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JUNE 2022

VOLUME 6, EDITION 2, NUR(LIGHT) 179 B.E.



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PRAYER



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!

-Prayer of Baha'u'llah

FOREWORD

“Be generous in prosperity and thankful in adversity, be fair in thy judgment, and guarded in thy speech. Be a lamp unto those who walk in darkness, and a home to the stranger. Be eyes to the blind, and a guiding light unto the feet of the erring. Be a breath of life to the body of humankind, a dew to the soil of the human heart, and a fruit upon the tree of humility.” – Baha'u'llah


Sending out our best wishes to the entire Baha'i world for the month of Nur (literally light). Two significant occurrences in Baha'i history occurred during the great month of Azamat which was before the month of Nur. To begin, the Bab, the predecessor of Baha'u'llah, made his statement on May 23, 1844. Second, Baha'u'llah's ascent occurred on the 29th of May 1892. While the 22nd of May was a day of celebration for the whole Baha'i community, the 29th of May is a day of sadness for all those who love Baha'u'llah and follow his teachings. Or, to put it another way, it is a day of grief for the globe, since mankind has lost a compassionate parent and a great leader who fought for the world's love and unity throughout his life. Looking at the following sayings His sayings, we will

understand how his teachings were all inclusive.

“The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light is these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. ... So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth.”

“All peoples and nations are of one family, the children of one Father, and should be to one another as brothers and sisters.”

As Baha'u'llah's followers, it is our responsibility to be all-inclusive, to never look down on anybody or anything, and to fight for the progress and development of mankind as a whole. And recognise that there is no claim to perfection when you pursue this road of devotion to mankind. The longer you toil on this route, the clearer it becomes how distant you are from reaching the summit, or, to put it another way, there is no apex on this path of service to mankind. All we have to do now is seek Baha'u'llah's guidance, become unselfish, and keep progressing in the road he



has given us, and we shall undoubtedly be saved one day. Pure salvation, as Abdu'l Baha calls it, is the realisation of spiritual satisfaction.

This issue of The Caravan of Baha'u'llah is a little endeavour to honour these holy figures, share their teachings, and reach out to those who want to learn more about the Baha'i religion and accept Baha'u'llah and the Master's real teachings. We want our readers to read our magazine attentively, and if they have any questions, criticism, or recommendations, they should write to us, and we would be pleased to respond.

Stay blessed,

The Free Baha'i Team

LET GO!



"Let go," He says. "Let go."

But my heart is stubborn, so I do not let go.

"What if it hurts?" I say.

"I know it will hurt," He says.

"What if I fall?" I say louder.

"I know you will fall," He says.

"But what if I can't get up?

What if I can't go on?

What if my heart breaks into a thousand pieces?"

"It's all right; just let go."

"No. I can't. I want to, but I can't."

"Let go."

"How? My heart will break. It is breaking already."

"So it will break. Let go."

"I can't. It hurts."

"Don't you know, my child?

If you fall, I will pick you up.

If you can't go on, I will carry you.

Don't you know, my child? Don't you know?

It is when it breaks that I can make you whole again.

It is when it breaks that I can pick out these broken pieces that are hurting you.

It is when it breaks that you can truly learn to love.

You can rise again.

You will rise again.

Let go."

- Fourcedow

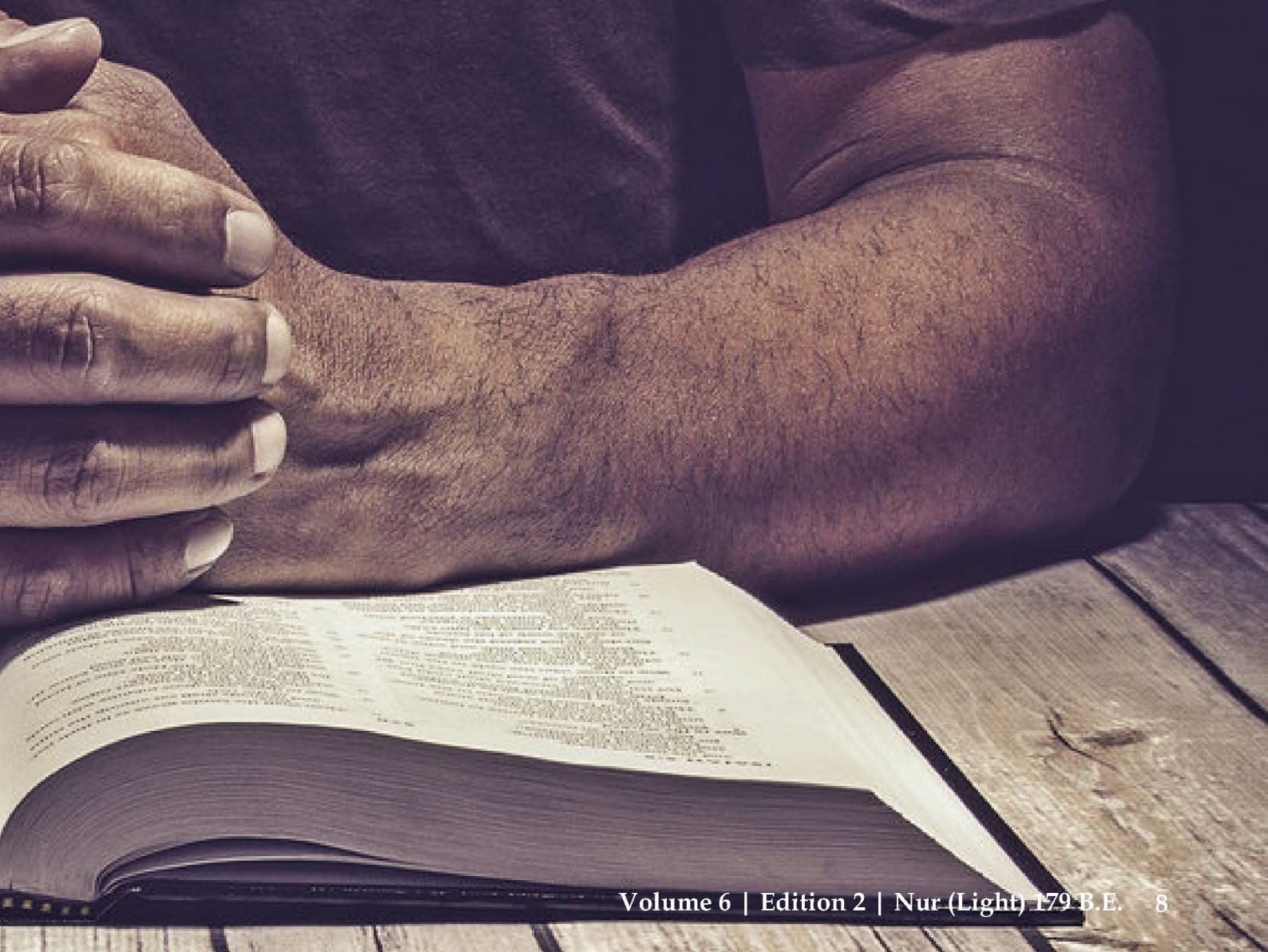
DIVINE LAWS

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

These are the stipulations of God which were written by the Most High Pen in the books and tablets. Hold fast to the orders and commandments of God. Be not of those who have held to their own principles (usul) and have cast behind them the principles of God in following their opinions and illusions. Restrain yourselves from eating and drinking from the rising (of the sun) until its setting. Beware lest passion hinder you from obtaining this grace which has been decreed to you in the Book.

