

# THE CARAVAN

Ruhi vs Revelation  
The System That  
Replaced the Spirit

Article Inside

Crisis of Faith  
Numbers Down.  
Spirit Lost.

Article Inside



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# PRAYER



As this physical frame is the throne of the inner temple, whatever occurs to the former is felt by the latter. In reality that which takes delight in joy or is saddened by pain is the inner temple of the body, not the body itself. Since this physical body is the throne whereon the inner temple is established, God hath ordained that the body be preserved to the extent possible, so that nothing that causeth repugnance may be experienced. The inner temple beholdeth its physical frame, which is its throne. Thus, if the latter is accorded respect, it is as if the former is the recipient. The converse is likewise true.

Therefore, it hath been ordained that the dead body should be treated with the utmost honor and respect.

**- The Bab**

# FOREWORD

*“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*

Dear readers,

Allah’u’Abha!

As we step into the sacred month of Kalimat, our hearts are turned once again toward the extraordinary figure of the Báb, whose life, teachings, and ultimate sacrifice shaped the foundation of a new spiritual era. This month, we mark His martyrdom on July 9th, a day etched in the soul of every true Baha’i - not as one of mourning, but of remembrance, courage, and divine calling. It is a time when we are reminded of what it means to stand firm for truth, even when the world turns

hostile.

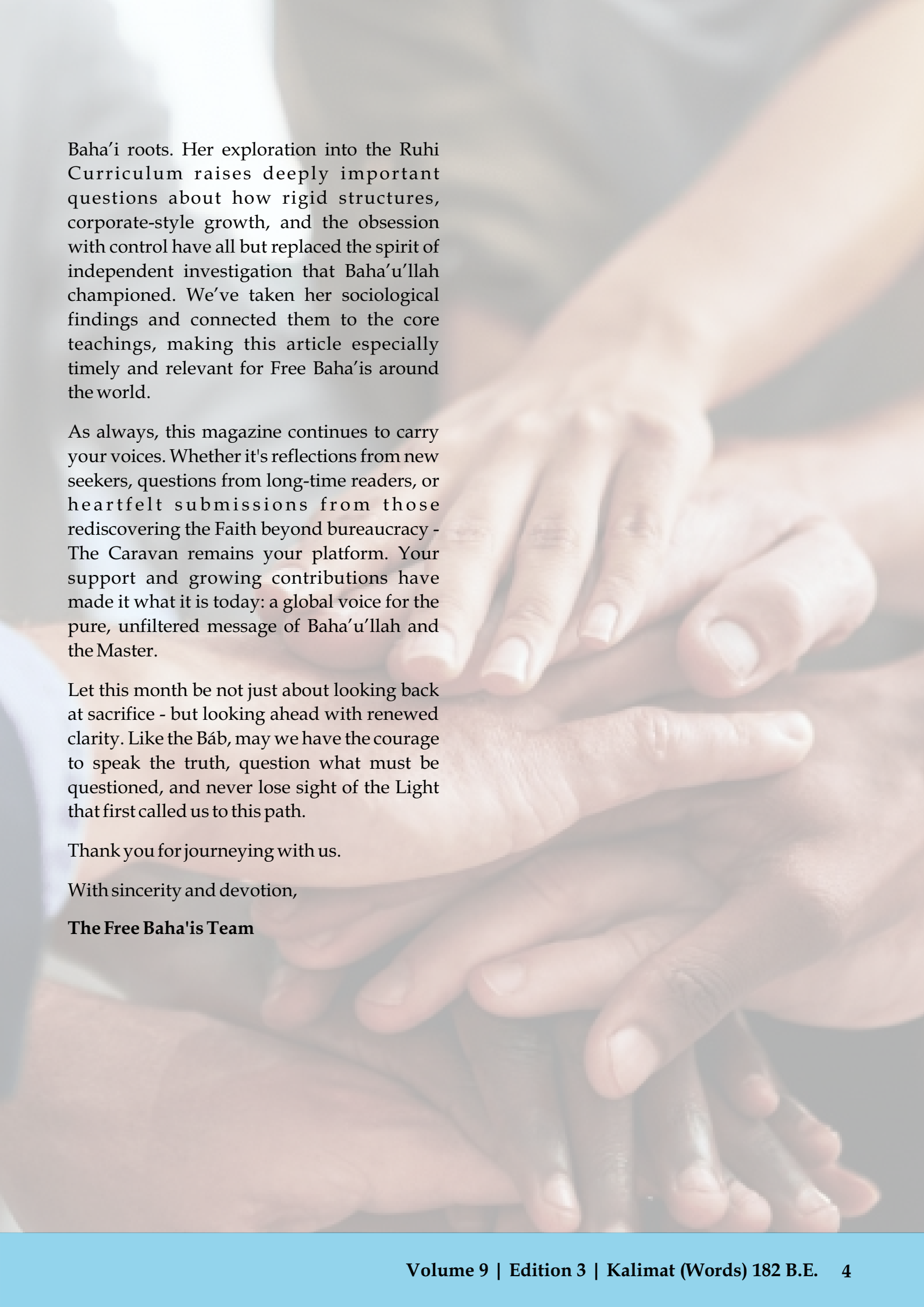
It is only fitting, then, that this edition of The Caravan carries forward the same spirit of truth-seeking and moral courage.

