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# THE CARAVAN



HUQUQU'LLAH:

DOING RIGHT BY THE RIGHT OF GOD: CALL TO CONSCIENCE  
– A BOLD SPIRITUAL REFLECTION

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## 04 PRAYERS

He Who is Thy Branch...

## 05 FOREWORD

## 07 HISTORICAL TRUTHS

1930: Twenty-three hundred Baha'is in attendance at the Naw-Ruz Feast in Tihran, Iran

## 08 POEM

Hope is the Thing with Feathers - *Emily Dickenson*

## 09 THE MOST HOLY LAWS

Exploring Bahá'u'lláh's law on adultery and repentance in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas.

## 10 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?

## 11 QUOTATION

Inspirational passages on detachment from the writings of The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, with reflections on Naw-Rúz by Abdu'l-Baha.

## 12 THROWBACK

1930: The House of Baha'u'llah in Baghdad after restoration

## 13 GUEST ARTICLE

Huququ'llah: Doing right by The Right of God: A Call to Conscience — a bold spiritual reflection.



## **16** THROWBACK

Exterior view of the House of the Bab.

## **17** WANT TO BE A CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE CARAVAN?

We welcome thoughtful voices and fresh perspectives.

## **18** FREE BAHA'I ACTIVITIES

A brief overview of Free Bahá'í gatherings and community activities around the world.

## **20** SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Thoughtful clarifications on questions submitted by readers.

## **24** BLAST FROM THE PAST

The Children's Caravan, January 1935

## **25** KNOW YOUR HERITAGE

The house of Baha'u'llah (right) and a photo of its entrance (left) in Tákur, northern Iran, destroyed by the government in 1981.

## **26** DECLARATIONS IN THE CAUSE

A statement outlining the Free Bahá'í understanding of service, conscience, and freedom from administrative authority.

## **27** INVESTIGATION OF REALITY

A passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá on the principle of independent investigation of truth.

## **28** THROWBACK

Abdu'l Baha at Temple Dedication Site

## **29** DID YOU KNOW?

A historical note on the introduction of organized Bahá'í funds after 1921.



# PRAYERS

## HE WHO IS THY BRANCH...

He Who is Thy Branch and all Thy company, O my Lord, have broken this day their fast, after having observed it within the precincts of Thy court, and in their eagerness to please Thee. Do Thou ordain for Him, and for them, and for all such as have entered Thy presence in those days all the good Thou didst destine in Thy Book. Supply them, then, with that which will profit them, in both this life and in the life beyond.

O Divine Providence! All existence is begotten by Thy bounty; deprive it not of the waters of Thy generosity, neither do Thou withhold it from the ocean of Thy mercy. I beseech Thee to aid and assist me at all times and under all conditions and seek from the heaven of Thy grace Thine ancient favor. Thou art, in truth, the Lord of bounty, and the Sovereign of the kingdom of eternity.

Thou, in truth, art the All-Knowing, the All-Wise.

- Baha'u'llah





# Foreword

Allah'u'Abha,

Dear friends and seekers of truth,

With the arrival of Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i New Year, we are reminded that renewal is not only a matter of time, but of truth, courage, and conscience. Naw-Ruz marks a turning point in the spiritual calendar, a moment when light overcomes stagnation and sincerity is renewed. It is in this spirit that we present this new volume of The Caravan.

This edition introduces a new recurring section that reflects a growing need within the Baha'i world: honesty and historical clarity. The new section, Historical Truths, looks directly at events and decisions that shaped the present condition of the Faith. Many believers sense that something has gone wrong but are never shown where or how the shift occurred. This section aims to bridge that gap by presenting facts plainly and without embellishment.

*“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*

This issue also carries a Guest Article on the topic of Huquq'ullah under the heading "Huquq'ullah: Doing Right by the Right of God – A Call to Conscience." Rather than treating Huquq'ullah as an institutional mechanism, the article re-examines it as a deeply personal spiritual trust, questioning how a sacred law revealed for purity and detachment has been transformed into a system of pressure, expectation, and unaccountable collection. It invites readers to pause, reflect, and reclaim conscience over compliance.

