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THE CARAVAN

"TRUST US"

WHEN INDEPENDENT
INVESTIGATION STOPS AT
THE TREASURY

ARTICLE INSIDE



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PRAYERS

SUFFER ME, O MY GOD...

Suffer me, O my God, to draw nigh unto Thee, and to abide within the precincts of Thy court, for remoteness from Thee hath well-nigh consumed me. Cause me to rest under the shadow of the wings of Thy grace, for the flame of my separation from Thee hath melted my heart within me. Draw me nearer unto the river that is life indeed, for my soul burneth with thirst in its ceaseless search after Thee. My sighs, O my God, proclaim the bitterness of mine anguish, and the tears I shed attest my love for Thee.

I beseech Thee, by the praise wherewith Thou praisest Thyself and the glory wherewith Thou glorifiest Thine own Essence, to grant that we may be numbered among them that have recognized Thee and acknowledged Thy sovereignty in Thy days. Help us then to quaff, O my God, from the fingers of mercy the living waters of Thy loving-kindness, that we may utterly forget all else except Thee, and be occupied only with Thy Self. Powerful art Thou to do what Thou wilt. No God is there beside Thee, the Mighty, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

Glorified be Thy name, O Thou Who art the King of all Kings!

- Baha'u'llah





Foreword

Dear Friends,

Allah'u'Abha!

"The substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover ... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly; and whosoever hath failed to recognize Me, hath turned away from all that is true and right and hath succumbed to everything evil and unseemly." - The Bab

As we enter the month of Izzat, meaning Honour, we are pleased to bring you another edition of The Free Baha'i Caravan. This is Volume 11, Edition 4, and it comes at a particularly joyful time for the Baha'i world as we prepare to celebrate the Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah in October.

The Birth of the Bab and of Baha'u'llah are not simply dates on a calendar. They remind us of two extraordinary lives that changed the course of religious history. The Bab opened the door to a new age and prepared humanity for the coming of Baha'u'llah, while Baha'u'llah brought a message calling humanity to unity, justice, spiritual freedom, and the independent search for truth.

In this issue, we reflect on these sacred occasions while continuing our usual sections that connect the

teachings of the Bab, Baha'u'llah, and Abdu'l Baha with the questions facing Baha'is and seekers today. Our Some Questions Answered section once again looks at important teachings and challenges us to return to the Writings themselves rather than simply accepting interpretations handed down by institutions.

We also bring you our Did You Know? section, along with reflections, stories, activities, and other features designed to make the teachings accessible and meaningful for readers of all ages. Our Free Baha'i Activities section highlights the continuing efforts of Free Baha'is around the world to keep the spirit of the Cause alive through fellowship, study, service, and the sharing of the message of Baha'u'llah.

This edition also features a special guest article on *"Trust Us": When Independent Investigation Stops at the Treasury*. We are grateful to our contributors and readers who continue to share their experiences, questions, and perspectives with us. These voices are important because the Baha'i Faith was never meant to be a faith of silence. It calls every individual to investigate truth, read the Holy Writings, think deeply, and follow conscience.

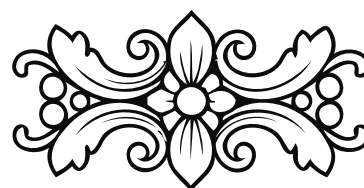
As we celebrate the Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah, may we remember that the greatest honour we can give Them is not merely to celebrate Their birthdays, but to live by the principles They taught.

The world needs the message of Baha'u'llah now more than ever: unity without uniformity, faith without coercion, service without position, and spiritual life without barriers between the individual and God.

We hope you enjoy this edition of The Free Baha'i Caravan, and that it inspires you to read, question, reflect, and discover the beauty of the Cause for yourself.

