

THE **CARAVAN**

Has the Ruhi Curriculum Silenced
the Voice of Baha'u'llah?

Article Inside

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PRAYER



Arise, and proclaim unto the entire creation the tidings that He Who is the All-Merciful hath directed His steps towards the Ridvan and entered it. Guide, then, the people unto the garden of delight which God hath made the Throne of His Paradise. We have chosen thee to be our most mighty Trumpet, whose blast is to signalize the resurrection of all mankind.

Say: This is the Paradise on whose foliage the wine of utterance hath imprinted the testimony: "He that was hidden from the eyes of men is revealed, girded with sovereignty and power!" This is the Paradise, the rustling of whose leaves proclaims: "O ye that inhabit the heavens and the earth! There hath appeared what hath never previously appeared. He Who, from everlasting, had concealed His Face from the sight of creation is now come." From the whispering breeze that wafteth amidst its branches there cometh the cry: "He Who is the sovereign Lord of all is made manifest. The Kingdom is God's," while from its streaming waters can be heard the murmur: "All eyes are gladdened, for He Whom none hath beheld, Whose secret no one hath discovered, hath lifted the veil of glory, and uncovered the countenance of Beauty."

Within this Paradise, and from the heights of its loftiest chambers, the Maids of Heaven have cried out and shouted: "Rejoice, ye dwellers of the realms above, for the fingers of Him Who is the Ancient of Days are ringing, in the name of the All-Glorious, the Most Great Bell, in the midmost heart of the heavens.

- Baha'u'llah

FOREWORD

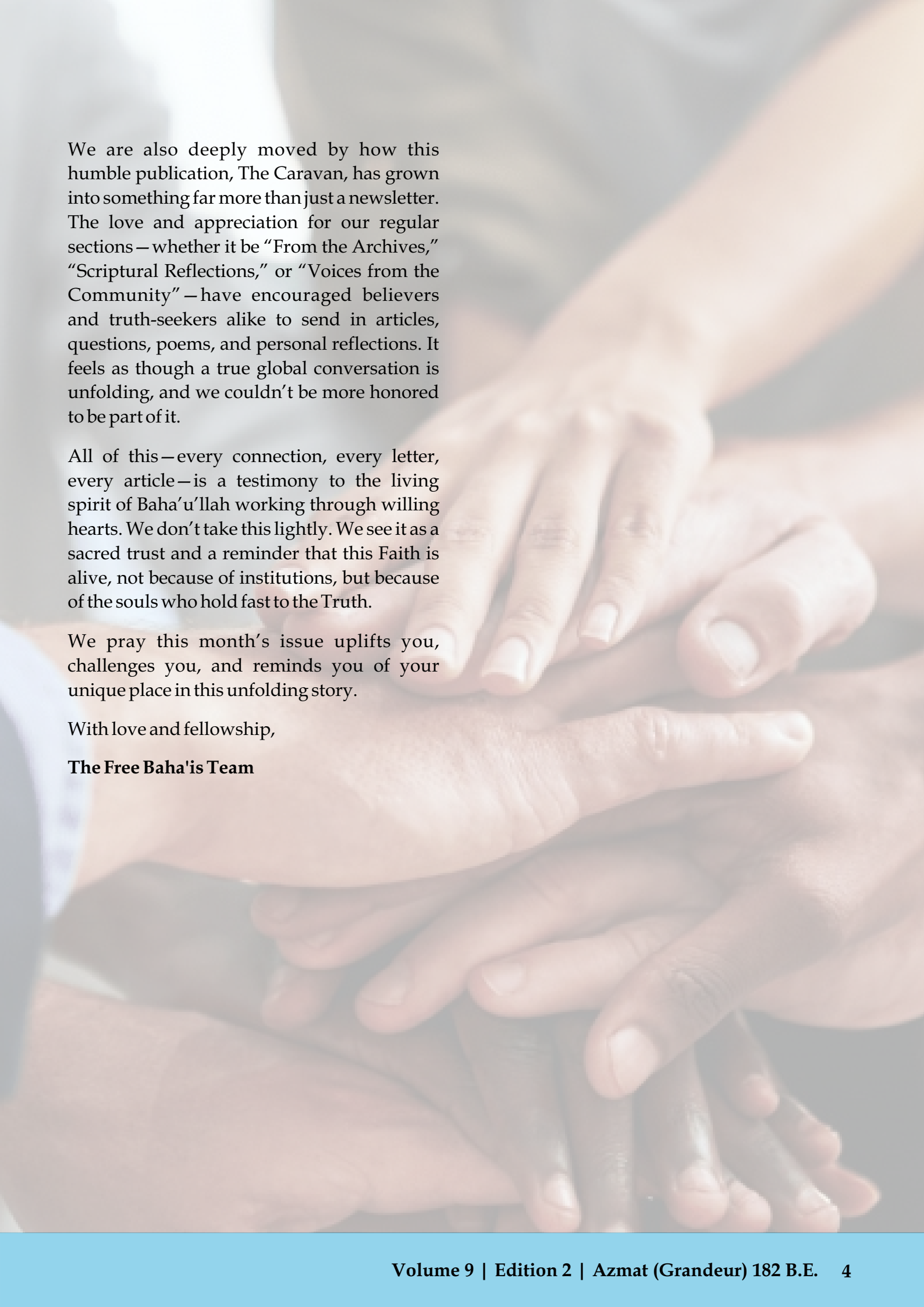
“The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry.” – Baha’u’llah