It has been ordained that whoever professes the religion of God, the Rewarder (al-dayyan), should wash his hands every day, then his face, and sit facing toward God and say ninety-five times, "Allahu abha" (God is most Splendid). So did the Former (fatir) of the heavenly command as He sits on the Thrones of the Names (al- asrna') with Greatness and Power. In like manner, perform ablutions before Worship because of a command from God, the Only One, the Choosing One.

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



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)

DOES THE UHJ ONLY LIKE BUILDING GRAND HOUSES OF WORSHIP? – GUEST ARTICLE

Modern Baha'is understand the building the House of Worship to be the duty of the Baha'i administration. But a little known fact is that Baha'u'llah actually gives this duty to the people, not the institutions:

"O people of the world! Build ye houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions. Make them as perfect as is possible in the world of being, and adorn them with that which befitteth them, not with images and effigies. Then, with radiance and joy, celebrate therein the praise of your Lord, the Most Compassionate. Verily, by His remembrance the eye is cheered and the heart is filled with light."

--Baha'u'llah, Kitab i Aqdas

Indeed, the first House of Worship in Ishqabat was built by the people. Haji Mirza Muhammad Taqi Afan, Vakilu'd-Dawlih, maternal cousin of the Bab, took the individual initiative to build the temple. He largely paid for and supervised the building of the House of Worship, spending nearly all of his personal fortune.

Why do we not see such examples of individual initiative in the Baha'i community today? This excerpt from former Baha'i Juan Cole's "Reply to Peter Khan Talk in New Zealand" may shed some light on that:

"The national budget of the US community in the 1990s was only about \$20 million a year on the average. The Universal House of Justice took an average of \$6 million a year from that. It impoverished the US community. It funneled enormous amounts of money to these projects. Local communities were left strapped. And, when one local community expressed its aspiration to build a local Mashriqu'l-Adhkar (house of worship), the UHJ sent agents out to bully these devoted Baha'is and make it clear to them that such a step (which would after all interfere with building terraces in Haifa) was out of the question and they should shut up and sit down, Or Else. Yet `Abdu'l-Baha commanded the building of local houses of worship, which he said was an urgent goal...In the meantime, local communities have to sit on the floor of someone's apartment during Feast..."

I haven't seen a source for Cole's claim that the UHJ sent agents to antagonize the local community's initiative to build a house of worship, but as a Baha'i whose own initiatives have been pushed back against by Baha'i administration, I fully believe it.

The Baha'i administration is hostile to individual initiative. It is common to hear stories of the Baha'i administration pressuring local assemblies to sell or cease leasing buildings. Why? A quick look at the annual

budget of the local assembly will make the reason clear. Baha'is tend to be both wealthy and generous, so local Baha'i communities receive lots of money in donations. But even though these donations are made specifically to local assemblies, the local assembly spends a very small fraction of what it receives. The rest gets "funneled up" to the National Spiritual Assembly and the UHJ, resulting in these institutions collecting enormous amounts of wealth. But if Baha'i communities were to build temples and Baha'i centers, they would have significantly less money left over to get "funneled up" to the higher levels of the Baha'i administration. This is one of the major reasons why the Baha'i administration hates seeing local Baha'i communities building their own Baha'i centers, or God forbid, Houses of Worship.

Now that we have made the problem clear, let's talk about the solution. First, we should make clear that the Baha'i administration's oppression of individual initiative has no political solution. We cannot convince the Baha'i administration to change its ways. For 20 years people have protested, but it is hopeless, because the Baha'i administration is an administration of idolators who worship their own plans. They will never admit they are wrong, despite the fact that Baha'u'llah never granted the



UHJ or any other institution infallibility, and despite the fact that Baha'u'llah even explicitly said that he has no partner in the most great infallibility. Since we cannot convince the Baha'i administration to solve the problem for us, we must solve the problem on our own.

Baha'is need to gain the courage to take individual initiative to build Houses of Worship in defiance of the UHJ. They should not fear punitive action from the UHJ, instead putting their faith in God and Baha'u'llah, gaining strength from knowing that they are on their side. Baha'u'llah says:

"Blessed is the strong one who shatters the idols of delusions in the name of his Lord, the owner of the worlds" --Baha'u'llah

Be a Strong One, who fears only God, and not delusions such as UHJ's supposed infallibility.

"He Who is the Dawning-place of God's Cause hath no partner in the Most Great Infallibility." --Baha'u'llah

Have faith in Baha'u'llah, and never let never allow yourself to be convinced of dogmas invented by others. Anything not made explicit by Baha'u'llah can be questioned. And you can be certain that any attempts to override what Baha'u'llah explicitly said are false teachings. Baha'is must wholeheartedly reject the notion that

the Baha'i administration can abrogate Baha'u'llah's giving of the duty of the building of the Houses of Worship to the people. Baha'is must defy the Baha'i administration out of respect for Baha'u'llah's word, and do what Baha'u'llah tells them to do, and not what the UHJ tells them to do. Baha'is loyal to Baha'u'llah must band together and build Houses of Worship on their own, without fearing what the Baha'i administration would think.

What about resources? Isn't it costly to build a House of Worship? It's true that it is costly to build a grand House of Worship like the one in Wilmette or New Delhi, but according to Abdul Baha it is of secondary importance for the House of Worship to be grand. Abdul Baha says:

"God willing, in all the states of America in the future there will be erected Temples with infinite architectural beauty, art, with pleasing proportion and handsome and attractive appearances; especially in New York. But for the present, be ye satisfied with a rented place."

(Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá Abbas, p. 437)

"...an edifice or temple is to be built in order that humanity might find a place of meeting, and this is to be conducive to unity and fellowship among them." ('Abdu'l-Bahá, Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 65)

As to the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it is of the utmost importance. The purpose is this: A spot should be designated, even if it is a small place beneath layers of earth and stone, and it should, out of prudence, be kept hidden and concealed lest it arouse the hostility of the mischief-makers. At least once a week, it should become the gathering place of the chosen friends who have discovered the secrets and become the intimates of divine mysteries. It may assume any form, for even if it be an underground pit, that pit shall become a sheltering paradise, an exalted bower, and a garden of delight. It shall become a centre

wherein the spirits are gladdened and the hearts attracted to the Abhá Kingdom. (From a Tablet — translated from the Persian)

"Gracious God! The edifice of the House of Worship hath a powerful influence on every phase of life. Experience hath, in the east, clearly shown this to be a fact. Even if, in some small village, a house was designated as the Mashriqu'l-Adhkár, it produced a marked effect; how much greater would be the impact of one especially raised up." (Selections from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, no. 60.1)

The last two quotes especially make it clear that a building does not have to be grand in order to be a Mashriqu'l-Adhkár. So Baha'is have no excuse not to build Houses of Worship. Buy a small house, or rent one, designate it as a "House of Worship", and then as far as the Baha'i writings are concerned this will be a legitimate Mashriqu'l-Adhkár.

So please, obey Baha'u'llah and build the Houses of Worship. Even a small Baha'i community typically has more than enough resources to do this. The only reason why they would not is because they lack courage, initiative, or because their faith in the UHJ is greater than their faith in Baha'u'llah.

-Trident





THE BAHAI RELIGION AND ITS ENEMY, THE BAHA'I ORGANIZATION – PART 13

(An extract from Lady Ruth White's book)

(...continued)

(PART THREE)

HE IS THE WITNESS. THE ALL-SUFFICING.

