

THE CARAVAN



Has the Baha'i Faith lost it's
true purpose?

Article Inside

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Prayer of Bab
2. Foreword
3. Poem – New Years Plan
4. Picture: Baha'is at their NawRuz's Feast in Tihran, March 21, 1930
5. Divine Laws
6. Questioning the path: Has the Baha'i Faith lost it's true purpose – Guest Article
7. Investigation of Reality
8. Clergy in the Baha'i Cause
9. Picture: Abdu'l Baha talked about Isfandiyar, the black servant of the Blessed Beauty.
10. Free Baha'i Activities
11. Inspiring Quotes
12. Introducing The Caravan App!
13. Some Questions Answered
14. Know your Heritage
15. Websplore
16. Did you know?
17. Blast from the Past
18. Declarations
19. Throwback

PRAYER



If thou art sailing upon the sea of God's Names, which are reflected in all things, know thou that He is exalted and sanctified from being known through His creatures, or being described by His servants. Everything thou beholdest hath been called into being through the operation of His Will. How can such a created thing, therefore, be indicative of His essential oneness? God's existence in itself testifieth to His Own oneness, while every created thing, by its very nature, beareth evidence that it hath been fashioned by God. Such is the proof of consummate wisdom in the estimation of those who sail the ocean of divine Truth.

- The Bab

FOREWORD

“If we are not happy and joyous at this season, for what other season shall we wait and for what other time shall we look? This is the time for growing, the season for joyous gathering! Take the cup of the Testament in thy hand, leap and dance with ecstasy in the triumphal procession of the Covenant! Lay your confidence in the everlasting bounty, turn to the presence of the generous God ... turn thy vision to the horizon of eternal wealth; and pray for help from the Source of Mercy! ... Soon the whole world, as in springtime, will change its garb. The turning and falling of the autumn leaves is past; the bleakness of the wintertime is over. The new year hath appeared and the spiritual springtime is at hand. The black earth is becoming a verdant garden; the deserts and mountains are teeming with red flowers; from the borders of the wilderness the tall grasses are standing like advance guards before the cypress and jessamine trees; while the birds are singing among the rose branches like the angels in the highest heavens, announcing the glad-tidings of the approach of that spiritual spring, and the sweet music of their voices is causing the real essence of all things to move and quiver.” – Abdu’l Baha

As the golden month of Baha redeems its

presence, we receive NawRuz in anticipation and bewilderment, a season of new beginnings, spiritual refreshment, and desires unfolding. Baha'is from every corner of the world convene to celebrate the joyous occasion by bidding farewell to the Fast and embracing the promise of renewal with this sacred moment.

NawRuz is much more than the New Year. It is a symbol of hope, transformation, and the eternal cycle of renewal, steeped in ancient traditions and celebrated among many cultures. This festival has long been connected to the arrival of spring, the rebirth of nature, and the cleaning of the soul. For us, Free Baha'is, it stands as a reminder of new opportunities lying ahead – both in our spiritual journey and in our mission to uphold the biases of Baha'u'llah's teaching in their purest form.

As we enter a new year, we pause and take stock of our journey thus far. This last year has seen growth, enlightenment, and resilience. We have witnessed the continuing dawn of the Free Baha'i community, more people

struggling to find the light of truth, to question the accepted norms, and to rediscover the core of Baha'u'llah's message. We have learned what we can from challenges that appeared like an encumbered cry, yet never did they break down our certainty and willingness in the pursuit of truth and service.

Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha's teachings deal with selfless service to humanity regardless of race, religion, or nationality. As we celebrate NawRuz, let us remind ourselves that true spirituality demands not only a renewal of self but also the upliftment of fellow beings. This shall be the year when kindness is contagious, heartfelt support comes free, and a world based on love, justice, and harmony becomes our new reality.

First and foremost, one of the beautiful teachings of Baha'u'llah is the principle of independent investigation of truth, meaning no one soul shall be allowed to follow blindly a tradition of practice but shall seek the truth with an open heart and mind. The Free Baha'i community practices this for real, allowing every individual to question, learn, and discover fearlessly and unrestricted. As we enter the new year, let us resolve once more to work actively in the acquisition of knowledge that encompasses a study of history and revives the very essence of the Faith.

This magazine pays tribute to the work and dedication bestowed upon the community by many hands. For the past months, it has become a place for sharing ideas and reflections, a platform for discussions, and a meeting place for seekers of truth. Our gratitude to each of those who have contributed their articles, reflections, and profound discussion is beyond measure. Thank you for your support and

encouragement. Your support nourishes the growth of this movement, and we are looking forward to the day when many more voices unite together.

Entering the New Year, let us enter with renewed strength, dynamism, and unswerving faith. May this NawRuz etch into the eternity of all hearts everyone's joy, peace, and clarity. May it give power to increase our resolve to make one more step on the journey that brings discovery, truth, and service.