As we step into the sacred month of Azamat, our hearts are filled with joy, reflection, and deep gratitude. This time of year brings with it a powerful trio of sacred observances that have always stood as pillars in the Baha’i calendar: the Festival of Ridván, the Declaration of the Báb, and the Ascension of Baha’u’llah. Each of these moments holds its own beauty and weight, reminding us of the immense spiritual forces that were set in motion over a century and a half ago—and how those forces continue to inspire hearts

around the world today.

Ridván, the “King of Festivals,” continues to stir something deep within us. It reminds us of Baha’u’llah’s open declaration of His divine mission and the courage it took to step into that sacred role. Following that, we commemorate the bold and soul-shaking Declaration of the Báb, who opened the gates of spiritual awakening for an entire era. And then comes the solemn and tender remembrance of Baha’u’llah’s Ascension—a time to pause and reconnect with the immense legacy of love, truth, and divine guidance He left behind for all of humanity.

In these sacred days, we are also humbled and filled with gratitude to witness how the teachings of the Free Baha’is are reaching hearts across continents. In recent months, we’ve been receiving heartfelt queries and messages from seekers across the globe—from North America to Africa, Asia to Europe. Many are questioning, exploring, and finding renewed purpose in the unfiltered words of Baha’u’llah. It is nothing short of a blessing.



We are also deeply moved by how this humble publication, *The Caravan*, has grown into something far more than just a newsletter. The love and appreciation for our regular sections – whether it be “From the Archives,” “Scriptural Reflections,” or “Voices from the Community” – have encouraged believers and truth-seekers alike to send in articles, questions, poems, and personal reflections. It feels as though a true global conversation is unfolding, and we couldn’t be more honored to be part of it.

All of this—every connection, every letter, every article—is a testimony to the living spirit of Baha’u’llah working through willing hearts. We don’t take this lightly. We see it as a sacred trust and a reminder that this Faith is alive, not because of institutions, but because of the souls who hold fast to the Truth.

We pray this month’s issue uplifts you, challenges you, and reminds you of your unique place in this unfolding story.

With love and fellowship,

The Free Baha'is Team

REST MY SOUL



Rest, my soul, in God's love
as you live every day.
Relax in His faithfulness
as you go along your way.

Embrace other's happiness.
Share with those in need.
Seek peace with your neighbors,
both in words and deed.

Take things nice and easy.
Be glad for all you've got;
Not so fast and furious
gripping on those you do not.

Fix your attention on God
and not so much on others.
Your times are in His hands;
that is all that matters.

Note to self, oh my soul:
As you do the best you can,
learn not to get upset
when things don't go according to plan.

Relax in God's goodness.
You know His ways are sublime.
He is never in a hurry
but is always on time.

-- Abimbola T. Alabi



The Ridván Garden, located outside the city of 'Akká, was rented by Abdu'l Baha in 1875 and prepared for Baha'u'llah's use. Baha'u'llah visited this garden many times during the latter part of His life.

DIVINE LAWS

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

Banishment and prison have been commanded as punishments for the thief. For the third offense, put a sign on his forehead. Thus, he will be known, so that the cities and provinces of God do not receive him. Beware lest pity (al-ra'fa) take hold of you in following the religion of God. Do what you have been commanded to do by the Tender-hearted, the Merciful One. We have disciplined you with the rods of wisdom and commandments so that you may keep yourselves pure and exalt your positions, just as fathers discipline their sons. By My life, if you only knew what We desire for you by Our holy commands, you would have devoted your souls to this Holy, Mighty, and Impregnable Cause.

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

HAS THE RUHI CURRICULUM SILENCED THE VOICE OF BAHA'U'LLAH?

– GUEST ARTICLE

Has the Ruhi Curriculum Silenced the Voice of Baha'u'llah?

All over the world, one of the most significant changes in the Haifan Bahá'í community over the past several decades has been the overwhelming reliance on the Ruhi Curriculum—a formalized, institutionalized set of study books designed to build capacity for service, deepen understanding of the Faith, and support community life. On its face, it looks like a positive project. But, underneath the pretty covers and replicate content is a fundamental question: Has the Ruhi Curriculum replaced the meaningful and independent search for truth called by Baha'u'llah?

As Free Baha'is, we think it has.

What Is the Ruhi Curriculum?

The Ruhi Curriculum started in the 1980s under the Haifan Baha'i administrative institutions in Colombia, as a means of spiritual empowerment and teaching. The curriculum consists of booklets of discussion

questions and memorization passages. These courses cannot be taught except as "study circles" with certified tutors. Each level must be taught one after another - Book 1, Book 2, etc.

So, for the looks of it and apparently, it seems like a straightforward system. In practice, it has 'institutionalized' spirituality, discouraged creative thought, and 'systematized' faith in a way that Baha'ullah never intended. Or let's say he NEVER desired.