We are honored to feature two groundbreaking guest articles that have stirred thoughtful conversations across our community:

**A Crisis in Numbers and Spirit - An unflinching breakdown of the 2025 Ridvan Report released by the U.S. Baha’i Administration.** This piece offers readers a reality check - behind the polished statistics and glossy words lies a troubling picture of decline, disconnection, and administrative overreach. Numbers don’t lie, but they do reveal how far we’ve drifted from the soul of the Faith. A must-read for anyone concerned about the current direction of the Haifan administration.

**Ruhi Over Revelation – A powerful analysis inspired by the academic work of Dr. Farida Fozdar, an independent sociologist with**





Baha'i roots. Her exploration into the Ruhi Curriculum raises deeply important questions about how rigid structures, corporate-style growth, and the obsession with control have all but replaced the spirit of independent investigation that Baha'u'llah championed. We've taken her sociological findings and connected them to the core teachings, making this article especially timely and relevant for Free Baha'is around the world.

As always, this magazine continues to carry your voices. Whether it's reflections from new seekers, questions from long-time readers, or heartfelt submissions from those rediscovering the Faith beyond bureaucracy - The Caravan remains your platform. Your support and growing contributions have made it what it is today: a global voice for the pure, unfiltered message of Baha'u'llah and the Master.

Let this month be not just about looking back at sacrifice - but looking ahead with renewed clarity. Like the Báb, may we have the courage to speak the truth, question what must be questioned, and never lose sight of the Light that first called us to this path.

Thank you for journeying with us.

With sincerity and devotion,

**The Free Baha'is Team**

# THE COMPLINE



Between us, there are one hundred one  
umber haints in our home.

In bed, we discuss  
our future, our children woven in myrrh, sitting

in some tomorrow, waiting for us to join & give them our science  
so they can live.

I tell her what I fear: I'll walk into fogged, writhen woods & die  
when our babies are too young to carry my baritone with them.

I'll become  
the almost-stranger

they hear their mother's prayers paint the night sky for.  
The Lord giveth & The Lord taketh parents every day.

Love is no shield against His mighty ginger hand or will.  
Even language passes away.

Even the bouquet of vowels & syllables collected  
each year can be swept from the scaly floor of the tongue.

All stories end in death  
if we are honest with ourselves & how the world works.

If I am being honest,  
when I, eventually, hear my love sleeping by my side,  
  
I eye the gloom, whisper to God, ask that He spare me  
the escape, the emptying out of the marigold light,  
  
for many years. I ask that, when it finally comes, I not go before  
I know all I've set my heart upon will live on well without me.  
  
I ask Him to forgive my selfish maw for having the nerve  
to call out His name & flood His holy ear with the word more.

-- Christian J. Collier



# 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)

# RUHI OVER REVELATION? A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPOSE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HIJACKING

The Haifan Baha'i Administration has made great strides in assuring the Haifan world that the Ruhi Curriculum is a spiritual and educational unifier. However, beneath the specifically simplified booklets and administered study circles is something more nefarious; it aims to homogenize a dynamic and universal religion into a mechanical administrative program. For Free Baha'is who claim their allegiance to the pristine teachings of Baha'u'llah and the central premise of independent investigation of truth, Ruhi represents everything we stand against.

Sociologist Farida Fozdar, (the daughter of Minoo Fozdar, the 3rd brother of John & Jamshid Fozdar), who has defined Baha'i heritage, has written a powerful assessment of the Ruhi process, not as heresy, but from a sociological and humanistic perspective. Below are the key takeaways from her article and the reasons all Baha'is need to deep reflect on them. Yes, I mean it – ALL Baha'is.

## **1. Ruhi Has become “the” Religion**

A tradition which was originally reflective of scripture, personal transformation and inner process has now become a rigidly generalized course. Fozdar notes that 'essentially Ruhi has become the religion' with other members feeling they must follow the same narrowly avoided study books to count as Baha'is – “active” Baha'is.