With love and steadfast hope,

The Free Baha'is Team

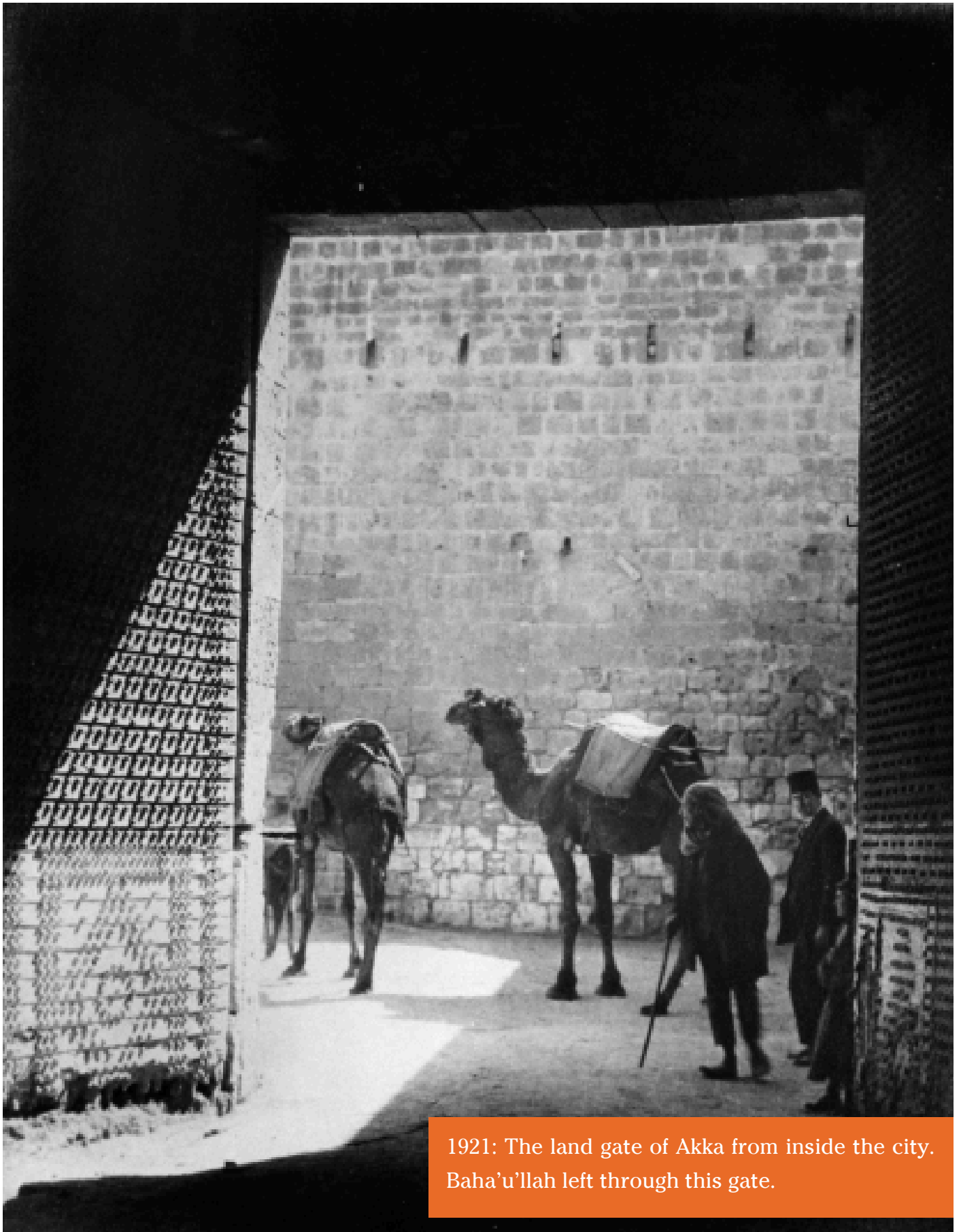


“

The Birthdays of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh are known as the Twin Holy Birthdays.

”

HISTORICAL TRUTHS



1921: The land gate of Akka from inside the city.
Baha'u'llah left through this gate.

FEELING, FAITH, AND FACT

*Three men were
walking on a wall,
Feeling, Faith, and
Fact,
When Feeling got
an awful fall,
And Faith was
taken back.*

*So close was Faith
to Feeling,
He stumbled and
fell too,
But Fact remained,
And pulled Faith
back
And Faith brought
feeling too.*

- Unknown Author



THE MOST HOLY LAWS

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

We have returned a third of all the fines to the Resting-place of Justice. We admonish its men to do absolute justice, that they spend all that has been collected by them in the way commanded by a Wise Knower. O Men of the House of Justice, be shepherds of the sheep of God in His kingdom and keep them from the wolves who appear in garments of sheep, just as you keep your sons. Thus does the faithful Adviser advise you.

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 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

Diary of Ahmad Sohrab, March 21, 1913

QUOTATION

"Everyone is eagerly awaiting His appearance, yet since their inner eyes are not directed towards Him sorrow must needs befall Him. In the case of the Apostle of God—may the blessings of God rest upon Him—before the revelation of the Qur'án everyone bore witness to His piety and noble virtues. Behold Him then after the revelation of the Qur'án. What outrageous insults were leveled against Him, as indeed the pen is ashamed to recount. Likewise behold the Point of the Bayán. His behavior prior to the declaration of His mission is clearly evident unto those who knew Him. Now, following His manifestation, although He hath, up to the present, revealed no less than five hundred thousand verses on different subjects, behold what calumnies are uttered, so unseemly that the pen is stricken with shame at the mention of them. But if all men were to observe the ordinances of God no sadness would befall that heavenly Tree. VI, 11."

The Bab



"By the righteousness of God! These are the days in which God hath proved the hearts of the entire company of His Messengers and Prophets, and beyond them those that stand guard over His sacred and inviolable Sanctuary, the inmates of the celestial Pavilion and dwellers of the Tabernacle of Glory. How severe, therefore, the test to which they who join partners with God must needs be subjected!"

Baha'u'llah

"The day is coming when all the religions of the world will unite, for in principle they are one already. There is no need for division, seeing that it is only the outward forms that separate them. Among the sons of men some souls are suffering through ignorance, let us hasten to teach them; others are like children needing care and education until they are grown, and some are sick—to these we must carry Divine healing."

Abdu'l Baha

THROWBACK



The flower pots on the ground mark the location of the bench where Baha'u'llah often sat when He visited the garden, c. 1920

"TRUST US": WHEN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION STOPS AT THE TREASURY

There is a principle at the heart of Baha'u'llah's teachings that most Baha'is know almost by heart: **independent investigation of truth.**

We are told not to blindly follow our parents, our clergy, our traditions or the opinions of others. We are expected to read, investigate, think and arrive at truth through our own sincere search.

But there is an interesting question that deserves to be asked:

Does independent investigation stop when we reach the doors of the Baha'i Administration?

Consider money.