O my God, my Beloved, my heart's Desire! Thou knowest, Thou seest that which hath befallen this servant of Thine, that hath humbled himself at Thy Door, and Thou knowest the sins committed against him by the people of malice, they that have broken Thy Covenant and turned their backs on Thy Testament. In the day-time they afflicted me with the arrows of hate and in the night-season they privily conspired to hurt me. At dawn they committed that which the Celestial Concourse did lament and at eventide they unsheathed against me the sword of tyranny and hurled in the presence of the ungodly their darts of calumny upon me.

Notwithstanding their misdeeds, this lowly servant of Thine was patient and did endure every affliction and trial at their hands, though by Thy power and might he could have destroyed their words, quenched their fire and stayed the flame of their rebelliousness.

Thou seest, O my God! how my long suffering, my forbearance and silence have increased their cruelty, their arrogance and their pride. By Thy Glory, O Beloved One! They have misbelieved in Thee and rebelled against Thee in such wise that they left me not a moment of rest and quiet, that I might arise as it meet and seemly, to exalt Thy Word amidst mankind, and might serve at Thy Threshold of Holiness with a heart that overfloweth with the joy of the dwellers of the Abha Kingdom.

Lord! My cup of woe runneth over, and from all sides blows are fiercely raging upon me.

The darts of affliction have compassed me round the arrows of distress have rained upon me. Thus tribulation overwhelmed me and my strength, because of the onslaught of the foemen became weakness within me, while I stood alone and forsaken in the midst of my woes. Lord! Have mercy upon me, lift me up unto Thyself and make me to drink from the Chalice of Martyrdom, for the wide world with all its vastness can no longer contain me.

Thou art, verily, the Merciful, the Compassionate, the Gracious, the All-Bountiful!

O ye the true, the sincere, the faithful friends of this wronged one! Everyone knoweth and believeth what calamities and afflictions have befallen this wronged one, this prisoner, at the hands of those who have broken the Covenant at the time when, after the setting of the Day-Star of the world, his heart was consumed with the flame of His bereavement.

When, in all parts of the earth, the enemies of God profiting by the passing away of the Sun of Truth, suddenly and with all their might launched their attack; at such a time and in the midst of so great a calamity, the Covenant-breakers arose with the utmost cruelty, intent upon harm and the stirring up of the spirit of enmity. At every moment a misdeed they did commit and bestirred themselves to sow the seeds of grievous sedition, and to ruin the edifice of the Covenant. But this wronged one, this prisoner, did his utmost to hide and veil their doings, that haply they might regret and repent. His long-suffering and forbearance of these evil deeds, however, made the rebellious ones still more arrogant and daring; until through leaflets written with their own hands, they sowed the seeds of doubt, printing these leaflets and scattering them broadcast throughout the world, believing that such foolish doings would bring to naught the Covenant and the Testament.

Thereupon the loved ones of the Lord arose, inspired with the greatest confidence and constancy and aided by the power of the

Kingdom by Divine Strength, by heavenly Grace, by the unfailing help and Celestial Bounty, they withstood the enemies of the Covenant in well-nigh three score and ten treatises and supported by conclusive proof, unmistakeable evidences and clear texts from the Holy Writ, they refuted their scrolls of doubt and mischief-kindling leaflets. The Centre of Sedition was thus confounded in his craftiness, afflicted by the wrath of God. sunk into a degradation and infamy that shall be lasting until the Day of Doom. Base and wretched is the plight of the people of evil deeds, they that are in grievous loss.

And as they lost their cause, grew hopeless in their efforts against the loved ones of God, saw the Standard of His Testament waving throughout all regions and witnessed the power of the Covenant of the Merciful One. the flame of envy so blazed within them as to be beyond recounting. With the utmost vigour, exertion, rancour and enmity, they following another part, walked in another way, devised another plan: that of kindling the flame of sedition in the heart of the very government itself, and thus caused this wronged one, this prisoner to appear as a mover of strife, inimical to the government and a hater and opponent of crown. Perchance Abdu'l Baha may be put to death and his name be made to perish whereby an arena may be opened unto the enemies of the Covenant wherein they may advance and spur on their charger, inflict a grievous loss upon everyone and subvert the very foundations of the edifice of the Cause of God. For so grievous is the conduct and behaviour of this false people that they are become even as an axe striking at the very root of the Blessed Tree. Should they be suffered to continue they would, in but, a few days time, exterminate the Cause of God, His word and themselves.

Hence, the beloved of the Lord must entirely shun them, avoid them, foil their machinations and evil whisperings, guard the Law of God and His religion, engage one and all in diffusing widely the sweet savours of

God and to the best of their endeavor proclaim His Teachings.

Whosoever and whatsoever meeting becometh a hinderance to the diffusion of the Light of Faith, let the loved ones give them counsel and say: "Of all the gifts of God the greatest is the gift of Teaching. It draweth unto us the Grace of God and is our first obligation. Of such a gift how can we deprive ourselves? Nay, our lives, our goods, our comforts, our rest, we offer them all as a sacrifice for the Abha Beauty and teach the Cause of God" Caution and prudence, however must be observed even as recorded in the Book. The veil must be in no wise be suddenly rest asunder. The Glory of Glories rest upon you.

O ye the Faithful loved ones of Abdu'l Baha! It is incumbent upon you to take greatest care of Shoghi Effendi, the twig that hath branched from and the fruit given forth by Two hallowed and Divine Lote-Trees that no dust of despondency and sorrow may stain his radiant nature, that day by day he may wax greater in happiness, in joy and spirituality, and may grow to become even as a fruitful tree.

