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CARAVAN

**AN OPEN LETTER
TO THE UNIVERSAL
HOUSE OF JUSTICE**

GUEST ARTICLE INSIDE!

**ARE THERE NO CLERGY
IN THE BAHAI FAITH?**

**REFER SOME QUESTIONS
ANSWERED SECTION**





TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Prayer of The Bab
2. Foreword
3. Divine Laws of Baha'u'llah
4. Poem – The Voice of the Rock
5. Clergy in the Baha'i Cause
6. An Open Letter to The Universal House of Justice – Guest Article
7. The Baha'i Religion and its enemy the Baha'i Organization - Part 9
8. Inspiring Quotes
9. Picture: 1912 - Abdu'l Baha, New Jersey, USA
10. Blast from the Past
11. Free Baha'i Activities
12. Some Questions Answered
13. Investigation of Reality
14. Did you know?
15. Know your Heritage
16. Declarations
17. Throwback

PRAYER



GLORY BE UNTO THEE, O LORD MY GOD!

Glory be unto Thee, O Lord my God! I beg Thee to forgive me and those who support Thy Faith. Verily, Thou art the sovereign Lord, the Forgiver, the Most Generous. O my God! Enable such servants of Thine as are deprived of knowledge to be admitted into Thy Cause; for once they learn of Thee, they bear witness to the truth of the Day of Judgment and do not dispute the revelations of Thy bounty. Send down upon them the tokens of Thy grace, and grant them, wherever they reside, a liberal share of that which Thou hast ordained for the pious among Thy servants. Thou art in truth the Supreme Ruler, the All-Bounteous, the Most Benevolent.

O my God! Let the outpourings of Thy bounty and blessings descend upon homes whose inmates have embraced Thy Faith, as a token of Thy grace and as a mark of loving-kindness from Thy presence. Verily, unsurpassed art Thou in granting forgiveness. Should Thy bounty be withheld from anyone, how could he be reckoned among the followers of the Faith in Thy Day?

Bless me, O my God, and those who will believe in Thy signs on the appointed Day, and such as cherish my love in their hearts—a love which Thou dost instil into them.

- Prayer of The Bab

FOREWORD

As soon as the Bab became manifested, Baha'u'llah said, "This great Man is the Lord of the righteous, and faith in Him is incumbent upon all." (Some Answered Questions, p. 27-8)

Baha'i friends commemorate the martyrdom of the Bab, who was the forerunner of Baha'u'llah, the founder of the Baha'i Faith. It is one of the most significant of all key days in the Baha'i calendar. The Bab's story began less than two centuries ago. The Bab (which means Gate in Arabic) began his new Faith in 1844. His stirring message—that his teachings heralded the future appearance of a great, worldwide revelation—rapidly caught fire in Persian society. Despite wholesale genocide against its followers, more and more people continued to become Babis. In 1850, frightened of its growing influence and desperate to crush the Babi movement, the authorities decided to execute The Bab.

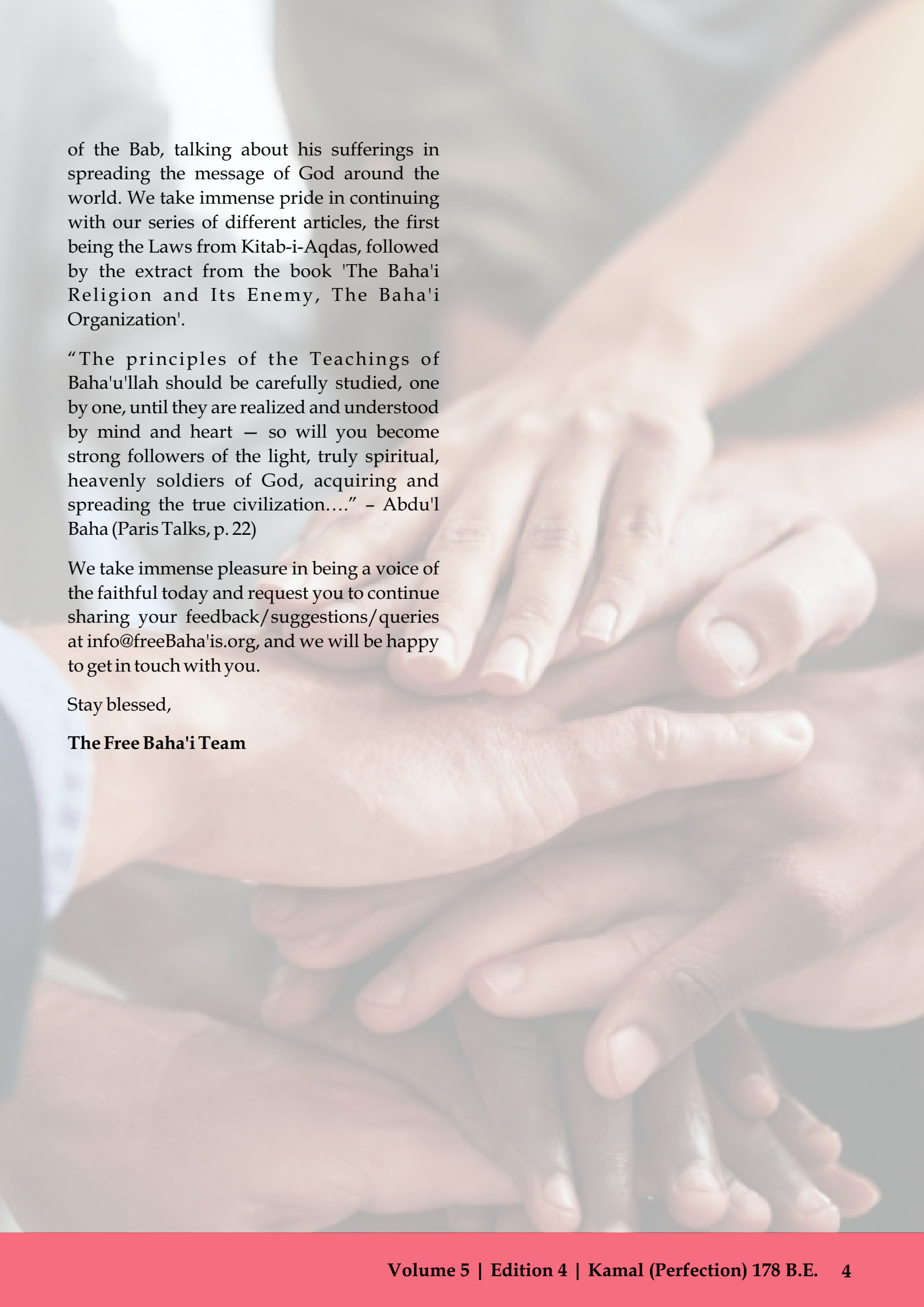
"If His Holiness, The Bab had not manifested love for mankind, surely he would not have offered his breast for a thousand bullets." – Abdu'l Baha

It is an honour for us that with the help of The

Caravan Magazine there has been a sense of alertness amongst the Baha'i friends with regards to the true teachings of Baha'u'llah. It gives us immense pleasure that this magazine has become a source of inspiration for our friends around the world who are steadfast in their faith in the face of the onslaught of the enemies who choose to belittle the Divine words and render meaningless the divine teachings for their material good.