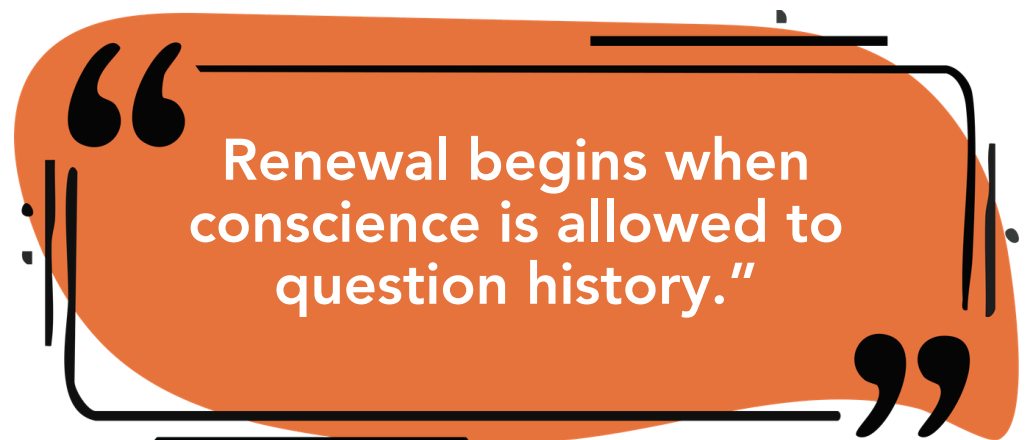
In our Did You Know? section, we highlight a pivotal but rarely discussed fact: the first organized system of compulsory funds did not originate with Baha'u'llah or Abdu'l Baha. It began after 1921, under Shoghi Effendi. This single shift continues to affect the spiritual life of Baha'is worldwide.

Finally, our Some Questions Answered section responds to sincere questions sent to the Free Baha'is team. This edition addresses religious laws from the Kitab-i-Aqdas, the true nature of Huquq'ullah, and difficult but necessary questions about the Administration itself. These are not abstract debates, but real concerns from believers seeking coherence between teachings and practice.

As we step into a new Baha'i year, we invite our readers to walk forward with openness, reflection, and independent investigation of truth. Naw-Ruz is not merely a celebration of beginnings, but an invitation to real renewal.