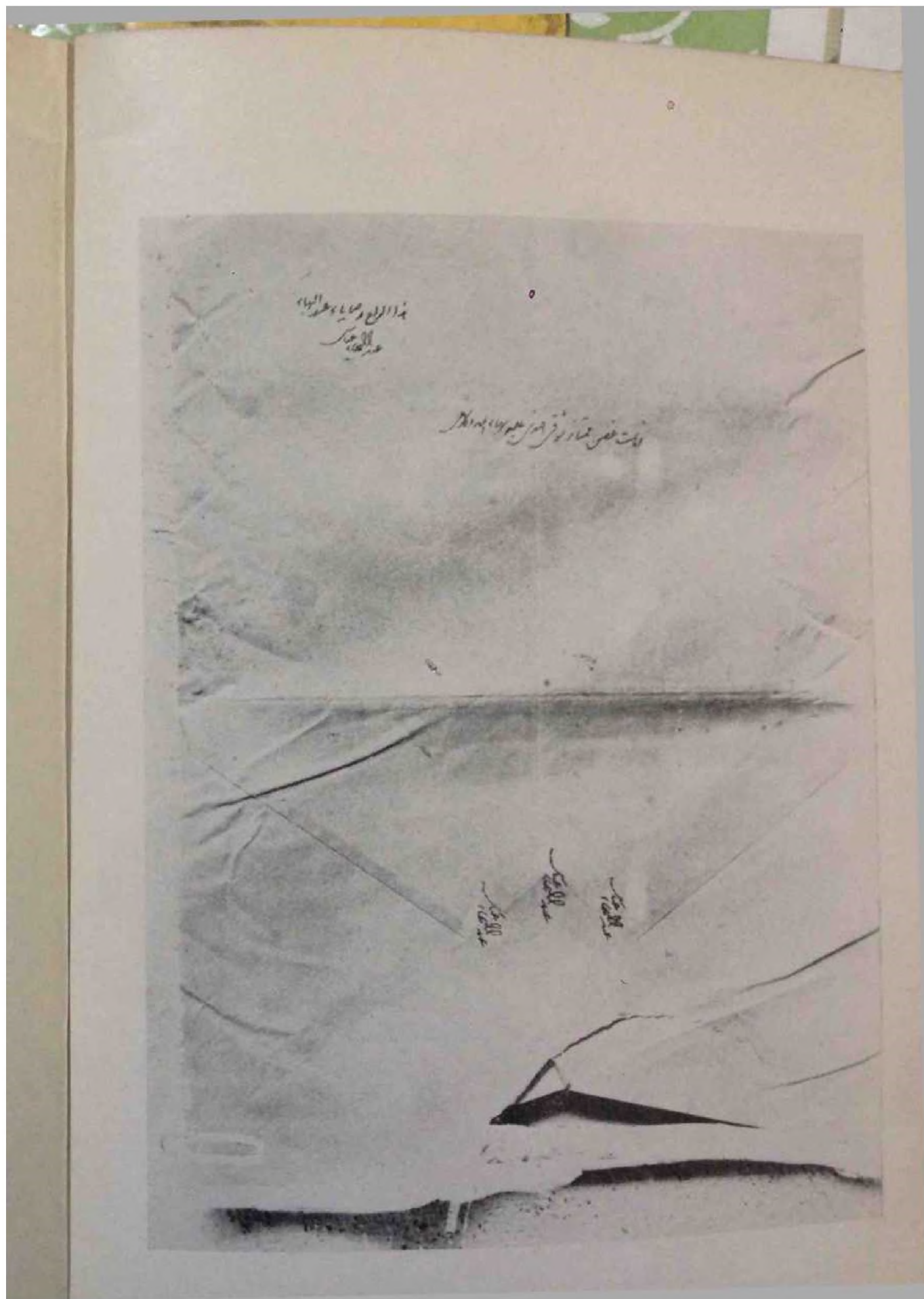
For he is after Abdu'l-Baha, the guardian of the Cause of God, the Afnan, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause and the beloved of the Lord must obey him and turn unto him. He that obeyeth him not, hath not obeyed God; he that turneth away from him hath turned away from God and he that denieth him hath denied the True One. Beware lest anyone falsely interpret these words, and like unto them that have broken the Covenant after the Day of Ascension (of Baha'u'llah) advance a pretext, raise the standard of revolt, wax stubborn and open wide the door of false interpretation. To none is given the right to put forth his own opinion or express his particular convictions. All must seek guidance and turn unto the Center of the Cause and the House of Justice. And he that turneth unto whatsoever else is indeed in grievous error.

The Glory of Glories rest upon you!

The end of the translation of the Alleged Will of Abdul Baha.

The reader will note that the translation is tabulated as "Part I," Part II," and "Part III." Yet in the original document there is no indication which is Part I, II or III. This arrangement was made by the beneficiary and alleged successor, Shoghi Effendi himself, as was also the translation. It will further be noted that Part II contradicts Parts I and III. There is no mention made in Part II that there is to be a successor and a continual line of successors. On the contrary, it confirms what both Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha said during their lifetimes, that the power of the Bahai Religion was to vest in the Houses of Justice whenever they would be established. There are many comments and deductions that I could make on this document, but these I shall have to leave for a future date.

The following ten pages are fac-simile reproductions of the alleged will of Abdul Baha



[illegible]

[illegible]

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[illegible][illegible]

[illegible]

The page facing this fac-simile reproduction of the writing of Abdu'l Baha. It was written in the Book of Unitarian church at Montclair, New Jersey, May 12, 1912 on which occasion he spoke at the church.

O Almighty! O Pure God! Thanks be unto Thee that the mountain and desert traversed, all the surrounding ocean was crossed until we arrived in this surrounding and now in this country have we loosed our tongue in Thy Name and Mention, and in this church like unto Elias have we heralded Thy Kingdom.

O God! Attract the members of this church to Thy Beauty, protect and guard them under Thy Shelter and bless them!

(Signed) ABDUL BAHA ABBAS

To be continued...





Abdu'l Baha, the Center of Covenant

THE BURNING SHRINE OF ABDUL BAHA – FAILURE OF CONSTRUCTION SAFETY OR INCINERATION OF EVIDENCE OF CORRUPTION.

The news of the fire which broke out at the under construction shrine of Abdul Baha in the early part of April was indeed very sad news. The blazing flames and the tower of bellowing smoke made the whole scene appear as an eternal inferno. Such visuals of the shrine of the Master brought both tears into my eyes as well as a rage in my heart. How could such a catastrophe happen?

The shock had not cleared out when came down the heavy hand of the administration over the dissemination of the sad news. The “Almighty Administration” without mincing words through their minion assemblies asked the faithful to stop spreading the news and also asked, in a stern tone if I may, to delete any and all media regarding this utterly sad incident.

After this sorry attempt at censorship came the, as expected, sombre sounding message :-

A major fire broke out earlier today at the construction site of the Shrine of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. The fire has now been extinguished and no one has been injured. The Holy Site of the Ridván Garden has not been affected.

Time will be required to assess the extent of the damage that has been caused and the remedial work needed. More information will be provided in this regard when it becomes available.

While this is a considerable setback for the project, the steps required to recover from it and for the construction to resume will begin as expeditiously as possible.

The Universal House of Justice

Reading this message made my heart burn with rage.

The shrine of Abdul Baha was burnt down to ashes, except for the concrete walls (which by nature are resistant to fire) nothing survived and all the Administration could do is give out a few words. Hell, even the bahai.org page about the updates to the construction of the shrine has entirely skipped this devastating episode. But then nothing better was expected from this incompetent shit piece called the administration.

I have a few pressing questions to ask



1. Why has no inquiry been initiated into the cause of the fire?
2. Why has no independent authority been appointed to survey the damage?
3. The message from the administration asked for time to “assess the damage” and suggest remedial action. It has been more than a month now. Where is the assessment and remedial action?
4. It has been reported that the construction project was insured. Then why does the administration not share the Insurance appraisers report into the fire?
5. Will the administration ultimately inform the Baha'is as to who was responsible for this mishap and what action is being pursued against him/her?

I am absolutely certain, that asking these questions will have me declared as a covenant breaker. But these are questions which desperately need answers. I have discussed this issue with other faithful and have gained

a significant insight into this devastating incident. Since the administration won't form a committee to investigate, we the faithful have formed our own committee and have noted the follows.

1. The administration routinely calls for guest workers from outside of Israel under the guise of service but they often end up doing paid work at labour rates significantly cheaper than the prevailing wages in Israel. Most of these workers come from economically backward countries with scant regard for workplace safety. Will the administration kindly clarify how many such guest (read illegal) workers were working on site at the time of this incident along with their nationalities?

2. Similar to the United States having occupational health and safety standards, Israel, being a high income OECD Nation also has rigorous standards for occupational safety. These Standards prohibit the storage of Flammable material near sources of ignition. These laws are meant to precisely prevent such an inferno. The size and magnitude of this fire shows that such laws on safety were disregarded by the administration, putting at

risk not just the project site but also the residents of the city of Haifa and the state of Israel. The incompetency of the administration seems to be greater than any fire that it can cause.

3. A friend from Eastern Europe with experience from the Insurance industry flatly labelled this incident as insurance fraud. His contention is that the money thirsty members of the administration having embezzled a tonne of money from this US\$ 77 million project found themselves in a soup to justify their expenses on account of over invoicing. Israeli Tax Authority requires audits to be submitted by the End of May each year and Audits have to report inventory to justify expenses. Any missing inventory would be reported and the same would then make headlines of financial fraud in the pool of money made up completely from donations. So the administration using their stupid little animals brains thought of burning up the Shrine of Abdul Baha in order to hide their crimes and fraud.