This magazine is the first in a series under creation under the order of NawRuz—energized with past energies and ready to finish our mission of further dispersing true teachings from Baha'u'llah. Well, now, we request readers to keep forwarding thoughts and experiences—plus some nabbers of inspiring articles so that we can tempt them into the Guest Article space.

And thank you for joining in this journey. Here's to a streaming year of light, wisdom, and progress!

With warm NawRuz greetings,

The Free Baha'is Team

NEW YEAR'S PLAN



I tried to think of a clever new phrase—
A slogan to inspire the next 365 days,
A motto to live by this coming New Year,
But the catchy words fell flat to my ear.

And then I heard His still small voice
Saying, "Consider this simple, daily choice:
With each new dawn and close of day
Make new your resolve to trust and obey."

"Don't look back, caught in regret
Or dwell on the sorrow of dreams unmet;
Don't stare forward anchored by fear,
No, live in this moment, for I Am here."

"I am all you need. Everything. I Am.
You are held secure by my strong hand.
Give me this one thing—your all in all;
Into my grace, let yourself fall."

So, at last, I'm ready; I see the way.
It's to daily follow, trust, and obey.
I enter the New Year armed with a plan,
To give Him my everything—all that I am.

--Mary Fairchild



Baha'is at their NawRuz's Feast in Tihran, March 21, 1930

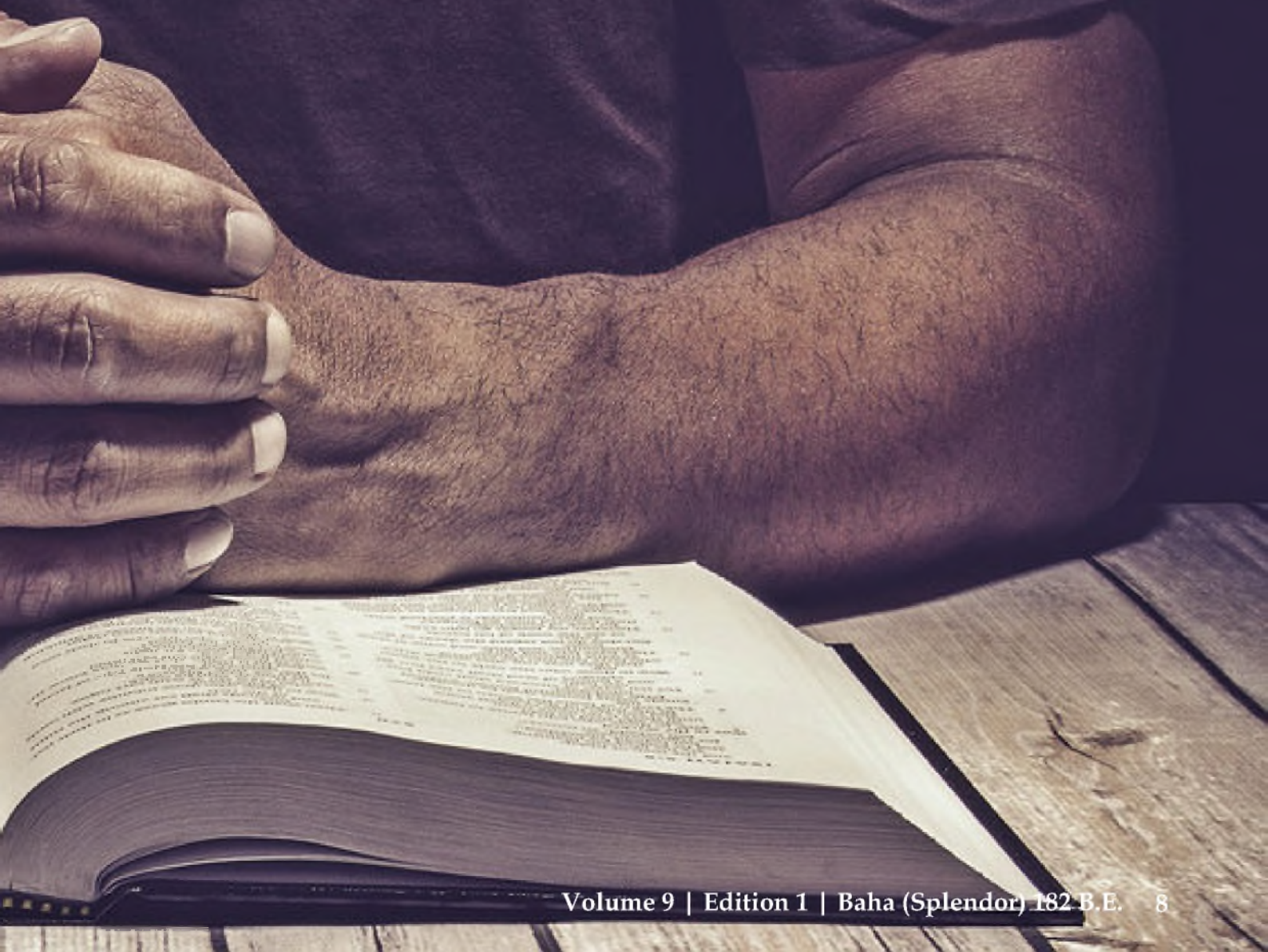
DIVINE LAWS

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

Neither show grief nor joy in times of calamity. Seek that which is between two extremes, which means the remembering (of God) when in that state and the being aware of what the outcome may be. So does the Omniscient Knower announce to you.