"Baha'u'llah continually urges man to free himself from the superstitions and traditions of the past and become an investigator of reality, for it will then be seen that God has revealed his light many times to illumine mankind in the path of evolution, in various countries and through many different prophets, masters and sages." – Abdu'l Baha (Divine Philosophy, p. 8)

Taking another step forward, we herewith present an interesting guest article submitted by a friend – An Open Letter to Universal House of Justice – this should be an interesting read for our readers. This edition of the magazine is dedicated to the holy personality



of the Bab, talking about his sufferings in spreading the message of God around the world. We take immense pride in continuing with our series of different articles, the first being the Laws from Kitab-i-Aqdas, followed by the extract from the book 'The Baha'i Religion and Its Enemy, The Baha'i Organization'.

“The principles of the Teachings of Baha'u'llah should be carefully studied, one by one, until they are realized and understood by mind and heart — so will you become strong followers of the light, truly spiritual, heavenly soldiers of God, acquiring and spreading the true civilization....” - Abdu'l Baha (Paris Talks, p. 22)

We take immense pleasure in being a voice of the faithful today and request you to continue sharing your feedback/suggestions/queries at info@freeBaha'is.org, and we will be happy to get in touch with you.

Stay blessed,

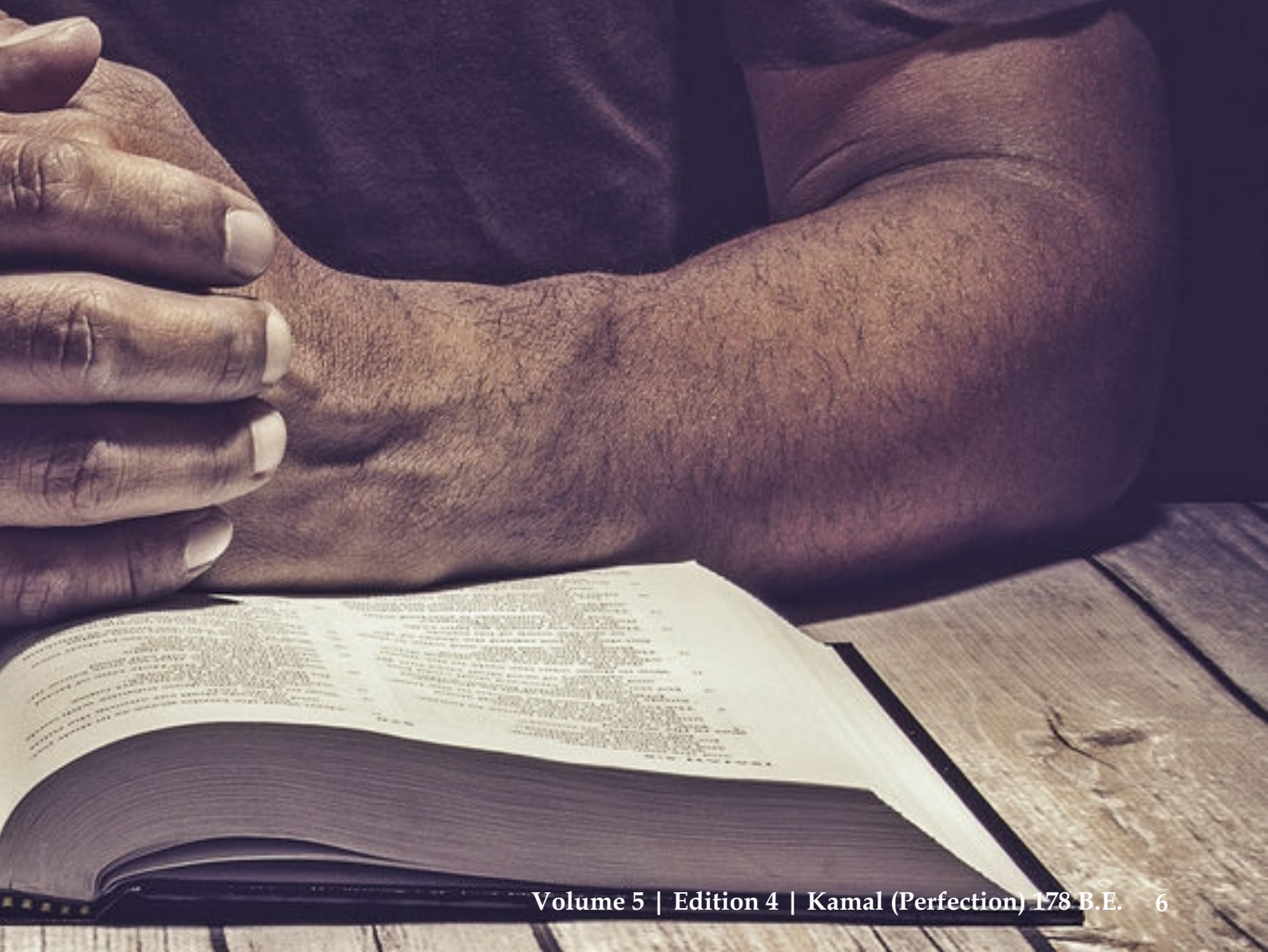
The Free Baha'i Team

DIVINE LAWS

In the name of Him who is the Ruler (al-hakim) over what was and what will be.

Worship and Fasting are obligatory to you on your coming to maturity [Note 1] a command from God, your Lord, and the Lord of your early fathers. Whoever is weak from illness or advanced age, God exempts him because of a Grace on His part. He is the Generous One, the Forgiver. God permits you to prostrate yourselves on everything pure, and we have taken away the ruling stipulated in the Book. [Note 2] God knows, and you do not. Whoever does not find water, let him repeat five times, "bi-sm-illah, al- athar, al-athar" (In the name of God, the Purest, the Purest,) and then begin worship. This is what the Master of the worlds commanded. In those lands where nights and days are long, they may perform worship by (using) clocks and objects which determine the times. He is the Wise One, the Explainer

(Source: Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas by Baha'u'llah, Translated from Arabic by Earl Elder & William Miller)





THE VOICE OF THE ROCK

Each of you a bordered country,
Delicate and strangely made proud,
Yet thrusting perpetually under siege.

Your armed struggles for profit
Have left collars of waste upon
My shore, currents of debris upon my breast.

Yet, today I call you to my riverside,
If you will study war no more.

Come, clad in peace and I will sing the songs
The Creator gave to me when I
And the tree and stone were one.

– Maya Angelou

CLERGY IN THE BAHA'I CAUSE

In answer to a question as to whether or not there would be any clergy in the Baha'i Cause?

“No. In this movement there will never be any paid ministers, no appointed clergy, no bishops, no cardinals, no popes, no ceremonies. A clergyman, assuming that he is ordained to his ministry, may think that he knows more about God than anyone else, whereas the humble man in his congregation may know more about God than he does. The sacerdotal and theological position makes a clergyman proud and haughty. But there is one thing in this Cause; some people may become greater than the rest, not through appointment, but through the purity of their hearts, their unselfish deeds, their heroic sacrifices, and their knowledge of God. Such illumined souls, like kind fathers or teachers, will guide and teach those less fortunate. They are the elder brothers of the members of the community. They do not arrogate to themselves any title or position. You will know them by their humility, their sincerity, their deeds, their severance, their knowledge, their spirituality, and their attraction.”

