Kings*** presents two chapters to show the fulfillment of this expectation by two deceptive figures who opposed ***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God***, with all their might, and tried in vain to destroy Him and establish themselves as the Central Figures of the Bahá'í Faith.

I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings prove that once again God has spoken to humanity, that He has fulfilled His promises, and has manifested His great glory and power by sending two supreme Messengers and Redeemers—***Bahá'u'lláh, and His martyred Herald, the Báb***—to guide our bewildered world to unity, peace, and justice, and to lead our wandering souls to His heavenly Mansions. Not investigating this Message of hope and fulfillment is to deprive yourself of the very source of all wisdom and the very purpose of coming to this world.

I have come down from heaven...

Christ (John 6:38)

Say, God is my witness! The Promised One Himself [Bahá'u'lláh] hath come down from heaven...with the hosts of revelation on His right, and the angels of inspiration on His left...

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

Behold, I come like a thief! Blessed is he who stays awake...

Christ (Rev. 16:15)

***Blessed the slumberer who is awakened...
Blessed the ear that hath heard, and the eye***

*that hath seen, and the heart that hath turned
unto Him... Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)*

What do others say about:

I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords,
King of Kings?

A scholarly work of meticulous research. Appealing to reason and applying the scientific method to prophetic scripture, it demonstrates that God has once again revealed Himself to humankind and has provided hope for unity and peace on this planet. John Paul Vader, M.D.

Author of For the Good of Mankind

A book with a message of hope and fulfillment, a message that can transform our planet into a place of peace, into a kingdom that has been the dream and hope of humanity since the dawn of history...a scholarly, comprehensive, and fascinating work that has been long overdue. No wonder it took over three decades to complete it.

Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson

Judge, U. S. Court of Appeals, 9th Circuit

A story with an incredible ending that is made credible by the sheer weight of evidence. It is a must for anyone interested in the proofs of the advent of the Promised One of all ages.

John Huddleston

*Former Chief of Budget and Planning
Division, International Monetary Fund,
Author of The Earth Is But One Country*

...a treasure house of great value for both Bahá'ís and seekers.

Adib Taherzadeh
Author and Scholar

I am in awe at the extent of research you have undertaken!

Waldo Boyd
Writer and Editor

Your work never fails to astound me. The effort and breadth of your knowledge both of the Bible and other literature as well as the depth of your understanding of Bahá'í Scripture is truly amazing. Also, a hallmark of your work is your thoroughness. Anyone who believes in biblical prophecy, and reads these volumes with an open mind, cannot fail to be convinced.

Dr. Tom Rowe
Professor of Psychology

Your work is the best I've seen on biblical prophecies and proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. You offer so much information in relatively few pages. Your many references prove clearly the book's central claim. Your language is simple and exciting. You take the reader through a complete spiritual and prophetic adventure. Your approach is modest, yet dynamic. I pray it will excite all your readers as it has excited me.

Joe Killeen
Bible Scholar, with a Degree in
Eschatology and Soteriology

There are few works by a single author that can rival Dr. Motlagh's in their sheer scope, depth and thoroughness of scholarship. Without

doubt, future Bahá'ís will thank Dr. Motlagh for his achievements, that are, in my opinion, not only astonishing—they are heroic.

An important work that will be referenced by future Bahá'í scholars for millennia to come.

Robert F. Riggs

Aerospace and Marine Scientist, Inventor,
Author of *The Apocalypse Unsealed*

By writing these volumes Dr. Motlagh has made a momentous contribution to our understanding of biblical prophecy. As a former Baptist minister, I urge all Christians to investigate the news of the return of our Lord as presented in I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords, and King of Kings. “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you” (Isa. 60:1).

Mel Campbell

Former Baptist Minister

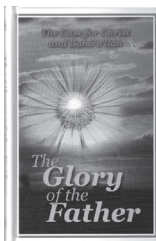


Come Now, Let Us Reason Together

286 Pages

This book is written in response to the objections raised by a pastor against the Bahá'í Faith. It removes all the main obstacles that prevent Christians from recognizing the return of the Son in the glory of the Father, from acknowledging the promised

Redeemer of our time—***Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God***. Once you start reading this book, you will find it hard to put down.