Do not shave your heads. God has adorned them with hair. In that there are certainly signs to him who considers the requirements of nature (al-tabi'a) from the standpoint of the Possessor of Mankind. Indeed, He is the Mighty, the Wise. It is not fitting to go beyond the limits of the ears. This is what the Master of the worlds commanded.

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



QUESTIONING THE PATH: HAS THE BAHAI FAITH LOST ITS TRUE PURPOSE?

– GUEST ARTICLE

Dear Friend,

Allah'u'Abha,

I have been reading your magazine for quite some time and have a question that I hope you can answer. I have been a Baha'i for seven and a half years. In my early years, I was introduced to the teachings of Baha'u'llah through books like the Tablets of Baha'u'llah, which initially drew me to the Faith. After my declaration, I began attending monthly feasts, and everything seemed good. I was told that the Baha'i population was around seven million worldwide, yet during the feasts, I noticed that very few people attended the meetings.

Over the years, I was introduced to the Ruhi curriculum and completed up to Book 4. Through these sessions, I learned about the importance of administration, including the Local Spiritual Assembly (LSA), the National Spiritual Assembly (NSA), and the Universal House of Justice (UHJ), which was described as the supreme body governing the affairs of Baha'is worldwide. I was told to completely

surrender to this institution since its nine members are considered immaculate. This is where my internal conflict began.

I asked one of my Ruhi teachers about this, as I was initially taught that the Baha'i Faith has no clergy, unlike the church. He was unable to provide a satisfactory answer and instead warned me that questioning the absolute authority of the UHJ was equivalent to questioning the authority of the Master, Abdu'l Baha. This question has remained in my mind ever since.

I am an avid reader and have studied many Baha'i writings available in English, including Traveler's Narrative, God Passes By, Kitab-i-Iqan, Hidden Words, The Seven Valleys and the Four Valleys, Epistle to the Son of the Wolf, Gems of Divine Mysteries, and many more. While attending meetings and feasts, I encountered certain terms that are not found in the fundamental writings of Baha'u'llah or Abdu'l Baha. These abbreviations are frequently used in Baha'i gatherings and reports:



- IBC – International Bahá'í Council
- IEF – International Environment Forum
- IPG – Intensive Program of Growth
- ISGP – Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity
- ITC – International Teaching Centre
- JY – Junior Youth
- JYG – Junior Youth Group
- JYSEP – Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program
- Cluster and Cluster Growth

I struggled to understand where these terms originated within the Baha'i Faith. Today, discussions about Faith itself are rare; instead, gatherings revolve around these abbreviations and administrative matters. When I asked a respected member of our community about this, his response was simply, "This is how the Baha'i Faith works." Needless to say, this answer was far from satisfying.

You may be wondering why I am writing to you. From what I understand of the Free Baha'i Faith, you do not believe in any form of administration. As a true follower of

Baha'u'llah, it deeply troubles me that when I ask questions, I do not receive clear answers from the elders or scholars in our community. Therefore, I decided to raise my concerns through your magazine.

Through my studies, I have found no mention of these terms in the holy writings of Baha'u'llah, the Master, or even early Baha'i scholars. I have read numerous accounts of Abdu'l Baha's travels to America and Europe, and not once did he use such terminology. Instead, he emphasized the teaching of the Faith. If I were to raise my concerns in a Baha'i gathering, I know I would be labeled a troublemaker – or worse, a Covenant Breaker. That is why I am choosing to express my concerns here.

It is clear that due to its overemphasis on administration, the Baha'i Faith has strayed from the original teachings of Baha'u'llah. Today, it seems we are merely trying to sustain a system by using bureaucratic terminology and impressing newcomers with formalities. The Faith is beginning to feel more like a social club than a spiritual

path. I sincerely hope my article gets published so that more Baha'is can begin to question this so-called immaculate administration.

By filling out reports and memorizing abbreviations, are we truly spreading the words of Baha'u'llah? Or are we simply trying to gain recognition from Auxiliary Board Members (ABM) and Counselors, who, in turn, write lengthy reports to the Universal House of Justice (UHJ) about cluster growth, youth empowerment, intensive program growth, and the Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity? Are all these efforts merely a way to climb the ranks, paving the path to the International Teaching Centre (ITC) and eventually securing a seat in the UHJ?

Sincerely,

A Concerned Baha'i





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

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)



November 2. On this date in 1912, in Chicago, Abdu'l Baha "talked about Isfandiyar, the black servant of the Blessed Beauty, referring to his faithfulness, obedience and goodness of heart, saying: 'If a believer in God prays for piety, it does not matter whether he is robed in black or white.'"