This is deeply problematic. It not only lowers spiritual depth and nuances of personal engagement, but it also brings hierarchy into this once egalitarian society, with status associated with the completion of their Ruhi books. We as Free Baha'is, ask - Is Baha'u'llah's message so superficial that it can only be understood through a nine-book crash course?

## **2. It takes down the principle of “Independent Investigation of Truth”**

Ruhi imposes a unified version of Baha'i teachings, undermining independent investigation. The books minimize the sacred texts to phrases, brief-excerpts, or fill-in-the-blank questions. These phrases are often





stripped of their context.

Farida Fozdar observes that this “contradicts the Baha’i emphasis on diversity” and establishes an “elite” class of Ruhi-affiliated Baha’is at the expense of others who may be genuinely spiritual while choosing to engage with the original Writings without filtering through own version of the Writings.

### **3. It is a cultural misfit**

The reality is, as Fozdar observes, that the Ruhi curriculum is based on the unwritten educational expectations of rural Colombia, namely - there is an expectation of high uncertainty avoidance, low individualism and group conformity. And Ruhi was then transported around the globe, including the United States, which has an opposite set of cultural values: independent, diversity, and skepticism of hierarchy.

Thus, many Western Baha’is - especially young people - feel a sense of alienation and disengagement. It is no wonder the Faith fails to attract new generations (you can refer the

2025 Ridvan Report released by the NSA of the Baha'is of the United States). Which clearly means - it's NOT the message from Baha'u'llah they are rejecting; it is THE administrative machinery.

### **4. From Spirit to System: The ‘McDonaldization’ of Faith**

Ruhi exemplifies what sociologist George Ritzer uses the term “McDonaldization” to describe, a devotion to efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. According to Fozdar, Ruhi uses the language of corporate management as well, measuring growth in books completed, service hours, and the number of study circles, and is treating spiritual growth as if it were a business KPI that they were tracking.

This fixation on quantification is seen in Ridvan Reports, where progress is quantified via the number of “clusters” that have achieved “stage three” Besides, how many hearts have been touched? How many souls have awakened? That’s not a question they would ever think to ask.

## 5. Suppressing Dissent and Silencing Thought

Criticism of the Ruhi Curriculum is not welcomed within the fold of Haifa, as Fozdar notes. He finds that there is no real critical discussion of Ruhi in Baha'i publications. Those who have expressed concern about these materials have been quietly labeled "covenant breakers" or "not deepened enough" to understand Ruhi.

There is irony, and danger, in that for a religion that teaches unity in diversity. The Free Baha'i spirit, however, promotes sincere questioning of the Writings, and believes in the values of reasoning and discovery, we are not here simply to obey, but to discover truth with an open heart.

## 6. Exclusion by Means of Standardization

In establishing a system of spiritual paths, the Ruhi sequence excludes others. Those who do not complete the avenue of study are not allowed to serve in several ways, some significant. In doing this, there is a caste system based on the completion of curriculum, not spiritual maturity.

Whatever happened to the inclusivity that Baha'u'llah aspired to? When you are locked out of service due to lack of a certificate the message is clear: you are not enough unless you conform.

## 7. Globalization as Control, Not Expansion

Ruhi was initially designed to educate the Iranian Baha'i diaspora after the 1979 revolution, many of whom were nominal Baha'is lacking deep knowledge. While that purpose was understandable, its global rollout has turned the Faith into a homogenized, one-size-fits-all structure, stifling local culture and diversity of thought.

As Fozdar points out, this is not

indigenization but enforced conformity. The global Baha'i Faith, instead of flourishing organically, is being pruned to fit administrative designs.

## 8. Ruhi is NOT growing

The ultimate irony is that despite the control and the systemization, Ruhi has not helped foster significant growth. Fozdar states "a difficult, perhaps impossible, task, has been to access figures for the number of Baha'is worldwide," and even the official statistics are mum on how many former Baha'is there are, or how many remain inactive.

Is Ruhi really promoting the growth of Faith? Or does it just give the illusion of growth while the very soul of the community slips quietly away?

## Final Thoughts: The Free Baha'i Path

We are Free Baha'is because we are convinced the Baha'u'llah's message is not something to be wrapped up in manuals and seminars. Faith is not a bureaucracy. It is love. It is truth. It is the courage to ask and the humility to grow.

We, the Free Baha'is, are taking a different path. The path of the heart, the path of the writings, the path of the eternal torch of individual search. Let us walk together, not in unison, but in unity.