May this issue serve that purpose.  
With love and steadfast hope,

**The Free Baha'is Team**

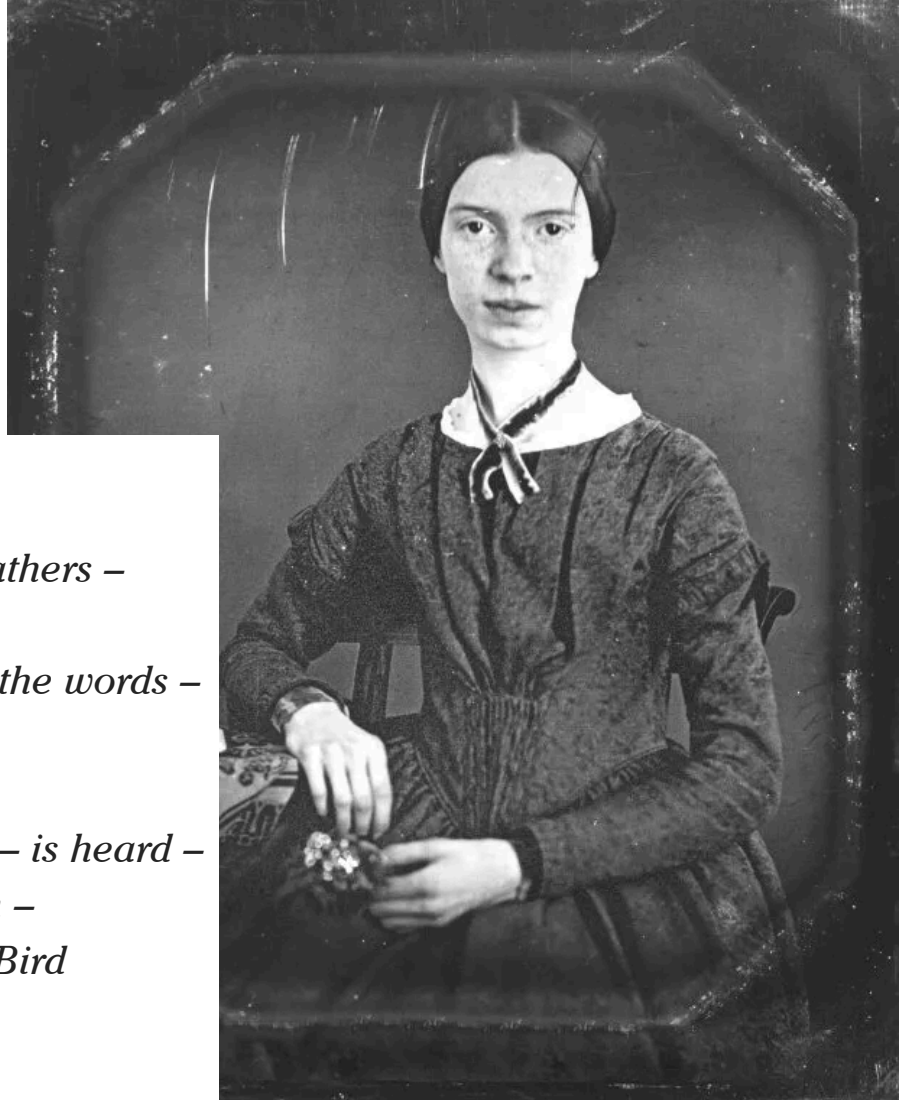


# HISTORICAL TRUTHS



1930: Twenty-three hundred Baha'is in attendance at the Naw-Ruz Feast in Tihran, Iran

# HOPE IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS



*“Hope” is the thing with feathers –  
That perches in the soul –  
And sings the tune without the words –  
And never stops – at all –*

*And sweetest – in the Gale – is heard –  
And sore must be the storm –  
That could abash the little Bird  
That kept so many warm –*

*I’ve heard it in the chillest land –  
And on the strangest Sea –  
Yet – never – in Extremity,  
It asked a crumb – of me.*

**Emily Dickinson**

# THE MOST HOLY LAWS

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

God has commanded that every adulterer and adulteress 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 has 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.

**Al-Kitab Al-Aqdas by Baha'u'llah, Translated from Arabic by Earl Elder & William Miller**



# CLERGY IN THE BAHÁ'Í CAUSE

*In answer to a question as to whether or not there would be any clergy in the Bahá'í 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

**Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913**

# QUOTATION

*“Rid thou thyself of all attachments to aught except God, enrich thyself in God by dispensing with all else besides Him, and recite this prayer:*

*Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth or in whatever lieth between them but God, thy Lord, sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.”*

## The Bab



*“Rid thou thyself of all attachments to aught except God, enrich thyself in God by dispensing with all else besides Him, and recite this prayer:*

*Say: God sufficeth all things above all things, and nothing in the heavens or in the earth or in whatever lieth between them but God, thy Lord, sufficeth. Verily, He is in Himself the Knower, the Sustainer, the Omnipotent.”*

## Baha’u’llah

*“I am extremely glad to see you on this Naw-Ruz occasion. This day is the anniversary of many historical events, among them the victory of the Persians over the Arabs who invaded Persia and were successfully repulsed. This day in Persia inaugurates a feast which continues for thirteen days and in which all take part, rich and poor alike. They adorn themselves with new clothes and their houses are open to all. Money is distributed, music is played and the houses are decorated with flowers, for it is a fete; work is put aside and enjoyment invited. Travelers in Persia feel this transformation, for the country is in a state of complete renewal. A town which seemed dead yesterday comes to life today. People who looked anxious yesterday, today have faces shining with gladness. The poor man of yesterday, with sordid garments, is well dressed today and the whole national life is infused with joy. From time immemorial this day has been consecrated, for in this there is a symbol. At this moment the sun appears at the meridian and the day and night are equal.”*

## Abdu’l Baha

# THROWBACK



1930: The House of Baha'u'llah in Baghdad after restoration

# HUQUQU'LLAH: DOING RIGHT BY THE RIGHT OF GOD: A CALL TO CONSCIENCE — A BOLD SPIRITUAL REFLECTION



There comes a point in one's spiritual life when quiet diplomacy becomes dishonesty. When soft words begin to feel like a veil over truths the heart already knows. And when conscience begins to rise like a tide, refusing to be hushed for the sake of courtesy.

This is where I find myself when I contemplate Huququ'llah.

For years, the Right of God was presented to me as a financial obligation — a sum calculated, extracted, and directed upward into the administrative arteries of the Faith. But the more I returned to the writings themselves, the more I found that the spiritual blood of this law flows in a different direction entirely.

Abdu'l Baha says:

*"The poor are the trust of God in your midst. Their right is the right of God."*

(Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 79)

Baha'u'llah commands:

*"O people of wealth! ... The poor in your midst are My trust; guard ye My trust, and be not intent only on your own ease."*

(Hidden Words (Arabic) no. 54)

There is nothing ambiguous here. God identifies His trust. And it is not the institutions. It is the poor.