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

“May a powerful influence remain in your hearts, signs of eternal joy and happiness that will illumine the kingdom in this city. May the breezes of the Holy Spirit waft upon you, that your intelligence may progress and your souls rejoice in your lord. Thus will you become eternal beings shining in the divine kingdom.” - Abdu’l Baha

With winter covering many regions now, we witnessed far-reaching initiatives by Free Baha’is in Canada, the United States, Germany, and the Middle East to serve the underprivileged. Volunteers gave out warm clothes, blankets, and essentials to those withstanding the biting cold, and their efforts ensured that many families struggling to stay warm felt the warmth of true human connection.

The orphanages visited by these Free Baha’is in Angola and India were provided with comforters and supplies that young and vulnerable children without families so desperately need. Their visits were not all about providing material aid; love was shared with the children and time spent with them to show them that they were really cared for and loved. The smiles from these children

reflected the very spirit of Baha’u’llah’s teachings—that service to humanity is the highest form of worship.

All around Southeast Asia, especially in Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia, new year was celebrated in a manner that genuinely reflected the Baha’i spirit—by sharing joy with less fortunate. Free Baha’is ushered in community meals in which participation was open to all, including guests from shelters and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Mirth, laughter, and gratitude characterized the gatherings, reinforcing the spirit of unity and equality.

The acts of service are accompanied with other opportunities for Free Baha’is to immerse themselves in studying Baha’u’llah and the Master’s writings. Such study groups were also organized in the United States, Germany, and India, where believers would gather to read, think and discuss in-depth meanings of the teachings. These sessions kept their faith strong and gave them affirmations to apply in their day-to-day lives.

As other Free Baha’is around the world

welcomed the new year into their homes, offering their friends and neighbours the glorious message of love, unity, and service found in the writings of Baha'u'llah, however, in Singapore, Canada, and Thailand, some believers ventured to host small and intimate gatherings wherein excerpts from sacred texts were read, and discussions open to the larger community were undertaken, allowing local neighbours to come and learn and share. This was a way to deepen their own faith while at the same time bond with those outside of their community to prove that the teachings of Baha'u'llah are for all humanity.

Let me particularly mention Malaysia, where the Free Baha'i community was newly founded and is growing very fast. Centered around the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah, the believers in Malaysia hold deepening sessions, engage in community service, and have open discussions on the true spirit of their Faith. As such, it is indeed creating an atmosphere to allow love and sincerity to direct their every action and movement, winning for participants those who earnestly seek out the perfumed soil of the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah.

Across all these regions, Free Baha'is are not just focusing on individual growth but also lend a wonderful hand to the well-being of society, be that through feeding the hungry, providing shelter, or extending the hand of friendship. They have exemplified the message of Baha'u'llah on unity, selflessness, and service.

May these efforts inspire us all through a year of determination and commitment to the very path set by Baha'u'llah: that of love, justice, and harmony for all. May we keep fighting for our mission, always ensuring that we are working for humanity every step of the way.

If you have engaged yourself in similar activities, please feel free to share your stories with us! Your experiences and insights may inspire many others to serve in just such a spirit.

With warm regards and best wishes,

Team Free Baha'is



INSPIRING QUOTES



“O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge and toward all Thy signs I set my heart. O Lord! Whether travelling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee.

Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy! Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me.

Thine is the absolute authority to command.”

— The Bab

“Happy the one who entereth upon the first day of the month of Bahá, the day which God hath consecrated to this Great Name. And blessed be he who evidenceth on this day the bounties that God hath bestowed upon him; he, verily, is of those who show forth thanks to God through actions betokening the Lord's munificence which hath encompassed all the worlds. Say: This day, verily, is the crown of all the months and the source thereof, the day on which the breath of life is wafted over all created things. Great is the blessedness of him who greeteth it with radiance and joy. We testify that he is, in truth, among those who are blissful.”

— Baha’u’llah

“The rising of the sun at the equinox is the symbol of life and the human reality is revived; our thoughts are transformed and our intelligence is quickened. The sun of truth bestows eternal life, just as the solar sun is the cause of terrestrial life. The day of the appearance of God's messenger on earth is ever a sacred day, a day when man commemorates his lord.”

— Abdu’l Baha

INTRODUCING

THE CARAVAN

APP!





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

Naw-Ruz is such a joyous occasion, denoting a new beginning and the turn of a new year! But how does one celebrate this day? Are there any traditions or counsel in the Baha'i Writings regarding this day?

Answer:

Hi,

Allah'u'Abha!

NawRuz is a time of renewal, joy, and spiritual upliftment, marking the end of the Fast and the beginning of a new year. While there are no rigid rituals prescribed for its celebration, Baha'u'llah has described it as a festival of joy and unity. It is a time to reflect on the past, renew our commitment to serving humanity, and celebrate the blessings of life with loved ones.

Abdu'l Baha encouraged that NawRuz should be observed with happiness and

kindness, making sure that not only our families but also those less fortunate can share in the joy. Many Baha'is spend the day in prayer, reading the Writings, and coming together with friends and family for a festive meal. Others use this occasion to give to charity, serve their communities, or invite people from all backgrounds to share in the spirit of unity.