- Abdu'l Baha

(Source: Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913)

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE – GUEST ARTICLE

SUBJECT: Persecution of Persian Baha'is at the Highest Seat of Baha'i Administration

Dear Esteemed Members of the Universal House of Justice,

1. Paul Lample
2. Payman Mohajer
3. Shahriar Razavi
4. Stephen Birkland
5. Stephen Hall
6. Ayman Rouhani
7. Chuungu Malitonga
8. Juan Francisco Mora
9. Praveen Mallik

It saddens me to write this letter to the esteemed members. Members, who collectively are supposed to be infallible in their decisions. For quite some time, some of the decisions of the members are being viewed as being with a targeted agenda –cleansing the

Baha'i Administration of Persian Baha'is' very silent callous Racism and fanaticism is engulfing the whole of Baha'i Community. The Persian Baha'is are being persecuted in whichever land they pioneered and surprisingly the Universal House of Justice is a mock spectator to this persecution.

One could argue that these steps are seen with prejudice. However, when the sequence of similar actions has witnessed the benefit of doubt reduces.

Let us one by one see such incidences to conclude whether it is coincidence or otherwise:

1. Recently a prominent Heterodox Baha'i, Omid Seioshansian, who was born in Qatar, was blacklisted in Qatar. Government authorities in the country have levelled criminal and national security charges against him. Mr. Omid now will face severe penalties in Qatar's judicial system. And will be denied entry.

Although Bani Duggal, the BIC's Principal



Representative to the United Nations, said that “the Baha'i International Community is saddened that the State of Qatar has chosen to expel members of a community that has peacefully coexisted in and contributed to the progress of the country”, the silence of UHJ has raised concerns. Many prominent Baha'is are of the opinion that UHJ is behind the expelling of Omid as they are in the cleansing process of Persian Bahais and Omid a high ranking Persian Baha'i in Baha'i Administration, who has an eye on selection to UHJ. He has a lot of clouds in countries like India.

2. Another high ranking Persian Baha'i, a counsellor, **Dr. Jabbar Eidelkhani** who had served for many years in Bangladesh was also removed from his post and a very insignificant Indian Baha'i was asked to step in his shoes. Was this part of a strategy?

3. Another Persian background lady, a former counsellor and member of NSA of India, Mrs **Zeena Sorabjee**, was asked to resign/retire from NSA after being elected on NSA. Fate

accompli?

4. A prominent Baha'i of the USA, **Mr. Bahareh Moghaddam** has been accused of trying to deceive and misguide the Baha'is of Iranian descent by sowing seeds of discord. UHJ just watched silently.

5. **Mr. Ali Nakhjawani** was hunted for his misunderstood statement resulting in ignorant Baha'is daring to ask him that why he gave such a statement. UHJ could have defended in this situation.

6. The case of Baha'i Scholar **Ahang Rabbani** has not been forgotten. After working for 15 years at the World Centre, he was heartbroken. UHJ had no comfort to offer.

7. **Jamshed Fozdar and Firoz Anaki** were on the brink of being declared Covenant Breakers, but some better reasoning prevailed on UHJ and they stopped from doing such an atrocious act. Both these gentlemen have bitterness still.

8. The Late Mr. Hasan Sabri along with

Isabella Sabri **made fun of Persian Bahais** and used to call them KHAR (donkey) and used to say that Persian Baha'is are misguiding other Baha'is. There are several other such incidences of rebuke. UHJ conveniently ignores these. They used to say Panchami is the centre of deviation.

9. The number of **Persian Baha'is as counsellors have come down drastically** and the story is not different for the ABMs. They were asked to leave their place of pioneer (where they had established themselves, gained respect and involved themselves in Teaching of the Faith) and settle in some other parts of the world. This is nothing but humiliation and harassment. UHJ chooses to look the other way.

10. When a non-Persian Counsellor retires from his post, he is immediately offered another post in his own country. But if the counsellor is Persian, and that too a pioneer, never this opportunity of service had been offered to him or his experience used for promotion of the Faith. This happens under the watchful eyes of the UHJ.

11. **A sincere Persian Baha'i** Mr. A.S. Furudi who took care of the Baha'i property at the National Hotel at Pune in India was threatened by one of the members of UHJ that he should come in line with UHJ or face severe consequences.

12. A Persian pioneer a devoted Bahai Dr. **Ahmed Ansari** was asked to resign after he was elected as a delegate for the National convention. It was feared that he was a sure member of the NSA.

13. **Payam Shoghi** - A person of capacity, he served the faith as a counsellor, but he was sacked by the UHJ and was asked to resign from all his administrative positions, just because he was "accused" of forging Documents? Which was never proved.

14. **Shahryar Nooreyazdan** - He has such a wide experience of the faith. Has given years as a pioneer to Mumbai Community. A person instrumental in building the Lotus Temple and donating huge amounts of his savings was never given any hearing by UHJ. All his suggestions are ignored and were made the centre of mockery.

15. **Farida Vahedi** - She served the Faith with the best of her capacity running the External affair department very efficiently but just some Indian NSA members who did not like her success was asked to resign from the NSA of India. In her place a dumb Ram Sevak Yadav was brought to NSA just to appease the Hindu nationalist Government.

16. **Afshin and his son Naim** now live a life of loneliness. Afshin gave all his golden years for the propagation of the faith in India. Today when he is ill and may need financial assistance, the UHJ is wasting sources on inexperienced, and worthless people like Praveen Mallick, Rajan Sawant etc. All the "soldiers of Baha'u'llah" are being treated like worthless entities.

17. The Baha'i Academy in Panchgani was subjected to pressure because its Director Mr. **Leson Azadi** was a Persian and son of a Martyr. UHJ made his life and his family miserable. He was sacked as Auxiliary Board Member.

Such examples leave us with a bitter conclusion that those having Persian (Cradle of Faith) background need to sieve. It is as though the UHJ sees the Persian Baha'is being responsible for the formation of so many sects. A thought is prevailing in the Faith that Persian Baha'is are working in groups and have a soft corner for the Persian fourth Guardian Nosratullah Bahremand of the Orthodox Baha'i Faith, calling his shots from Australia. Such suspicion has been prevailing for many years now. UHJ has so far not taken

any steps to reject this idea.

While all this is happening, the clout of Baha'is with Jewish background is increasing. Whether it is happening with the connivance of the Jewish state, is a question that then comes to mind.

Esteemed members do investigate the injustice that has crept in the functioning of the Faith. Else history would not forget UHJ being the cause of moral and population downfall of our beloved Faith.

-A GROUP OF PERSIAN BAHAI'S





THE BAHAI RELIGION AND ITS ENEMY, THE BAHA'I ORGANIZATION – PART 9

(An extract from Lady Ruth White's book)

(...continued)

CHAPTER V.

EARLY FAMILY HISTORY –
BAHA'O'LLAH STATES IN LAWH-I-
AKDAS POWER OF BAHAI CAUSE TO
VEST IN HOUSE OF JUSTICE –
MOHAMMED ALI FORGED WRITINGS OF
BAHA'O'LLAH IN ORDER TO GAIN
CONTROL OF BAHAI RELIGION.
COMPLETE REPRINT OF "THE EPISTLE TO
THE BAHAI WORLD."