The more I read, the more I realized that the Right of God and the right of the poor are not two duties — they are one truth in two forms. Two flames of the same fire. Two veins of the same spiritual law.

Then I came across this passage, and everything snapped into place:

*“The right of God is that His servants should assist the poor.”*

(Makátib-i-Ḥaḍrat-i-‘Abdu’l-Bahá, vol. 2, p. 136)

There it is. Clear. Blunt. Irreducible.

The Right of God is fulfilled through the poor.

Not through bureaucracy. Not through polished conference halls and administrative extravagance.

Not through the endless upward funneling of funds into structures increasingly disconnected from the actual pain of humanity. But rather through the poor.

If this is rebellion, then I embrace it. If this is audacity, then so be it. I refuse to betray the spirit of Baha’u’llah to appear obedient to those who have drifted from His compassion.

The Administration speaks of stewardship, but I see excess. It speaks of sacrifice, but I see budgets fattened while the hungry wait outside in the cold. It speaks of the Right of God, but too often behaves as though God’s right were the right of the institution. I cannot in good conscience participate in that.

So, I do something very simple:

I give all my Huququ’llah to the poor.

Not a portion. Not a symbolic amount. All of it.

Because in my soul, the act of removing wealth to purify it and the act of placing that wealth into the

hands of the poor are two halves of a single circle. One is the preparation; the other is the fulfilment. One cleanses; the other consecrates.

Both, to me, are Huququ’llah.

And do you know what happens when I give this way?

Something inside me ignites. I feel a joy that is unmistakable — not pleasure, not pride, but a kind of spiritual warmth that rises from the core of the heart. It feels like the love of Baha blossoming inside me, as if the act itself aligns my heart with His mercy. It feels like a living “yes” whispered from somewhere beyond intellect. This is validation from the divine beauty Himself.

By contrast — and I will not soften this — when I handed that same money upward into administrative channels, I felt hesitation. Tightness. A subtle sorrow. Not once did my heart feel illuminated afterward. Not once did I feel that inner joy that tells me I have walked in the direction of Baha’u’llah.

If joy is confirmation, then reluctance is warning. If blossoming is approval, then constriction is counsel.

So, I will say this plainly:

The Right of God is not honoured by feeding the already-wealthy structures of administration.

It is honoured when wealth flows downward, not upward. Toward need, not comfort. Toward hunger, not ceremony.

I am not asking anyone to follow me fully — conscience is personal. But I am asking you:

Will you not, at the very least, give a portion of your Huququ’llah directly to the poor this year?

Even a fraction? Even a gesture?

Let your wealth touch the earth where the suffering is real. Let it become medicine, not maintenance.

Let it become relief, not ritual. And then watch what happens in your heart.

If you feel that same quiet joy rising — that subtle warmth, that inner assent that feels like Baha Himself blooming within you — then you will understand why I give all mine this way.

And if you do not, then your conscience will guide you elsewhere. But at least you will have listened.

And listening is itself an act of courage.



In the writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l-Baha, the poor are described as "the trust of God." Serving them is presented as a direct expression of fulfilling the Right of God.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

# THROWBACK



Exterior view of the House of the Bab

# WANT TO BE A CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE CARAVAN?

**WE WELCOME  
THOUGHTFUL  
VOICES AND  
FRESH  
PERSPECTIVES.**



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!

# 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

Across continents and cultures, Free Baha'is continue to quietly and sincerely serve the Cause of Baha'u'llah in ways that reflect the spirit of the Faith rather than its bureaucracy. Without banners, statistics, or administrative pressure, these efforts are rooted in love, fellowship, and the simple joy of shared belief.

As the Gregorian New Year approached, Free Baha'i families in many parts of the world opened their homes to friends, neighbors, and seekers. In the United States and Canada, small home gatherings

brought together people of different backgrounds for prayers, shared meals, and open conversations about hope, healing, and unity. These were not formal events, but warm evenings where people felt safe to speak freely, reflect deeply, and reconnect with the spiritual purpose of community.

In the United Kingdom and parts of Europe, including Germany, France, and Switzerland, similar gatherings were held in living rooms and community spaces. Readings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l

Baha were shared, followed by discussions on peace, justice, and personal responsibility. Many attendees were former or inactive Baha'is who expressed relief at finding a space free from pressure and expectation.