Where Is the Soul of Faith?

Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha constantly emphasized the importance of the independent investigation of truth, encouraging believers to search, reflect, and connect directly with the divine message. They did not mention checklists or tutor-based certification. The essence of Baha'i Faith was the freedom of conscience, the oneness of mankind, and the capacity of the individual to awaken to truth.



But today, many new believers coming through Ruhi-based programs are becoming exposed more to the “Ruhi culture” than to the living word of Baha'u'llah. Community participation has become a process of checking the boxes: Finished Book 1? You're now qualified to serve. Finished Book 3? You can now teach children's classes.

Is that really how transformation works? Can God’s light be distilled down to a series of modules? The Numbers Don’t Lie!

Despite the Ruhi push on the administrative side, global Baha’i enrollment has not experienced the spiritual revival that was suggested and threatened. Comprehensive evaluations through seeding online forums, independent investigations, and insider reports point to a retreating spirit in many communities with significant loss of participation and especially among the youth.

- In places such as Africa, or even South East Asia, mass teachings once brought in large numbers, yet many Ruhi-

trained “believers” never established meaningful membership in the Faith.

- Young people in the West are increasingly detached from a system at times more like religious schooling than spiritual awakening.
- Even long-term Baha’is have silently shared exhaustion regarding the mechanical aspects designed into Ruhi classes and longingly sought the text-rich, mystical prosaic writings of the Bab, Baha’u’l’lah, and Abdu’l Baha.

A Substitute for Sacred Writings?

What is even worse is that the Ruhi Curriculum contributes to replacing Baha’i scriptures. YES! The OG is being replaced by a fake. While there are many quotes used in the Ruhi books, those quotes are typically cherry-picked, taken out of context, and are filtered through the ‘institutional’ lens to brainwash the faithful, so they don’t end up questioning the ‘institution’. You know whom I’m referring to! The vast wisdom of

the Kitab-i-Iqan, the Hidden Words, or the Tablets of the Divine Plan are likely to never be explored fully.

This has blurred the spiritual sharpness of Faith. Whereas previously the seeker's heart lit up after seeing the Word of God directly, the seeking heart is often directed toward filtered content supporting administrative efforts.

Where Do Free Baha'is Stand?

As Free Baha'is, we reject the idea that an institutionalized curriculum should govern our access to God's Word. We affirm that every soul has the capacity—and the right—to study Baha'u'llah's message independently and draw strength directly from the original texts.

We do not require tutors. We do not rank believers by which books they've completed. We do not reduce spiritual awakening to a study circle.

Instead, we encourage:

- Independent reading of Baha'u'llah's Writings (Isn't that what the Writings of Baha'u'llah and the Master represent! And is that not what Independent Investigation of the Truth implies?!)
- Open and inclusive gatherings (Not tutor-led circles, please!)
- Spiritual growth through genuine service to humanity (Not administrative assignments!)
- Youth involvement through meaningful conversations (Not scripted content!)

Way Forward

If the Baha'i Faith is to remain vibrant, especially for the younger generation, we must return to the authentic essence of

Baha'u'llah's revelation. That means celebrating diversity in learning, encouraging open dialogue, and letting the Word of God—not the word of institutions—lead the way.

I remember the words of a very senior Baha'i, who once said, "How can the Ruhi Curriculum ever truly work, when it stands in the way of the very words that breathe life into the soul? The sacred writings of Baha'u'llah, pure and overflowing with divine love, were never meant to be replaced by man-made booklets. To substitute such beauty with structure is to dim the very light that once ignited hearts."

Let us not forget: a curriculum can never replace a connection.

- A victim of Ruhi Curriculum





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)



August 16-22, 1912: Abdu'l Baha visited Green Acre in Eliot. Sarah Farmer, the founder of Green Acre, was an early believer in the Baha'i faith and offered up the inn for classes and lectures on religious topics from all religions. Abdu'l Baha gave many lectures while visiting Eliot about the Baha'i Faith. Eliot residents as well as visitors to Green Acre attended these talks.

FREE BAHÁ'I ACTIVITIES

“Strive ye then, with all your hearts and souls, to awaken those who slumber, to cause the blind to see, and the dead to rise.” - Abdu’l Baha

This Ridván season has been nothing short of extraordinary for the Free Baha’is around the world. The Most Great Festival—the King of Festivals—was observed in a spirit of unity, simplicity, and heartfelt devotion to the teachings of Baha’u’llah, as envisioned in their purest form. From homes and gardens to parks, the light of Baha’u’llah’s message continues to spread across continents.

Across Asia, Free Baha’is in countries like Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore gathered in homes and open spaces, reciting prayers, reflecting on the Ridván messages, and reading from the Writings of Baha’u’llah and the Master. Malaysia, in particular, has shown remarkable dedication. Communities across the country are steadily growing and engaging new friends in deepened conversations about the Faith. The Malaysian Free Baha’is have been instrumental in nurturing a vibrant spiritual atmosphere where the focus remains on the original teachings, unclouded by administration or hierarchy.

In the Middle East, believers commemorated the sacred days with quiet dignity in the spirit of the Ridván garden. The gatherings were small but powerful—echoing with the verses of the Hidden Words, the Kitáb-i-Íqán, and other divine Tablets.

