



The

CARRAVAN



Q&A

Prayers



Will & Testament



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175 B.E.

“ There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not 'Appointed' anyone to perform any special service, but I encourage everyone to engage in the service of the Kingdom. The foundation of this Cause is pure spiritual democracy and not a theocracy.
- Abdu'l-Baha ”



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Praise be to Thee, O Lord...

Praise be to Thee, O Lord, my Best Beloved! Make me steadfast in Thy Cause, and grant that I may be reckoned among those who have not violated Thy Covenant nor followed the gods of their own idle fancy. Enable me, then, to obtain a seat of truth in Thy presence, bestow upon me a token of Thy mercy and let me join with such of Thy servants as shall have no fear nor shall they be put to grief. Abandon me not to myself, O my Lord, nor deprive me of recognizing Him Who is the Manifestation of Thine Own Self, nor account me with such as have turned away from Thy holy presence. Number me, O my God, with those who are privileged to fix their gaze upon Thy Beauty and who take such delight therein that they would not exchange a single moment thereof with the sovereignty of the kingdom of heavens and earth or with the entire realm of creation. Have mercy on me, O Lord, in these days when the peoples of Thine earth have erred grievously; supply me then, O my God, with that which is good and seemly in Thine estimation. Thou art, verily, the All-Powerful, the Gracious, the Bountiful, the Ever-Forgiving.

Grant, O my God, that I may not be reckoned among those whose ears are deaf, whose eyes are blind, whose tongues are speechless and whose hearts have failed to comprehend. Deliver me, O Lord, from the fire of ignorance and of selfish desire, suffer me to be admitted into the precincts of Thy transcendent mercy and send down upon me that which Thou hast ordained for Thy chosen ones. Potent art Thou to do what Thou willest. Verily, Thou art the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

- Prayer of The Bab



May 1912: Abdu'l Baha with children and youth in Lincoln Park, Chicago

FOREWORD

What a wonderful feeling it is to be a part of the Caravan of Baha'u'llah and work for the propagation of the immaculate message to achieve world peace, unity and harmony.

We are back with another edition of the Caravan Magazine. In this edition as well, we are presenting our readers with an unbiased analysis of the Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha, as an attempt to keep the Baha'i faith free from all sorts of prejudice and conspiracy. It becomes a personal responsibility of each and every Baha'i to walk on the path shown by Baha'u'llah and perform an independent investigation of truth which will lead them to refined conclusions.

The current form of UHJ will never encourage the Baha'is to perform this investigation, despite clear emphasis made by Baha'u'llah and the Master to not accept anything without doing a thorough investigation about the thing. Don't you think this is the enormous point to prove that the so-called UHJ is working against the teachings and principles of the Baha'i faith and are unquestionably working for the sake of disrupting the faith?

Baha'u'llah had come to unite humanity and work in ordinance with practical reasoning. Keeping that in mind we would encourage our readers to always question whatever they are forced to believe in and accept nothing without inspection.

We would hope that you will find this magazine equally inspiring as the last one and show it the same kind of love which our earlier editions received. And we shall try our best to lovingly work towards spreading the true values of the Divine Manifestation.

Do send your feedback/suggestions/queries to info@freebahais.org, and we will be happy to get in touch with you.

Thank you!

The Free Baha'i Team

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Beloved

(A Poem in honor of Baha'u'llah)

I have drunk in your days, Beloved.
Each trek, each room, reach rose.
I have felt your ceaseless strife,
Every trial of your life.
I think I was ever with You
As You are ever with me.

For you pitched tents in Badasht,
At Baghdad your tablets washed,
Carried your bowl at Sar-Galu,
Picked roses at Ridvan too.
At Takur trailed you into the cypress,
Later rowed you across the Tigris,
Shadowed you through the alleys of
Edirne,

Even crept into the great Selimiyeh.
I think I was ever with You
As You are ever with me.
Carried water with Hassan,
And gold and tablets with Salman,
With Mulla Husayn swung swords,
With Aqa Jan scribbled words.
Stirred soup with Aschji,
And knelt with Badi,

Swept with my turban before you,
Rent my veil with Tahirih too.
I think I was ever with You
As You are ever with me.
Disembarked behind you in Haifa,
Carried the Leaves ashore at Akka,
In your company entered the Sea Gate,
And in the same strolled out the Land
Gate.

I think I was ever with You
As You are ever with me.
Wept through the bastinado's bite,
But also at the boy and the skylight,
At the darkness of the cave,
And the ever-lapping wave.

Wept again at the chain's scar,
At the tremor of the poison jar,
At the loneliness, at the guile,
At the endless, endless exile.
One tribulation at at time.
I think I was ever with You,
As You are ever with me.

*(A poem from the United States, as shared
by a friend)*

The Principles of the Free Baha'i Faith Explained

The Fourth Baha'i Principle is:

“Religion must be in accord with Science and Reason.”