Before the reader turns to the English translation of this document, I wish to recount some important facts, which will throw light on it.

Baha'o'llah died in 1892. He was survived by four sons and a daughter, as follows:

Abdul Baha, Bahiah Khanum, Mohammed Ali, Ziah Ullah and Badi Ullah. The last three are half-brothers of the first two. In his will Baha'o'llah appointed his eldest son, Abdul Baha his successor. But he said that he appointed him only because God had appointed him. That is, his station did not depend upon appointment. For Baha'o'llah plainly showed again and again that he considered Abdul Baha greater than himself. When Abdul Baha was still a young man in his twenties, Baha'o'llah called him, "His Highness the Master," and "The Mystery of God." He also wrote to Abdul Baha, when he was on a visit to Bey rout, Syria, that God would help him to attain again to the return of Abdul Baha. Of himself Abdul Baha states: "Baha'o'llah is the root, I am the Branch, the root of the tree does not bear fruit, The fruit is found upon the branches."

Star of the West, October 16, 1911, page 11. According to Mirza Abul Fazl, Baha'o'llah, in his will, specified that after Abdul Baha, the successorship was to pass to Mohammed Ali, provided that he accepted the station of Abdul Baha. This he did not do, but on the contrary used every means to undermine the influence of Abdul Baha.

In The Star of the West, December 12, 1917, Mirza Abdul Fazl states:

"The Manifestation (Baha'o'llah) wrote the Kitab-Ah'd two years before his departure, in which he said: The One-whom-God-hath-chosen is the Greatest Branch, (i.e. Abdul-Baha) . . . We have chosen El-Akbar after El-Azam (El-Akbar-Mohammed Ali) . . . Why did the Manifestation knowing all things choose Mohammed Ali after Abdul-Baha? . . . the only proof which will make us understand this question is this, that God, according to his law, will never pronounce any judgment or condemn anybody before one shows his disobedience and commits the crime for which he is to be judged;... so also, the Manifestation chose the branches and declared they would be the best of people if they continued to be under the shadow of the Tree.

In several tablets he said: 'Any one of the branches who departs from the shadow of the Tree, will be cut off.' Besides there is a special Tablet which was revealed by the Manifestation to Mohammed-Ali, in which he says: Shouldst thou deviate from the right path for an instant, thou shalt be cut off.'"

From, notes of Mrs. Sarah Herron at Acca, in 1900. Baha'o'llah showed that after the appointment of these two sons, there were to be no more successors. As Mohammed Ali lost his right to succession, it therefore ended with Abdul Baha. Taxes and inheritances were to be paid and left to the Houses of Justice. This is shown in the following translation from the

Lawh-i-Akdas, of Baha'o'llah, by Professor Edward G. Browne in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1889; pages 918, 949:

"Provision is made for the disposal of endowments (Wakf) in the event of Babism becoming the dominant religion in any country, the control over these belonging to Bella (Baha'o'llah) so long as Ire lives, then to his sons (Aghsan) and then to the House of Justice."

I have in my possession three photostat copies of The Lawh-i-Akdas by Baha'o'llah or The Kitab-i-Aqdas as it is also called. This book contains the complete Laws of Baha'o'llah.

Two of these were formerly owned by the late Professor E. G. Browne. Upon his death he bequeathed one to the Cambridge University, and the other to the British Museum. The third is a photostat copy which I obtained from the Library of Congress at Washington, and is a copy of the St. Petersburg edition. The parts pertaining to The House of Justice, and wakfs, and endowments, I had translated in all three editions. In none of these editions does it even hint that there is to be a continual line of successors. On the contrary Baha'o'llah very definitely states in all three of these editions that after his branches the power of the Baha'i Cause is to vest in the House of Justice, and endowments, and wakfs are to be paid to the House of Justice. The following is an extract which appears in all three editions:

"The wakfs (pious endowments), which are predestined for the good deeds, belong to God who sent down the Ayats (holy verses). Nobody may spend them (the wakfs) without the permission of the Rise of Revelation (the Prophet, Baha'o'llah). After him the decision belongs to the Branches (Aghsans), and after them to the House of Justice, if the order about it is executed (The sons here referred to are Abdul Baha and Mohammed Ali, according to the quotations from "The Star of the West."

Page) (if this institution is established) in that country, in order that they (the wakfs) will be spent for the institutions erected for this Cause (faith) and according to the orders of the Strong, the Powerful (God). Otherwise it (the wakf) belongs to the people of Baha.

Despite these clear and definite statements, the alleged will not only contradicts this law of Baha'o'llah, but also everything that Abdul Baha himself said concerning this matter. In the alleged will, Shoghi Effendi, his great grandson, has taken the place and the power that both Baha'o'llah and Abdul Baha said was to vest in the House of Justice.

Baha'o'llah also made many clear and definite statements that if Mohammed Ali did not accept the appointment of Abdul Baha that he was to lose his right of succession. And he did lose it on account of the following facts: Mohammed Ali, who had always been the bitter enemy of Abdul Baha, became so infuriated at the appointment of Abdul Baha, that when Baha'o'llah died he interpolated an epistle of Baha'o'llah in order to nullify the influence of Abdul Baha. This interpolation was made public by Badi Ullah in a pamphlet called 'An Epistle to the Baha'i World',* in which he confessed(*See pages 129 to 163.) that he had witnessed Mohammed Ali's interpolation. After this public confession the little influence that Mohammed Ali might have exercised was broken. But in all the years that have intervened since 1892, Mohammed Ali has been secretly working to gain control of the Bahai Religion.

If Mohammed Ali forged papers during the lifetime of Abdul Baha in order to gain control of the Bahai Religion, isn't it a natural inference that he may have done the same thing after the death of Abdul Baha, when it was much easier to do so? Or at any rate he might have been the instigator of it in collusion with others. In this later attempt, knowing that he could not gain a following if

he tried to claim the succession for himself, he consented to reign indirectly through Shoghi Effendi. For if he had no following then the spoils of the tax that was to be paid to the successor, according to the commands issued in the alleged will, would not be forthcoming. Therefore, the family of Abdul Baha would have been impoverished. The question naturally may here arise: "Why should Mohammed Ali have permitted, or perhaps interpolated himself, the clause of the appointment into a document of about nine thousand words, which condemned Mohammed Ali. when a short will of a few lines would have, answered just as well. The reason is that an interpolated paragraph in a long authentic document might not be so easily suspected. And this is exactly what he did to the writings of Baha'o'llah. Furthermore, it would strengthen the position of Shoghi Effendi if the pretence of enmity between the family of Abdul Baha and Mohammed Ali were to continue. They all loved organization and they all knew that unless they agreed upon a successor there would be no power and wealth for any of the family. They knew that Mohammed Ali, by his own acts, had lost forever the chance of gaining a following, even if he succeeded in establishing a claim. He also knew that he would have no following, and no tax would accrue to any of them. Therefore, they may have mutually agreed that if Mohammed Ali would not dispute the appointment of Shoghi Effendi they would all share in the tax the successor would claim. Rather than to let the power and money go out of the family they all agreed to this plot, and all now share in the tax, which contrary to both Baha'o'llah's and Abdul Baha's statements, is paid to Shoghi Effendi. When I say all the family, I do not believe that the wife or the sister of Abdul Baha entered into this plot, and they in all sincerity believe the will to be authentic. There may be a few of the other women of the

household who also have not entered into this plot. But I believe that some of the brother-in-laws, and Mohammed Ali are the instigators, and the others came in later.