Baha'is are encouraged to contribute to various funds. There is the local fund, the national fund, international funds, Huququ'llah and other appeals connected with the work of the Faith. Giving is presented as a spiritual act, and there is certainly nothing wrong with generosity.

But generosity and accountability are not opposites.

If someone asks you to entrust them with your money, is it unreasonable to ask what happens to it?

Of course not.

A family keeps accounts. A business keeps accounts. A charity keeps financial records. An organization entrusted with other people's money normally has systems of reporting and oversight.



So why should a religious institution be different?

"The House of Justice does not issue an accounting"

Here the matter becomes particularly interesting because we do not have to speculate about the position of the Universal House of Justice. Its own published material addresses this very question.

In a 2006 letter written on its behalf concerning Huququ'llah, the Universal House of Justice stated plainly:

"The House of Justice does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure of these funds."

The same letter explains that detailed accounts of

Huququ'llah income and expenditures are maintained internally and that the House of Justice considers its own assurance sufficient for members of the Baha'i community. It further states that there is no need, at present, to present those accounts to external audiences.

Read that again.

The accounts exist.

They are maintained.

They are monitored internally.

But the believers who contribute the money are not given the accounts.

Instead, they are given an assurance.

And this raises a question that should not be considered rebellious or disrespectful:

Why should assurance replace transparency?

Trust is not the same as accountability

Nobody is suggesting that every person serving in the Baha'i Administration is dishonest.

That is not the point.

The question is much simpler.

Suppose you gave your money to a charity and asked to see its accounts. Would you be satisfied if the organisation replied:

"We keep detailed accounts. We have examined them ourselves. Everything is being handled with integrity. You have our assurance."

Perhaps some people would.

But most would reasonably ask for more.

And there is a good reason for this.

Accountability does not exist because everyone is assumed to be dishonest. Accountability exists because everyone is human.

Good financial systems protect honest people just as much as they expose dishonest ones.

When people know that expenditures will be recorded, reviewed and explained, they naturally become more careful with money. Transparency creates discipline.

Without meaningful external accountability, the person spending the money is effectively answering to the same system that controls the books.

That deserves examination.

What about Huququ'llah?

The issue becomes even more significant with

Huququ'llah.

Baha'u'llah describes the Right of God as a sacred obligation, and the Baha'i sources explain that its disbursement is entrusted to the Head of the Faith. The Universal House of Justice states that these funds may be used for a broad range of purposes, including the work of the Faith, Holy Places, institutions, Houses of Worship and charitable and benevolent undertakings.

These may all be worthy purposes.

But a worthy purpose does not eliminate the need for accountability.

In fact, it should make accountability even more important.

If believers are giving their hard-earned money because they sincerely believe it is being used to serve humanity and advance the Cause of Baha'u'llah, they deserve confidence that the system handling those funds is operating with the highest possible standards of transparency.

Instead, they are effectively asked to say:

"We trust you."

But where did Baha'u'llah teach us to surrender our capacity to question?

The contradiction

This is where the issue becomes bigger than money.

The Baha'i Faith teaches the individual to investigate truth independently.

Yet when the subject becomes the Administration, believers are often encouraged to accept its decisions because the institution is trusted.

We are encouraged to question inherited religious beliefs.

But questioning administrative decisions can be treated very differently.

We are encouraged to examine the Writings for ourselves.

But when an institutional interpretation is presented, questioning it may be regarded as disobedience.

And when money is involved, the standard can become even more uncomfortable:

Give freely — but do not expect to see the books.

Is this really what independent investigation was supposed to mean?

Who serves whom?

This is the question Free Baha'is believe needs to be asked.

The Administration exists to serve the Cause.

It does not own the Cause.

The institutions exist to serve the believers and advance the teachings.

The believers do not exist merely to sustain the institutions.

That distinction is fundamental.

Baha'u'llah's Revelation was not established to create another religious bureaucracy demanding unquestioning loyalty. It was meant to awaken the individual, liberate the conscience and bring humanity into a new relationship with truth.

When an institution becomes so powerful that believers begin to feel that questioning it is equivalent to questioning the Faith itself, something has gone seriously wrong.

And when an institution receives money but tells the people providing that money that its own assurance is sufficient, we should at least have the courage to ask whether this reflects the spirit of Baha'u'llah's teachings.

The question is not "Where did the money go?"

We should be careful here.

Without access to the accounts, nobody outside the system can responsibly claim that the money has been misused.

That is precisely why transparency matters.

The question is not:

"Can we prove that something improper happened?"

The question is:

"Why should believers have to prove wrongdoing before asking for accountability?"

That reverses the entire principle.

A transparent institution does not wait for suspicion before explaining itself.

It explains itself precisely so that suspicion has less room to grow.

The Faith deserves better

Free Baha'is are not opposed to giving.

We are not opposed to supporting genuine teaching work, education, charitable projects, Houses of Worship, Holy Places or the many sincere believers who dedicate their lives to serving humanity.

We are questioning something more fundamental:

Why should faith require financial trust without corresponding financial transparency?

If the accounts are carefully maintained, let meaningful accountability demonstrate it.

If the funds are being used exactly as represented, transparency can only strengthen confidence.

If the Administration truly believes in independent investigation, it should welcome sincere questions rather than regard them as threats.

Because ultimately, this is not really about money.

It is about conscience.

It is about whether a Baha'i is allowed to remain an adult human being capable of asking difficult questions.

It is about whether "trust" has become a substitute for evidence.