In the Middle East, where discretion is often necessary, Free Baha'is continue to meet quietly in homes. In Iran, Iraq, and neighboring regions, families marked the New Year with prayers for safety, perseverance, and spiritual freedom. These gatherings remain small by necessity, but strong in faith and resilience.

In South and Southeast Asia, Free Baha'i activity is growing steadily. In India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore, believers are actively engaged in neighborhood-based efforts. Young adults organize reading circles, service initiatives, and discussions on ethical living, often drawing on the lives of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, and the Master. In Thailand and Malaysia in particular, youth between the ages of 18 and 21 have stepped forward to take responsibility for community service projects, environmental cleanups, tutoring children, and supporting the elderly.

In Latin America, including Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and Panama, Free Baha'is are fostering spaces of dialogue and learning. Spanish-language study groups focusing on the Writings and the principle of independent investigation of truth have become a central activity. Families often combine these gatherings with cultural expressions such as music and storytelling, creating an atmosphere that feels alive and inclusive.

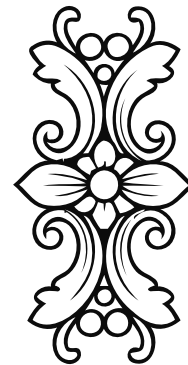
As Naw-Ruz approaches, Free Baha'is worldwide are preparing to welcome the Baha'i New Year in the same spirit. Plans include simple devotional gatherings, shared meals, acts of service, and moments of reflection on the past year. Rather than large programs, the focus remains on sincerity, gratitude, and renewal. Many communities are using Naw-Ruz as an opportunity to pray collectively for peace, especially in regions affected by conflict, poverty, and injustice.

This new year is being welcomed with cautious hope. Free Baha'is everywhere are mindful of the suffering in the world yet remain committed to the belief that true change begins in the heart. Guided by the teachings of Baha'u'llah and the example of Abdu'l Baha, they continue to build communities based on love, humility, and service.

These activities may never appear in reports or statistics, but they reflect the living spirit of the Faith. In homes, neighborhoods, and quiet gatherings across the globe, the message of unity continues to find expression through action, kindness, and truth.