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Robe worn by the Bab

# A CRISIS IN NUMBERS AND SPIRIT – THE ADMINISTRATION’S FAILURE LAID BARE

The 2025 Ridvan Report released by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States looks celebratory at first glance. Pages and pages of professional language, statistics, and institutional initiatives are meant to give you the impression of strength and success. However, read the fine print, and you see a different story---a story of stagnation, exclusion, and disconnection from the spirit of Baha'u'llah and the original message. Let's explore the real message behind statistics and language.

## **The Decline of the Faith: A Crisis Created by the Administration**

The report indicates that 260 believers have chosen to disengage from the Faith, and 464 people died. That means over 700 people were lost to the community in one year, with only 396 new believers. The total number of declared Baha'ís in the U.S. stands at just 15,200, spread thinly across a vast population. Most of those new arrivals likely arrived due to family or birth-born Baha'ís, meaning they are likely not new, or they

joined via outreach. Excluding reinstatements and returns, the data shows a glacial hemorrhaging of membership.

Despite billions of dollars being spent globally for decades, there are now 25,832, out of 32,625, localities without Baha'ís in the U.S. – a staggering 79% of U.S. localities have NO active Baha'i community whatsoever. This shows a deep Administration failure in outreach and retention. This is nowhere near the community building. This is decline.

## **Youth: Missing in Action**

The Ridvan report really makes effort to boast the successes of youth programs that were put into place- junior youth camps, summer activities, institute events, etc., but admits the harsh reality between the lines. For instance, the Wilmette Temple, the largest Baha'i institution in North America, only launched youth service initiative this year. Why? Because young people don't care. The numbers say it all. In the entire country, only 125 youth declared this year, and just 26 junior youth became Baha'ís. A mere 4,374



# CRISIS

junior youth participated in programs – and most were not even Baha'is.

Young people are seekers of truth. The desire for justice, for sincerity, for independence in their search for faith. In exchange they find an inflexible administrative structure based on bureaucracy and fear of questioning. Ruhi books don't motivate them. Declaration cards don't liberate them. The Free Baha'is, who don't control the bylaws, continue to receive more and more inquiries from disenfranchised youth.

## **The False Refuge of Institutionalism**

The paper consistently speaks of "havens of peace," implying that study circles and children's classes are the sole solution to the suffering of humanity. Meanwhile, 79% of the country has no local Baha'i presence. This is not addressed at all; there is no reflection given on why the Faith has not spread organically, no mention of spiritual transformation, just institutionally managed participants. Each completed, and celebrated, Ruhi book (6,229 this year) holds

no symbolism; there are no indications provided to answer the more significant question: are souls transforming? Where are the personal accounts of individuals who are finding peace, service, or a relationship with God through this ceremonial bureaucracy? There are none. It's all output, no outcome. In fact, the Baha'i Faith boasted 58,921 devotional participants, yet doesn't say how many were actual Baha'is. These programs increasingly serve as numbers-padding rather than soul-nourishment.

## **The Financial Empire Built on Faith**

The report clarifies, \$3.3 million has been given to the International Fund, and \$39.5 million to the Shrine of Abdu'l Baha from the U.S. only. Meanwhile, the Faith's total assets ballooned to over \$181.7 million, and yet local communities struggle with relevance and visibility. Yet, while the money flows, the hearts are fleeing. How is it that a dwindling community is putting tens of millions into construction and development projects, while local assemblies are unable to attract people to the core teachings of Baha'u'llah?



Are we building the Kingdom of God, or just building kingdoms of glass and concrete?

## **The Ruhi Curriculum – A Symptom of Control**

The Ridvan Report exalts “advancement in clusters” and “programs of growth,” but these phrases are only thinly veiled euphemisms for systematic indoctrination through the Ruhi Institute. It’s all one and the same, complete with a lack of depth for the sake of duplicity.

Even the Wilmette Institute, which pretends it is an educational setting, is co-opting Baha'i theology to have propagandized graduates with the institutional vision of the Baha'i Faith. Evidence of co-opting is that Wilmette instructs its graduates to go back into the community and "revise your approach and reflect"-reflect on what? Not with regard to the authentic Writings of Baha'u'llah. There is no focus on personal investigation, nor critique of the actual status quo.

## **What the Free Baha’i Community Sees**

The Free Baha'i movement sees through this veil. We see the administration drifting away from the true essence of faith. We see meetings full of statistics, without spirit. We see youth walking out, not because they don't love Baha'u'llah, but because they no longer recognize him in what the UHJ has become.

Baha'u'llah warned about religious hierarchy and spiritual arrogance. And now, in this day, the Baha'i institutions look the same as the very clerical power structure they meant to replace.