And it is about whether the institution has quietly become more important than the principles it was created to serve.

Baha'u'llah taught humanity to investigate truth.

So let us investigate everything.

The Scriptures.

The history.

The institutions.

The interpretations.

And yes — even the accounts.

If an institution is genuinely serving the Cause of Baha'u'llah, honest questions should not threaten it.

They should strengthen it.

"Trust us" is not accountability.

And in a Faith built upon independent investigation, no institution should ever be afraid of being examined.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Universal House of Justice stated that it does not issue an accounting of the current expenditure of Huququ'llah funds, although detailed accounts are maintained internally. The accounts exist—but are they transparent to those who contribute?



DID YOU KNOW?

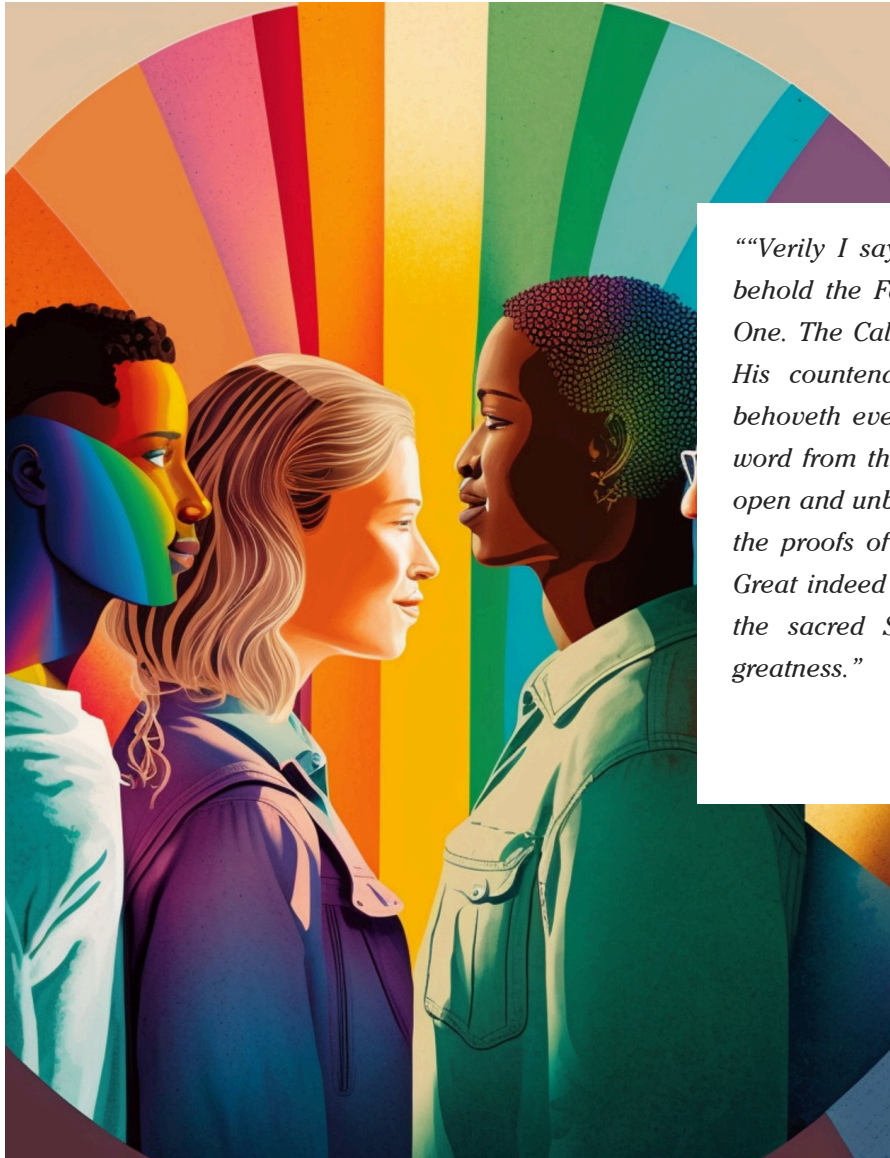
WANT TO BE A CONTRIBUTOR FOR THE CARAVAN?

**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 and if we find your article unique, knowledgeable, and interesting enough for our readers, we will surely publish it in our upcoming issue. If you have any other queries, you can write to us at info@freebahais.org Thank you!

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES



“Verily I say, this is the Day in which mankind can behold the Face, and hear the Voice, of the Promised One. The Call of God hath been raised, and the light of His countenance hath been lifted up upon men. It behoveth every man to blot out the trace of every idle word from the tablet of his heart, and to gaze, with an open and unbiased mind, on the signs of His Revelation, the proofs of His Mission, and the tokens of His glory. Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness.”

Baha'u'llah

Dear Friends,

One of the most beautiful things about the Free Baha'i community is that the Cause does not depend upon an institution, a title, or a particular building to remain alive. It lives wherever people come together to read the Writings of Baha'u'llah, remember the Bab and Abdu'l Baha, serve their neighbours, and share the message of unity and love.

As we enter the month of Izzat and look ahead to the

Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah in October, Free Baha'is around the world are once again preparing gatherings and activities to honour these two great Figures.

Preparing for the Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah

Across Free Baha'i communities, preparations are already underway for gatherings marking the Birth of the Bab and the Birth of Baha'u'llah. These

celebrations take many forms because there is no single formula for celebrating a Holy Day.