To make the claim of Shoghi Effendi appear stronger it was further arranged that Mohammed Ali was to put in a slight protest and pretend to claim the succession for himself. This he did, but the very fact that he did not insist upon the alleged will being put to the test of handwriting experts indicates collusion.

But the most overwhelming proof that Shoghi Effendi and Mohammed Ali are in collusion is this: The National Spiritual Assembly, at the dictates of Shoghi Effendi, published in The Bahai World a list of Bahai literature alleging to include every known writing for and against the Bahai Cause. This list includes a book "Bahatism and Its Claims" by the Rev. R. G. Wilson which is a most scurrilous attack on Abdul Baha. Furthermore, a great deal of the misinformation in this book was received through Mohammed Ali's follower, I. G. Kheiralla. Yet the Bahai organization, while alleging to print everything for and against the Bahai Cause, deliberately omitted from the list the book which showed Mohammed Ali to be a forger. That is, they did not include "The Epistle to the Bahai World," in which BadiUllah confessed that he was present and had witnessed Mohammed Ali's interpolation of a Tablet of Baha'o'llah, in order to discredit Abdul Baha.

As this important book has been suppressed by the Bahai organization, and as they will undoubtedly do what they can to make it completely lost to posterity, I herewith reprint this book complete-for the benefit of the historians of the future. It is a reprint of photostats I had made from the copy in the Oriental Room of the New York public Library, at Fifth Avenue and 42 Street.

An Epistle to the Bahai World

By

MIRZA BADI ULLAH

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL
PERSIAN

By

DR. AMEEN ULLAH FAREED

Published by

BAHAI PUBLISHING SOCIETY

Chicago, 111., U.S.A.

Translator's Preface

A few days ago the following command was received in the blessed handwriting of ABDUL-BAHA, the Center of the Covenant of God:

"O Ameen Fareed!

"Translate the epistle of Mirza Badi Ullah and soon print and publish it.

(Signed) ABDUL-BAHA ABBAS."

For the enlightenment of the Bahai friends in the English speaking lands, this humble translator will write what follows:

After the ascension of the Heavenly Father (BAHA'U'LLAH)—Glory be to Him!—when the Book of His Covenant became known among the Bahais, all who were faithful obeyed His will and turned to ABDUL-BAHA, the Center of His Covenant, for guidance in the Kingdom of ABHA. Mirza Mohammed Ali disobeyed the command of the Father, and the author of this booklet,

Mizra Badi Ullah, sided with him. About four years ago Mirza Badi Ullah returned to the Center of the Covenant (ABDUL-BAHA) and published, on February 4th, 1903, a confession which will be cited as an introduction to his epistle.

This epistle was written by him to set forth the reasons for his “return” and to inform the sincere seekers after the Truth concerning the attitude, the conduct and the actions of Mirza Mohammed Ali. The original Persian manuscript of the author, with his seal upon it, is preserved in Egypt, where the booklet has been printed and published throughout the Orient.

AMEENULLAHFAREED, M. D.

Chicago, Illinois, August 27, 1907.

Translation of the Confession

Written and Signed

BY

BADIULLAH

HEISEL-ABHA!

Praise be to God the Unique, the Incomparable, who has aided and assisted me through His great bounty and absolute mercy while in this great and glorious prison in this holy and luminous land! He has revealed and manifested to me the reality of that which had long since been hidden. He has helped me to grasp the firm support of His Covenant and Testament, and has strengthened me to become firm and steadfast under the protection of the standard of the Blessed Perfection. Exalted is His Name! Majesty and glory be to Him!

O ye beloved of God, who have turned unto the horizon of the Kingdom of God! Know that this servant while writing this brief

confession, testifies with heart and tongue that all that has occurred, since the departure of the Adored One (BAHA'U'LLAH), through the Nakazeen, has been a violation of the Covenant, a transgression of the Testament of the Almighty God, an opposition to the texts of the Books of the “Conclusive Proof” and a contradiction of the absolute will of the Lord of Lords.

The intentions and intrigues of the violators (Nakazeen) were concealed from this servant until the powerful hand of God rent the veils asunder and removed the coverings. That which was misunderstood and misapprehended by me is now clear and manifest to me and has caused me to turn my face to the appointed station, ABDUL-BAHA—May the life of all existent beings be a sacrifice to Him!—and to be sheltered under the shadow of the Divine Covenant. Now—Praise be to God!—this servant is severed and detached from all else save Him and is united with and following Him.

I hope the friends of God will pray and supplicate God to assist me that I may render Him an acceptable service and may God—Glory to His Name!—assist the others, as He has assisted me, to return unto His Covenant and Testament, forsaking enmity and hatred that they might be delivered from their great abasement and be sheltered under the shadow of the Holy Tree. But, alas! they are hindered by their designs and prevented by their egotism.

O beloved of God!—May the Glory of God, EL- ABHA, be upon you!—It behooves all of us as servants to speak with one accord in the Cause of God, saying, we believe, we confess, and we are firm in Thy Covenant.

In brief, this servant has understood their intentions and realized that their only thought is contradiction and their only purpose is to confuse and mislead the weak ones, and to

confound the simple minded. Therefore, I have entirely turned away from them and have taken firm hold upon the Covenant of God. I have forsaken "the left hand" of error and sought "the right hand" of perfect assurance.

To be continued...

"When the Sea of Meeting sinks and the Book of Origin is achieved to the end, turn your face unto Him whom God hath willed. He, who is branched from this Pre-existent Root."

"By this verse is intended the Greatest Branch. Thus have We revealed the command as a grace from Our presence, and I am the Gracious, the Beneficent."

I supplicate God to aid me to manifest such firmness as will amaze the minds, and I humbly beseech Him to awaken the others also and to forgive their sins. For the favors of God and the compassion of the Center of the Covenant are boundless. "Verily, this is not difficult with God."



Mirza Agha Jan wrote something before his death. Now the Nakazeen have recently added certain passages to it, have interpolated it and are intending to publish that spurious copy. Let it be known that even Mirza Agha Jan, in his last days, having learned their designs, repented and endeavored to return to the Covenant. Now they have lately written a false writing in his name, which bears many signatures. Note ye that we (those who have returned to ABDUL-BAHA) do not sanction and are quit of the contents thereof.

Praise and glory be upon ye and upon those who love ye for the sake of God and listen to your words in the Cause of God.

Upon ye be greeting and praise.

(Signed) BADIULLAH.

*This paragraph and the one following are quoted from the words of Baha'u'llah.

INSPIRING QUOTES



“God desireth not to see, in the Dispensation of the Bayán, any soul deprived of joy and radiance. He indeed desireth that under all conditions, all may be adorned with such purity, both inwardly and outwardly, that no repugnance may be caused even to themselves, how much less unto others.”

— The Bab

“I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.”

