



The Bahá'í Faith

All Peoples – One Common Faith



The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion whose purpose is to unite all the races and peoples in one universal Cause and one common Faith.

Bahá'ís are followers of Baha'u'llah, Who they believe is the Promised One of all Ages.

“That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.”



© 2003 CedarCastle Designs

God, the unknowable Creator

Baha'u'llah teaches us that God is unknowable in His Essence. This means that we should not make images of God in our mind, thinking of Him, for example, as a man.

In general, that which has been created cannot understand its creator.

God is the Creator of all things and the reason behind our creation is love. Baha'u'llah teaches us that God loved us, and we were created from this love.



“O SON OF MAN!

I loved thy creation, hence I created thee.
Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name
thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of
life.”



The Eternal Covenant

The way this love flows to us is through His Eternal Covenant.

God never leaves us alone and without Guidance; when humanity moves away from God and forgets His Teachings, a Manifestation of God appears and makes God's Will and Purpose known to us.



Manifestation of God



The Manifestations of God reveal the Word and Will of God and to listen to Them is to respond to the Call of God.

The Manifestations of God are like perfect Mirrors that reflect the Light of God in all its Splendor. And all these Mirrors reflect the same Light.

While God is beyond our reach, these perfect Beings come to us from time to time, live among us, give us guidance, and fill us with the energy we need to progress, materially and spiritually.



The Plight of Humanity



The Promise of this Day

Baha'u'llah says:

“This is the Day in which God's most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things. It is incumbent upon all the peoples of the world to reconcile their differences, and, with perfect unity and peace, abide beneath the shadow of the Tree of His care and loving-kindness.”

The Aim of the Baha'i Faith is to Unify Humanity

Although we differ from one another physically and emotionally, and have different talents and capacities, we all spring from the same root; we all belong to the same human family.

When a feeling of hatred begins to take shape in our hearts, we should immediately replace it with a feeling of love.



The Oneness of Humanity

Although the oneness of humanity is an undeniable truth, the peoples of the world are so far from it that unifying them is no easy task.

When someone joins the Baha'i Community they participate with the rest of us in our efforts to build and maintain unity.



So many passages in the Baha'i Writings teach us how to walk in the ways of unity and how to help others take the same path.

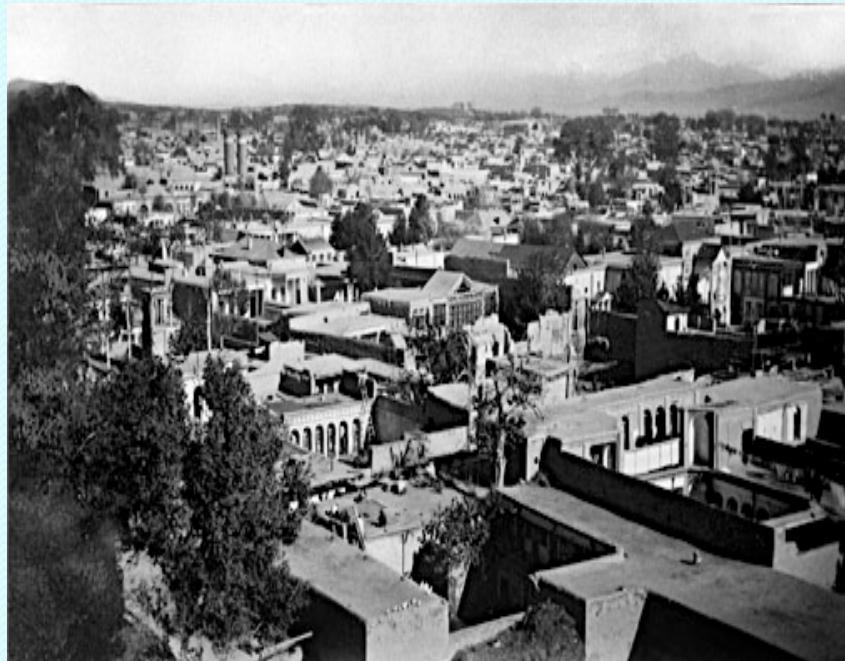
A Divine Design for Unity

“Bahá'u'lláh has drawn the circle of unity, He has made a design for the uniting of all the peoples, and for the gathering of them all under the shelter of the tent of universal unity. This is the work of the Divine Bounty, and we must all strive with heart and soul until we have the reality of unity in our midst, and as we work, so will strength be given unto us.”