Meanwhile, in North America, the joyful spirit of Ridván blossomed—quite literally. In Canada and the United States, where spring has been breathtaking, many Free Baha’is celebrated outdoors under blooming cherry blossom trees, enjoying warm, pleasant weather. These settings provided a perfect backdrop for reflection, fellowship, and sharing the Word of God. In parks and public spaces, seekers and believers came together for prayer, spiritual conversations, and the reading of passages from the Writings. What made this Ridván truly unique was the surprising number of individuals from the Haifan Baha’i community who approached Free Baha’is with curiosity and open hearts.

We witnessed a wave of Haifan Baha’is who, after years of inner conflict and questioning, finally professed—not through administrative paperwork, but through the

acceptance of the message in their hearts. Many were astonished to learn that Free Baha'is do not follow the practice of signing cards or formal declarations. In the original Faith as revealed by Baha'u'llah, there is no clergy, no administration, and no hierarchy of forms. To believe from the heart and live the teachings — that alone is enough.

One newly-accepting friend from California shared:

“I was deeply moved when I realized that the Free Baha'is only ask that I believe in Baha'u'llah — not in institutions or appointments. This is what I had been searching for all along.”

In Europe, small Free Baha'i gatherings took place in France, Germany, and the UK, many of which were hosted in homes, libraries, and quiet green spaces. Conversations were meaningful and deep, often centered around themes from The Seven Valleys and the Hidden Words. The simplicity of these meetings reminded everyone of the beauty of the Cause in its unadulterated form.

A special mention must be made of the Free Baha'i team in Canada, who have been working quietly but tirelessly to support the global community online. They have made significant upgrades to the official Free Baha'i website, making it more secure and accessible to seekers worldwide. Their efforts in enhancing UI/UX have already begun, and a full website revamp is expected to be launched later this year. This will be a major milestone in offering seekers and believers a

more intuitive way to connect, read the writings, and stay updated.

Elsewhere in the world, from Australia to Kenya, India to Iran, and Indonesia to Turkey, Free Baha'is have been spreading the message with patience, wisdom, and love. Whether through book readings, study circles focused on the original writings of Baha'u'llah and `Abdu'l-Bahá, or simple prayer meetings — every effort has been a step toward bringing people closer to the essence of the Faith.

More and more believers are contributing articles and reflections to The Caravan Magazine, showing that all our sections are deeply appreciated by our global readership. All of this has been possible only through the blessings of Baha'u'llah, whose light continues to shine upon those who seek it with sincerity.

Let us continue walking this path with humility, faith, and service, knowing that every step we take in spreading His teachings is a step toward a more spiritually awakened world.

With warm regards and best wishes,
Team Free Baha'is



INSPIRING QUOTES



“It is better to guide one soul than to possess all that is on earth, for as long as that guided soul is under the shadow of the Tree of Divine Unity, he and the one who hath guided him will both be recipients of God’s tender mercy, whereas possession of earthly things will cease at the time of death. The path to guidance is one of love and compassion, not of force and coercion. This hath been God’s method in the past, and shall continue to be in the future!”

— The Bab

“Methinks that thou hast halted and movest not upon My Tablet. Could the brightness of the Divine Countenance have bewildered thee, or the idle talk of the froward filled thee with grief and paralyzed thy movement? Take heed lest anything deter thee from extolling the greatness of this Day -- the Day whereon the Finger of majesty and power hath opened the seal of the Wine of Reunion, and called all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. Preferrest thou to tarry when the breeze announcing the Day of God hath already breathed over thee, or art thou of them that are shut out as by a veil from Him?”

— Baha’u’llah

“Thou didst wish to celebrate the Day of Ridvan with a feast, and to have those present on that day engage in reciting Tablets with delight and joy, and thou didst request me to send thee a letter to be read on that day. My letter is this: O ye beloved, and ye handmaids of the Merciful! This is the day when the Day-Star of Truth rose over the horizon of life, and its glory spread, and its brightness shone out with such power that it clove the dense and high-piled clouds and mounted the skies of the world in all its splendour. Hence do ye witness a new stirring throughout all created things. See how, in this day, the scope of sciences and arts hath widened out, and what wondrous technical advances have been made, and to what a high degree the mind’s powers have increased, and what stupendous inventions have appeared. ...”

— Abdu’l Baha

INTRODUCING

THE CARAVAN

APP!





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

Hello,

I have questions about your religion so I figured that I would reach out to the contact that is listed on your website. Hopefully I can hear a response to this email, as I find your religion to be fascinating. Please let me know what you think about the answers to these questions

1. Do the Free Baha'is have any gathering places that were built or maintained by Free Baha'is? It would be cool to know if there are any places that were built or maintained specifically as Free Baha'i gathering places. Also, do you have any world headquarters or something of that nature?
2. How do you view the other denominations of Baha'is such as the Unitarian Baha'is who followed Mirza Muhammad Ali when he split with Abdul Baha?