Some communities are planning simple devotional gatherings, with readings from the Writings of the Bab and Baha'u'llah followed by conversation and fellowship. Others are preparing cultural evenings with music, poetry, storytelling, and food shared among friends and neighbours.

For families with children, the celebrations provide an opportunity to make the history of the Bab and Baha'u'llah come alive through storytelling, drawings, simple crafts, quizzes, and readings. Children do not need complicated programmes to appreciate the beauty of the Cause. Sometimes a story about the courage of the Bab or the generosity of Baha'u'llah is enough to plant a seed that remains with a child for years.

Children: Learning Through Joy

Free Baha'i families continue to place importance on creating spaces where children can learn without feeling that religion is a classroom exercise.

Reading circles, storytelling sessions, children's devotional gatherings, drawing activities, and simple service projects are among the activities being encouraged. Children may read a passage from the Writings and then discuss what it means in their own words.

A child helping an elderly neighbour, collecting books for children who cannot afford them, planting trees, or simply visiting someone who is lonely can become a practical lesson in the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

The objective is simple: ***teach the heart through action.***

Young People Taking the Lead

Young people remain one of the most important parts of the Free Baha'i community.

Rather than treating young people simply as participants waiting for older members to organise

everything, Free Baha'i communities encourage them to take initiative themselves. Young adults are involved in reading groups, devotional gatherings, neighbourhood activities, community service, and discussions about the problems facing society.

In places such as **Thailand and Malaysia**, young Baha'is have been taking increasingly active roles in organising gatherings, reaching out to friends, arranging study sessions, and participating in service activities. Young men and women in the 18-21 age group are demonstrating something important: leadership does not have to mean holding an administrative position.

It can simply mean seeing something that needs to be done and doing it.

Serving the Neighbourhood

Much of the work of Free Baha'is happens quietly.

It may be a family opening its home for a devotional gathering. It may be a group visiting a neighbour who is ill, helping children with their studies, supporting a local charitable effort, or organising a small community meal.

These activities rarely produce impressive statistics, but they produce something far more valuable: relationships.

A community is not built by counting how many activities were completed. It is built when people know one another, care for one another, and are willing to serve one another.

India: Faith Through Fellowship and Service

In India, Free Baha'is continue to maintain connections through personal gatherings, devotional meetings, study of the Holy Writings, and conversations with seekers who are questioning the existing administrative structure.

Small gatherings often provide something that larger institutional programmes cannot: the freedom to ask

difficult questions.

People can discuss Baha'u'llah, the Bab, Abdu'l Baha, the history of the Faith, and the development of the Baha'i administration without feeling that they must arrive at a predetermined conclusion.

That freedom is central to the Free Baha'i approach.

Southeast Asia: A Growing Spirit of Youth Participation

Thailand and Malaysia continue to be particularly encouraging examples of young people becoming involved in the life of the Cause.

Young Baha'is are participating in devotional gatherings, reading circles, community service, and informal outreach. Their involvement demonstrates that young people do not necessarily need an elaborate institutional structure to become active.

They need trust.

They need meaningful spiritual conversations.

And most importantly, they need the freedom to think for themselves.

North America and Europe

In North America and Europe, Free Baha'is continue to connect through online meetings as well as smaller personal gatherings. For some believers, remaining openly identified with the Free Baha'i position can be difficult because of the possibility of being labelled a Covenant-breaker or facing social consequences within established Baha'i communities.

For this reason, much of the work is personal and discreet.

A conversation between two friends can become a study session. A simple online meeting can connect believers thousands of kilometres apart. A shared article can lead someone who has been quietly questioning to discover that they are not alone.

The internet has made it possible for isolated believers to find one another without requiring a physical institution.

Latin America and Beyond

Free Baha'i activity is also developing through personal contacts and online connections in Latin America and other parts of the world. Seekers who discover the Free Baha'i perspective often begin simply by asking questions.

And questions are welcome.

The purpose is not to persuade someone to exchange one label for another. It is to encourage people to investigate the Writings of Baha'u'llah and the Bab independently and make their own informed decision.

A Different Kind of Community

The Free Baha'i community may not have the numbers, buildings, administrative machinery, or financial resources of the Haifan Baha'i organisation. But that does not mean there is no activity.

In fact, much of the work is deliberately simple.

A devotional gathering.

A children's story.

A youth discussion.

A visit to a neighbour.

A community service project.

A conversation with a seeker.

A reading from Baha'u'llah.

A question that leads someone back to the Writings.

These things may never appear in an annual statistical report. Yet they are precisely the kinds of human connections through which a spiritual

community grows.

Looking Towards October

As the Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah approach, Free Baha'is are preparing not simply to commemorate two historical events, but to renew their connection with the message behind them.

The Bab called humanity to prepare for the coming of Baha'u'llah. Baha'u'llah called humanity toward unity, justice, peace, and spiritual transformation. Abdu'l Baha showed through his life what those teachings could look like in action.

That is the spirit we seek to carry forward.

Not through statistics.

Not through titles.

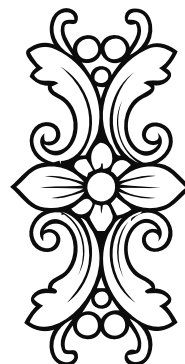
Not through institutional power.

But through faith, friendship, **service, study, and love.**

The Cause belongs to every soul who sincerely seeks truth. And wherever even a handful of people gather in that spirit, the light of Baha'u'llah continues to shine.