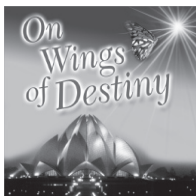
***The Glory of
The Father***

329 pages

One way to prove that Bahá'u'lláh fulfills the promise of the Second Advent is to compare Him with Jesus Christ. ***The Glory of the Father: The Case for Christ and Bahá'u'lláh***, does exactly that. It compares Jesus and Bahá'u'lláh in 35 different ways. A fair-minded, even a skeptical, reader cannot escape this conclusion: If Jesus is the One He claims to be, so must be Bahá'u'lláh. A sincere Christian cannot in good faith accept One and reject the other. It will be like having twin children, but loving only one of them!

In addition, ***The Glory of the Father*** offers a summary of some of the most significant prophecies presented in ***I Shall Come Again, Lord of Lords***, and ***King of Kings***.

History and Teachings



On Wings of Destiny

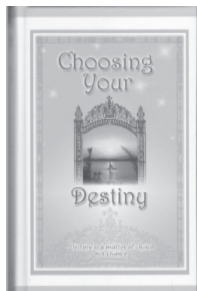
274 Pages

On Wings of Destiny is based on a dialogue between two friends. Reading it is like joining a circle of friends and participating in a “fireside chat.”

The prime purpose of the book is to inspire you—and anyone else who values his soul and spiritual life—to recognize that *in this world you have an awesome responsibility: you must choose your everlasting destiny. That choice has unimaginable consequences that will endure beyond death for all eternity.* Failing to make a choice is also a choice. This book invites you to make every effort to discover God’s plan for you and to follow that plan.

On Wings of Destiny shows that the only way you can attain true joy and happiness in all the worlds of God is to cultivate your spiritual potential and to draw nearer and nearer to God. If you value your soul and wish to choose your destiny in the light of knowledge and freedom, take the time to listen to this inspiring “fireside chat” to discover how the Bahá’í teachings can help you attain contentment,

fulfill your life's purpose, and discover your divine destiny: Heaven's most glorious gift to you.

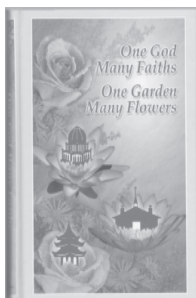


Choosing Your Destiny

375 Pages

Most people leave their destiny to “chance.” Whatever their parents happen to believe, they believe. This book shows that our “destiny” is God’s most precious gift to us. Should we throw this gift to the wind? Should we allow “chance” rather than “choice” determine our destiny?

The Bahá’í Faith has come to give us spiritual insight and to help us choose our destiny in the light of reason and true knowledge, rather than in the darkness of tradition and conformity. The knowledge contained in ***Choosing Your Destiny*** can liberate us from past prejudices and illusions and set our souls free. It can help us become spiritual by developing “the divine image” in our soul.



***One God, Many
Faiths; One Garden,
Many Flowers***

290 Pages

One God, Many Faiths; One Garden, Many Flowers shows that in God's garden there are many fragrant flowers, planted and nourished by the same Gardener. The Bahá'í Faith has come to help us recognize the beauty of the garden, the harmony of the flowers, and the oneness of the Gardener.

When we realize that we are all one people, on one planet, under one God, with one common destiny, the walls of prejudice that divide God's beautiful garden will crumble. Only true knowledge and love can reveal this beauty and bring about this wonder. The Bahá'í Faith is that knowledge and that love. It penetrates the hearts and souls of humankind to dispel all shadows of prejudice and separation. It connects our hearts and reveals the beauty and splendor of our souls in the light of oneness. ***One God, Many Faiths, One Garden, Many Flowers*** offers you the knowledge that can change your destiny.

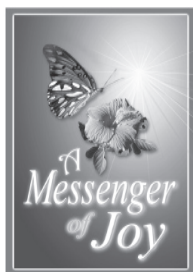
The Afterlife



Unto God Shall We Return

164 pages

This is a compilation from the Bahá'í Scriptures on the afterlife. It brings together the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the purpose of human life and the continuation of that purpose into the mysterious realms beyond. ***Unto God Shall We Return*** is compiled and arranged to portray a clear vision of the meaning of life—both here and hereafter—and to offer guidance about how we can prepare our soul for God's "many mansions in heaven."