“Neither must deny the other. The fifth foundation stone, the Sardius, is red or brown, according to the way it is held. So, it is with science and religion; they are in essence one but differ in color or manifestation. Today they are coming closer together in their realities in the minds of thinking people.” – Abdu'l Baha

There exists conflict between science and religion today, which is not new to the chronological records of man's history. The annals of history provide numberless accounts of scientists who have been persecuted in the name of religion and forced with horrible tortures to deny their discoveries. A recent trend, changes the swing of the pendulum the other way, forcing religion now to adapt its theological universe to the realities uncovered by science.

The steady, victorious advance of science has tended not only to technologize but also to secularize the life of humanity. This has proved an advantage from one point of view, in that it has freed man's mind and man's creative activities from the chains and trammels of religious creed and tradition. Human beings are no longer burned at the stake for proclaiming scientific truth.

The secularization of all human activities and affairs on the planet has been fraught also with tragic consequences. Man is a being, differentiated from the animal, with capacity for spiritual perception and spiritual motivation. Science, detouring the life of humanity from these precious and necessary goals, has almost completely stultified man's spiritual powers, so far as daily living is concerned. And despite all the efforts of religionists to infuse life with spiritual zeal and understanding, science continues to increase its devastating hold upon the human mind and soul.

To recapture the imagination and character of man, religion must first make terms with science. Not by surrendering to science one jot of truth or principle, but by restating spiritual truth in terms compatible with the known and accepted truths of science. There must be a reconciliation between science and religion. Both are needed by humanity.

“Ali', the son-in-law of Muhammad, said: 'That which is in conformity with science is also in conformity with religion'. Whatever the intelligence of man cannot understand, religion ought not to accept. Religion and Science walk hand in hand and any religion contrary to science is not the truth.” – Abdu'l Baha

Both Religion and Science are approaches to truth and cannot be in opposition. Scientists and Priests may disagree, and either may be wrong, but Science, which is knowledge of the universe, cannot be opposed to Religion, which is the art of living.

“Put all your beliefs into harmony with science, there can be no opposition, for truth is one. When religion, shorn of its superstitions, traditions and unintelligent dogmas, shows its conformity with science, then will there be a great unifying, cleansing force in the world, which will sweep before it all wars, disagreements, discord and struggles, and then will mankind be united in the power of the Love of God.” – Abdu'l Baha

Abdu'l Baha says that science and religion are two wings upon which civilization must fly. We may think of science as one wing and religion as the other. A bird needs two wings for flight, one alone would be useless. Any religion that contradicts science, or that is opposed to it, is only ignorance. Religion which consists only of rites and ceremonies of prejudice is not the truth. Much of the discord and disunion of the world is created by these man-made oppositions and contradictions. If religion were in harmony with science, much of the hatred and bitterness now bringing misery to the human race would be at an end.

“Weigh carefully in the balance of reason and science everything that is presented to you as religion. If it passes this test, then accept it, for it is Truth. If, however, it does not so conform, then reject it, for it is ignorance. It is impossible for Religion to be contrary to science, even though some intellects are too weak or too immature to understand truth.” – 'Abdu'l-Baha

“Perfect harmony between religion and science is the 'sine qua non' of the higher life for humanity. When that is achieved, and every child is trained not only in the study of the sciences and arts, but equally in love to all man-kind and in radiant acquiescence to the will of God as revealed in the progress of evolution; the Prophets, then and not till then, shall the Kingdom of God come and His will be done on earth as it is in heaven; then and not till then shall the Most Great Peace shed its blessing on the world.” – J.E. Esslemont

Once harmony is established between Science and Religion, the essence of reality will be recognized among the peoples of the planet. Mankind has for ages fantasized his way through existence, without regard to any recognizable reality. So much has been lost in wasted effort, when there awaited the unveiling of eternal glory.

Indeed, there are two sides to every item or issue, if they oppose one another there is no harmony or unity, however, if they agree and are supportive, then a harmony of truth is established. If Religion possesses a truth, and Science can establish its foundation, a true essence of harmony and truth has become a reality, unto which all of humanity will turn their hearts.

The Alleged will of Abdu'l Baha - An Analysis PART 2

As promised to our dearest readers, we present in this article the Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha which was made available for the masses after his death. The Will is divided into three parts and each part has its own content and significance. Here we shall present the Second part of the Will, followed by a short summary. We urge our readers to take effort in understanding these Holy words as part of Independent Investigation of Truth.