Bahá'u'lláh, Manifestation of God

- *Bahá'u'lláh was born in 1817 in Tíhran, the capital of Iran.*
- *From His early childhood, He showed signs of greatness.*
- *He received some instruction at home, but He did not attend school, for He was endowed with innate knowledge from God.*



The Life of Bahá'u'lláh



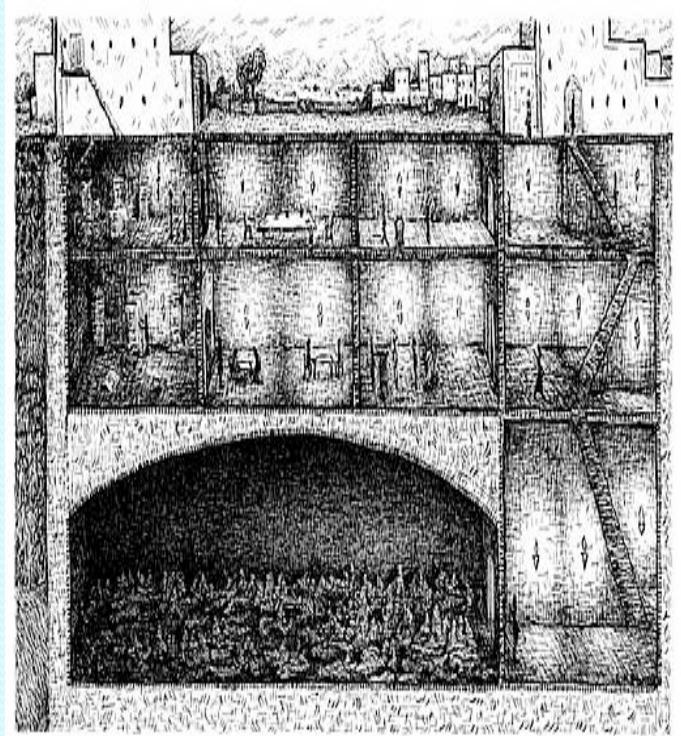
Baha'u'llah came from a noble family; when He was a young man, He was offered a high position in the court of the King, but refused it - dedicating His time instead to helping the oppressed, the sick and the poor and to championing the cause of justice.