— Baha'u'llah

" Love the creatures for the sake of God and not for themselves. You will never become angry or impatient if you love them for the sake of God. Humanity is not perfect. There are imperfections in every human being, and you will always become unhappy if you look toward the people themselves. But if you look toward God, you will love them and be kind to them, for the world of God is the world of perfection and complete mercy. Therefore, do not look at the shortcomings of anybody; see with the sight of forgiveness. The imperfect eye beholds imperfections. The eye that covers faults looks toward the Creator of souls. He created them, trains and provides for them, endows them with capacity and life, sight and hearing; therefore, they are the signs of His grandeur. You must love and be kind to everybody, care for the poor, protect the weak, heal the sick, teach and educate the ignorant. "

— Abdu'l Baha



1912 - Abdul-Baha, New Jersey, USA

BLAST FROM THE PAST

LETTER FROM PROFESSOR EINSTEIN

ADDRESSED TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE
WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL,
LYONS, AUGUST 1-4, 1931.

I ADDRESS myself to you, the delegates of the War Resisters' International, meeting in Conference at Lyons, because you represent the movement most certain to end war. If you act wisely and courageously, you can become the most effective body of men and women in the greatest of all human endeavors. Those whom you represent in fifty-six countries have a potential power far mightier than the sword.

All the nations of the world are talking about Disarmament. You must lead

them to do more than talk. The people must take this matter out of the hands of statesmen and diplomats. They must grip it in their own hands.

Those who think that the danger of war is past are living in a fool's paradise. We have to face to-day a militarism far more powerful and destructive than the militarism which brought about the disaster of the Great War.

That was the achievement of Governments. But among the People the idea of war resistance spreads. You must

challengingly and fearlessly extend this idea. You must lead the people to take disarmament into their own hands and declare that they will take no part or lot in war or in the preparation of war. You must call upon the workers of all nations to unitedly refuse to become the tools of death-dealing interests. There are young men in twelve countries who are resisting conscription by refusal to do military service. They are the pioneers of a Warless World. Every sincere friend of Peace must support them and help to arouse the moral conviction of the world against conscription.

I appeal especially to the intellectuals of the world. I appeal to my fellow-scientists to refuse to co-operate in research work for war purposes. I appeal to the preachers to seek truth and renounce national prejudices. I appeal to the men of letters to declare themselves unequivocally.

I ask every newspaper which prides itself on supporting Peace to encourage the people to refuse war service. I ask editors to challenge men of eminence and of influence by asking them bluntly: "Where do you stand? Must you wait for everyone else to disarm before you put down your weapons and hold out the hand of friendship?"

This is no time for temporising. You are either for War or against War. If you are for War, then you must encourage science, finance, industry, religion and labor to exert their powers to make your national armaments as efficient and

deadly as they can be made. If you are against War, you must encourage them to resist it to the uttermost. I ask everyone who reads these words to make this great and definite decision.

Let this generation take the greatest step forward ever made in the life of Man. Let it offer to the generations who follow, the inestimable gift of a world in which the barbarity of war has been forever renounced. We can do it if we will. It requires only that all who hate war shall have the courage to say that they will not have it.

I appeal to all men and women, whether they be eminent or humble, to declare before the World Disarmament Conference meets at Geneva in February, that they will refuse to give any further assistance to war or to the preparation for war. I ask them to tell their Governments this in writing and to register their decision by informing me that they have done so.

I shall expect to have thousands of responses to this appeal. They should be addressed to me at the Headquarters of the War Resisters' International, 11 Abbey Road, Enfield, Middlesex, England. To enable this great effort to be carried through effectively, I have authorized the establishment of the "Einstein War Resisters' International Fund." Contributions to this fund should be sent to the Treasurer of the W. R. I., 11 Abbey Road, Enfield, Middlesex, England.

(Signed) A. EINSTEIN.

(Reference: New History Magazine, Volume I, Number 3, December 1931)

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

"Had you believed in Me every one of you would have followed the example of this youth, who stood in rank above most of you, and would have willingly sacrificed himself in My path. The day will come when you will have recognized Me; that day I shall have ceased to be with you." - The Bab

Dear Friends,

Allah'u'Abha!

During this period of the past month, we received updates from friends globally regarding various devotionals, gatherings and prayer meet conducted virtually as well as physically based on the prevalent condition of the pandemic in their geographical locations. It provides comfort to our hearts to learn that the efforts of our friends in India have paid off well in providing aid and assistance to people affected by the prevailing pandemic especially the oxygen crisis. As per the updates, the situation of in India has improved much for a better for the past month. We based on the teachings of our Master, encourage friends to keep looking around to help people who are coping up with the financial crisis resulting from lockdowns and medical expenses.

Friends from Canada have given updates of holding prayer meetings among the community members and having interfaith discussions with their neighbours and friends. And what better cure for the ailing

hearts in this world of difficulties could be, other than the soothing words and prayers from Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha. 9th July marked the day of martyrdom of the Bab. Friends around the globe also held gatherings commemorating the martyrdom of the Bab. Friends from Germany shared their experience of holding multiple small gatherings at their homes inviting their friends and relatives and took the opportunity to learn about the life history of The Bab and the brief history of the Faith. A group of believers in Angola did a charity project in Lubanga to mark the martyrdom of the Bab. Believers from various countries of the Middle East who share similar linguistic cultures had an online conference discussing the ways to contribute to the progress of faith in their areas.

Since these friends face double persecution, one from the Muslim government and the other from the UHJ, it is indeed a challenging task to uphold one's religious values and remain steadfast. Indeed, the life history of Bab, the commitment and love of his ardent followers and their willingness to die for him are great life lessons for us to sacrifice our lives for our faith. In the incidence of the martyrdom of The Bab at Barrack square of Tabriz, the love and attachment displayed by this young boy Anis who wished to be martyred along with his master, amazes us. While the administration is busy with the numbers and powers derived using the name

of such incidences, we must remain steadfast on the path of truth without any evil intention to have materialistic gains under the garb of religion. The Bab faced opposition, difficulties, trials, and persecutions while bearing them patiently. This gives us also the strength to face the challenges and difficulties in our spiritual and physical world with utmost patience and forbearance. The spread of faith worldwide and its popularity despite persecuting and killings of such a man of God clearly indicates the fact that the truth shall triumph however wicked the evil might be. Friends from countries like Australia, Singapore, and Thailand had held webinars on the topic - 'History of the Bab from his Birth till his Martyrdom', which was attended by people from other faiths and denominations too. They also had the opportunity to introduce the attendees to the shrine of the Bab located at Mount Carmel, Haifa.

Friends from many parts of the globe reiterated this fact that due to the prevailing situation of the pandemic, virtual gatherings

and programs have helped them reach out to us while maintaining confidentiality. This prevents any harassment from the regime of the administrative Baha'is i.e., UHJ. This is such a blessing in disguise and the reason why we Free Baha'is always insist on virtual meetings right from the beginning. Those who felt oppressed and mistreated by the tyrannic, self-proclaimed body of the highest order, have always quenched their thirst by the true words of God without revealing their identity. Our sole purpose is to share and spread the word of kindness and peace to all mankind regardless of their name, location, or past inclination. This neutral approach has helped many find the truth.

Lastly, we pray for the friends and for all mankind to be safe, healthy, and spiritually sound.

Warmest Baha'i regards,

Free Baha'i Team





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

Hello, do you have Free Baha'is in Atlanta, United States? Can I meet my other friends in my area, do you mind sharing their details? I await your prompt response. Im studying about the Free Baha'is and keen on being a part of it soon.