Second Part of the Will:

He Is God

O my Lord, my heart's Desire, Thou Whom I ever invoke, Thou Who art my Aider and my Shelter, my Helper and my Refuge! Thou seest me submerged in an ocean of calamities that overwhelm the soul, of afflictions that oppress the heart, of woes that disperse Thy gathering, of ills and pains that scatter Thy flock. Sore trials have compassed me round and perils have from all sides beset me. Thou seest me immersed in a sea of unsurpassed tribulation, sunk into a fathomless abyss, afflicted by mine enemies and consumed with the flame of their hate, enkindled by my kinsmen with whom Thou didst make Thy strong Covenant and Thy firm Testament, wherein Thou biddest them turn their hearts to this wronged one, to keep away from me the foolish, the unjust, and refer unto this lonely one all that about which they differ in Thy Holy Book, so that the Truth may be revealed unto them, their doubts may be dispelled and Thy manifest Signs be spread abroad.

Yet now Thou seest them, O Lord, my God! with Thine eye that sleepeth not, how that they have broken Thy Covenant and turned their backs thereon, how with hate and rebelliousness they have erred from Thy Testament and have arisen intent upon malice.

Adversities have waxed still more severe as they rose with unbearable cruelty to overpower and crush me, as they scattered far and wide their scrolls of doubt and in utter falsehood hurled their calumnies upon me. Not content with this, their chief, O my God, hath dared to interpolate Thy Book, to fraudulently alter Thy decisive Holy Text and falsify that which hath been revealed by Thy All-Glorious Pen. He did also maliciously insert that which Thou didst reveal for the one that hath wrought the most glaring cruelty upon Thee, disbelieved in Thee and denied Thy wondrous Signs, into what Thou didst reveal for this servant of Thine that hath been wronged in this world. All this he did that he might beguile the souls of men and breathe his evil whisperings into the hearts of Thy devoted ones.

Thereunto did their second chief testify, confessing it in his own handwriting, setting thereupon his seal and spreading it throughout all regions. O my God! Could there be a more grievous injustice than this? And still they rested not, but further strove with stubbornness, falsehood and slander, with scorn and calumny to stir up sedition in the midst of the government of this land and elsewhere, causing them to deem me a sower of sedition and filling the minds with things that the ear abhorreth to hear. The government was thus alarmed, fear fell upon the sovereign, and the suspicion of the nobility was aroused. Minds were troubled, affairs were upset, souls were perturbed, the fire of anguish and sorrow was kindled within the breasts, the Holy Leaves (of the Household) were convulsed and shaken, their eyes rained with tears, their sighs and lamentations were raised and their hearts burned within them as they bewailed this wronged servant of Thine, fallen a victim into the hands of these, his kindred, nay, his very enemies!

Lord! Thou seest all things weeping me, and my kindred rejoicing in my woes. By Thy Glory, O my God! Even amongst mine enemies, some have lamented my troubles and my distress, and of the envious ones a number have shed tears because of my cares, my exile and my afflictions. They did this because they found naught in me but affection and care and witnessed naught but kindness and mercy. As they saw me swept into the flood of tribulation and adversity and exposed even as a target to the arrows of fate, their hearts were moved with compassion, tears came to their eyes and they testified declaring: "The Lord is our witness; naught have we seen from him but faithfulness, generosity and extreme compassion." The Covenant-breakers, foreboders of evil, however, waxed fiercer in their rancor, rejoiced as I fell a victim to the most grievous ordeal, bestirred themselves against me and made merry over the heartrending happenings around me.

I call upon Thee, O Lord my God! with my tongue and with all my heart, not to requite them for their cruelty and their wrong-doings, their craft and their mischief, for they are foolish and ignoble and know not what they do. They discern not good from evil, neither do they distinguish right from wrong, nor justice from injustice. They follow their own desires and walk in the footsteps of the most imperfect and foolish amongst them. O my Lord! Have mercy upon them, shield them from all afflictions in these troubled times and grant that all trials and hardships may be the lot of this Thy servant that hath fallen into this darksome pit. Single me out for every woe and make me a sacrifice for all Thy loved ones. O Lord, Most High! May my soul, my life, my being, my spirit, my all be offered up for them. O God, my God! Lowly, suppliant and fallen upon my face, I beseech Thee with all the ardor of my invocation to pardon whosoever hath hurt me, forgive him that hath conspired against me and offended me, and wash away the misdeeds of them that have wrought injustice upon me. Vouchsafe unto them Thy goodly gifts, give them joy, relieve them from sorrow, grant them peace and prosperity, give them Thy bliss and pour upon them Thy bounty.

Thou art the Powerful, the Gracious, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting!

O dearly beloved friends! I am now in very great danger and the hope of even an hour's life is lost to me. I am thus constrained to write these lines for the protection of the Cause of God, the preservation of His Law, the safeguarding of His Word and the safety of His Teachings. By the Ancient Beauty! This wronged one hath in no wise borne nor doth he bears a grudge against any one; towards none doth he entertain any ill-feeling and uttereth no word save for the good of the world.

My supreme obligation, however, of necessity, prompteth me to guard and preserve the Cause of God. Thus, with the greatest regret, I counsel you saying: Guard ye the Cause of God, protect His law and have the utmost fear of discord. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them): "His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb), is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty. His Holiness the Abhá Beauty (may my life be a sacrifice for His steadfast friends) is the Supreme Manifestation of God and the Dayspring of His Most Divine Essence. All others are servants unto Him and do His bidding."