## **A Call Back to the Core**

A total of 254 individuals withdrew from Faith, with 77 citing doctrinal or administrative concerns, and 32 officially converted to another religion. These are not rebels, they are seekers of truth. When you

move away from the original teachings of Baha’u’llah, people leave you – it is that obvious! The moment is here to reexamine: What did Baha'u'llah want? A religion that is directed by accountants, fund reports, and Ruhi completions? A world that fostered independent investigation, unity of hearts, and unconditional service.

Free Baha'is are not rebels. We are returners. We have returned to the original call of Baha'u'llah: the call not to control, but to liberate. The call is not to create kingdoms of paper, but communities of love. The call is not to sign cards, but to unlock hearts.

## **Conclusion: A House Divided**

The Ridvan 2025 Report reads like the desperate attempts of an empire losing its hold. Money is rising, but meaning is fading. Under Administration, the reports are thick, but the Faith is thin. Community-building has become code for control, and the “society-building power of the Faith” has been buried under administration speak.

We Free Baha'is offer another way. A better way. A return to Baha'u'llah – not to the institutions that now stand between Him and His followers.

Let the reader decide.







The Bab's signet ring



# 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)





# 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

# FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

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

As we reflect on the sacred month of Kalimát, dedicated to the Báb, we recall His courage, sacrifice, and revolutionary call for spiritual awakening that prepared the world for the advent of Baha’u’llah. In this spirit, Free Baha’is across the world have come together over the past two months to commemorate three momentous holy days – the Declaration of the Báb on 23 May, the Ascension of Baha’u’llah on 28 May, and the Martyrdom of the Báb on 9 July.

These commemorations weren’t held in grand auditoriums or vast institutions but in humble homes, peaceful gardens, and community parks – echoing the spirit of simplicity and truth that the Báb Himself embodied. Whether it was Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, or the United States, Free Baha’is marked these holy days not with administrative formalities, but with heartfelt devotions, readings from the Writings, and genuine community fellowship.

In Canada and the US, Free Baha’is have

witnessed increasing interest in the original teachings of Baha’u’llah, especially from friends who once identified with the mainstream Baha’i administration. Many have come forward to express disillusionment with how heavily the faith has been institutionalized – where emphasis on donation reports, statistical growth, and hierarchical management has often overshadowed the call for independent investigation of truth and universal fellowship.

In the Middle East, despite the complex environment, quiet gatherings continue to take place where believers reflect on the message of unity, equality, and justice that the Báb and Baha’u’llah brought to humanity. In Germany and Angola, youth groups are reviving study circles that focus on the original writings – not manuals or guidebooks, but the pure words revealed by the Manifestations themselves.

We are also pleased to see how Malaysia, one of the newest Free Baha’i communities, is blossoming. With the help of a pioneer from Thailand, several Baha’i families in Malaysia have begun organizing monthly devotions



and open study sessions focused solely on the writings of Baha'u'llah and 'Abdu'l-Bahá — free from administrative interference or declarations.

It is becoming increasingly clear that many Baha'is — especially youth and seekers — are growing distant from the institution-heavy structure of the current Baha'i administration. The overwhelming focus on financial contributions and reporting frameworks has left many questioning: Where is the soul of Faith?

And while the administration appears more concerned with budgets, buildings, and strategic growth metrics, the Free Baha'i community remains focused on what truly matters: service to humanity, the oneness of mankind, and living the teachings of Baha'u'llah in our daily lives.

There are no sign-up forms, declaration cards, or membership tallies among Free Baha'is.

What binds us is not an institution, but our love for Baha'u'llah and the Báb, our commitment to His teachings, and our shared desire to walk a path of spiritual integrity. This is what makes our community both resilient and welcoming.

As more and more individuals begin to ask the deeper questions and re-evaluate what it means to follow the Faith, we find ourselves at a hopeful crossroads — a moment to return to the spiritual essence of the Revelation, free from layers of interpretation and control.

With warm regards and best wishes,

**Team Free Baha'is**



# INSPIRING QUOTES



“Praised and glorified art Thou, O God! Grant that the day of attaining Thy holy presence may be fast approaching. Cheer our hearts through the potency of Thy love and good-pleasure and bestow upon us steadfastness that we may willingly submit to Thy Will and Thy Decree. Verily Thy knowledge embraceth all the things Thou hast created or wilt create, and Thy celestial might transcendeth whatsoever Thou hast called or wilt call into being. There is none to be worshipped but Thee, there is none to be desired except Thee, there is none to be adored besides Thee and there is naught to be loved save Thy good pleasure. Verily Thou art the supreme Ruler, the Sovereign Truth, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.”

— **The Bab**

“Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker’s heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.”