The Third point in particular hit hard. Knowing the malpractices (especially financial) perpetrated by these hungry for position soul less hypocrites the possibility of fraud in the construction project seems ever so likely. Also the hush around the reporting of the fire and the lack of accountability thereafter further points to their guilt. The lack of independent investigation and discussion paints the picture further black. The administration should produce before us the construction logs, material invoices and inventory reports to show where our donation is being spent. But alas, they will not even produce a coffee receipt.

The scoundrels in the administration should answer all of this and if the incompetent administration has even an iota of shame, it should permit the setting up of a fact finding committee along with a forensic audit into the books of accounts to uncover this fraud and bring out those who have committed crimes

so that they may be brought to justice.

I wish to conclude with some wise words from an old Baha'i friend – "A fire in the middle of the desert is a sign of distress. Maybe the spirituality of the Baha'i Faith is in such grave distress that the Master chose to put fire into his own shrine to act as a beacon of distress?" – Words to Ponder !



INSPIRING QUOTES



“O Lord! Unto Thee I repair for refuge and toward all Thy signs I set my heart. O Lord! Whether travelling or at home, and in my occupation or in my work, I place my whole trust in Thee. Grant me then Thy sufficing help so as to make me independent of all things, O Thou Who art unsurpassed in Thy mercy! Bestow upon me my portion, O Lord, as Thou pleasest, and cause me to be satisfied with whatsoever Thou hast ordained for me. Thine is the absolute authority to command.”

— The Bab

“Led by the light of unfailing guidance, and invested with supreme sovereignty, They are commissioned to use the inspiration of Their words, the effusions of Their infallible grace and the sanctifying breeze of Their Revelation for the cleansing of every longing heart and receptive spirit from the dross and dust of earthly cares and limitations.”

— Baha'u'llah

"The divine religions were founded for the purpose of unifying humanity and establishing universal peace. Any movement which brings about peace and agreement in human society is truly a divine movement; any reform which causes people to come together under the shelter of the same tabernacle is surely animated by heavenly motives.”

— Abdu'l Baha

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

"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 Friends,

Allah'u'Abha!

For all of us, the feelings throughout the recent reporting period have been a combination of emotions. On the one hand, we have observed the joy of Ridvan and the sombre day of the Bab's Declaration, and on the other hand, we have watched Baha'u'llah's Ascension, which was both emotional and meditative. The faithful have had the chance to re-energize their spirits and deepen their spiritual links with the Blessed Beauty as a result of these events.

During the joyous festival of Ridvan, the Administration-led hen-pack was busy with their rat race for LSA office jobs, faithful Baha'is were celebrating it to the fullest. And

by this, we mean the enormous quantity of service provided by the truly believers throughout these days of absorbing the Blessed Beauty's actual teachings. Local Seminars were hosted by friends in Singapore, Canada and USA, similar to garage sales, when loyal families invited their neighbours and friends to learn about the beautiful Baha'i message of oneness, unity, and love. It was wonderful to read about these activities that plant the seeds of future growth.

We are all aware of the catastrophe that occurred in Acca in terms of the damage caused by fire at the Master's new shrine that was being built, and the entire structure was reduced to ashes owing to a cause known only to the Administration. This episode should serve as a wake-up call to all of us. This demonstrates how the Administration's desire for power blinds them and prevents them from providing real service. Consider how much money was lost, and how much of it was contributed by Baha'is all across the world. The worst thing is that the Administration has yet to provide an update on the cost of the damage caused by the fire. No wonder Abdu'l Baha, in His infinite wisdom, elected not to appoint any offices in the Faith, understanding that service to

humanity should always come first and that power corrupts everything.

Further to that, we have an amazing news to share this time and it is about our very own 'The Caravan' app which has now been launched on the Google Play store. With this app you can now read all your favorite Caravan content on your mobile without any worries. Special thanks to the friends of Singapore who have helped us with the app launch, making it convenient for all our readers. We welcome all the Android users to download the app, add your reviews/comments on the app and spread the message amongst their friends and relatives. Let's together make it a success with the blessings of Baha'u'llah.

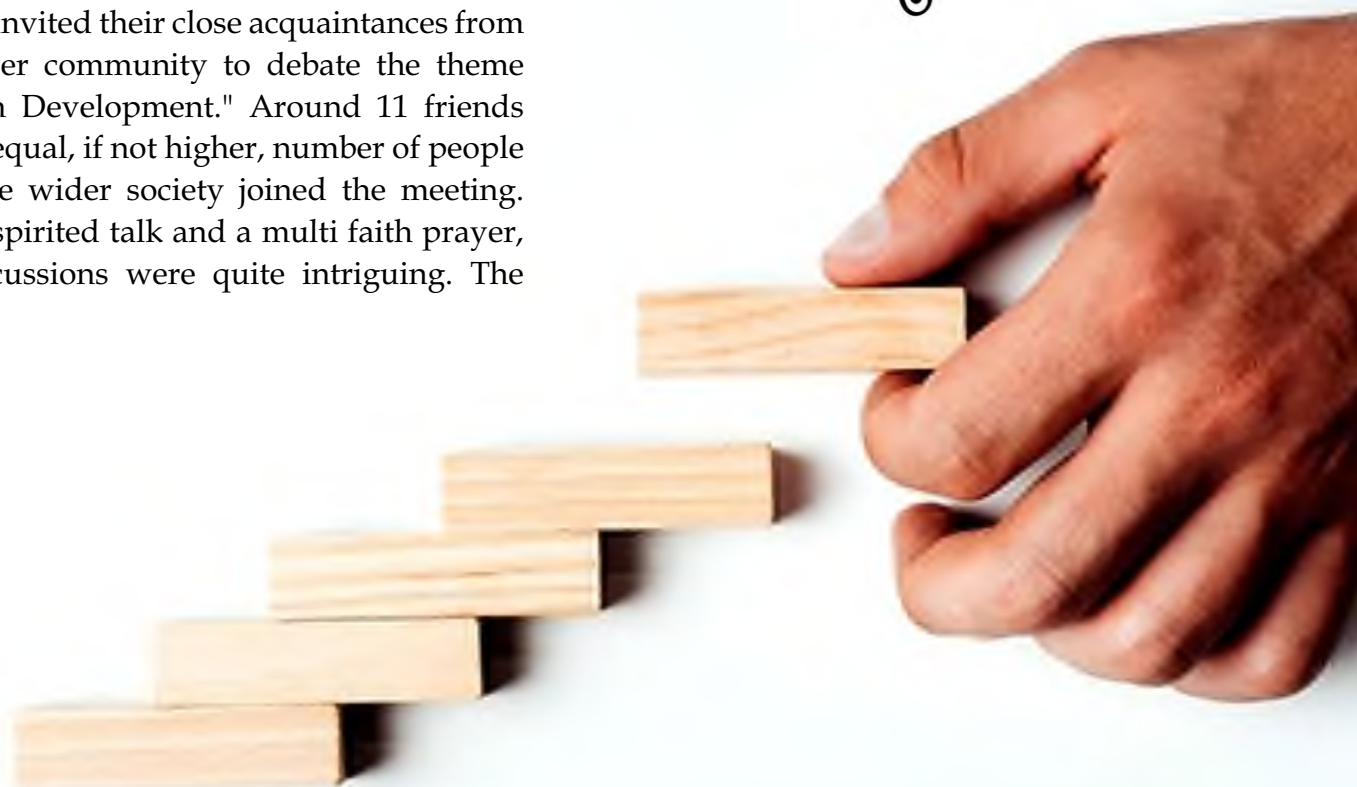
Moving on, we have received reports from our ever-growing worldwide community regarding the numerous various gatherings and meditations organised to honour the two solemn events, 'The Declaration of the Bab' and 'Baha'u'llah's Ascension'. An excerpt from a report received from the faithful in Thailand is included below: - "On the occasion of the Bab's Declaration, a party was held when friends invited their close acquaintances from the wider community to debate the theme "Human Development." Around 11 friends and an equal, if not higher, number of people from the wider society joined the meeting. With a spirited talk and a multi faith prayer, the discussions were quite intriguing. The

Bab's Mission and Baha'i desire of universal peace via service to mankind as a whole were explained to the visitors. Everyone in attendance decided to make this a regular event with conversations on various esoteric subjects. We intend to build on this foundation."