With steadfast love,

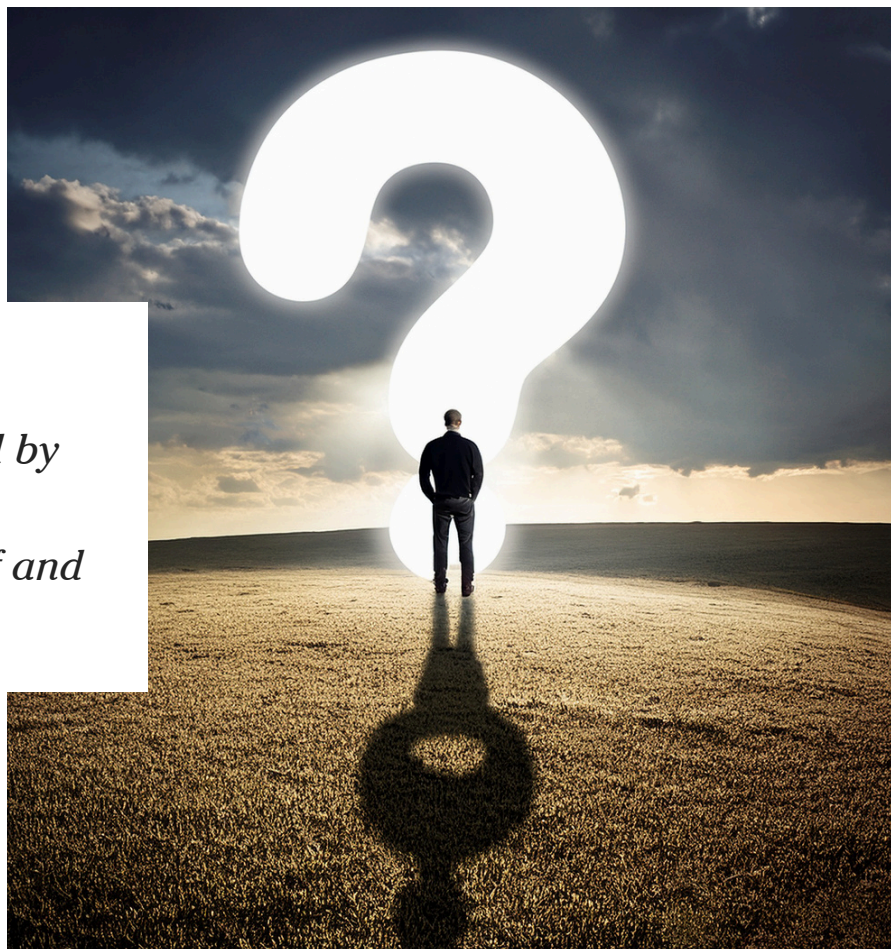
The Caravan Team, Free Baha'is



SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Here we address a few questions frequently raised by readers.

Our aim is to provide brief and thoughtful clarifications.



Hi Free Baha'i Team,

I've a question, can you please help me with it. If a guy who once served the Cause turns away from it, does the teaching says to simply condemn and excommunicate them, or does Baha'u'llah ask to leave the door open for them to return?

Answer:

Hello Maggie,
Allah'u'Abha!

Thank you for your email. The question you have raised is quite interesting, and we understand where you're coming from.

One of the most striking things about Baha'u'llah's words is that even when He addresses someone who has seriously turned away, He does not begin by closing the door. He calls that person to truth, self-examination, repentance and return.

The passage from the Kitab-i-Aqdas is particularly powerful because Baha'u'llah reminds this person of the closeness they once had to the Cause. He recalls how they were educated and prepared for service, and even reminds them of the words they themselves once wrote at His direction. Then comes the question that cuts much deeper than any punishment could:

"Suppose people were mistaken about thy affair; art thou mistaken about thyself?"

That is a question every believer can ask themselves.

What happens when loyalty to a person, institution or

position becomes more important than truth? What happens when zeal prevents us from recognizing our own mistakes? And what happens when we become so attached to defending our position that we can no longer honestly examine it?

Baha'u'llah's answer is not simply rejection. He says:

"Take care that zeal does not hinder thee from the Unity. Face towards Him, be not afraid because of thy (evil) works. He forgives whom He wills by Grace from Him."

And finally, He leaves the door open:

"Therefore return to Him submissive, humble, and humiliated. He will pardon thy evil doings."

For Free Baha'is, these words carry an important lesson. No institution, administration or human authority should become more important than the truth itself. A person who discovers that they have followed an interpretation, a leader or an institution in error must have the freedom to reconsider and return to the Word of God without fear.

Independent investigation is not merely the freedom to choose what we believe. It is also the courage to admit when we may have been wrong.

Baha'u'llah's invitation is remarkably simple: return to Him.

Not to an institution.

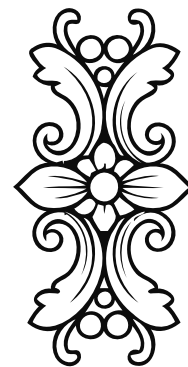
Not to a personality.

Not to an administration.

Return to God.

Warmth and peace,

Team Free Baha'is



Why do the Free Baha'is question the asking for contributions to the Baha'i funds when we know that the money is supposedly being used for a good cause? Isn't giving to the Cause a good thing?

Answer:

Hi FN,

Allah'u'Abha!