Unto the Most Holy Book everyone must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant. By this House is meant that Universal House of Justice which is to be elected from all countries, that is from those parts in the East and West where the loved ones are to be found, after the manner of the customary elections in Western countries such as those of England.

It is incumbent upon these members (of the Universal House of Justice) to gather in a certain place and deliberate upon all problems which have caused difference, questions that are obscure and matters that are not expressly recorded in the Book. Whatsoever they decide has the same effect as the Text itself. And in as much as this House of Justice hath power to enact laws that are not expressly recorded in the Book and bear upon daily transactions, so also it hath power to repeal the same. Thus, for example, the House of Justice enacteth today a certain law and enforceth it, and a hundred years hence, circumstances having profoundly changed and the conditions having altered, another House of Justice will then have power, according to the exigencies of the time, to alter that law. This it can do because that law formeth no part of the Divine Explicit Text. The House of Justice is both the initiator and the abrogator of its own laws.

And now, one of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers, for they will utterly destroy the Cause of God, exterminate His Law and render of no account all efforts exerted in the past. O friends! It behooveth you to call to mind with tenderness the trials of His Holiness, the Exalted One, and show your fidelity to the Ever-Blest Beauty. The utmost endeavor must be exerted lest all these woes, trials and afflictions, all this pure and sacred blood that hath been shed so profusely in the Path of God, may prove to be in vain.

Ye know well what the hands of the Center of Sedition, Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí, and his associates have wrought. Among his doings, one of them is the corruption of the Sacred Text whereof ye are all aware, the Lord be praised, and know that it is evident, proven and confirmed by the testimony of his brother, Mírzá Badí'u'lláh, whose confession is written in his own handwriting, beareth his seal, is printed and spread abroad. This is but one of his misdeeds. Can a transgression be imagined more glaring than this, the interpolation of the Holy Text? Nay, by the righteousness of the Lord! His transgressions are writ and recorded in a leaflet by itself. Please God, ye will peruse it.

In short, according to the explicit Divine Text the least transgression shall make of this man a fallen creature, and what transgression is more grievous than attempting to destroy the Divine Edifice, breaking the Covenant, erring from the Testament, falsifying the Holy Text, sowing the seeds of doubt, calumniating 'Abdu'l Bahá, advancing claims for which God hath sent down no warrant, kindling mischief and striving to shed the very blood of 'Abdu'l Bahá, and many other things whereof ye are all aware!

It is thus evident that should this man succeed in bringing disruption into the Cause of God, he will utterly destroy and exterminate it. Beware lest ye approach this man, for to approach him is worse than approaching fire!

Gracious God! After Mírzá Badí'u'lláh had declared in his own handwriting that this man (Muhammad 'Alí) had broken the Covenant and had proclaimed his falsification of the Holy Text, he realized that to return to the True Faith and pay allegiance to the Covenant and Testament would in no wise promote his selfish desires. He thus repented and regretted the thing he had done and attempted privily to gather in his printed confessions, plotted darkly with the Center of Sedition against me and informed him daily of all the happenings within my household. He has even taken a leading part in the mischievous deeds that have of late been committed. Praise be to God affairs recovered their former stability and the loved ones obtained partial peace. But ever since the day he entered again into our midst, he began afresh to sow the seeds of sore sedition. Some of his machinations and intrigues will be recorded in a separate leaflet.

My purpose is, however, to show that it is incumbent upon the friends that are fast and firm in the Covenant and Testament to be ever wakeful lest after this wronged one is gone this alert and active worker of mischief may cause disruption, privily sow the seeds of doubt and sedition and utterly root out the Cause of God. A thousand times shun his company. Take heed and be on your guard. Watch and examine; should anyone, openly or privily, have the least connection with him, cast him out from your midst, for he will surely cause disruption and mischief.

O ye beloved of the Lord! Strive with all your heart to shield the Cause of God from the onslaught of the insincere, for souls such as these cause the straight to become crooked and all benevolent efforts to produce contrary results.

O God, my God! I call Thee, Thy Prophets and Thy Messengers, Thy Saints and Thy Holy Ones, to witness that I have declared conclusively Thy Proofs unto Thy loved ones and set forth clearly all things unto them, that they may watch over Thy Faith, guard Thy Straight Path and protect Thy Resplendent Law. Thou art, verily, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise!

A brief analysis of the above quoted part from the Will & Testament:

The second part of the Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha generally follows the overall theme of the Will which includes

- Lamentations over the oppression to either Abdu'l Baha or to Baha'u'llah
- The description of the acts of Mirza Mohammed Ali
- The importance and functions of the Universal House of Justice
- The necessity to disassociate from the covenant breakers

Staying true to the theme, the Part 2 starts with eulogy of Abdu'l Baha to himself describing the pain caused to him by those who break the covenant and use planning and plotting to get him arrested or otherwise harassed.