We've heard similar stories from believers in Uganda, India, and Azerbaijan, among other countries. We have been getting one positive report after another, thanks to Baha'u'llah's kindness, and we are grateful to be able to share such joy with all of our readers. The sole reward for our efforts in real devotion to Baha'u'llah is that the blessed beauty shows us success along the route. This kind of accomplishment inspires us to do more and work harder.

Warmest Baha'i regards,

Free Baha'i Team



BLAST FROM THE PAST



The STORY TELLER

THE SEA OF THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

ONCE upon a time a King of the countries of the North went out hunting. Passing from the sunny gardens of his domain he turned aside, penetrating deep into the forest, and here he came upon a man who was engaged in picking thorns.

"Who are you?" enquired the King reining in his horse.

"Only a poor thorn-picker," the man answered.

"And do you come here every day?"

"Oh, should I miss one day, my people would go hungry."

The King considered for a while and then he said:

"If you will come with me, and follow my instructions you will learn the secret of the Philosopher's Stone, which turns base metal into gold."

"Very well. I am not equal to this hard work. I will go."

"But first you should realize that the trail is encompassed with temptations, and that you must not be drawn aside, but renouncing all things, ever follow me."

"Yes, yes, I will do anything."

"Then come, you shall have a trial."

The King pressed his horse with his knee and continued on his way, and the

thorn-picker threw aside his stiletto and began to trudge after him.

For long hours they picked their path through the tangled forest until the trees began to thin, and all of a sudden they emerged upon a wide field which lay shimmering under the rays of the sun.

"Why is this field so brilliant?" the thorn-picker asked.

"The soil of this field is made of silver."

"Oh, oh, may I not fill my pockets with it?"

"No, for on this road you should turn neither to the right nor to the left."

The thorn-picker sighing, fixed his gaze on the tail of the King's horse and so patiently advanced over the luminous field until they entered a plain which stretched glittering out of sight.

"What is this yellow marvel?" the thorn-picker caught his breath.

"The sand of this plain is made of gold."

"Gold! Gold! So much gold, while I and my family are starving."

"Come, come my brother. Did I not promise to make you rich?"

"Yes, but here are riches! A pocket full is all I ask!"

"On this quest, you cannot stop along the way."

The thorn-picker muttered discontentedly, blinking at the far-flung stretches of gold dust, but followed nevertheless, until presently they came upon a dazzling desert, and here he stopped crying wildly:

"Tell me, tell me, what is this? My eyes are blinded by the light."

"This is the diamond desert."

"Diamonds! All these priceless diamonds! A single one would make me independent!"

"Be not a child, for I have promised you the secret of the Philosopher's Stone."

The thorn-picker began to whimper, staring through his tears at the brilliant gems, but all the while the King's horse kept moving on, and desperately he stumbled after him.

So they plowed ahead until at last they reached the rim of the desert and lo! an ocean was spread out before them, glowing beneath the setting sun!

Then cried the King exultantly:

"Behold the Sea of the Philosopher's Stone; one drop of which will transmute all lesser metals into purest gold!"

The thorn-picker, who was now extremely tired looked but dully at the

opalescent surface of the magic Ocean, and as he looked, another thorn-picker appeared upon the scene and advancing to his side whispered:

"Today a number of our Guild went on strike, so a load of thorns is fetching high prices in the city. If you come with me you can make a nice profit in the time before the strike is settled."

Then the thorn-picker became greatly excited and, forgetting the Sea of the Philosopher's Stone and the inexhaustible fortune awaiting him, turned back.

The King in pity cried after him, but he would not listen.

"You have fooled me all day! You cannot fool me again! I have had enough!"

So the thorn-picker retraced his steps and with his comrade gathered quantities of thorns; but when he entered the city, he learned to his dismay that the strike was non-existent and that the price of thorns was even lower than before.

Then the poor man remembered the deserts of silver, gold and diamond, and the Sea of the Philosopher's Stone. Frenziedly he ran from the city, deliriously calling over the plains; but though he searched for endless days and nights, he found no more the traces of glory, nor heard the voice of the King.

(Reference: The New History Magazine, October 1931)



SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

Are Baha'is allowed to convert through marriage?

Answer:

Hello,

Allah'u'Abha! Hope you are doing well and staying safe.

Marriage is an extremely personal decision and as per the teachings of the Baha'i faith, not even parents are allowed to interfere or force either the girl or the boy on each other. Let's look at what Abdu'l Baha has to say on this topic.

"As for the question regarding marriage under the Law of God: first thou must choose one who is pleasing to thee, and then the matter is subject to the consent of father and mother. Before thou makest thy choice, they have no right to interfere." (Selections from

the writings of Abdu'l Baha, page 118)

On the same page, Abdu'l Baha says –

"The true marriage of Baha'is is this, that husband and wife should be united both physically and spiritually, that they may ever improve the spiritual life of each other, and may enjoy everlasting unity throughout all the worlds of God. This is Baha'i marriage." - Abdu'l Baha

Baha'u'llah calls marriage to be a fortress of well being and salvation –

"...He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity..."

Overall, marriage is a pure notion built on love that will assist both the husband and wife in living a happy and prosperous life. If this pure connection is not established on the

pillars of love and is just for the purpose of converting someone to the Baha'i religion, it will undoubtedly be contrary to Baha'u'llah's teachings and will not lead to salvation. However, if one marries a non-Baha'i in the middle of love, trust, and harmony with the aim of having a pure soul walk along the correct road, then his or her thoughts are pure, and he will undoubtedly be successful. But, once again, your motives should be pure, and this connection should be built on love.

Hope that answers your question. Do write back in case of any further queries.

Thanks and regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 2:

What are your thoughts on the accident that happened at the shrine of the Master because of which it was bought down to ashes? Do you think this is a curse of Baha'u'llah so that the Baha'is can open their eyes?

Answer:

Hi William,

Allah'u'Abha!

It was a tragic event that should have been commemorated by Baha'is all across the world as a sorrowful day. We pity all the Baha'is, young and old, who contributed to our cause just to see their money squandered like this. Between all of this, the most terrible aspect was the Administration's attempt to keep this information from reaching Baha'is. The story was even removed from media websites, and LSA and NSA members all across the world were instructed to ensure that no one was talking about it or disseminating it in their networks or on social media. People were asked to delete their messages from WhatsApp groups and many a WhatsApp groups were restricted to Admins only post so that only LSA members can post on those groups.