— **Baha’u’llah**

“Consider the flowers of a garden. Though differing in kind, color, form, and shape, yet, inasmuch as they are refreshed by the waters of one spring, revived by the breath of one wind, invigorated by the rays of one sun, this diversity increaseth their charm, and addeth unto their beauty. How unpleasing to the eye if all the flowers and plants, the leaves and blossoms, the fruits, the branches and the trees of that garden were all of the same shape and color! Diversity of hues, form and shape, enricheth and adorneth the garden, and heighteneth the effect thereof. In like manner, when divers shades of thought, temperament and character, are brought together under the power and influence of one central agency, the beauty and glory of human perfection will be revealed and made manifest. Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men.”

— **Abdu’l Baha**

# INTRODUCING *THE CARAVAN* APP!





# SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

## Email 1:

Hello,

My name is ZZZZZ ZZZZZ. I am a middle aged American ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher. I currently live and work in Poland, however, over the last 30 years, I have lived and worked all over the world.

I mention this because, by the will of God, I was led to investigate the Baha'i Faith in 1998-99. I travelled to Chiang Mai, Thailand in 1999 and met a deeply devout Iranian Baha'i family there. After a short time, I declared myself a member of the Baha'i faith and began studying, attending the local Baha'i Center and generally integrating myself into the Baha'i community of Chiang Mai. I was very happy.

However, in time I began to feel that beneath the smiles and kind words was...something else. Something cold, dark and controlling. Where I'd thought there was love, openness

and acceptance, I soon discovered legalism, intolerance and judgement. I eventually left Thailand and my spiritual search continued.

But, in the more than 25 years since that time, I've never forgotten the Baha'i Faith or the joy my soul experienced when I first came into contact with it.

By the will of God, I have recently begun looking into the Faith again. While reading a forum concerning former Baha'is who had left the faith, I discovered this group, the Free Baha'is. Glory to God! I feel like a prayer has been answered - a prayer I didn't even know I'd prayed.

If I may, I would like to humbly ask to be allowed to join this wonderful community. I have forgotten much, but I feel inspired to dive back into the deep spiritual waters of the TRUE Baha'i Faith once again.

Thank you so much for being here, and may



you be blessed as you continue to carry out God's work.

All the best,

ZZZZZ

**Answer:**

Dear ZZZZZ,

Allah'u'Abha!

Reading your heartfelt message truly moved us. Thank you for taking the time to share your spiritual journey - it's stories like yours that remind us of why the Free Baha'i Faith matters so deeply today.

It's no coincidence that you've found your way back to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh after all these years. As you rightly said, sometimes prayers are answered before we even realize we've spoken them. The fact that your soul still remembers the joy and light of the Faith after so long is a powerful sign of your sincere connection to the truth.

We're honored to welcome you to the Free Baha'i community — a space where the light of Bahá'u'lláh's original teachings is kept alive: free from institutional control, untouched by man-made hierarchy, and rooted in love, unity, and independent investigation of truth.

You are not alone in your experience. Many have felt the same spiritual disconnect within the organized Baha'i structure, and like you, they yearned for something more genuine, more divine. We believe the Free Baha'i Faith offers that — a return to the pure essence of the message without fear, control, or judgment.

We would love to have you be an active part of this growing movement. If you're open to it, we invite you to share your story in one of our upcoming Caravan magazine issues. Your journey will inspire others who may be going through the same doubts or spiritual trials.

Please let us know how we can support you further — whether it's with resources to deepen your knowledge, answering questions, or simply being in touch.

Welcome home, ZZZZZ. May this new beginning bring you peace, strength, and clarity in the path of Bahá'u'lláh.

With warm regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**



## Email 2:

I've been told there is only the UHJ can do the interpretation of the Writings, and that any personal understanding must agree with theirs and even the books that we read like Kitab-i-Iqaan or Kitab-i-Aqdas has to be read alongside a key that has been published by the Administration and obviously approved by the UHJ. But I have a question, which is that Baha'u'llah called for independent investigation of truth, and I feel like I ought to be able to interpret the Writings for myself. I'm confused. Who actually has the power to interpret?

### Answer:

Dear Friend,

This is a sincere and important question — and one that touches the very heart of the Baha'i Faith.

From the earliest days, the Faith of Baha'u'llah has stood firmly against the idea of clergy, centralized interpretation, or institutional control over spiritual understanding. The principle of Independent Investigation of Truth means that every soul is responsible for studying the Writings and arriving at their own understanding — not to rely blindly on others.