A Messenger of Joy

112 Pages

A Messenger of Joy is the most comforting and positive book ever written on death and the afterlife. In consoling and uplifting the souls of the grieving,

it sets a standard that is not likely to be surpassed for a long time.

This book portrays death as a message of joy and hope, and not as the news of sorrow and despair. It lifts the veil to show that death is not the end of life, but the beginning of an everlasting and most glorious journey toward God.

A Glimpse of Paradise

A Near-Death Vision of the Next Life

This DVD (also video) contains a talk given by Reinee Pasarow about one of her near death visions. This is a state in which the individual shows no vital signs of life, yet experiences life to its fullest. What makes this story unique is this: Reinee's vision guided her to become a Bahá'í. She was given several clues by a spiritual being about the Bahá'í Faith. For instance, one of the titles of Bahá'u'lláh—the Blessed Beauty—was revealed to her. She was also told the word “justice” and shown the seat of the Universal House of Justice, exactly as it is built. Reinee had many unusual dreams as a child, and three near death visions.

We have added an introduction and a conclusion to this DVD to make it more attractive and meaningful to all viewers, especially to seekers. The introduction and conclusion present Biblical and Bahá'í references to the many clues that Mrs. Pasarow received while in the presence of the Being of Light.

Forthcoming Books

The Glory of the Son

It is absolutely essential to know why we believe in Jesus. Where can we find the answer? Only in the Words of Jesus Himself. ***The Glory of the Son*** offers a brief summary of all the reasons Jesus—not His followers—gave to substantiate His claim. This is a book that every Christian should read. It will also be of great value to those of the Jewish faith who have a desire to know the evidence for their glorious King and Redeemer: Jesus Christ.

Will Jesus Come from the Sky or as a Thief?

Be always on the watch! Luke 21:36

***The day of the Lord will come like a thief
in the night. I Thess. 5:2***

In the mid-19th century many Christian scholars had discovered that, according to numerous biblical prophecies and promises, Christ would return in 1844. Thousands of Christians around the world expected His Return in that year. Why did so many discover the same date? And what piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did they miss? Let us explore this critical question.

Jesus declared that He would return “**like a thief.**” He also repeatedly warned us to “**Watch!**” How does a thief come? Secretly. A thief does not want to draw attention to himself. This is his foremost concern. How can we catch a thief? By being awake and “**watchful,**” by “**paying attention**” to his coming. Jesus’ warning that He would return “**like a thief,**” and His recommended strategy for recognizing Him by staying *awake* and by “**watching**” for Him, are complementary:

The warning: I shall come like a thief!

The way to recognize me: Watch, pay close attention! Do not be complacent!

What, then, did Jesus mean by warning us repeatedly and emphatically to “**Watch!**”? He meant: “**Pay close attention to the news of My coming!**”

How did Jesus come the first time? Like a thief. He walked among the Jews. He knew every one of them, but with a few exceptions, they did not know Him. Jesus concealed His supreme glory from “the strangers,” from all those who were unworthy of seeing the Spirit of God in Him (John 12:40), from all those who “**may look and look but see nothing**” (Mark 10:12). ***Only the spiritually-sighted paid close attention to Him,*** only they “watched” with their hearts and souls, and only they saw the glory of God in Him. Jesus did not allow the spiritually blind to witness His divine glory.

By the vivid expression “*like a thief*” Jesus instructs us to expect a repetition of the way He came the first time. He further confirms this fact by predicting that *people will respond to the News of His coming the same way that they responded to the News of the coming of Noah*. They will be complacent, non-attentive, negligent, and spiritually asleep!

What piece of “the prophetic puzzle” did Christians (who expected the Return of Christ in 1844) miss? The same “piece” that the Jews had missed 18 centuries earlier and are still missing! That piece is the word “**SPIRIT**:”

The “missing piece” for Jews:

He will come as a “*king*” means: “*His Spirit* will come as a king.”

The “missing piece” for Christians:

He will come from *heaven* means: “*His Spirit* will come from heaven.”

Jesus Himself decoded the word “sky” or “heaven” several times. Compare the following two verses, one from *Jesus Christ, the Anointed One of God*; the other from *Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God*:

I [the Spirit of God, Christ] have come down from heaven. Christ (John 6:38)

He [the Spirit of God, Bahá'u'lláh], verily, hath again come down from heaven, even as He came down from it the first time.