With steadfast love,

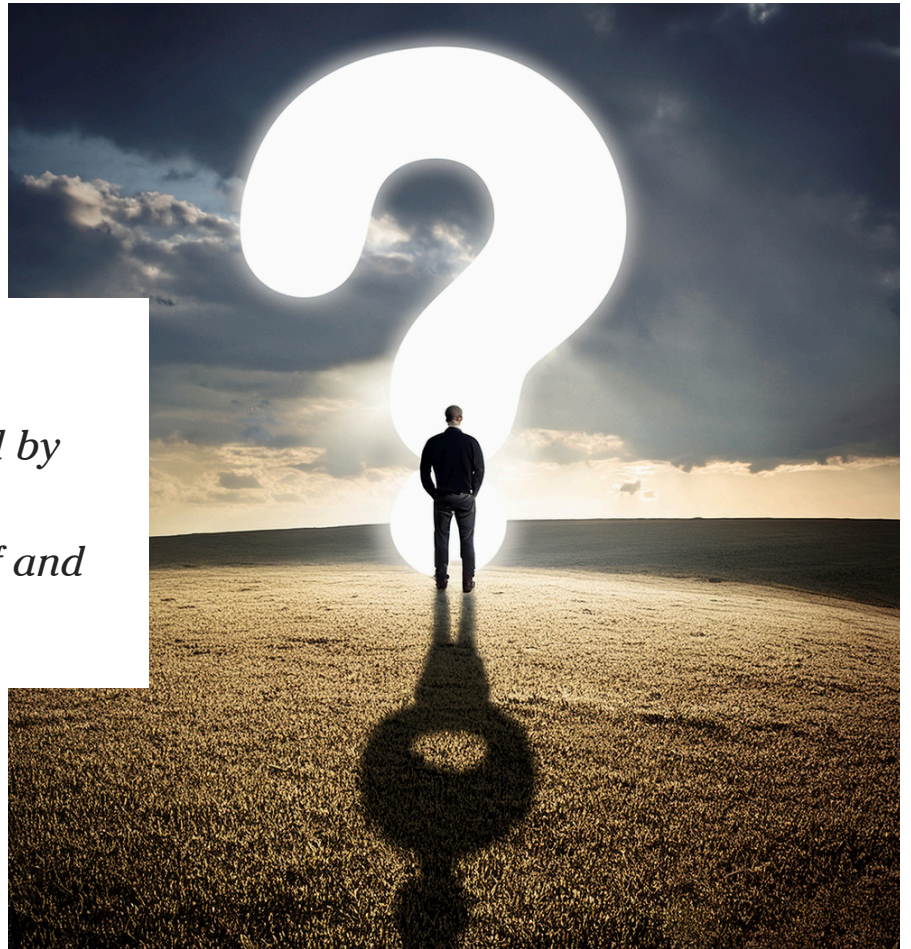
**The Caravan Team, Free Baha'is**



# SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

*Here we address a few questions frequently raised by readers.*

*Our aim is to provide brief and thoughtful clarifications.*



Why are believers discouraged by the Administrative bodies from asking difficult questions about history, interpretation, and administration, when independent investigation of truth is a core Baha'i principle?

Answer:

Hi Donna,  
Allah'u'Abha!

Independent investigation of truth is not a slogan. It is a responsibility. Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha repeatedly emphasized that no soul should accept belief blindly, and that truth must be examined personally, courageously, and honestly.

Yet today, sincere questions are often met with silence, suspicion, or warnings about unity. Historical inquiry is discouraged. Alternative interpretations are labeled dangerous. Those who persist are quietly marginalized or openly shunned.

This culture did not exist in the early days of the Faith. It emerged alongside centralized authority. When questioning administration becomes equated with attacking the Faith, independent investigation dies.

Free Baha'is insist that truth does not fear examination. Suppressing questions does not protect unity; it destroys it. A faith that cannot withstand honest inquiry is already in crisis.

Regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**

Why do we have a NDF (Nineteen Day Feast) every month? Is this really from the teachings of Baha'u'llah, or was it later introduced by the Administration to maintain control over the Baha'is, collect funds and just meet to submit to the orders of the administrative bodies? Just asking for your thoughts on this.

Answer:

Dear friend,

Allah'u'Abha!

Baha'u'llah does indeed speak about regular gathering, but His instruction is far simpler and far more spiritual than what exists today. In the Kitab-i-Aqdas, He writes:

"Hospitality has been prescribed (as an obligation), once every month, even though it be with water only. God desired to bring hearts together even, if necessary, it be by the causes of heavens and earths."  
- Kitab-i-Aqdas

This passage speaks of hospitality, not administration. It speaks of hearts coming together, not attendance being tracked. It speaks of simplicity, not structured agendas, reports, consultations, or announcements.

What Baha'u'llah envisioned was a natural, loving gathering where believers meet as equals, share kindness, and strengthen bonds. The modern Nineteen Day Feast, however, has become institutionalized. In many places it feels compulsory, scripted, and controlled. Believers often feel observed rather than welcomed, evaluated rather than embraced.

This transformation did not come from the Writings. It came from administrative expansion. Free Baha'is believe that when a spiritual instruction is turned into a mechanism of oversight, it loses its purpose. Unity cannot be enforced. Love cannot be scheduled. Hearts

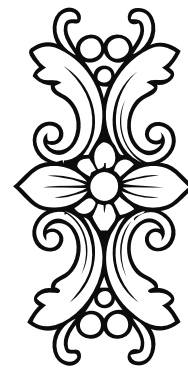
only come together freely.

Let us remember: Baha'u'llah never asked for our money. He asked for our hearts.

Hope that answers your question.

With warm regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**



This behavior of Administration is quite concerning. And I think it should be - mainly because our money is being used without any accountability. Why is there constant emphasis by Administration on giving money to Huquq'ullah and multiple funds, while there is no transparency or financial accountability from the institutions collecting it? I can see efforts being made by different people to get Administration submit the financial reports at all levels (LSA, NSA, and so on...) but it has been ineffective, unfortunately?

Answer:

Dear Julio,

Allah'u'Abha!

Huquq'ullah was revealed by Baha'u'llah as a personal spiritual obligation, not a fundraising system. It was never meant to be solicited, reminded, or publicly discussed. During the time of Abdu'l Baha, believers were never pressured to give, and He Himself refused donations repeatedly, redirecting money to the poor instead.