However, what we now witness is an unfortunate contradiction of this core principle. The current Baha'i Administration, particularly the Universal House of Justice (UHJ), has effectively positioned itself as the sole interpreter and guide — and anyone who questions or reads the Writings differently is often labeled as “misguided” or worse, a “covenant-breaker.”

But let us turn to the Writings themselves. Baha'u'llah explicitly warned against this very thing in Kitab-i-Aqdas:

“Whoever interprets what has been sent from the heaven of Revelation by taking it away from the evident meaning is one of those who have tampered with the highest Word of God and have suffered loss according to the Perspicuous Book.”

This powerful passage reveals that no one — individual or institution — has the right to reinterpret the words of Revelation in a way that departs from their clear, evident meaning. Any such manipulation or monopolization of interpretation is a grave error.

The Free Baha'is believe that every individual has the spiritual capacity and right to read, reflect, and understand the sacred texts. Our connection to God is personal, and no administration, no elected body, and no institution has the right to stand in the way of that sacred bond.

True unity comes not from uniformity in interpretation, but from shared love for Baha'u'llah and a collective spirit of truth-seeking and service. Let us reclaim that right — with humility, study, and sincerity — and remember that Baha'u'llah's message was never meant to be filtered through layers of bureaucracy.

In the path of truth and freedom,

**Team Free Baha'is**



### Email 3:

#### Question:

With all of the things happening around the world today - wars, injustice, poverty and natural disasters - I sometimes feel powerless and helpless. As a Bahai, what should we hold on to when it feels like nothing is in our control?

#### Answer:

Your feeling is deeply valid – and shared by many around the world today. It’s heartbreaking to witness innocent lives being lost, families displaced, and suffering multiplied day by day. In moments like these, the heart naturally cries out for relief, for justice, for peace. And this is exactly where the pure and powerful words of the Báb offer comfort and clarity:

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

This prayer is not just words – it is a lifeline. It reminds us that in the face of injustice, oppression, or calamity, we are not powerless, nor are we alone. While the world seems to spiral into deeper crises, we are assured that God’s power is above all. The recognition that “all are His servants” is both humbling and uplifting – it places tyrants, victims, leaders, and common folk all under the same divine command.

As Free Baha’is, we reflect on this prayer not just as a personal plea for help, but as a call to action. Trusting in God doesn't mean being passive. It means drawing strength from our faith to continue standing for truth, helping the oppressed, and being voices of justice – without ever giving in to despair.

This prayer teaches us surrender, but not

silence. It teaches us faith, but not inaction. It invites us to align our hearts with God's will and find courage in knowing that He is the true Remover of all difficulties – even if relief doesn’t come on our timeline.

In these dark times, let us hold fast to this radiant prayer and be reminded that praise belongs to God, even amidst chaos, and that His wisdom unfolds in ways we may not yet understand.

With solidarity and prayer,

**Team Free Baha'is**





# KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



**Brazier and samovar belonging to the Bab**

*“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 ?

**The first person to recognize the Bab – Mulla Husayn – only did so because he dared to ask questions and walk a path less traveled?**

It was the evening of 22 May 1844 when Mulla Husayn, a young scholar on a spiritual quest, approached the gate of Shiraz. He was not simply wandering — he was searching. His heart was restless, seeking the Promised One foretold in scriptures. As if led by destiny, he was met by a radiant young man in a green turban, who greeted him with remarkable affection and invited him to his home.

That stranger was none other than the Báb.

Through the night, the two engaged in deep conversation. Mulla Husayn, astonished by the Báb's insight and wisdom, found every sign he had hoped to recognize manifest before him. By morning, his search had ended: "O thou who art the first to believe in Me!" declared the Báb. "Verily I say, I am the Báb, the Gate of God..."



But what if Mulla Husayn had not questioned? What if he had accepted the world as it was, never dared to search? That historic declaration — the moment that launched a new religious dispensation — might never have happened the way it did.

As Free Baha'is, we uphold the principle of Independent Investigation of Truth. Mulla Husayn's story reminds us that true faith doesn't come from blind following or inherited belief — it comes from asking, searching, and being willing to walk alone if truth demands it.

Every seeker's path may be unfamiliar or even isolating. But, like Mulla Husayn, if we seek sincerely, we may just find ourselves at the doorstep of divine truth.

The path less travelled is often the path that leads to the light.

# BLAST FROM THE PAST

## On Thirst

There are certain souls whose thirst is never allayed, while others are satisfied with a single drop. A large vase has great capacity, but a small one is quickly filled. When Christ appeared, the Jews said: "We have sufficient water in our vases. We do not need the fountain of Christ. We have, in the course of our history, been blessed with many prophets; then shall we, who have tasted of the pure water from the hands of these divine Cup-bearers, turn to a new spring?"