Answer:

Hi,

Allah'u'Abha!

Thanks for writing to us. We are not sure if there are any Free Baha'is based in Atlanta, at least not that we are aware of. The Free Baha'is, following the footsteps of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, do not believe in declaration or signing of a card and hence we do not gather information about anyone. There are friends from around the world who write to us about them accepting the teachings of the

Free Baha'i faith, but we are against organising the Faith and hence do not work towards making a list of people accepting the Faith.

It is good to know that you have been attracted towards the pristine teachings of Baha'u'llah, it will be great if you write to us about your journey and what made you consider the Free Baha'i Faith and we will be happy to publish it in our magazine, if we find it interesting and you are okay with it. It will certainly be an eye opening for other Baha'is who are caught under the shackles of Administration.

Team Free Baha'is

Email 2:

Hi Team, I am a Baha'i and recently came across the Free Baha'i faith though I am yet to accept its teachings. I had this question, hope you can answer it. While reading your magazine I found that Abdul Baha used to visit mosque, used to offer prayers and even his last funeral rites were performed at a mosque in Akka. My question is if he was a Bahai or a Muslim? If he was a Bahai, why did he attend mosque, offer prayers and why did his last rites were done as per the Muslims? This is a little strange for me, please let me know if you could help with a response. Thank you and God bless.

Answer:

Hi Susane,

Alla'hu'Abha!

Trust you are doing well and staying safe!

Glad to know you have been doing your research and reading about the true teachings of the Baha'i faith. May Baha'u'llah help you in your efforts.

You should note that Abdu'l Baha was born into a Muslim family and hence living amongst them, visiting their places of worship is not at all unusual, if you think from his perspective. Also, if you closely read his teachings, he and even Baha'u'llah has emphasised on the fact that people should live in the society as a family, they should intermingle with each other and not consider others as strangers.

"The tabernacle of unity hath been raised; regard ye not one another as strangers. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch." (Baha'u'llah, Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p.218)

Another famous saying of Baha'u'llah, which

has been praised worldwide and is quite popular, "The world is one country and mankind its citizens,"

You should also note that due to this attitude of the Master, he had gained a lot of Muslim followers who although did not apparently accepted the Baha'i Faith, but were truly inspired by its teachings and hence were deeply hurt by the passing away of the Master and hence came in huge numbers to perform his funeral rites and that might be the reason that his coffin was taken to the mosque for the final prayers. Hope that answers your question.

Do write back in case of any further queries.

Thanks, and regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 3:

Hi, The Baha'i Administration preach Independent Investigation of Truth, but then, when someone follows it, they have to face the heat. Isn't this two-facedness? How do the Free Baha'is help in upholding this key principle?

Answer:

Hi Sam,

Thanks for your email.

Regarding your question, certainly it is the hypocrisy of the Administration that they are although preaching the teachings of Baha'u'llah but practicing the teachings of Shoghi Effendi by excommunicating all those who question their action. Following the teachings of Baha'u'llah, Free Baha'is have always stressed on the essential responsibility of individuals to acquire knowledge with their own eyes and not through the eyes of others and therefore know why they adhere to a given ideology or doctrine.

When we blindly follow various traditions, movements, and opinions, we tend to become intolerant of those who do not share them. This attitude - believing that only our own beliefs are right and everyone else is wrong - is one of the main sources of conflict in the world today.

Abdu'l Baha explains that "God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth...Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. ... Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation..." (Foundations of World Unity)

Baha'is believe that, as there is only one

reality, all people will gradually discover its different facets and come to a common understanding and unity, provided they sincerely seek after truth. In this connection, Abdu'l-Baha said:

"Being one, truth cannot be divided, and the differences that appear to exist among the many nations only result from their attachment to prejudice. If only men would search out truth, they would find themselves united." (Paris Talks)

Following the principle of Independent Investigation of Truth, Lady Ruth White concluded that the Will and Testament of the Master was forged by Shoghi Effendi and his authority as a Guardian of the Faith was invalid. Hope that answers the question.

If you still have any questions, do let us know.

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 4:

Hi dear, I am a Christian and while reading about the Baha'is I read that you guys do not believe in system of clergy. Are there no clergy in the Bahai faith? What is the idea behind it?

Answer:

Hi Jack,

Glad to see your question. Baha'u'llah, the founder Prophet of the Baha'i Faith taught that in an age of universal education, there was no longer a need for a special class of ministers, priests, imams, rabbis, or any other form of the clergy. As per the teachings of Baha'u'llah, every Baha'i conducts its own religious services, as each and every Baha'i has a role to play in the society.

First among these is the teaching of religious doctrine. From childhood, both girls and boys in every Baha'i community all around the world must learn to read and write. Each person studies the holy texts for personal education, communal learning, and to pass on the religious themes and messages to others. The operating principle for acquiring knowledge, including religious truth, is the independent investigation of reality.

Previously, the other world religions appeared before widespread literacy: Hinduism, 2500 BCE (before the common era); Judaism, 1000 BCE; Buddhism, 644 BCE; Christianity, at the dawn of the common era (CE), 2016 years ago; and Islam in 610 CE. These religions required clergy as they addressed largely illiterate populations. However, this learning is now possible in an age of nearly ubiquitous reading – and is a logical step in the development of humanity.

As simply explained by Abdu'l Baha, the

Guardian of the Baha'i Faith, "In this movement there will never be any paid ministers, no appointed clergy, no bishops, no cardinals, no popes, no ceremonies. A clergyman, assuming that he is ordained to his ministry, may think that he knows more about God than anyone else, whereas the humble man in his congregation may know more about God than he does. The sacerdotal and theological position makes a clergyman proud and haughty." (Reference: Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913)

Hope that answers your question.

If you still have doubts or would need more clarity, pls reach out to us.

Thanks,

Team Free Baha'is





INVESTIGATION OF REALITY

“God has given man the eye of investigation by which he may see and recognize truth. He has endowed man with ears that he may hear the message of reality and conferred upon him the gift of reason by which he may discover things for himself. This is his endowment and equipment for the investigation of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain... Therefore, depend upon your own reason and judgment and adhere to the outcome of your own investigation; otherwise, you will be utterly submerged in the sea of ignorance and deprived of all the bounties of God.”

– Abdu'l-Baha, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, Volume 2, p. 287

“Where there is love, nothing is too much trouble and there is always time.” – Abdu'l Baha



With this, I pray to God to help us follow in the footsteps of the Master and take care of the poor and the needy, always. More power to you!

Want to be a contributor for 'The Caravan'?

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Thank you!

DID YOU KNOW ?

When the Bab was martyred and killed, he was only 30 years old. He was charged with apostasy and shot by order of the Prime Minister of the Persian Empire. Apostasy is the abandonment or rejection of a religious belief. It should be noted that Prophets often have short lifespans. Christ died on the cross at 33, after teaching his new Faith for only three years. For some reason, the leaders of humanity often react badly to the founders of the world's great Faiths and persecute them terribly. Abraham and Moses faced prison, exile, ridicule, and persecution. Krishna and Buddha suffered derision and official censure. Society's leaders crucified Christ; made war on Muhammad; tortured, exiled, and imprisoned Baha'u'llah; and executed The Bab.