Bahá'u'lláh – His Suffering & Influence

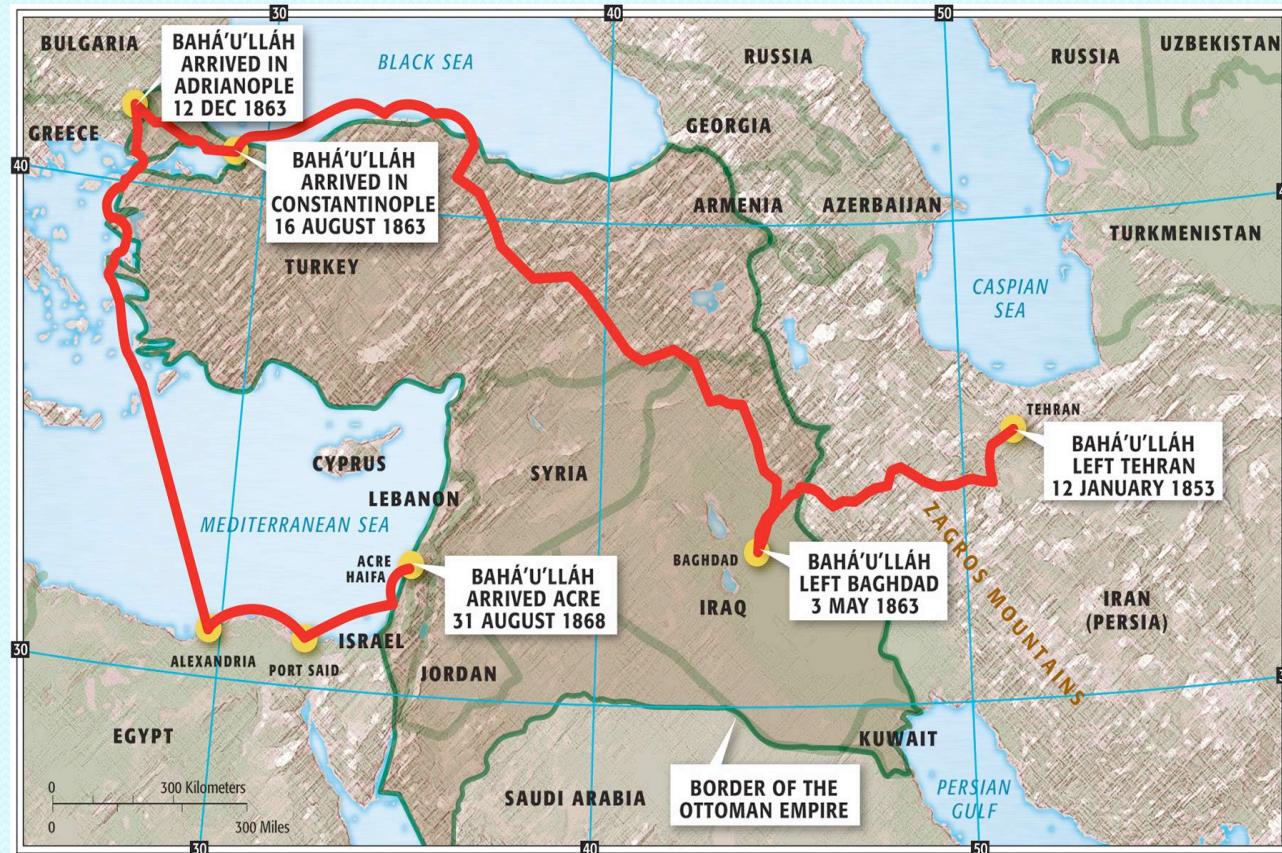
Baha'u'llah's sufferings began the moment He arose to proclaim the Cause of God – He lived a life of exile, imprisonment and persecution; He was put in chains in a dark and dismal dungeon in Tihran.



SOUTHERN PART OF TIHRĀN WHERE CRIMINALS WERE HANGED AND WHERE MANY BAHÁ'Í MARTYRDOMS TOOK PLACE (MARK X INDICATES SITE OF THE SIYĀH-CHÁL)



His Exile and Imprisonment



He was exiled four times from land to land until finally being sent to the Prison City of Akka in the Ottoman Empire. Nothing could be done to stop Baha'u'llah's growing influence.

The Most Great Prison



“Remember My days during thy days, and My distress and banishment in this remote prison. And be thou so steadfast in My love that thy heart shall not waver, even if the swords of the enemies rain blows upon thee and all the heavens and the earth arise against thee.”

“The Ancient Beauty hath consented to be bound with chains that mankind may be released from its bondage, and hath accepted to be made a prisoner within this most mighty Stronghold 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, O believers in the Unity of God, 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 that have joined partners with God have forced Him to dwell within the most desolate of cities!”

The Light of Truth

Every effort was made by two powerful courts, those of the King of Iran and the Ottoman Emperor, to oppose Baha'u'llah and His Teachings but the light of Truth is not easily extinguished.

In spite of constant persecution Baha'u'llah continued to reveal the Word of God for more than 40 years.



The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh



Bahá'u'lláh passed away in 1892. His Shrine is located in the Holy Land near the city of 'Akká, Israel.



The Bab, Herald of the Baha'i Faith



All of the Manifestations of God have given Their Lives for the salvation of humanity.

The Báb, “The Gate”

Several years before Baha'u'llah proclaimed His Mission, God sent a special Messenger to announce His coming.



For six years He taught ceaselessly that the appearance of the new Manifestation of God was near and prepared the way for His coming.

He told the people that they were witnessing the dawn of a new Age, the dawn of the Promised Day of God.

His Suffering & Influence



Thousands upon thousands of people accepted the Message of the Báb and began to follow His Teachings. But the government of Iran and the powerful clergy who ruled over the masses rose against Him.

Martyrdom of the Báb



His followers were persecuted and large numbers were put to death.