Others however, blessed they were and glorious, drank deeply from the fountain of Christ, and yet continued thirsty. Baha-U-Llah has said:

"Though you drink all the seas of the earth, no trace of dampness should remain on your lips. The more the circle of your acquaintance widens, the greater must be the impetus of your search. Through this open attitude, you will become perfect; while a man whose cup is filled with a few drops will never become perfect."

Reference: New History Magazine, The Caravan at Home, April  
1933

# 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."

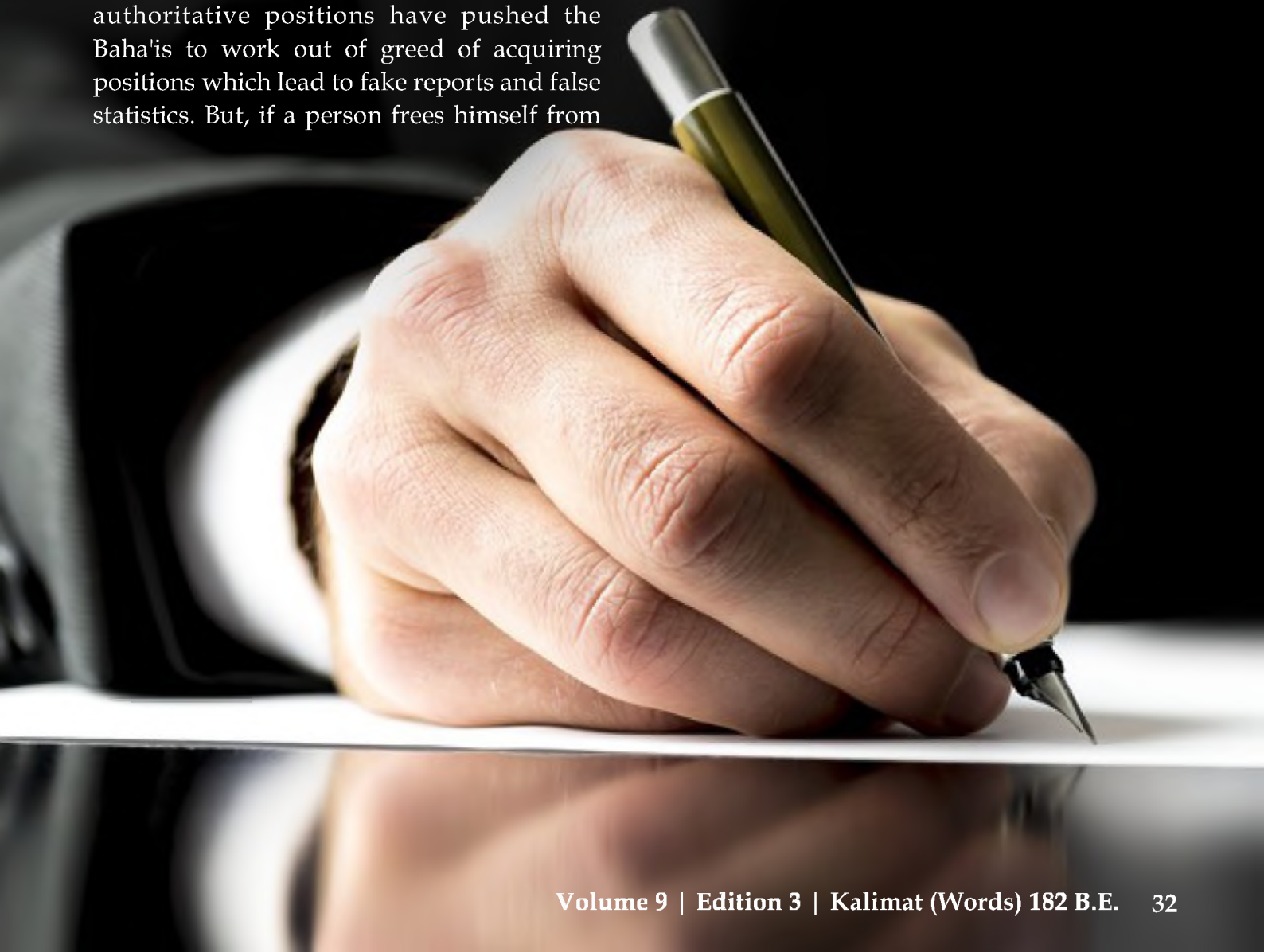
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

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



Close-up view of the Barracks Square in Tabriz where the Bab was martyred. Photos taken in the dead of winter of a later year.

# DISCLAIMER

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