People were requested to remove their messages from WhatsApp groups, and many of them were locked to admin-only posts so that only LSA members could write. This also shows that the Baha'i Administration and UHJ members are neither infallible or capable, as they are sometimes claimed to be, or else the tale would be different. We have long questioned the UHJ members' and Administration's positions, and this occurrence might now serve as proof against

the entire system. How can they conceal the actual essence of the Baha'i institution since the whole Administration failed to preserve the building project, which turned out to be a disaster?!

According to your viewpoint, the Baha'is may finally open their eyes as a result of Baha'u'llah's chastisement. It is past time for the entire Baha'i world to reflect on how they initially destroyed Baha'u'llah's teachings. Although the construction project can be renewed, can the goal of just withholding power and reigning over innocent Baha'is ever lead to the creation of Baha'u'llah's true teachings? The current version of UHJ is far far from Baha'u'llah's teachings, and its intentions are to lead Baha'is away from the actual essence of the faith and to strive for their own personal gain. May Baha'u'llah keep us safe from their nefarious plans.

Please contact us if you have any more questions.

Thanks, and regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 3:

How can you prove your point of Baha'is being allowed to go to mosques and churches by looking at Abdul Baha visiting the mosque? He used to go there maybe because there were no Baha'i houses of worship then, but when now we have our own houses of worship, why is there even a need to go to other religious places?

Answer:

Hi Glenn,

Allah'u'Abha!

Our statement about Baha'is being able to attend mosques, chapels, and temples is solely based on Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha's words and acts. Their behaviours and words are in harmony, sending the message that visiting other religions' places of worship is not only acceptable, but encouraged. Just remember that the objective of your visit must be solely to commemorate His name. When Baha'u'llah and the Master were in Baghdad and Akka, they both visited mosques. The Master visited and lectured at numerous temples, churches, synagogues, and even mosques



PIC: Abdu'l Baha's coffin coming out of a mosque in Haifa, Israel

while travelling across Egypt, Europe, and North America. In these places of worship, He gave a number of recorded discourses. Not only that, but following his death, his coffin was taken to a mosque for last prayers, and hundreds of people attended the burial, which was attended by not just Baha'is but also members of other faiths.

The Master was not only visiting the mosque, but he also used to pray there, according to reports. Mohammed Ali Faizi writes on page 341 of his book *The Life of Abdu'l Baha* that the Master used to attend Friday congregation prayers at a Mosque in Israel and would offer alms to beggars thereafter. This plainly indicates that he did it for his own pleasure and for the purpose of Him alone, rather than under duress. I hope this has answered your question.

Do let us know if you have any other queries/feedback/suggestions. We will be happy to help you!

Regards, **Team Free Baha'is**

KNOW YOUR HERITAGE

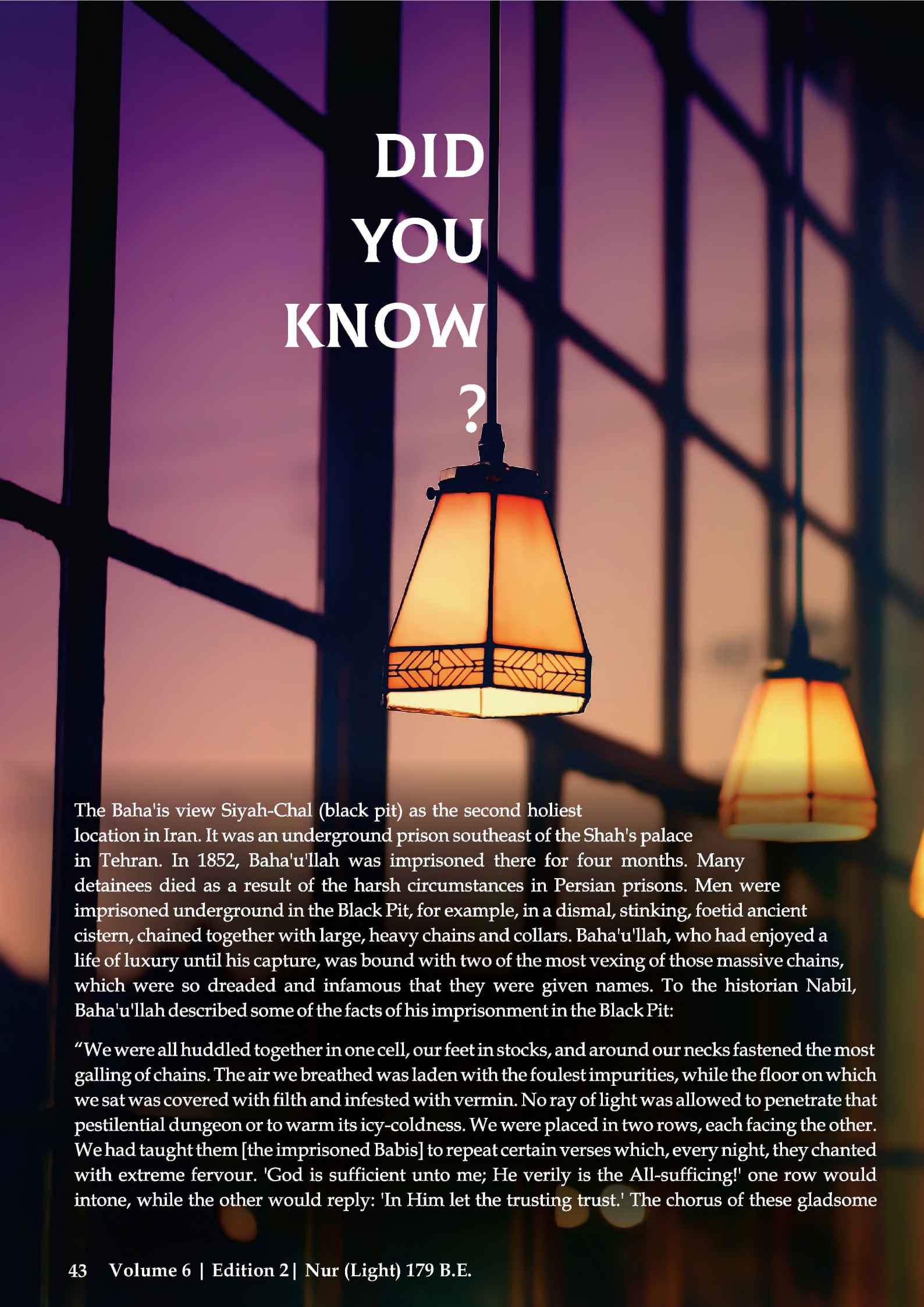


Baha'u'llah's pen nib made of metal.

INTRODUCING *THE CARAVAN* APP!