Initially, only a few people learned about the Bab and his teachings, but then thousands and tens of thousands began to become Babis, breaking away from their society's traditions and challenging the authority of its leaders. The rapid growth of the Babi Faith challenged the underpinnings of Persian society. Persia's clerics and rulers did not react kindly to this new religious development, to say the least.

Just six years after the Bab's announcement of his new Faith in 1844, the Qajar government ordered the execution of this young, intensely charismatic messenger — who was only thirty years old at the

time. The government and the Islamic clerics had already gruesomely tortured and killed more than 20,000 of the Bab's ardent followers during the short, intense six-year duration of the Babi movement. Because the Bab called for revolutionary changes to the prevailing system of religious belief and governance, and because he taught the unity of all religions, the authorities feared that this dynamic new challenge and its growing support would soon sweep them from power.

Despite wholesale genocide against its followers, more and more people continued to become Babis. In 1850, frightened of its growing influence and desperate to crush the Babi movement, the authorities decided to execute The Bab. When they charged him with apostasy – the same exact charge the Pharisees levelled against Jesus – the Bab refused to repent or refute his teachings, calmly accepting the consequences.

Some accounts state that the Bab and one of his companions were suspended on a wall where they were shot by a large firing squad. But, when the smoke cleared after the first firing of bullets, the Bab was missing. It is said that he was found back in his prison room finishing dictation to his secretary. There are several other interpretations of this miracle story. Even so, they all agree that the Bab survived the first firing squad and was killed by the second.

For many years after the Bab's death, his followers secretly transported his body from place to place to avoid the desecration of his remains. The Bab was finally laid to rest at the Shrine of the Bab in Haifa on the middle terrace of the Baha'i Gardens.

Baha'is commemorate the Martyrdom of the Bab with prayers and scripture. Specifically, the Baha'i scripture called Tablets of Visitation. This scripture signifies the passing of an important figure.

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



Baha'u'llah's Prayer-beads and Ring (right), the Bab's Prayer-beads and Ring (left), Baha'u'llah's Pen-case and Tea-glass

DECLARATIONS

We the Free Baha'is do not believe in declarations. We believe in spreading the true teachings of Baha'u'llah and don't work for numbers. A Free Baha'i should purify himself from greed of attaining positions, and start working out of love for humanity and world peace.

Our Master has clearly stated,

"There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not appointed any one to perform any special services, but I encourage everyone to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The foundation of this Cause is purely a democracy, and not a theocracy."

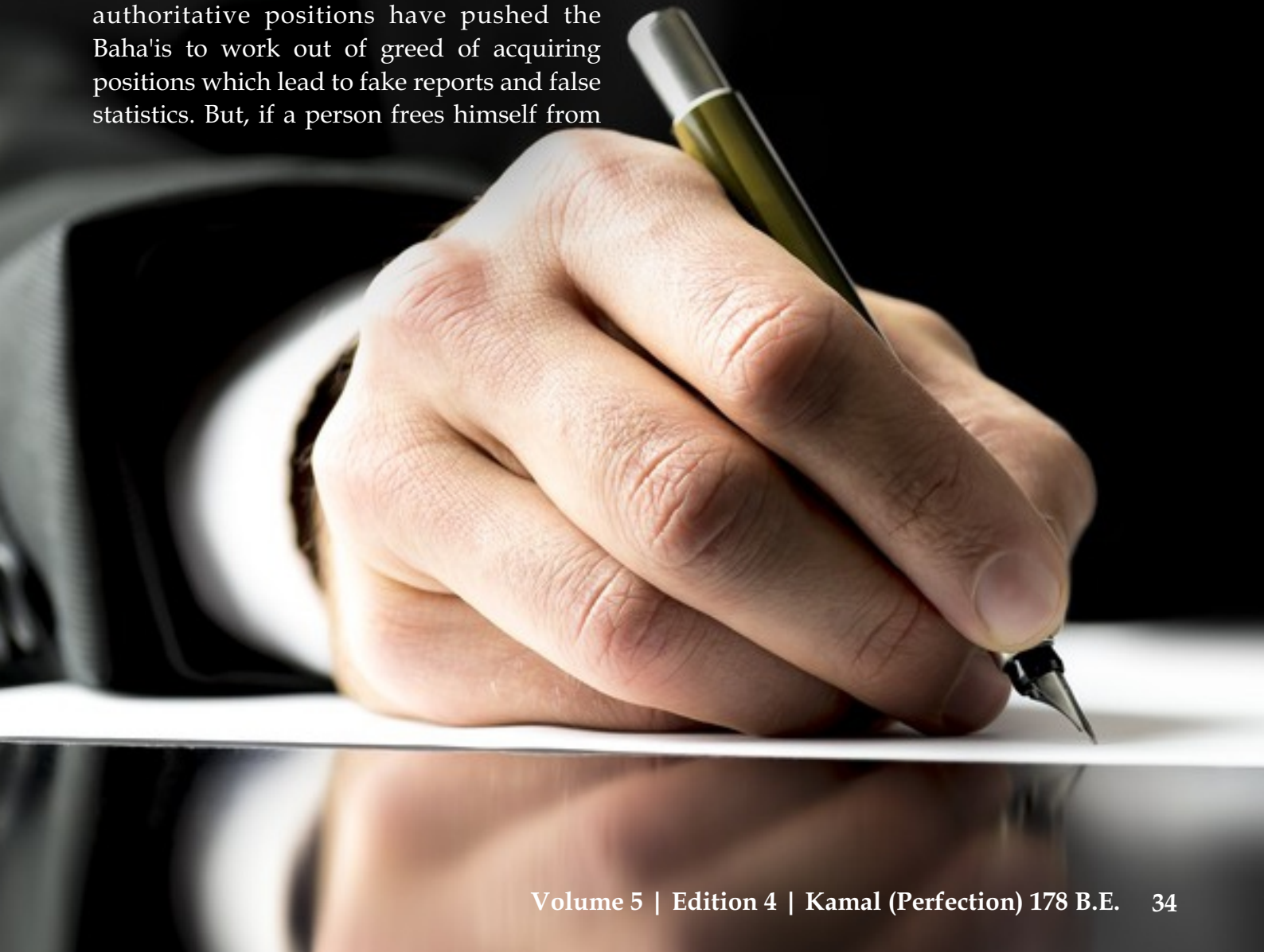
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

These man-made assemblies and authoritative positions have pushed the Baha'is to work out of greed of acquiring positions which lead to fake reports and false statistics. But, if a person frees himself from

administration, he will fulfil his duties towards Baha'u'llah and not for NSA or UHJ. Thus, he will be rewarded by Baha'u'llah for his efforts. For this reason, Free Baha'is do not believe in Officers or Office Bearers and one must be the Guardian of his own faith and action.

So, anyone who would wish to work for the faith should follow the teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, serve the faith and promote world peace and harmony.

Why do you think the Baha'i Faith got split into various groups after the passing away of the Master? Don't you think the rule of the so-called guardian Shoghi Effendi and his Administration has played a very crucial role in the division and disunity of the Baha'is?



THROWBACK



**Abdu'l Baha with a group of Baha'is at Lincoln Park in Chicago, Illinois, 3
May 1912**

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www.freebahais.org | info@freebahais.org

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