Bahá'u'lláh (the Glory of God)

Muhammad: the Spirit Who Glorified Jesus

This book introduces Islam from a Bahá'í perspective. It demonstrates a remarkable harmony between the Bible and the Qur'án. It also responds to the objections raised against Islam.

Does Your Fish Bowl Need Fresh Water?

This book is written to refresh the life of the soul. Its prime purpose is to advance the “knowledge of God,” so that we may know our Creator as He really is, not as we may wish Him to be!

A poet once said: “God is closer to me than I am to myself. Why, then, am I so far from Him?” How can this be possible? The distance between our spirit and the Spirit of God can be measured by the difference between God as He really is, and the God that we have created in our mind. The purpose of acquiring the “knowledge of God” is to diminish the distance. The more we know God as He really is, the closer we draw to Him.

Our purpose in coming to this world is spiritual transformation, which can be attained only by knowing and loving God. ***Does Your Fish Bowl Need Fresh Water?*** will help you attain this Most Glorious Purpose. It appeals both to the mind and to the heart. It satisfies the mind by presenting the latest scientific evidence for the existence of God

and the afterlife. It inspires and transforms the heart by showing the everlasting honors and rewards in store for those who cultivate their spiritual potential and the unimaginable losses for those who fail in this endeavor.

How would you feel if you traveled for 70 years toward a destination, and then at the end of this journey, you suddenly discovered that you had traveled in the wrong direction? This is the way many people squander the precious days of their lives. Imagine their disappointment at the end of their spiritual journey! Should we not then learn a lesson from their lives? Should we not take a little time for our soul while we still have a chance?

Appendix

A Letter for New Seekers

The following is a copy of a letter that I give to many of those with whom I share the news of the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh. Please feel free to reproduce copies.

Brighten our hearts, O my Lord, with the splendor of Thy knowledge, and illumine our sight with the light of such eyes as are fixed upon the horizon of Thy grace and the Day-Spring of Thy glory.¹

Bahá'u'lláh

Dear Friend:

You should feel honored to be among those who have heard the news of the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh, the Glory of God. I pray that your knowledge will lead you to His Presence. The first requirement for success is removing “the veils of idle fancies” or “unverified and false assumptions” that surround us:

...free thyself from ***the veils of idle fancies*** and enter into My court, that thou mayest be fit for everlasting life and worthy to meet Me.² Bahá'u'lláh

Only by removing “the veils” can the light of knowledge reach us and lead us to ***true faith***. Only then can we attain the honor of ***seeing the glory of God***.

Did I not tell you that if you have ***faith***, you will ***see the glory of God***?”

Christ (John 11:40 NEB)

Prophecies declare that among the many who are “called” only a few will succeed in freeing their souls from “the veils.” Only ***a few*** will be able to join the ranks of the ones chosen by God:

...*many* are called, but *few* chosen.

Christ (Matt. 20:16 NKJ)

In this letter I wish to share with you some insight about the choices you will make. Over the years I have noticed that those who are called to know Bahá'u'lláh fall into one of these groups:

- Many of them fail to investigate His message beyond their first exposure.
- Some of them investigate His message for a while—perhaps for a few weeks or months—and then stop.
- A few of them continue their investigation until they arrive at a conclusion.

Do you belong to the first, the second, or the third group? You will soon discover for yourself. You have, of course, full freedom to join the ranks of any group that you wish. I hope and pray that you will choose to join the ranks of the third group by continuing your investigation. To help you make the best choice, let me remind you of a universal law found in all the sacred Scriptures. It is *the Law of Reciprocity*. According to this Law, God will treat us the way we treat Him:

For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.

Christ (Luke 6:38 NKJ)

Let us now apply ***the Law of Reciprocity*** to the consequence of accepting or rejecting God's invitation to investigate the news of the Advent of His great Messengers and Redeemers. Only God has the authority to set these laws, to speak in this language, and to give such warnings:

But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.