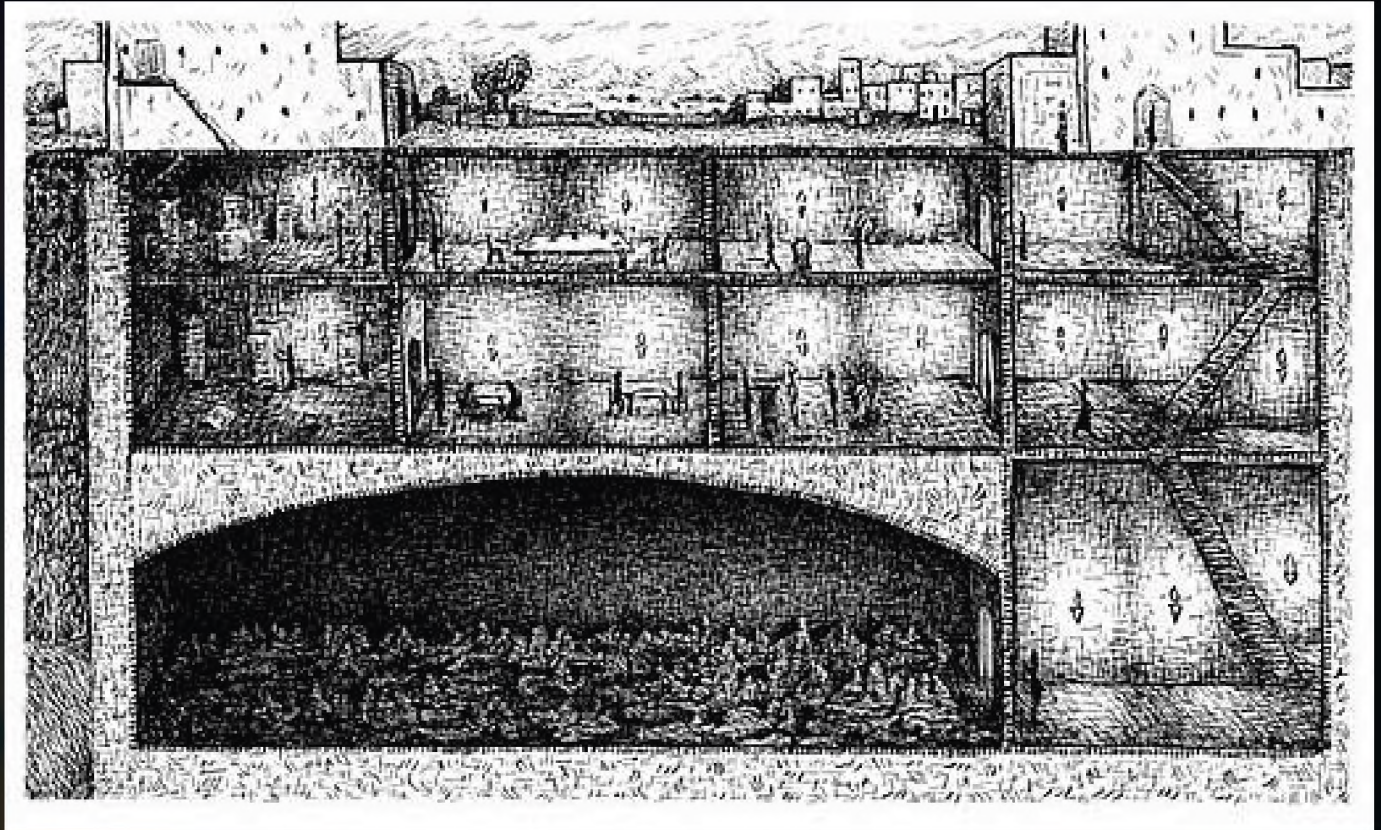
DID YOU KNOW ?



The Baha'is view Siyah-Chal (black pit) as the second holiest location in Iran. It was an underground prison southeast of the Shah's palace in Tehran. In 1852, Baha'u'llah was imprisoned there for four months. Many detainees died as a result of the harsh circumstances in Persian prisons. Men were imprisoned underground in the Black Pit, for example, in a dismal, stinking, foetid ancient cistern, chained together with large, heavy chains and collars. Baha'u'llah, who had enjoyed a life of luxury until his capture, was bound with two of the most vexing of those massive chains, which were so dreaded and infamous that they were given names. To the historian Nabil, Baha'u'llah described some of the facts of his imprisonment in the Black Pit:

"We were all huddled together in one cell, our feet in stocks, and around our necks fastened the most galling of chains. The air we breathed was laden with the foulest impurities, while the floor on which we sat was covered with filth and infested with vermin. No ray of light was allowed to penetrate that pestilential dungeon or to warm its icy-coldness. We were placed in two rows, each facing the other. We had taught them [the imprisoned Babis] to repeat certain verses which, every night, they chanted with extreme fervour. 'God is sufficient unto me; He verily is the All-sufficing!' one row would intone, while the other would reply: 'In Him let the trusting trust.' The chorus of these gladsome

voices would continue to peal out until the early hours of the morning. Their reverberation would fill the dungeon, and, piercing its massive walls, would reach the ears of Nasiri'd-Din Shah [Persia's king], whose palace was not far distant from the place where we were imprisoned. 'What means this sound?' he was reported to have exclaimed. 'It is the anthem the Babis are intoning in their prison,' they replied. The Shah made no further remarks, nor did he attempt to restrain the enthusiasm his prisoners, despite the horrors of their confinement, continued to display."



But, despite the anguish, starvation, and terrible suffering he and the other Babis endured there, something extraordinary happened to Baha'u'llah in that dungeon: he saw, in a vision, a foreshadowing of his and humanity's future:

"While engulfed in tribulations I heard a most wondrous, a most sweet voice, calling above My head. Turning My face, I beheld a Maiden — the embodiment of the remembrance of the name of My Lord — suspended in the air before Me. So rejoiced was she in her very soul that her countenance shone with the ornament of the good pleasure of God, and her cheeks glowed with the brightness of the All-Merciful. Betwixt earth and heaven she was raising a call which captivated the hearts and minds of men. She was imparting to both My inward and outer being tidings which rejoiced My soul, and the souls of God's honoured servants.

Pointing with her finger unto My head, she addressed all who are in heaven and all who are on earth, saying: By God! This is the Best-Beloved of the worlds, and yet ye comprehend not. This is the Beauty of God amongst you, and the power of His sovereignty within you, could ye but understand. This is the Mystery of God and His Treasure, the Cause of God and His glory unto all who are in the kingdoms of Revelation and of creation, if ye be of them that perceive. This is He Whose Presence is the ardent desire of the denizens of the Realm of eternity, and of them that dwell within the Tabernacle of glory, and yet from His Beauty do ye turn aside." – Baha'u'llah, *The Summons of the Lord of Hosts*, pp. 5-6.



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

“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!

WEBSPLORE



Posted by u/Amir_Raddsh 29 minutes ago



Vote

Some bahá'ís are finally waking up!



  18 h · 

Hello, I have not attended a Baha'i meetings for many months, I have met with individuals & couples. I live in a fairly isolated (Baha'i wise) part of England. So please understand I can only speak from a limited "English" experience. My point is: partly my withdrawal is due to the present process of growth & lack of true reflection within that process which seems to have restricted growth & open consultation. Whenever I have brought up my reservations regarding the activities of the Bahai community I simply but politely get told I'm doing it wrong & keep trying. The Bahai Community in UK is stagnating from what I understand & the process of the Teaching institute seems a major factor in this. I realise this is not a direct question but hope I have made myself clear & would appreciate any thoughts/comments. thank you



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THROWBACK



Born Aqa Buzurg-i-Nishapuri, the son of a devoted Babi, he was later given the title Badi' (unique, wonderful) by Baha'u'llah.

Reputed to be a wild, unruly youth, he had no interest in his father's affairs until, during the visit to his home of a traveling teacher, Mulla Muhammadi-Zarandi (Nabil-i-A'zam), he listened to some verses from a long poem by Baha'u'llah and was so entranced that he devoted the balance of his life to serving Him. After his conversion he set out to visit Him, traveling on foot from Mosul to 'Akka. It was during this visit that he was chosen to deliver a letter (Tablet) from Baha'u'llah to Nasiri'd-Din Shah. (The A to Z of the Baha'i Faith by Hugh Adamson)

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?



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**PUBLISHED BY THE FREE BAHA'I FAITH
IN
SINGAPORE | THAILAND | USA**



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**THE CARAVAN || REVIVED EDITION
VOLUME 6 - EDITION 2**

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