3. What are your sources that show that Shoghi Effendi was not chosen by Abdul Baha?

4. Is there any major difference between the Kitab-i-Aqdas or other Holy books (I don't know if there are any others) that you use, in comparison to the Haifan Baha'is? If there is a different version, where could I find it?

5. I know that one of the semi-controversial beliefs among Haifan Baha'is are their beliefs about sexuality and LGBTQ issues. Are the Free Baha'is are more accepting, and if so What sections/writings/lines of the Kitab-i-Aqdas are these beliefs are based on?

6. How many Free Baha'is are there today? Do you have any estimates or a count?

7. Is there a place I could go to to ask more about the Free Baha'i faith and get more in depth answers?

8. Is there any major difference between the Free Baha'is and the Reform Baha'is and are you the same or similar to them?

I hope that I can hear from you soon, as I am fascinated by the different denominations of the Baha'i faith. I hope for the best for you, and I hope that I can learn about your religion.

Answer:

Dear Axel,

Allah'u'Abha!

Thank you for reaching out with such a sincere and respectful set of questions. It's always a joy to connect with those who are genuinely curious about the teachings of Baha'u'llah and the diversity of thought that has emerged within the Baha'i world. I'd be happy to answer your questions to the best of my understanding as a follower of the Free Baha'i Faith.

1. Do the Free Baha'is have any gathering places that were built or maintained by Free Baha'is? Do you have any world headquarters?

At present, Free Baha'is gather in homes, community centers, or even outdoor spaces, in a very organic and grassroots manner. We believe that spirituality does not require grand architecture or ornate buildings—it only requires sincerity of heart. That said, there are no official "Free Baha'i temples" as of now, nor do we have a central headquarters like the Haifan Baha'is. Our movement is decentralized, which allows each community to flourish independently while being guided by the writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha.

2. How do you view the other denominations of Bahá'is such as the Unitarian Bahá'is who followed Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí?

We approach all Baha'is—with different interpretations or affiliations—with respect and humility. The split between Abdu'l Baha and Mírzá Muhammad 'Alí is a sensitive part of Baha'i history. While we don't follow the Unitarian Baha'is, we understand their position emerged from genuine theological concerns. Our focus remains on unity through the original teachings of Baha'u'llah and the inclusive vision that He and Abdu'l Baha laid out. We do not believe in excommunicating or condemning anyone for having differing interpretations.

3. What are your sources that show that Shoghi Effendi was not chosen by Abdu'l Baha?

This is one of the central differences in our belief. The Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha, which appoints Shoghi Effendi as Guardian, has been a point of much debate. Free Baha'is believe this document was added posthumously and does not reflect the spirit of Abdu'l Baha's teachings, especially his consistent emphasis on the abolition of a clergy class. Moreover, there is no mention of Shoghi Effendi in Baha'u'llah's writings or during Abdu'l Baha's lifetime in a context that would prepare the community for such a successor. These discrepancies lead us to question the authenticity and spiritual necessity of the Guardianship as introduced later.

4. Are there differences in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas or other holy books between you and the Haifan Baha'is?

We accept the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and all authenticated writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha as central to our practice. The texts themselves are the same; however, our interpretation differs. We read these writings free from the influence of administrative

interpretations or official bodies. We encourage every individual to engage directly with the Holy Writings and find meaning in them, rather than being told how to interpret them. We are cautious about placing too much emphasis on post-Baha'u'llah literature, especially where it introduces structures or ideas not rooted in the original teachings.

5. Are Free Baha'is more accepting of LGBTQ individuals, and if so, what is that based on?

As Free Baha'is, we take our guidance directly from the writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha. Since neither of them made explicit statements regarding LGBTQ individuals or issues of sexuality, we too refrain from making definitive pronouncements—either for or against. In matters where the Founders of our Faith have chosen silence, we believe it is not our place to interpret or legislate. We focus instead on the broader principles that are clearly emphasized in the teachings: love, compassion, unity, and the inherent nobility of every human being. Our communities are encouraged to treat all individuals with dignity and respect, regardless of background or identity, and to avoid judgment in areas where divine guidance has not been clearly given.

6. How many Free Baha'is are there today? Do you have any estimates?

Since we are a decentralized movement and do not maintain membership rolls or administrative bodies, it's difficult to provide an exact count. Free Baha'is can be found in various parts of the world, including India, the United States, Canada, Germany, Singapore, the Middle East, and beyond. Many of us practice quietly or in small groups. Some come from mainstream Baha'i backgrounds and find solace in the unfiltered teachings of Baha'u'llah, free from the pressures of organizational control.

7. Where can I learn more or ask in-depth questions about the Free Baha'i Faith?

You are always welcome to reach out through our website <https://freebahais.org>, which contains a variety of articles, booklets, and even historical documents. You can also send more questions to the same contact email. Some Free Baha'is are happy to correspond personally to have more meaningful dialogues. We also release an online magazine that discusses faith-based reflections, historical insights, and community experiences.

8. Is there any major difference between the Free Baha'is and Reform Baha'is? Are you the same or similar?

We share some similarities with Reform Baha'is, particularly in questioning the centralized administrative structure. However, the Free Baha'is focus more explicitly on following only the original teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, without reliance on any clergy, appointed body, or self-declared leadership. While Reform Baha'is might retain some administrative elements or develop new ones, we advocate for a community centered solely around personal spiritual development, service, and authentic scripture.