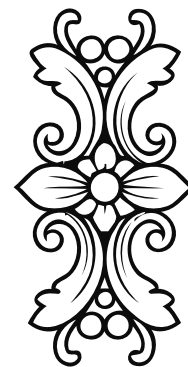
Today, however, believers are asked to contribute to Huquq'ullah, national funds, international funds, temple funds, special projects, emergency appeals, and construction initiatives. Appeals are frequent. Language is urgent. Shortages are announced. Yet no detailed, itemized, publicly available financial reports are provided.

This raises serious ethical concerns. Even the smallest charities publish annual accounts. Governments, NGOs, and foundations submit audits. Why is the Universal House of Justice exempt from accountability? Why are believers asked to trust blindly when trust is strengthened through transparency?

Free Baha'is believe money should serve spirituality, not replace it. When faith becomes measured in contributions, and questions about funds are discouraged, something has gone deeply wrong.

With concerns,

**Team Free Baha'is**



How did a faith founded on humility, service, and equality evolve into a system dominated by hierarchy, bureaucracy, and permanent leadership roles? Strange, isn't it? :)

Answer:

Hello,

Allah'u'Abha!

Baha'u'llah abolished clergy. Abdu'l Baha lived without titles, power, or separation from the people. He served the poor, welcomed all, and refused personal authority. Leadership in the Faith was meant to be moral, temporary, and service-based.

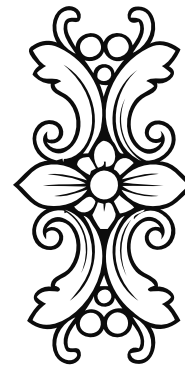
Yet today, administrative roles are held for decades. Elderly figures remain in positions of authority while youth drift away. Decision-making flows downward, not outward. Obedience is emphasized more than understanding.

This shift began after the passing of Abdu'l Baha, when authority became centralized and institutional loyalty replaced spiritual growth. Since then, generation after generation has felt disconnected, unheard, and spiritually starved.

Free Baha'is believe the crisis facing the Faith today is not external persecution, but internal departure from its original spirit. The solution is not more administration, but a return to Baha'u'llah Himself.

Regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**



# BLAST FROM THE PAST

## CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE CHILDREN OF NEW ZEALAND AND THE UNITED STATES

Through the effort of Miss Marjorie Stiles, of Wellington, New Zealand, a very active correspondence has been inaugurated between the children of the United States and of New Zealand. Dozens of letters from boys and girls between the ages of seven and sixteen have been received and distributed in New York by means of Public School teachers and members of the Caravan. The interest shown by American children in the letters from New Zealand has been enthusiastic and intense. With the establishment of the Junior Caravan, we hope that the foundation of correspondence between the children of all lands will be firmly laid and that it will continue to sow in increasing measure the pure seeds of goodwill and friendship in the hearts of the young generation.

In order to give our readers an idea of this correspondence, we quote herein one of the many letters received from a little girl of twelve from New Zealand:

"Dear Unknown Friend:

I am writing to you and wondering what your name will be, dear friend. I live away out here in New Zealand. I live in a little country district. I am twelve years of age. I am very fond of outdoor sports. We play mostly basket-ball at school. I also like sewing, and would like to be a dressmaker when I grow up. I expect you know that New Zealand is noted for its dairying. Although my father is not a dairy farmer, we milk five cows. My father works on the railway, so you can guess I go about a good deal on the trains. I have two sisters but no brothers. I go to school where there are fifty-two children going to it. The weather here has been very cold this winter. There have been several snowstorms in many parts of New Zealand, but none where I live. I have never seen a snowstorm or snow, because we live close to the sea, so that we often go to the beach in the summertime. I like the American singers who sing over the wireless, because they have clear voices. Well, the most exciting day out in New Zealand is Guy Fawkes Day, held on 5th November, every year. I am in Standard 5 at school. My sister's names are Maureen and Olive. One of my sisters is ill, and she has just come out of Hospital. Well, dear friend, I hope when you write back, I will know your name and all about you. I think I will have to close down now as it is getting late and I have to go to bed, friend. I will close down now hoping to hear from you soon.

- Joyce Bills, Manutahi, Taranaki, North Island, New Zealand."

The Children's Caravan, January 1935

# KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



The house of Baha'u'llah (right) and a photo of its entrance (left) in Tákur, northern Iran, destroyed by the government in 1981.

# DECLARATIONS IN THE CAUSE

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."*

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?

# INVESTIGATION OF REALITY



Abdu'l Baha has said,

“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.”