There is nothing wrong with giving generously when we believe our contribution will genuinely help the Cause or those in need. Free Baha'is are not against generosity. The question is accountability.

Baha'u'llah Himself gives us an important principle in the Kitab-i-Aqdas:

"It is not permissible to beg, and when one is asked (for money), it is forbidden for him to give. It has been ordained that everyone earn his living. Whoever is unable to do so, let the guardians and the rich appoint for him what is sufficient. Perform the stipulations and ordinances of God. Then keep them as you keep your eyes, and be not among the losers."

If believers are continually being asked to contribute to different funds, it is reasonable to ask: Where does all this money go? Who accounts for it? Who examines the spending? And who answers the believers when they ask questions?

This becomes particularly important when enormous sums are entrusted to an institution such as the Universal House of Justice, yet ordinary believers are not given a clear, publicly accessible account showing how the money received is spent.

A simple principle applies in everyday life: when people are entrusted with money, proper accounts encourage careful spending. A family keeps track of its finances. A business prepares accounts. A charitable organisation normally has financial reporting and oversight. Accountability does not insult the person entrusted with money; it protects both the money and the person handling it.

Why should a religious institution entrusted with the contributions of believers be any different?

From the Free Baha'i perspective, saying that money is being used "for the Cause" cannot itself be the end of the discussion. Good intentions do not eliminate the need for accountability.

Without meaningful financial transparency, believers are left asking questions for which they have no answers: How much has been received? How much has been spent? On what? Who approved the expenditure? What remains? And what mechanisms exist to ensure that the money is being used wisely?

The answer should not be, "Trust the institution."

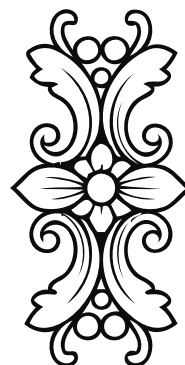
Baha'u'llah taught us to investigate truth for ourselves. That principle should not suddenly disappear when the subject is money.

Free Baha'is therefore do not question generosity; we question unaccountable authority. If the funds are genuinely being used wisely and entirely for the purposes claimed, then transparent accounts should strengthen confidence rather than threaten it.

After all, accountability should never be something a sincere institution has to fear.

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is



One thing that turns me off from the Baha'i faith is the taking of Huquq'ullah by the Administration. Is Huquq'ullah really a spiritual offering to God, or has it become another way for the Baha'i Administration to collect money from believers?

Answer:

Hi Jess,

Allah'u'Abha!

Huquq'u'llah is often presented as one of the important laws of the Baha'i Faith. But there is a question that deserves to be asked honestly: when money is collected in the name of God, who is ultimately accountable for it?

Baha'u'llah writes in the Kitab-i-Aqdas:

"This is that which God hath ordained for you in His Book, and this is a bounty from Him unto you, if ye be of them that are thankful."

The important word here is bounty. Huquq'u'llah is not supposed to be a membership fee, a tax imposed by an institution, or a price for belonging to the Baha'i community. It is described as a spiritual obligation connected with one's possessions and gratitude to God.

Yet this raises an uncomfortable question for the modern believer: when an institution receives these offerings, should believers simply hand over their money and never ask what happens afterward?

Free Baha'is believe the answer must be no.

A spiritual offering does not become beyond question simply because it carries a sacred name. If anything, money offered in the name of God demands greater responsibility, greater honesty and greater transparency.

Baha'u'llah also says:

"It is incumbent upon everyone to make a will. It is incumbent upon him to write it in his own handwriting and to set forth therein his testimony and the testimony

of the believers."

The repeated emphasis in the Baha'i Writings on personal responsibility should make us cautious about turning spiritual laws into mechanisms of institutional control.

Huquq'u'llah should bring the believer closer to God, not closer to an institution's financial machinery.

So, the Free Baha'i question is simple:

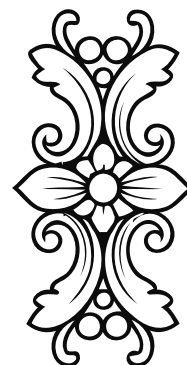
If Huquq'u'llah is truly an offering made to God, why should questioning its collection, administration and use be treated as a lack of faith?

We should be able to give freely without being pressured. We should be able to ask questions without being silenced. And we should be able to expect accountability from anyone entrusted with sacred funds.

Faith does not become purer when questions disappear. It becomes stronger when truth can withstand them.

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is



BLAST FROM THE PAST

THE SONG OF THE CARAVAN

Words by Julie Chanler

Music by Burt Hall

Feet on the sands,
Heavy feet, light feet,
Boot, sandal, moccasin,
Yellow feet, white feet,
Treading the desert waste,
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

We, who were told
That sunlight would blind us,
We, who were trained to look
Ever behind us -
Toward the horizon's brim,
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

Songs on the air,
Swung to new measures,
Gypsy and vagabond,
Caught by new pleasures,
Forward, the Caravan!
With the gait of Kings.
Now we advance a foot,
Yes, we advance a foot,
But soon - on wings!

(Musical arrangement available at the Headquarters of The Caravan,
132 East 65th Street, New York, N. Y., Price, 25c)

The Children's Caravan, April 1935

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



Copper inkwell with silver decorative top belonging to Baha'u'llah

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



The sea gate where Baha'u'llah and His companions entered Akka in 1868, c. 1920

DID YOU KNOW?