Once again, thank you for your thoughtful inquiry. The Baha'i Faith is a beautiful and transformative path, and we're always open to conversations that are grounded in sincerity and a spirit of discovery.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have more questions.

Thanks and regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Email 2:

If faith is about connection with God, then why Kitab-i-Aqdas say to pay fine in gold for something like adultery? I don't understand how this help in spiritual way? I feel little confused.

Answer:

Dear Friend,

Thank you for this heartfelt and sincere question. Many people feel this way when they first come across certain laws in the Kitab-i-Aqdas, especially when it mentions things like fines or gold payments. Let us help clear your confusion with love.

Baha'u'llah's Faith is deeply spiritual – about our connection with God, about purity of heart, and walking the path of truth. But He also gave us guidance for living peacefully in society, with justice and accountability.

In the Kitab-i-Aqdas, it is written:

"God has commanded that every adulterer and adultress pay a fine (diya – blood money) to the House of Justice. The sum is nine mithqals of gold. For the second offence double the punishment. This is what the Possessor of Names commanded for this world, and for the world to come a degrading punishment has been destined for them. Whoever is overcome by a sin, let him repent and turn back to God. He, indeed, forgives whom He wills and He is not to be questioned about what He wills. He is the Relenting, the Powerful, the Praised."

Now remember – this is not about punishment. Baha'u'llah is reminding us: actions have consequences. The fine is a symbolic act of responsibility, a way for the person to acknowledge their mistake before God and society.

As Free Baha'is, we believe that this fine is not meant to fill the pockets of any religious administration. It is not for the UHJ or for the clergy – because Baha'u'llah abolished the clergy. Instead, this money is to be used for the service of humanity – for education, for care of the poor, for healing and rebuilding lives. This is in the true spirit of "House of Justice" – to bring justice and upliftment, not power or control.

So, when someone pays this fine, it's not just a penalty – it becomes an offering to help society. Their mistake becomes a reason for healing, not only for themselves but also for others.

Baha'u'llah also says that God forgives – He is the Merciful, the Relenting. If someone turns back to God with a pure heart, they are embraced by His love. That is the ultimate goal.

In the Free Baha'i path, everything is about love, truth, and human betterment – not blind obedience. Even laws are meant to help the soul grow and help society progress.

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 3:

Question:

Hola... I am following the Free Baha'i teachings because I feel they are more close to the love and peace Baha'u'llah wanted. But still, I see the world is in wars, people hating each other... Even some Baha'is fight over who is right or wrong. Why is there so much division and bloodshed if the message of Baha'u'llah and the Master was for unity? Sometimes I ask myself, is the Cause really working?

Answer:

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your heartfelt question—and we can feel the sincerity behind your words. It's true, and painful, to witness the suffering in the world today. You're right to wonder why there is still so much division, even among people who claim to follow a faith based on unity and love.

But this concern is not new. Abdu'l Baha, the beloved Master, spoke with deep sorrow about the state of the world. He said:

"The world is at war and the human race is in travail and mortal combat. The dark night of hate hath taken over, and the light of good faith is blotted out... It is thousands of households that are vagrant and dispossessed... The tents of life and joy are down... On such things do men pride themselves, in such do they glory! Love—righteousness—these are everywhere censured..."

These words reflect not only His pain but also His truthful vision of the times we live in. The world suffers because spiritual teachings are being politicized or turned into institutions of power. Even within the Baha'i community, many have turned faith into formality—into

rules, membership cards, and authority—rather than a living, breathing connection with God and with humanity.