He advises the believers: "Guard ye the Cause of God, protect His law and have the utmost fear of discord. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Baha (may my life be offered up for them)"

He asks them to refer to the Holy texts for guidance. in the absence of the matter in the Holy texts. He asks for them to refer to the "Universal House of Justice" for guidance thereby establishing the explicit authority of the house of justice in promulgating laws and asks them to establish it in an elected way similar to that of "England". There after He describes the method of working / functioning of the Universal House of Justice.

After this comes the strong warning: "one of the greatest and most fundamental principles of the Cause of God is to shun and avoid entirely the Covenant-breakers."

This sets forth in the policy of the faith present till date with regards to the Covenant Breakers.

Again, following the overall theme and the general pattern, this warning is followed by warning the believers of Mirza Mohammed Ali.

The part then ends with a general prayer for the protection of the cause and faith.

To be Continued...

The Oppressed Family of Baha'u'llah *(Guest Article)*

One of the fundamental principle of the Baha'i faith is the Unity of Mankind and love for brotherhood irrespective of any race, where the entire humanity is under the same roof of unity as is mentioned in one of the several quotes of Baha'u'llah:

"The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens"

– Baha'u'llah,
The Kitab-i-Aqdas: The Most Holy Book

As a Baha'i, I have learnt quite a few things, one of which is that the actual essence of life which Baha'u'llah teaches is Unity. I have been a part of a lot of religious conferences and interfaith meetings, but the fact is whatever the people represent, they themselves don't follow. But when it comes to the Baha'i faith, the scenario is different. As Baha'u'llah magnificently says:

"Cleave unto that which draweth you together and uniteth you. This, verily, is the most exalted Word which the Mother Book hath sent down and revealed unto you."

-Bahá'u'lláh,
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 217

Furthermore, Abdu'l Baha also encourages the concept of Unity and brotherhood within the people. Moreover, he has even travelled extensively around the globe to encourage and inspire the masses for the only cause of uniting the people, that being the Baha'i faith. The Master says:

"Unity is the expression of the loving power of God and reflects the reality of Divinity. It is resplendent in this Day through the bestowals of light upon humanity."

'Abdu'l-Bahá,
The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 14

After studying the life of Baha'u'llah and the Master, I concluded that their existence and those around them had lived a life of love and prosperity. Their entire efforts made by them were to spread unity and love for humanity.

But in 1921, after the sad demise of the Master, Shoghi Effendi claimed guardianship and started making several alterations in the Cause. One of them being persecution of the loyal and trusted followers of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha. Even the family of Baha'u'llah, who had served their entire life just to promulgate the faith, was excommunicated by Shoghi Effendi without any justifiable reason as they had never intervened in his affairs, nor have ever rebelled against him.

In addition to their persecution, I would like to mention the reasons of excommunication of a few of Baha'u'llah's family members who were excommunicated for some absurd reasons. For instances,

- Foad Effendi Afnan, brother of Ruhi Effendi was excommunicated because of a trip he made to England without informing the Guardian.
- Touba Khanum, the daughter of Abdu'l Baha and mother of Ruhi, Soraya and Foad, is apparently included in the excommunication; for in the first cablegram, we find these words: Ruhi's family concurred. Inform all believers that all manner of communication with excommunicated family is forbidden.
- Rouha Khanum, third daughter of Abdul Baha and mother of Zahra, is likewise implicated; for, if she has stood by the side of her daughter and continues to do so, the ban falls on her also.
- Ruhi Effendi Afnan incurred dissatisfaction towards the Guardian. Ruhi Effendi wife, Zahra Khanum Shahid; his sister, Saraya Khanum Afnan his second visit to America in 1935 was made without the consent of the Guardian and hence was excommunicated.
- The cablegram states that Mehr-Angiz Khanum has followed the example of Ruhi's sister. There is a possibility that Mehr-Angiz Khanum might have followed the footsteps of Ruhi Effendi's sister, Soraya Khanum by marrying to one of her cousins.

Subsequently, Shoghi Effendi even excommunicated his own parents. The parents of Shoghi Effendi, strongly condemn Mehr-angiz's action. Thus, Shoghi's parents were forced to publicly denounce and repudiate their own daughter. Hereafter, they became strangers to her. They can never approach her in her hours of trouble or illness. They will never be allowed to hold their grandchildren in their arms.

To conclude, the Baha'i faith which was founded by Baha'u'llah had gradually turned away from the path shown by the Master because of the so-called Guardian Shoghi Effendi followed by the current form of Universal House of Justice. Special thanks to the Free Baha'i Faith for being an eye opener for all the Baha'is and showing them the reality.

We all must investigate into the religious teachings and only then accept the faith and then follow the path shown by Baha'u'llah.