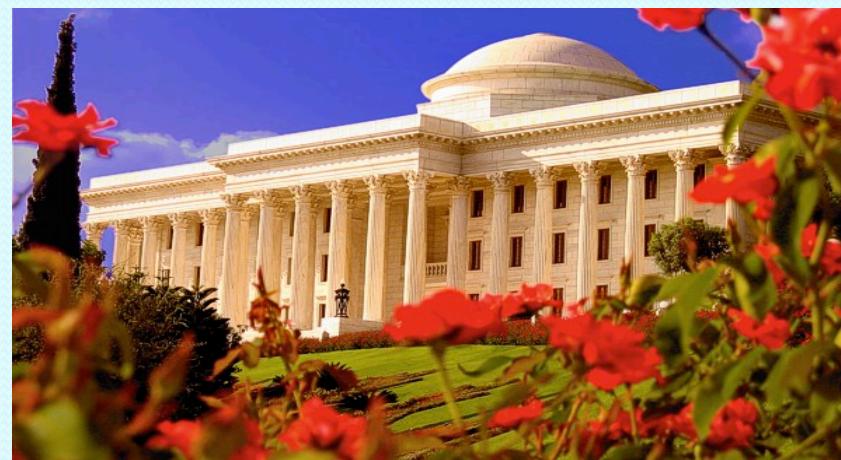
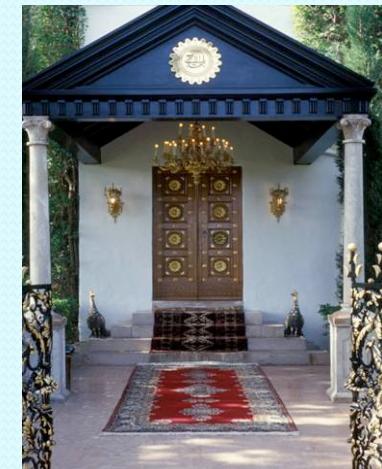
The Bab Himself at the age of 31 was martyred by a regiment of soldiers who, at the orders of the government, suspended Him in a public square and opened fire on Him.

Two Prayers of the Báb:

“Is there any Remover of difficulties save God? Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His servants, and all abide by His bidding!”

“Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth but God sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.”

Spiritual and Administrative World Center



‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Center of the Covenant

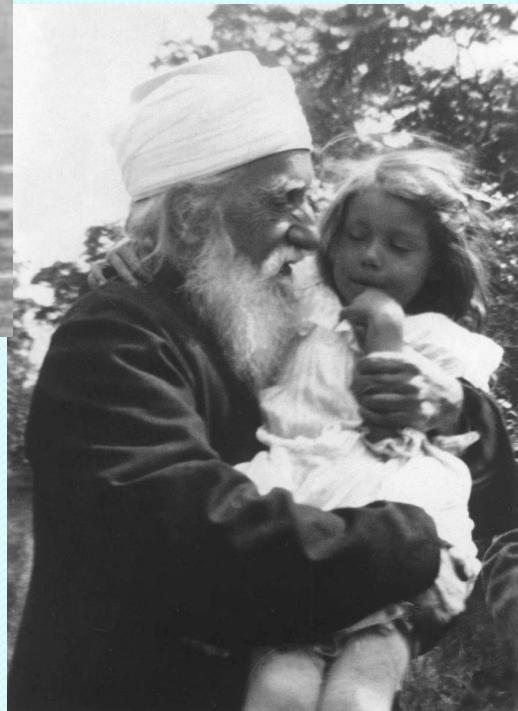
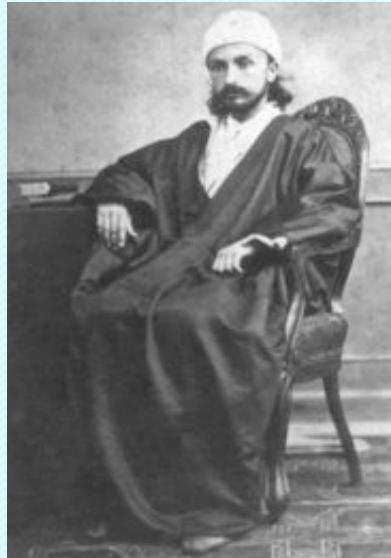


The idea most central to our lives as Baha’is is that we have entered into a Covenant with Baha’u’llah.