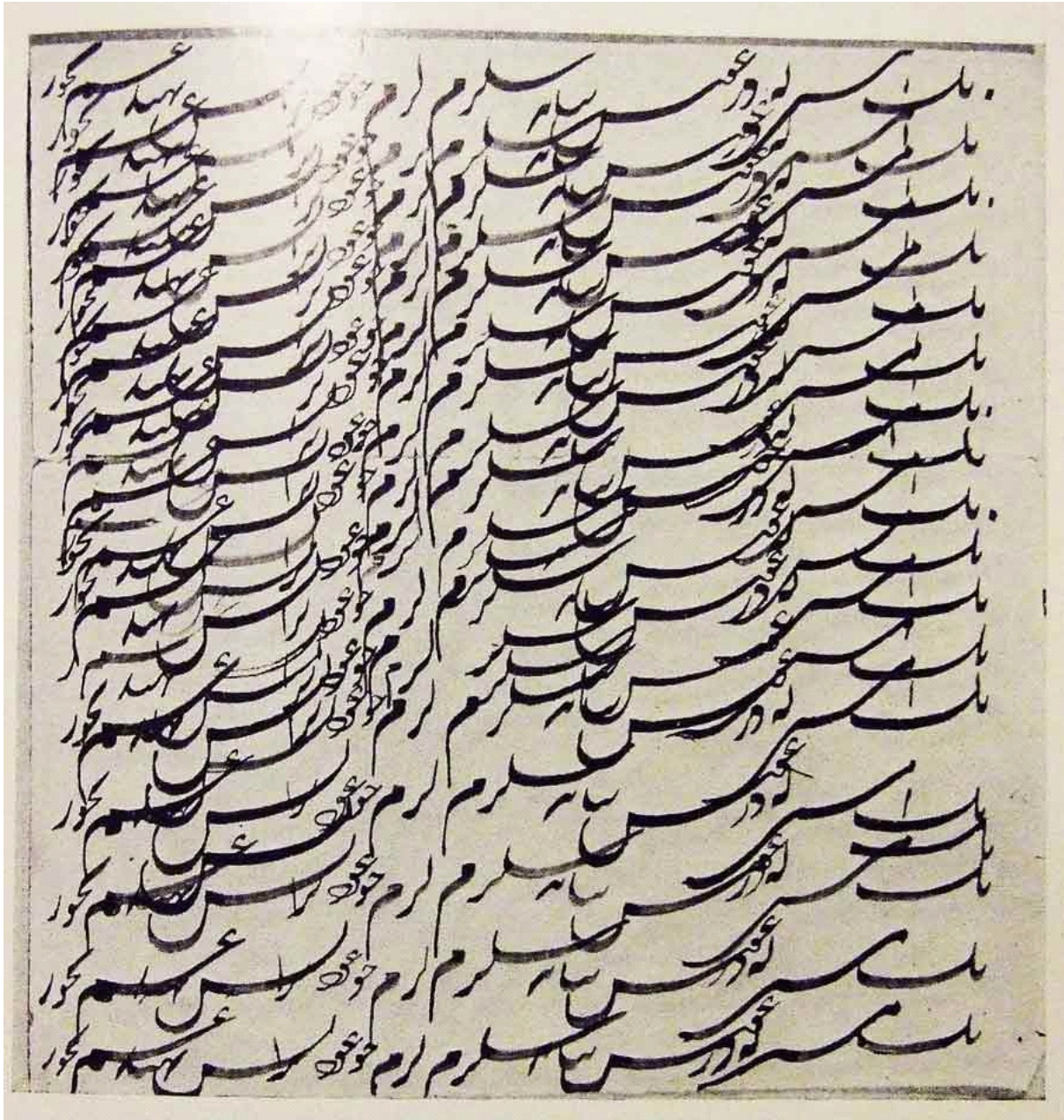
That's why Free Baha'is are choosing to walk the original path—where faith comes from the heart, not from signatures; where no one is cast out for asking questions; and where unity means inclusion, not control.

So yes, the world is hurting—but the Cause is working, through those who live the teachings of Baha'u'llah with love, sincerity, and open arms. You are already part of that light, and we're grateful to walk this path with you.

Warm regards,

Team Free Baha'is

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



Calligraphic exercise of the Bab written before he was ten years old.



1925: A hotel near Mt. Carmel in Haifa for the American visitors on Baha'i pilgrimage

“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 ?

Being a Baha'i Means Loving All Humanity

When asked, "What is a Baha'i?" Abdu'l Baha responded: "To be a Baha'i simply means to love all the world; to love humanity and try to serve it; to work for universal peace and universal brotherhood." (as mentioned by Mirza Ahmad Sohrab in his book *Abdu'l Baha's Grandson: Story of a Twentieth Century Excommunication*).

This profound statement emphasizes that being a Baha'i is not about abandoning one's previous religious identity but about embracing a broader, more inclusive love for all humanity. It aligns with the Baha'i principle of the oneness of religion, recognizing that all major world religions come from the same divine source and are part of a progressive revelation.

In this light, identifying as a Baha'i while maintaining one's cultural or religious heritage—be it Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, or otherwise—is seen as harmonious with the teachings of Baha'u'llah. The focus is on unity, love, and service to humanity, transcending individual religious labels.

This inclusive approach resonates deeply with the Free Baha'i perspective, which emphasizes the original teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, free from institutional constraints. It encourages individuals to connect with the divine through love and service, fostering a global community

united in the pursuit of peace and understanding.

So, whether you identify as a Baha'i, Hindu, Christian, Buddhist, or any other faith, embracing the core Baha'i principles of love, unity, and service contributes to the betterment of the world and aligns with the true spirit of the Baha'i teachings.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

The New History Society in Korea

On August 5th, 1934, Mr. Kim Pyeng Choon gave a dinner party at his house in Pyeng Yang, Korea. Fourteen guests had been invited and at the same time provided with the literature of The New History Society, for the purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways and means of working for a United States of the World and a Universal Religion.

How fascinating the conversation must have been to those who had the privilege of being there! For us, however, it is enough to keep the picture of that little dinner party illumined in the galleries of our memories, for that occasion marked the founding of the First Branch of The New History Society in Asia.

We quote here from a letter lately received from Mr. Kim Pyeng Choon: "I have come, last night, from a trip through China. I wanted to get in touch with the new educational and religious movement of the Chinese. I spent days in Shanghai, Soochow, Tsingtao, Peiping and Tientsin. I also travelled through Manchuria. Now I will be able to do my best work for The New History Society from Pyeng Yang, my home town.