Christ (Luke 12:9)

God will verily do unto them that which they themselves are doing, and will forget them even as they have ignored His Presence in His day. Such is His decree unto those that have denied Him, and such will it be unto them that have rejected His signs.³ Bahá'u'lláh

Recognition of ***the Law of Reciprocity*** will empower our soul with "fear of God"—an awareness of His awesome authority—and then it will lead us to wisdom, the most precious of all virtues:

The fear of the Lord is the beginning
of wisdom... Psalms 111:10

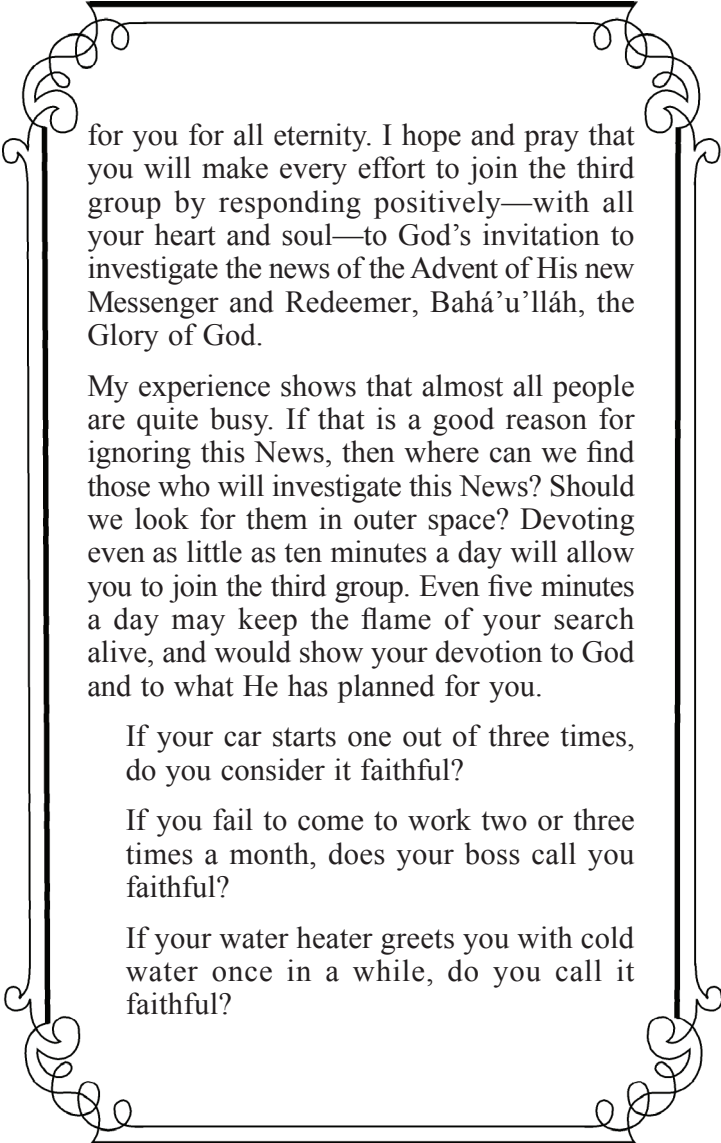
The essence of wisdom is the fear of
God...and the apprehension of His justice
and decree.⁴ Bahá'u'lláh

Hearing about the News of the Advent of
Bahá'u'lláh not only offers you a chance to
attain the greatest glory and honor, it also
places a special responsibility on your conscience.
This is because after you hear the News,
a second law takes effect. It is ***the Law
of Justice***, expressed in these words:

***From everyone who has been given
much, much will be demanded***; and
from the one who has been entrusted
with much, much more will be asked.

Christ (Luke 12:48 NIV)

This letter expresses my love for all those
seekers with whom I share this Greatest and
most Glorious News: the Advent of the Glory
of God—the One for whom the world has
been awaiting for thousands of years. Its
purpose is to help you recognize the great
honor of hearing about Bahá'u'lláh and the
heavenly fruits that this knowledge can bear

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for you for all eternity. I hope and pray that you will make every effort to join the third group by responding positively—with all your heart and soul—to God’s invitation to investigate the news of the Advent of His new Messenger and Redeemer, Bahá’u’lláh, the Glory of God.

My experience shows that almost all people are quite busy. If that is a good reason for ignoring this News, then where can we find those who will investigate this News? Should we look for them in outer space? Devoting even as little as ten minutes a day will allow you to join the third group. Even five minutes a day may keep the flame of your search alive, and would show your devotion to God and to what He has planned for you.