Article submitted by a guest writer

Mr Cesar Natal

Dubai, UAE

In answer to a question as to whether or not there would be any clergy in the Bahai 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)

Inspiring Quotes

It is seemly that the servant should, after each prayer, supplicate God to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his parents.

– The Bab

“The future is bad; in the future there will be great destruction. Nations should rise to extinguish this fire so that it would not spread to other countries. Soon it will affect them...”

– Baha'u'llah

“...look not upon each other with the eyes of strangeness. Ye are all the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch.”

– Abdu'l Baha

An Update on Free Baha'i Activities

"The most acceptable prayer is the one offered with the utmost spirituality and radiance; its prolongation hath not been and is not beloved by God. The more detached and the purer the prayer, the more acceptable is it in the presence of God."

[Qayyumul Asma by The Bab]

Dear faithful Baha'is,

Allah'u'Abha!

Firstly, we would like to congratulate all the Baha'is on the auspicious 199th birth anniversary of The Bab. The life of the Bab was full of wonders. The young son of a merchant, who fulfilled promises of all previous religions and was then martyred in very young age. The Bab was born in Shiraz, Persia (Iran) on October 20, 1819. He was born into a middle-class family of a merchant, who was well known for his fairness and piety. The first eighteen who believed in Him were given the special title of "Letters of the Living." Each of these eighteen Letters of the Living found out about the Bab's message independently and accepted it by his/her own free will. Just like the Twelve Apostles of His Holiness Jesus Christ, these Letters of the Living were pious people with open hearts, which enabled them to be receptive to and ultimately accept their Lord's newest message to humanity.

We would like to express gratitude to all Baha'is who kept us encouraging in our efforts in spreading teaching of Baha'u'llah and increasing in numbers in helping us to spread Beautiful teaching of Baha'u'llah about love and peace.

We received a lot of emails from the Free Baha'is worldwide about celebrations of the birthday of the Bab. They held unique programs amongst themselves. The Free Baha'i community of Singapore distributed sweets and messages of Baha'u'llah to their office colleague and friends with this saying of Baha'u'llah on the greeting card – "The earth is but one country, and mankind its citizen" which was loved by one and all.

Several faithful have asked questions about service to the Baha'i faith. As informed earlier, we do not believe in "organizing the faith" keeping in mind the teachings of the Master. We encourage fellow newcomers to start a blog or a Twitter/Instagram account or a page on Facebook and spread the teachings of Baha'u'llah amongst their friends/family. With regards to Huquq'u'llah, it is the right of the Guardian only and currently there is no Guardian in the Cause, we would encourage all Baha'is to follow the footsteps of the Master and distribute the accumulated money to poor and needy as charity. We encourage the Free Baha'is to follow the same footsteps lead by our beloved Master and to work for the betterment of humanity.

We encourage all our followers/subscribers to write to us at info@freebahais.org with all their queries regarding the Baha'i faith and we would be more than happy to help each one of you.

Warmest Baha'i regards,
The Free Baha'i Team.

Want to be a contributor for The Caravan Magazine ?

Interested in contributing to the Caravan Magazine by writing a guest article?

Kindly send us your article at thecaravan@freebahais.org and if we find your article unique, knowledgeable and interesting enough for our readers, we will surely publish it in our upcoming issue.

If you have any other queries, you can write to us at

info@freebahais.org

Thank you!

Some Questions Answered / Write to us

Question 1



Rafael 'Rafael' to Free

20, Oct 1, 8:18 AM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hi Friends,

In the last issue of the Caravan Magazine, it was stated that the Free Baha'i team was considering putting together a Free Baha'i conference to discuss how to better serve the Faith and spread the message of Baha'u'llah. Please keep me updated on when that will take place and how. Also, if there is anyway I can help, let me know?

Love you all,

Rafael

Answer:

Dear Rafael,

We're extremely glad to hear back from you. Sure, we would update you about the conference and would be certainly delighted to make you a part of it.

Since you're keen on working for the cause, let me know if you would be interested in being as active contributor to the Caravan magazine? We are currently working on our next issue which will be launched at the start of the month of Qudrat i.e. 4th November. Let me know if you can write a Guest Article for the same? Or how about creating a blog dedicating to the Free Baha'i faith wherein you can post the pristine message of Baha'u'llah?

Looking forward to hearing from you. :)

May God bless you!

Regards,

Team Free Baha'i

Question 2

Free Baha'i Query Inbox x



Oxana L. to info

20, Oct 1, 5:17 PM (8 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hello sir,

I am a Baha'i since last 28 years and i living in Sharypovo, Russia. I came across your website and was studying about the Free Baha'is sect. I understand you do not believe in Shoghi Effendi and UHJ and follow Ruth White and Ahmad Sorab. I am interested in the Free Baha'i faith but when I mentioned about it in front of my other Baha'i friends, a friend told me that you guys are segregated around the world, very few in numbers and are also excommunicated from the faith. Can you please tell me how many Baha'is are associated with the Free baha'i faith and what is your standing around the world?