"I have received all the books, leaflets and pamphlets that you have sent me. From this evidence, I see that you are interested in the Branch of New History Society in Pyeng Yang. This morning, I opened my office for this work and placed the sign on the door. I wrote the sign in two ways, one in English and one in Japanese. I want to show you the sign in Japanese and in English. 'The Korean Branch of the New History Society of New York.'

"I put two desks and four chairs in my office and I began my work. I will interview some influential Korean friends to interest them in the aims of our Society. Few here can read and understand English—so we must translate the necessary literature in Korean language, so that the people may know our ideals."

Our brother of Korea! You have planted a mighty seed in your fertile garden—a seed that can multiply into thousands, producing harvests of reconciliation and amity, of knowledge and progress, of prosperity and joy, and of Peace for the East and for the West.

We congratulate the pioneers of a New History in Korea! —The Editor.

Reference: New History Magazine, Volume 4, Number II, Nov. 1934

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."

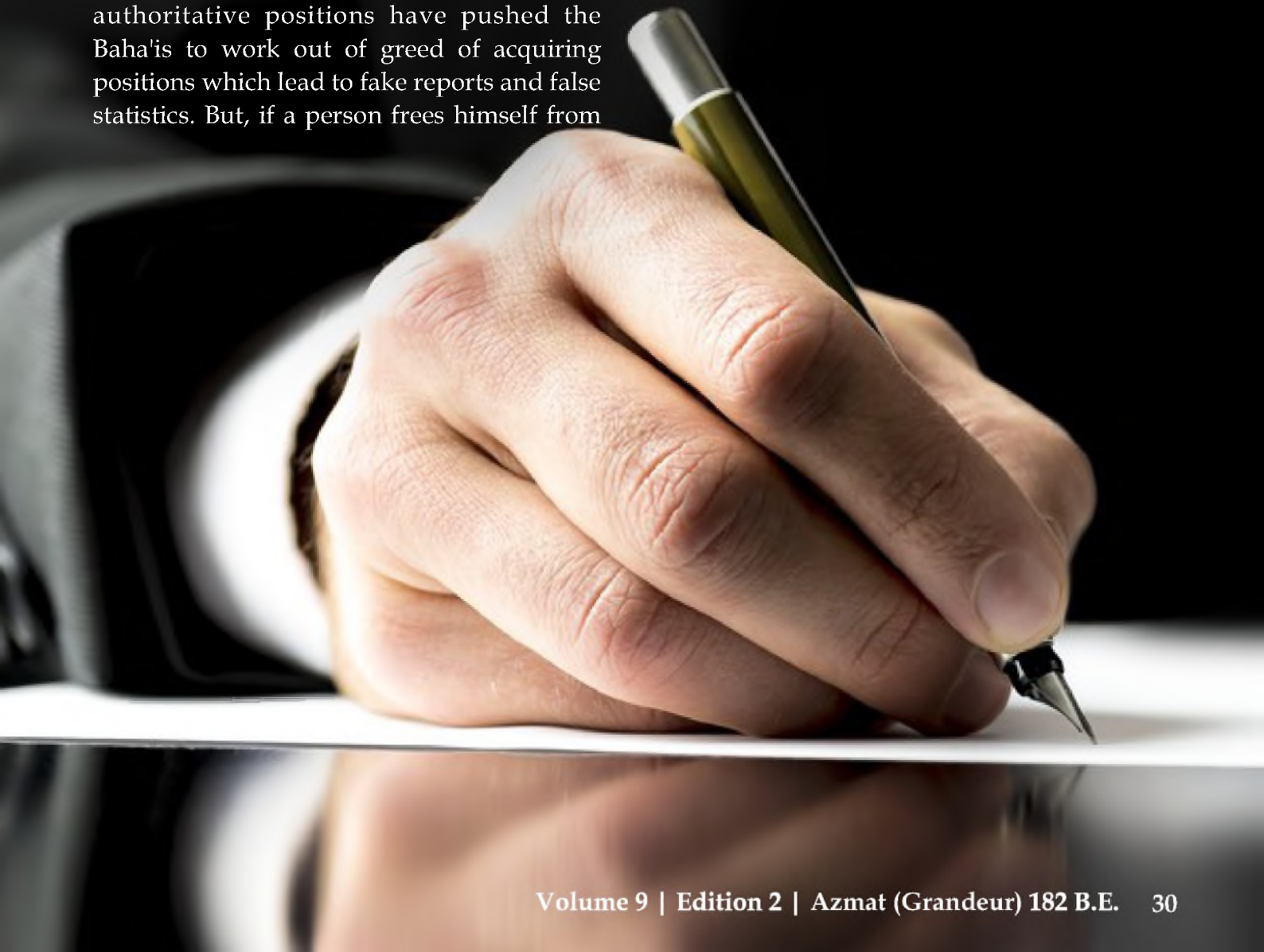
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

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



1920: The first Baha'i National Convention, held on the lawns of Bombay University's Fort campus. From left, the multi-lingual Siyyid Mustafa Rumi (fifth), who accompanied Baha'i teacher Jamal Effendi on his tours; Narayan Rao Shethji Vakil (eighth), and just behind him, Pritam Singh, the first Sikh to become a Baha'i.

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