If your car starts one out of three times, do you consider it faithful?

If you fail to come to work two or three times a month, does your boss call you faithful?

If your water heater greets you with cold water once in a while, do you call it faithful?

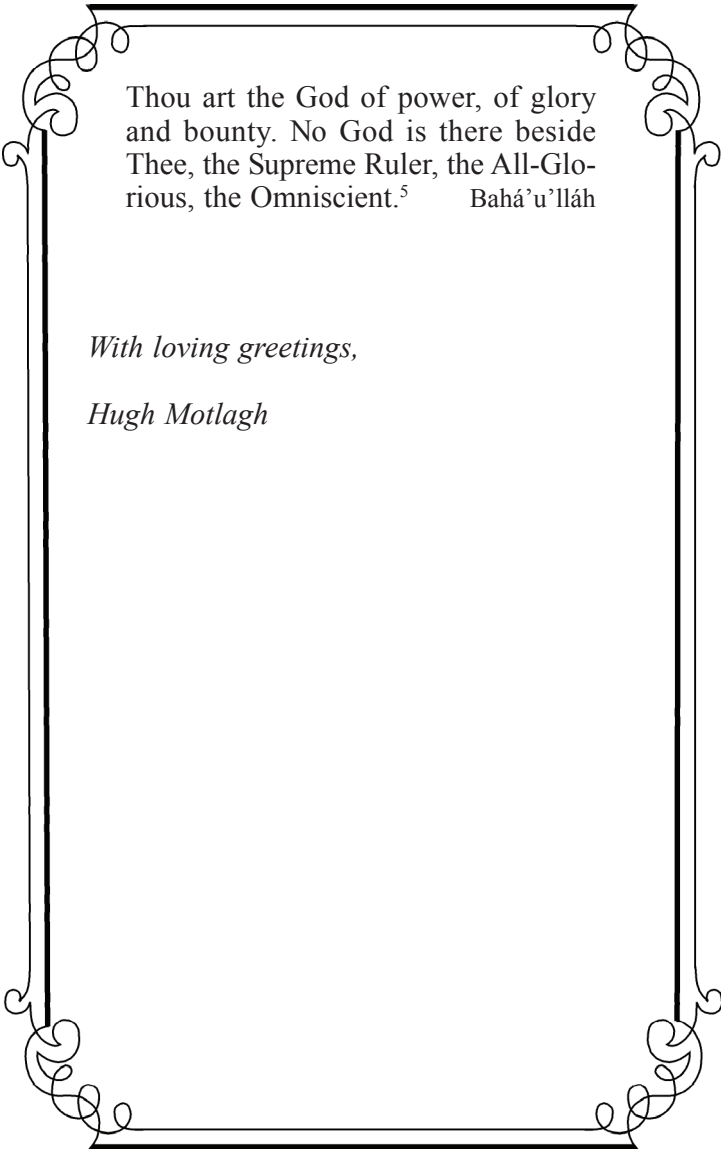
If you miss a couple of mortgage payments a year, does the loan company say, “Oh, well, 10 out of 12 is not too bad”?

If we expect faithfulness from other people and things, does not God expect the same—if not more—from us?

If at this point in your life, even five minutes a day is too much for you to devote to your everlasting destiny, then you may wish to keep this letter as a reminder to do in the future what you cannot do now.

May God give you plenty of time to investigate the news of the Advent of Bahá'u'lláh—the most awesome revelation of Knowledge from God—before your share of time has come to an end. May God bless you and aid you in all your endeavors.

Magnified be Thy name, O Lord my God! Thou art He Whom all things worship and Who worshipeth no one... I implore Thee...to enable me to drink deep of the living waters through which Thou hast vivified the hearts of Thy chosen ones and quickened the souls of them that love Thee, that I may, at all times and under all conditions, turn my face wholly towards Thee.



Thou art the God of power, of glory
and bounty. No God is there beside
Thee, the Supreme Ruler, the All-Glo-
rious, the Omniscient.⁵ Bahá'u'lláh

With loving greetings,

Hugh Motlagh

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1. *Prayers and Meditations by Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 47-48.
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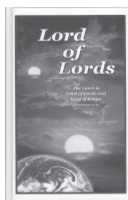
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