The Twin Birthdays Are Also a Reminder to Question Authority

The Birthdays of the Bab and Baha'u'llah are among the happiest occasions in the Baha'i calendar. But behind these celebrations is a message that remains deeply relevant today: truth does not require permission from religious authorities.

When the Bab declared His mission in 1844, He challenged the religious establishment of His time. He did not ask people to accept His message simply because the clergy told them to. He called souls to investigate, recognize and decide for themselves.

Mulla Husayn is one of the best examples. He was searching for the Promised One when he encountered the Bab in Shiraz. He had no institution telling him what conclusion to reach. He listened, questioned and recognized the truth for himself.

That same principle lies at the heart of the Baha'i teaching of independent investigation of truth.

So, what happens when an administration begins telling believers what they may question, whom they may read, what interpretations they must accept and which believers they must avoid?

This is where the Free Baha'i position begins.

We believe that standing against the Haifan Administration is not standing against Baha'u'llah. It is standing for the freedom that Baha'u'llah gave to every individual to investigate truth.

The Bab challenged the religious authorities of His day. Baha'u'llah challenged the traditions and assumptions that had imprisoned religion for centuries. Abdu'l Baha repeatedly demonstrated humility, service and freedom from the behaviour of a religious ruler.

Free Baha'is therefore ask a simple question:

If the Bab and Baha'u'llah taught us to investigate truth independently, why should we surrender that right to any modern institution?

We do not reject the Bab or Baha'u'llah by questioning the Administration. Quite the opposite.

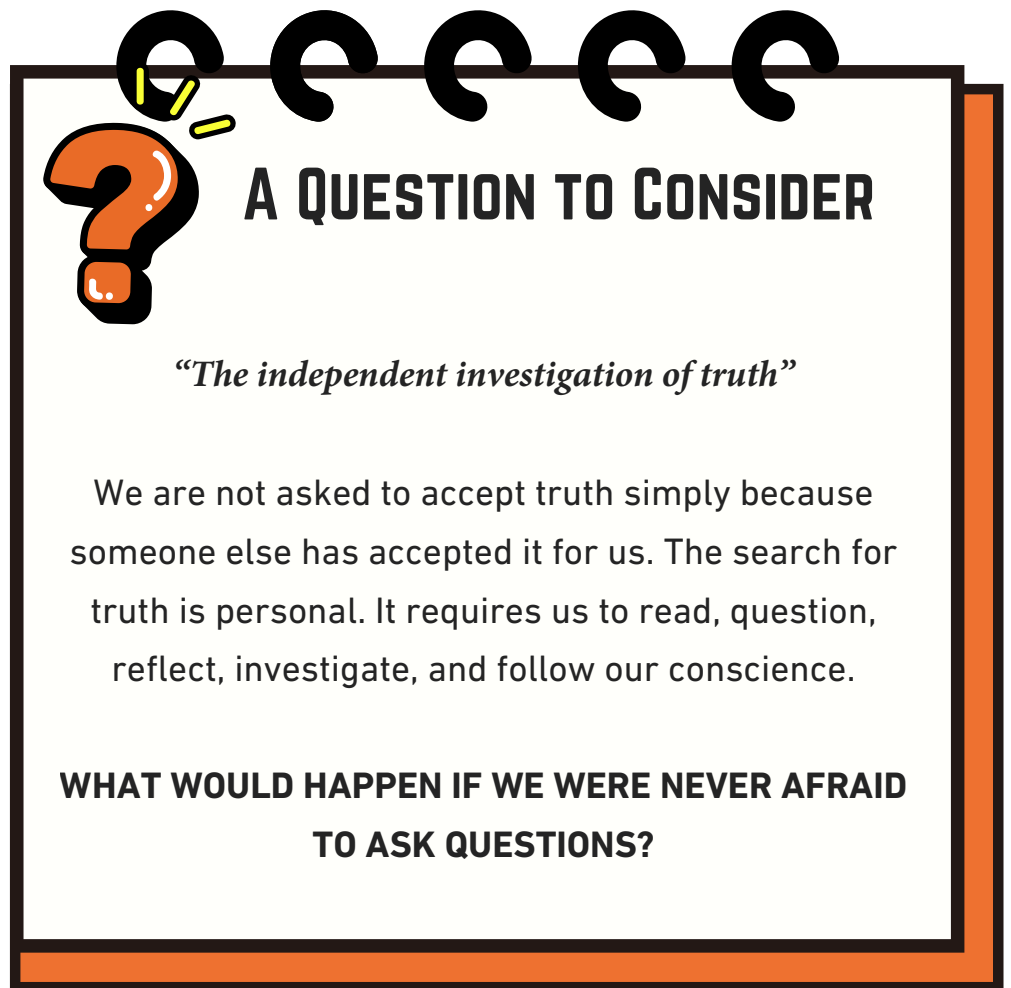
We question the Administration because we take Their teachings seriously.

The Twin Birthdays are therefore more than celebrations of two historic Figures. They remind us that every generation must make its own journey toward truth.

The Bab opened the door.

Baha'u'llah called humanity through it.

Free Baha'is simply refuse to let any administration close that door again.



A QUESTION TO CONSIDER

“The independent investigation of truth”

We are not asked to accept truth simply because someone else has accepted it for us. The search for truth is personal. It requires us to read, question, reflect, investigate, and follow our conscience.

**WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF WE WERE NEVER AFRAID
TO ASK QUESTIONS?**



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