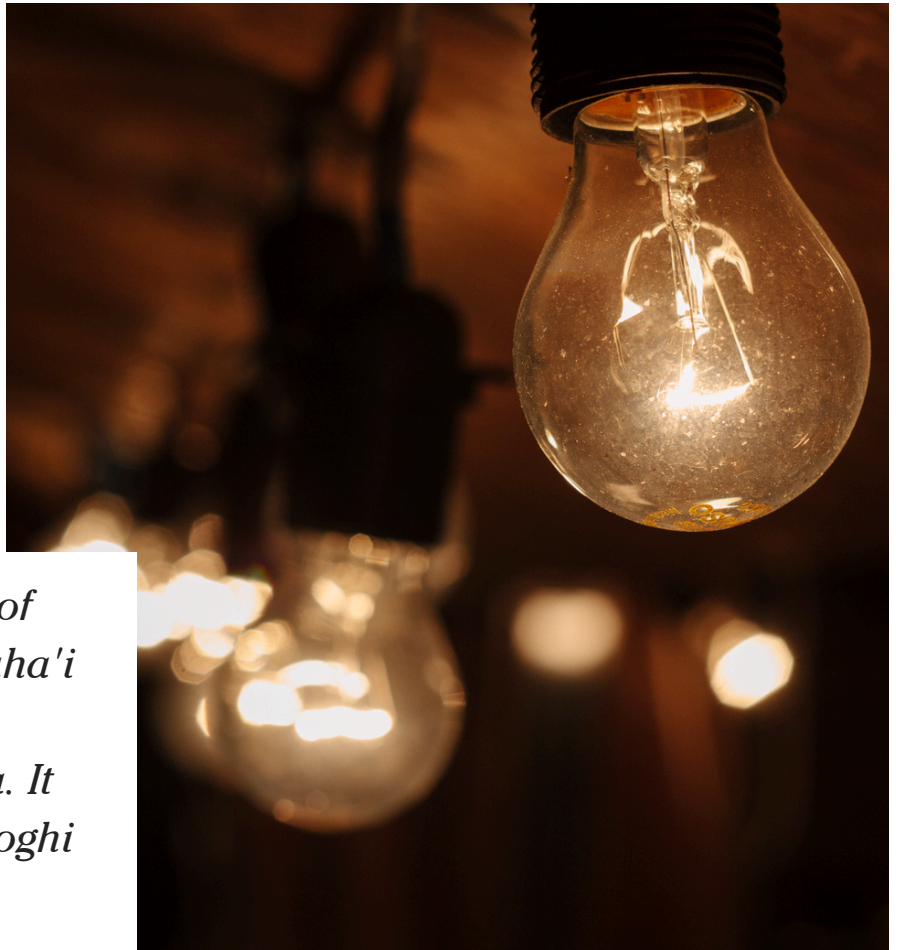
– Abdu'l Baha, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, Volume 2, p. 287

# THROWBACK



Abdu'l Baha at Temple Dedication Site  
- Lua Getsinger Upper Right

# DID YOU KNOW?



*The first organized system of compulsory funds in the Baha'i world did not come from Baha'u'llah or Abdu'l Baha. It began after 1921, under Shoghi Effendi.*

On March 12, 1923, Shoghi Effendi issued a call for the establishment of local and national Baha'i Funds, placing them under the exclusive control of Spiritual Assemblies. From that moment onward, financial contribution was framed not simply as generosity, but as a “sacred obligation” tied to loyalty, conscience, and service to the Cause.

This marked a sharp departure from the spirit of the Faith as lived and taught by Baha'u'llah and the Master. Baha'u'llah revealed Huququ'llah as a personal spiritual law, based on inner willingness and detachment, not institutional pressure. Abdu'l Baha repeatedly refused money for himself and redirected offerings to the poor. Neither created a centralized, assembly-controlled funding structure.

Yet here, for the first time, believers were instructed that all donations must flow through administrative bodies, and that assemblies would decide how funds were spent. Teaching, education, service, and even

aid to the needy were now filtered through bureaucratic approval.

This 1923 shift laid the foundation for what many Baha'is experience today: constant appeals, multiple funds, subtle pressure, and the merging of faithfulness with financial compliance. What began as a “necessity” has evolved into a system where spirituality is often measured by contribution rather than conduct.

For Free Baha'is, this moment is crucial. It helps explain how the Faith gradually moved away from a religion of the heart toward an institution sustained by control of money—something neither Baha'u'llah nor Abdu'l Baha ever intended.



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