In the true essence of Baha'u'llah's teachings, NawRuz is not just a personal celebration but a chance to spread love, bring people together, and renew our dedication to justice, kindness, and truth. Hope that answers your question.

Thanks and regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Email 2:

We're always told to follow institutions like the NSA, LSA, and UHJ because they've been given responsibilities by Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha. But what happens when these institutions start acting more like rulers than servants? Are we supposed to follow them blindly, or do we have a responsibility to make sure they stay true to Baha'u'llah's vision?

Answer:

Dear Friend,

The whole point of Baha'u'llah's message was to free people from religious hierarchy and blind obedience. He wanted faith to be personal, something we search for and understand on our own, not something dictated by a select group of people.

In the Kitab-i-Aqdas, Baha'u'llah clearly said:

"You have been prohibited from mounting into pulpits. Whoever desires to recite the verses of his Lord to you, let him sit on a seat placed on a platform and mention (the name of) God, his Lord and the Lord of the worlds. God likes you to sit on platforms and seats because of the greatness of what you have of the love of God and the Rising-place of His Shining, Brilliant Cause."

This isn't just about not using pulpits—it's about breaking down any kind of religious superiority. No one should have power over others when it comes to spiritual truth. But look at what's happening today. Instead of guiding with love and humility, institutions are controlling how people practice their faith, telling them what they can and cannot believe, and even casting out those who ask questions.

If Baha'u'llah abolished the clergy, why are we letting these institutions take on that same role? Faith isn't about obeying an

institution—it's about personal connection with God and living the teachings in our daily lives.

As Free Baha'is, we believe in returning to the true spirit of Baha'u'llah's message—where unity is built on love and understanding, not fear and control. Questioning authority isn't being rebellious; it's being faithful to what Baha'u'llah actually taught. If these institutions were meant to serve the people, then it's our duty to hold them accountable and make sure they stay true to that purpose.

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 3:

How do you know when your prayers have been answered? 🙏🙏🙏

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Answer:

Dear Friend,

Often, we wonder if our prayers are heard and if they truly bring about change in our lives. But Baha'u'llah reminds us that divine wisdom operates beyond human understanding, guiding us in ways we may not immediately perceive.

He says:

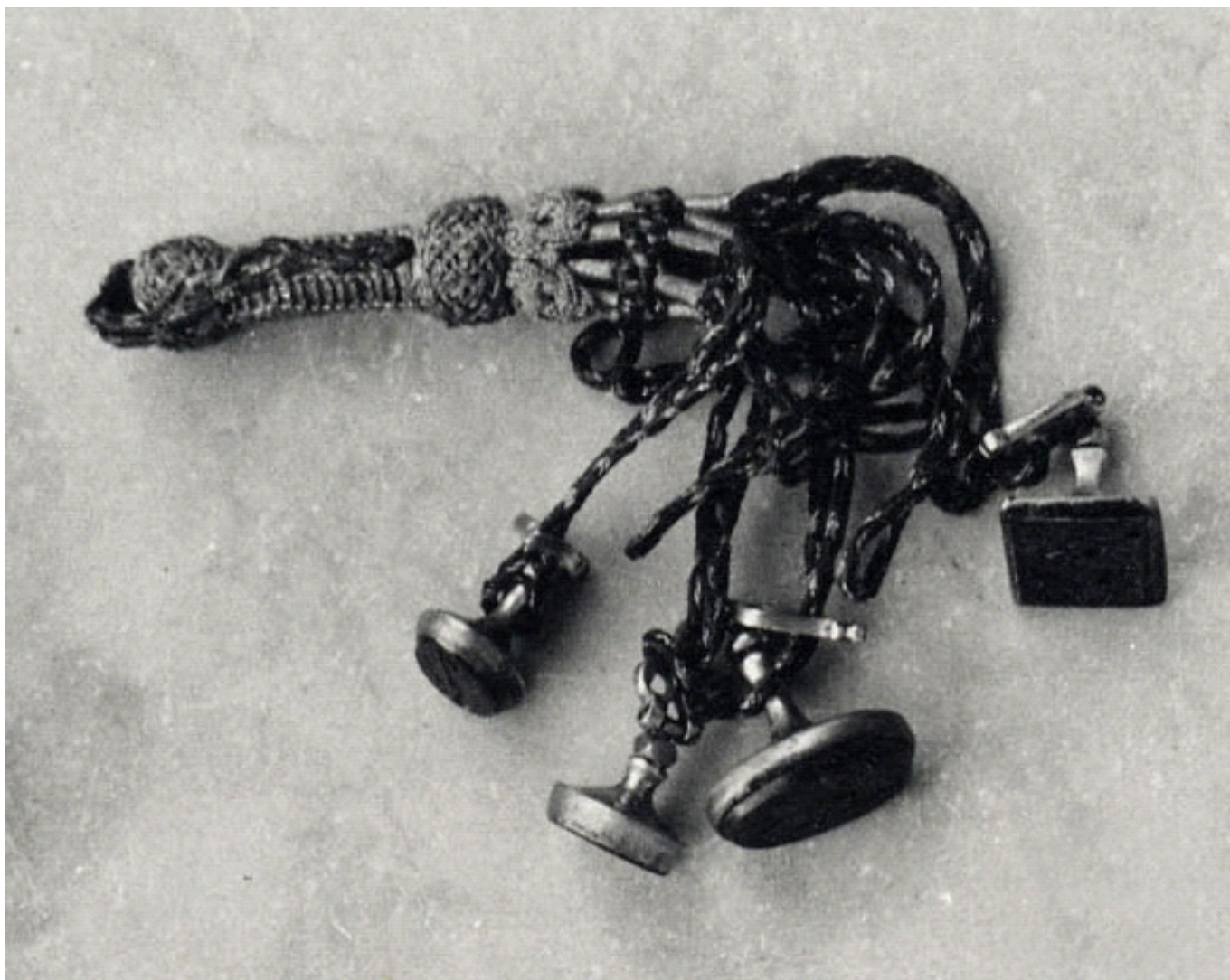
"The matter is in the hand of God; He gives to whom He wills what He wills and He keeps back from whom He wills what He desires. He knows the secrets of the hearts and that by which the eyes of those who wink are moved. How many a careless one who came with sincerity We set down on the throne of welcome! How many an intelligent person We returned to the Fire because of justice on Our part!"

(Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

This powerful passage reveals that God's response to our prayers is not about what we expect but about what is just and necessary for our souls. Some who seem undeserving may receive divine favor because of their sincerity, while others who appear wise may be tested to refine their faith.

The key is trust—knowing that our prayers are answered in ways that align with a greater wisdom. Sometimes, the answer comes as patience, a shift in our perspective, or unexpected opportunities. The true blessing is to recognize that whatever comes from God is ultimately for our growth and spiritual well-being.

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



Several of the carved seals of Baha'u'llah used to stamp letters or tablets to verify the author.

WEBSPLORE

←  r/bahai • 2 days ago
Ctisphonics

...

Are the Baha'i still Anti-Homeless and Pro-Woke?

I was looking into the Baha'i back in 2010, and was voluntarily homeless then (studying and recovering from a Army injury) but holding down a full time job. A homeless member (old toothless woman) of the prayer groups was being.... not so much mistreated as poorly tolerated and ignored at best, and at worst given a but of exasperated light hostility whenever she left the bathroom wet or messy. Most of the Baha'i seemed well off (you are either rich or homeless in SF). I got the worst look when I brought this up, asking them to treat her better (in actions, not words) and came out as homeless myself. They thought all they had to do was make eye contact and acknowledge them and that was that. This occurred before woke was a thing culturally, but this is the earliest I can think of the phenomena culturally, the whole fake out "I acknowledge you're existence" thing, where that makes everything okay. Absolved you of having to take action and responsibility.

Over a decade later, I missed death four times in the last two months. I ceased having a stable life two years ago, got out of this time involuntary homelessness (home aide, and the people I took care of died, causing my homelessness), after that by hiking a week to a city, getting a job in a city and a minivan to live in. I had a brain tumor cut out on New Years, a kidney removed late January, and a week ago my van that I lived out of did a triple flip.

I visited the Bahai temple in Chicago two days ago. Sat through a 44 minute long video about the Bab that said nothing about the Bab, just inter racial harmony stuff. It got me worried I couldn't find anything about the next steps of the Baha'i movement. I searched the internet and it seems everyone is okay with infinitely delaying even small scale trials until centuries from now when a Baha'i state exists. When I still had my minivan I was handing out blankets to the homeless I came across hyperthermic in the streets.

So will it just be a few centuries of rich white woke people attacking poor whites until someone starts doing something positive? I'm from West Virginia, one of the towns Bill Clinton destroyed when he dropped the tariffs. I lost siblings to drugs because of his actions (area went downhill hard as a result of the economic nuke he left off), and have been turned into a deplorable as a result. I really don't want to join a religion that hates me for my economic class as a homeless worker and being the wrong skin color. Can we move on from the race wars the left has been forcing and like, fix stuff? Move on with The New World Order?

Don't keep coming up with new bad races to beat up on? That's all the woke do. It's why I left the Catholic Church with the Liberation Theology being taught by rich middle aged people that white is bad, and everything else is good. I'm a geo-politics buff. I like Chinese historical culture, but suspect the live harvesting of organs for resell on the healthcare market of Uighyrs and Fulan Gong members in todays world should take a higher precedent over how black people feel sad about slavery several generations ago, especially since in many jobs I've had over the years I have worked besides and under them. One is a real evil, the other is a minor historical concern that goes away once you let it go away, as it never actually happened to you. The world has changed for some racial relations.