Please reply soon.

Thank you,

Oxana L.

Answer:

Allah'u'Abha, Oxana!

We're glad to receive your email. Thank you for writing to us.

Firstly, Free Baha'is do not follow the teachings of Lady Ruth White or Mirza Ahmad Sohrab. We believe in the correct, untainted message of Baha'u'llah and the Master. We do not believe in the Guardianship of Shoghi Effendi due to obvious reasons. Also, the Free Baha'is believe in the concept of UHJ, but not the current established one, whose members are appointed and not elected. We believe that the true UHJ will be established only when the Baha'is become free from the shackles of administration and follow the pristine message of Baha'u'llah. Baha'u'llah was against organizing the religion and wanted all Baha'is to work for the cause wholeheartedly. However, the current form of UHJ is functioning exactly reverse. They have made people work towards gaining authority. Unfortunately, all this started right after the passing away of the Master and as soon as the so-called Guardian Shoghi Effendi came to power.

Regarding your other question, Free Baha'is are located worldwide at different locations. As of now, Free Baha'is are majorly located in the USA, UK, Singapore, Thailand, Germany, Russia, Emirates, Oman, Bahrain, Iran, Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh. But, since we do not believe in Administration and signing of cards, we do not keep record of the total number of Free Baha'is.

Anyway, we would advise all Baha'is to spread the message of love and bind people together with the pristine message of Baha'u'llah and make sure the followers of Baha'u'llah are united towards the cause and promote world peace and harmony.

Question 3



L. Pavey <...@gmail.com>

3:19 PM ☆ ↩ ⋮

to Free ▾

Alla'u'abha.

My personal journey to the Free Baha'i Faith has been a progress through independent thought after studying major religions for the last 3/4 years.

Growing up I wasn't christened as a child but did have a belief in God, my mum was Protestant but her Godmother was Catholic, so my mum kinda taught me both.

So growing up I had the religious belief but as I grew up I started to look for answers from the other Prophets (Manifestation) to find the correct source, but around 3ish years ago I discovered the Baha'i Faith for the first time which answered my questions and the fact I had love and respect for all Manifestation which strengthened my faith, but had but never joined though due to the authority of the Haifa Officers putting me off which was a pain cause I knew it was true Baha'u'llah revelation.

So I looked through other religions Buddhism and just before my declaration of faith Mormonism, while Joseph Smith not be a manifestation I do believe he was a seer my own personal belief and he foretold the coming of The Bab & Baha'u'llah in a prophecy of about Mount Carmel in the year 1891 and reading this rekindled what I knew was true, soon after that I found The Free Baha'i Faith and here we are today.

I use to drink as well but recently through prayer and faith I have been clean and have been happier since.

And I thank you for the warm welcome and you have my permission to publish in your magazine, have a nice day.

Yours Sincerely,

L. Pavey

Answer:

Allah'u'abha!

We are glad to hear back from you. Your journey to the faith sounds so appealing to us. We wish you great success in both the worlds. May Baha'u'llah bless you!

We have a suggestion for you - If you're digital savvy, we would request you to kindly start a blog to spread the pristine message of Baha'u'llah online. You can gather all the Free Baha'i related info and put them up on the blog. Another thing that could be uploaded on the blog is The Caravan Magazine. You can download them from our website here - <http://freebahais.org/the-caravan-magazine/>

Dedicate this blog from your country and if we find it interesting, we will promote the same on our website and through our magazine as well.

Do feel free to write back in case you have any more questions. Looking forward to your replies on the above-mentioned questions.

Thank you,
Team Free Baha'i

P.S. Following our conversation, Lewis started a new profile on Twitter dedicating it to the Free Baha'i Faith. Those who wish to follow him can search '**Free Baha'i Servant of Baha**' on Twitter.

Question 4



Answer:

Hi Shawn,

Allah'u'Abha!

Sure, we will do that for you. Thank you for writing to us.

Meanwhile, we would request you to kindly visit our website to download and read books online, while on the go.

- **Link to the popular Baha'i books** - <http://freebahais.org/bahai-books/>
- **Link to the books written by Ahmad Sohrab** - <http://freebahais.org/books-by-mirza-ahmad-sohrab/>
- **Link to the books written by Lady Ruth White** - <http://freebahais.org/early-bahais/ruth-white/>
- **Link to the books written by Julie Chanler** - <http://freebahais.org/books-by-julie-chanler/>

Do let us know if you have any other queries/feedback/suggestions. We will be happy to help you! :)

Humbly,
The Free Baha'i Team

Know your Heritage



*A reed pen of Baha'u'llah, on display at British Museum,
November 2017*

Declarations into the Free Baha'i Faith

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 Abdul Baha' 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'i 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?

Have you done your independent investigation of truth ?