In all other religions, after the passing of the Manifestation, His followers had thousands of disputes among themselves and, as a result, split the religion into many sects.

Baha’u’llah has protected His Faith against such division by endowing it with a unique power, the power of the Covenant.

Sole Interpreter & Perfect Exemplar



Before His passing He stated in the clearest terms, in His written Will, that after Him, all Baha'is should turn to 'Abdu'l-Baha.

He had been raised by Baha'u'llah Himself, had recognized His Station even as a child, and had shared the sufferings of His Father.

'Abdu'l-Bahá lived on this earth for 77 years. He was born on the same night the Bab declared His Mission in 1844 and passed away in November 1921.

A Unified World Community

After the passing of His Father, the responsibility for the Baha'i community fell on His shoulders, and He labored day and night to spread the Faith throughout the East and the West.



'Abdu'l-Baha reminds us of our Covenant with Baha'u'llah and we will not allow the unity of His followers to be broken.

United as a worldwide community we will labor until the oneness of humankind has been firmly established.

Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian



In His Will and Testament, Abdu'l-Baha named His grandson the Guardian of the Faith and after His passing, Shoghi Effendi became the authorized interpreter of the Teachings.



For 36 years, he continued the work of His Grandfather, clarifying the Words of the Manifestation and firmly establishing His Faith.

The Universal House of Justice



The Baha'is of the world elected the Universal House of Justice, as envisioned by Baha'u'llah and clearly described by 'Abdu'l-Baha and the Guardian.

The Universal House of Justice is the supreme institution of the Faith to which all the Baha'is of the world now turn.



The Manifestations of God Bring Laws to Humanity

“the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures.”

“Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.”

Prayer – Spiritual Sustenance

“I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.

“I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”



Backbiting Forbidden

“O COMPANION OF MY THRONE!

“Hear no evil, and see no evil, abase not thyself, neither sigh and weep. Speak no evil, that thou mayest not hear it spoken unto thee, and magnify not the faults of others that thine own faults may not appear great; and wish not the abasement of anyone, that thine own abasement be not exposed.

Live then the days of thy life, that are less than a fleeting moment, with thy mind stainless, thy heart unsullied, thy thoughts pure, and thy nature sanctified, so that, free and content, thou mayest put away this mortal frame, and repair unto the mystic paradise and abide in the eternal kingdom for evermore.”

Prohibition of Alcohol & Drugs

“O SON OF SPIRIT!

“I created thee rich, why dost thou bring thyself down to poverty? Noble I made thee, wherewith dost thou abase thyself?

Out of the essence of knowledge I gave thee being, why seekest thou enlightenment from anyone beside Me? Out of the clay of love I molded thee, how dost thou busy thyself with another? Turn thy sight unto thyself, that thou mayest find Me standing within thee, mighty, powerful and self-subsisting.”

Education of All Children



“The first duty of the beloved of God and the maid-servants of the Merciful is this: They must strive by all possible means to educate both sexes, male and female; girls like boys; there is no difference whatsoever between them. The ignorance of both is blameworthy, and negligence in both cases is reprobable. ‘Are they who know and they who do not know equal?’”

Building a World Civilization



First Participant – Individual

It is the duty of an individual Baha'i to remain firm in the Covenant, to strive daily to bring his or her life in line with Baha'u'llah's Teachings, and to serve humanity, always conscious of the fact that life does not end with death and that one's relation with God is eternal.

After death, our souls become free and continue to progress towards God for all eternity.



Second Participant – Community

Human beings were not created to exist alone. We live in communities and must work together to build the new civilization.

The community closest to us is the local one which consists of the Baha'is of our village or town.

It is in the local community where we learn to cooperate with one another, to grow together and become united.



Third Participant – Institutions



Baha'u'llah has brought His own Administrative Order, which means that He has told us what institutions we must create, how they should function, and how humanity should be governed.

There are no priests or clergy in the Bahá'i Faith, and it is the Local Spiritual Assembly that guides the affairs of the local community.

A Local Spiritual Assembly consists of nine members elected in a prayerful atmosphere by secret ballot by all the adult believers in the community.

Closing Prayer

“O God! Refresh and Gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand.

Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being.

O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.

O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee O Lord.”