I'm moving now to another, warmer part of the country (so I don't end up on the street in a future surgery in cold weather). On the train, will arrive in a few hours. I'm also worried because the Baha'i center in my future town seems to be all electronic now with no face to face meetings, all zoom. I know the Baha'i are zipcode and municipality obsessed, and I got around this before, but I am certain someone will eventually take note of a lack of house on my part in the videos. I'm not wanting not only having the wrong skin color and not showing the woke excitement being a impediment, but also being the wrong economic class being a bar to learning more about the actual functioning of The New World Order, even if I am working. I don't want to feel less than human because others are misunderstanding what unity is about. I'm seeing alot of rampant racism on the left and absolute disregard for millions suffering. If you are poor and white you are a hated deplorable. Scanning through reddit Baha'i questions I notice some seemed to say the same. Seemed to becsuse the OP usually is deleted, but you get the idea from the comments alot of bad woke racism has taken root in at least parts of the Baha'i community. Is it now everywhere? How common? Are people taking note of the double standards?

I'm hoping it is rare and I have a good experience. I've stayed up all night worried.

“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'?

Interested in contributing to the Caravan Magazine by writing a guest article? Kindly send us your article at ['thecaravan@freebahais.org'](mailto: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'](mailto:info@freebahais.org)

Thank you!

DID YOU KNOW ?

Shoghi Effendi's Attempt to Westernize the Baha'i Faith

I am a follower of the Baha'i Faith, and it is truly strange for me to read this statement from Shoghi Effendi, published in Baha'i News, December 1947, p. 3:

"The use of 'Allah-u-Abha' in the East is, generally speaking, confined to a greeting. It is not said at the end of prayers and the Guardian feels that the less it is used freely in public by the Baha'is in the West (before strangers) the better, as it gives a very peculiar impression of us, and makes us seem like some strange Oriental sect."

For those familiar with the Baha'i teachings, this statement seems deeply contradictory. The phrase "Allahu Abha" (meaning "God is Most Glorious") is central to the faith, serving not only as a greeting but also as an invocation of the name of God. It holds a special place in Baha'i prayers, is part of the daily Greatest Name Remembrance (Ninety-five Allahu Abhas), and is a powerful expression of devotion to Baha'u'llah.

The Free Baha'i movement recognizes that such alterations are not in line with the universal nature of Baha'u'llah's teachings. Faith is meant to transcend cultural and national boundaries—not to be reshaped to fit Western sensibilities. The fear of being associated with "the East" contradicts Baha'u'llah's vision of unity and oneness.

A Departure from the Teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha

Baha'u'llah never discouraged the use of "Allahu Abha." On the contrary, he emphasized its importance. Abdu'l Baha himself frequently used and encouraged its use among Baha'is. So why did Shoghi Effendi—who claimed to be the Guardian of the faith—seek to suppress this fundamental expression of devotion?

The Free Baha'i perspective suggests that after Abdu'l Baha's passing, the original teachings of the faith were gradually changed to align with administrative and political concerns rather than spiritual truth. The Universal House of Justice, under the guidance of the Guardian, moved towards an institutionalized and bureaucratic form of governance, which often conflicted with the open, inclusive vision that Baha'u'llah had originally intended.

This instruction from Shoghi Effendi seems to be one such example of this shift. Rather than promoting the natural expression of faith, he sought to regulate and limit it, especially in the West.

The Free Baha'i View: Returning to the True Spirit of the Faith

The Free Baha'i movement believes in returning to the original, unaltered teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha. Faith was never meant to be confined by rigid administrative structures or altered for the sake of public perception. "Allahu Abha" is a sacred phrase, and its suppression is a sign of the institutional changes that occurred after Abdu'l Baha's passing.

Baha'u'llah's message is one of unity, authenticity, and spiritual truth. The Baha'i community should not be concerned with how they appear to outsiders, but rather with living the truth of their faith. If "Allahu Abha" is a divine phrase revealed by Baha'u'llah, why should its use be restricted?

The suppression of such a fundamental part of the faith should make us question: What else has been altered?

It is time for Baha'is to reflect on these changes and seek the original message of Baha'u'llah—a message of truth, openness, and spiritual freedom.

Free Baha'is firmly believe that the essence of the Baha'i Faith can only be achieved once we free ourselves from the clutches and bounds of the strict administration, which is suffocating, spying, and spiritually killing the community. The Baha'i Faith was never meant to be an institution of control but a path toward the unity of mankind through love, wisdom, and divine guidance.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

OUT OF THE MAIL BAG

- 3

Brawley, California: I am in receipt of your letter and the Junior Caravan. This appeals to me very strongly because of my love for Peace and my great desire to see the children of the world educated in the ways of peace. We have founded here the "School World Friendship League" and I enclose our folders on the different departments of our work. We have also made available a collection of "World Friendship Songs". These songs supply a need long felt for children's work everywhere.....It occurs to me as I have re-read the aims of the Junior Caravan that we might join our forces for the Cause of Peace. I am at present a teacher in the public schools of Brawley and all the work that I have done has been done as a teacher.