Abdu'l Baha has said,

“... It is the duty of everyone to investigate reality, and investigation of reality by another will not do ...”

“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 investigations of reality. Man is not intended to see through the eyes of another, hear through another's ears nor comprehend with another's brain. Each human creature has individual endowment, power and responsibility in the creative plan of God. 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. Turn to God; supplicate humbly at his threshold, seeking assistance and confirmation, that God may rend asunder the veils that obscure your vision. Then will your eyes be filled with illumination; face to face you will behold the reality of God and your heart become completely purified from the dross of ignorance, reflecting the glories and bounties of the kingdom.”

The Promulgation of Universal Truth. Discourses Abdul Baha; pages 285-287-288

Throwback - 1916

During Abdu'l Baha's lifetime, accordingly to the WORLD ALMANAC for 1916, there were 2884 Baha'is in United States belonging to the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is. But in 1926, after the first five years of Shoghi Effendi's administration, there were only 1247 – a decrease of more than 50 percent. In 1936, the figures were still below those of 1916.

The shrinkage was due to two reasons.

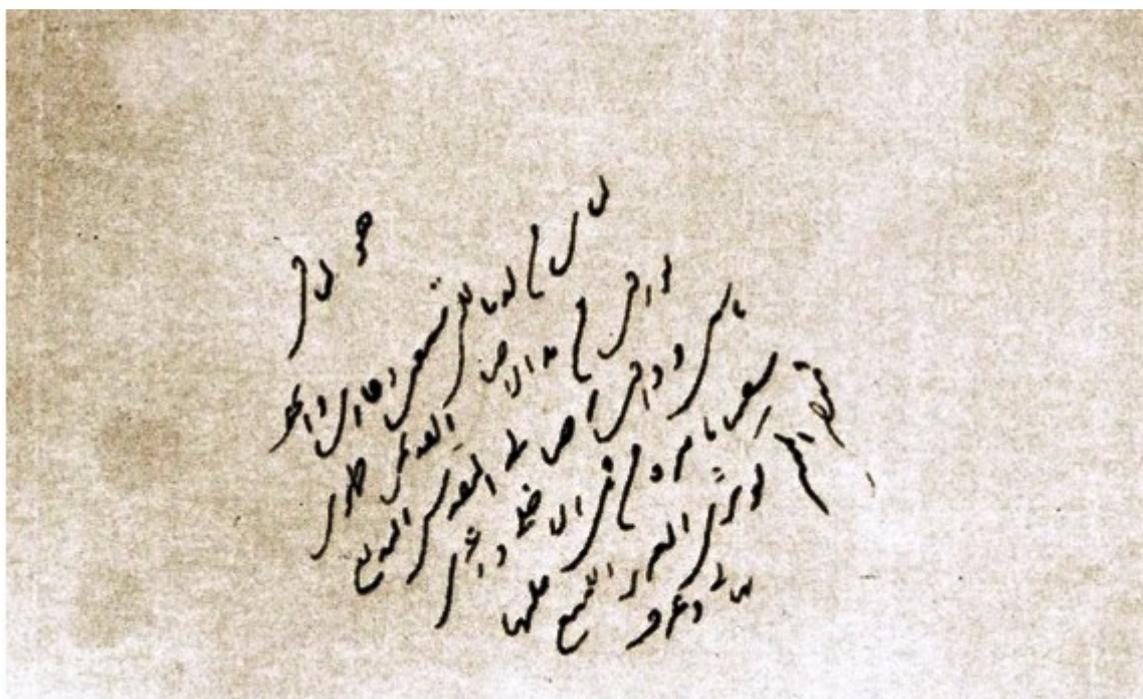
1. The alleged Will was produced after the death of Abdu'l Baha appointing Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Cause
2. Shoghi Effendi substituted the teachings of Baha'u'llah with inverted principles

When Baha'is with spiritual insight realised the actions of the so-called Guardian, which contradicted the pristine message of Baha'u'llah and the master, they seceded from the faith.

Whether the alleged Will of the Master is authentic or spurious, the results of the Administration of Shoghi Effendi and the National Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is stand as an historic indictment against them.

(Source: Abdu'l Baha's Questioned Will and Testament, pgs. 98-99)

Did YOU Know ??



Baha'u'llah wrote a Tablet to his only daughter Bahiyyih Khanum, whose text has been carved and gilded around the pediment of her monument. Translation of the same is as follows:

He is the Eternal! This is My testimony for her who hath heard My voice and drawn nigh unto Me. Verily, she is a leaf that hath sprung from this pre-existent Root. She hath revealed herself in My name and tasted of the sweet savours of My holy, My wondrous pleasure. At one time We gave her to drink from My honeyed Mouth, at another caused her to partake of My mighty, My luminous Kawthar. Upon her rest the glory of My name and the fragrance of My shining robe.

(Baha'u'llah, Bahiyyih Khanum, The Greatest Holy Leaf, p. 2)

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