*

Paris, France: Mlle. Remande, who has been in Alsace these past months, has arrived in Paris. It is with her that I am arranging the matter of the Junior Caravan and its announcement in "L'Enfant", monthly review. You did not know that I was already cooperating with this Magazine and knew its founder, Maître Henri Rollet, a great soul, who, for fifty years, devoted his life for the cause of the so-called "criminal childhood". It is in one of his institutions that I have gone for nearly two years, every Sunday, to play with those from 13 to 21 who were sentenced to various periods or taken away from irresponsible or difficult parents. At present, "L'Enfant" is just adding a section to its pages. This new section will be especially for children, while the rest of the journal will be for educators, teachers, parents and social welfare institutions interested in the care of childhood. The announcement of the Junior Caravan will be made in the January issue and we are expecting a permit from the Ministère de l'Education Nationale to introduce the magazine in the public schools of France. Such permit would be a great help to us and for the Junior Caravan. We intend to set aside a page every month for the publication of a letter to or from America written by a child or a class.

Reference: The Children's Caravan, April 1935

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."

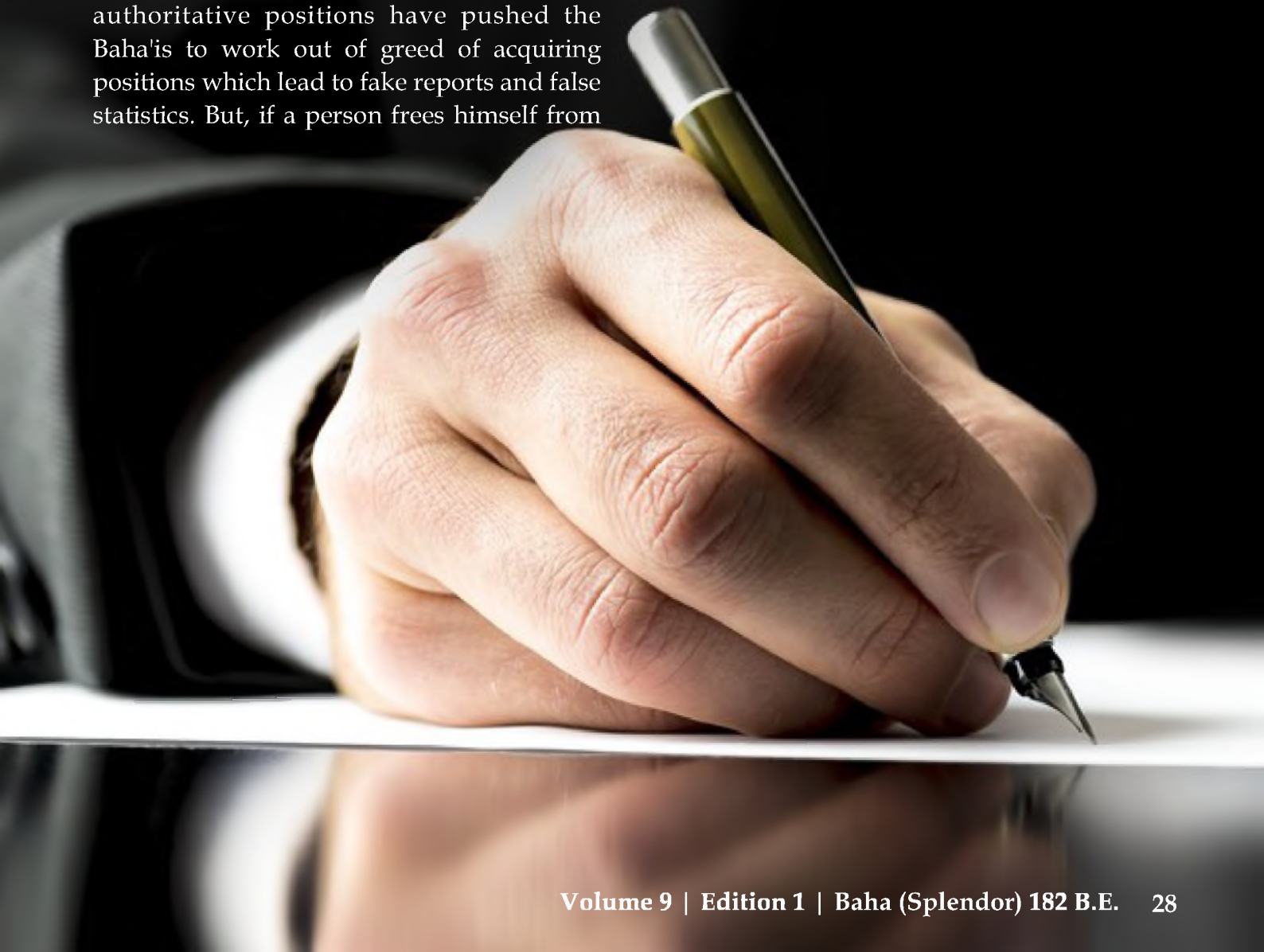
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

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



1895: Portrait of Bahiyyih Khanum, The Greatest Holy Leaf, daughter of Baha'u'llah

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