

THE CARAVAN

Alarming decline in the
Baha'i population of The
United States

Article Inside

Baha'i friends should utilise
their Huququ'llah funds for
the advancement of
society

Details Inside

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PRAYER



He is the All-Glorious!

O God, my God! Lowly and tearful, I raise my suppliant hands to Thee and cover my face in the dust of that Threshold of Thine, exalted above the knowledge of the learned, and the praise of all that glorify Thee. Graciously look upon Thy servant, humble and lowly at Thy door, with the glances of the eye of Thy mercy, and immerse him in the Ocean of Thine eternal grace.

Lord! He is a poor and lowly servant of Thine, enthralled and imploring Thee, captive in Thy hand, praying fervently to Thee, trusting in Thee, in tears before Thy face, calling to Thee and beseeching Thee, saying:

O Lord, my God! Give me Thy grace to serve Thy loved ones, strengthen me in my servitude to Thee, illumine my brow with the light of adoration in Thy court of holiness, and of prayer to Thy kingdom of grandeur. Help me to be selfless at the heavenly entrance of Thy gate, and aid me to be detached from all things within Thy holy precincts. Lord! Give me to drink from the chalice of selflessness; with its robe clothe me, and in its ocean immerse me. Make me as dust in the pathway of Thy loved ones, and grant that I may offer up my soul for the earth ennobled by the footsteps of Thy chosen ones in Thy path, O Lord of Glory in the Highest.

With this prayer doth Thy servant call Thee, at dawning and in the night-season. Fulfill his heart's desire, O Lord! Illumine his heart, gladden his bosom, kindle his light, that he may serve Thy Cause and Thy servants.

Thou art the Bestower, the Pitiful, the Most Bountiful, the Gracious, the Merciful, the Compassionate.

- Abdu'l Baha

(This prayer is read at His Shrine. It is also used in private prayer)



FOREWORD

“...to ordain in the course of this year what shall exalt Thy loved ones. Do Thou, moreover, decree within this year what will enable the Daystar of Thy power to shine brightly above the horizon of Thy glory and to illuminate by Thy sovereign might, the whole world.” – Baha'u'llah, Prayers and Meditations, p. 146.

A merry and wonderful Naw-Ruz to all of our readers from the whole Free Baha'is team!

Families get together at Naw-Ruz to celebrate the completion of another year and the prospect of renewal in the year to come. It is a joyful time. As Baha'u'llah stated himself, “...a day on which the breath of life is wafted over all created things.” (Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah, p. 14.)


Every morning marks the beginning of a Naw-Ruz that cries out to be revitalised. We might question ourselves: How can I think differently today to improve things? every morning. How can I alter my speech to make my conversations more interesting? How can I act today to demonstrate my faith in the inherent worth of every person? How can I

muster the guts to let these traits and qualities shine through in every area of my life?

In order to fulfill our destiny – that is, to create a society in which every daybreak is a Naw-Ruz – we have a duty to purify our spirits, enlighten our thinking, elevate our discourse, and enhance our behaviour.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to the first series of the 7th Volume of the Caravan magazine as Naw-Ruz approaches. We are happy to hear that you appreciate the magazine and the effort put into it. We should also emphasise that it would not have been possible without the assistance and support of each and every one of our readers, since it is only with your backing that we can keep making our little attempts to spread the news about Baha'u'llah.

This magazine will continue to feature the laws from Kitab-i-Aqdas, Blast from the Past, Did You Know, Guest Articles, and other ongoing series in which you have all shown a great deal of interest. If any of our readers have new suggestions for expanding the



magazine's content, please let us know; we'll be sure to incorporate them.

If you have any more suggestions, comments, or questions, feel free to write to us, and we will respond. Maintain your health and happiness till then!

Stay blessed,

The Free Baha'i Team

A NEW BEGINNING— WITH PRAYER AND HOPE



With new hopes and a prayer,
Let us have fresh beginnings,
With new commitments,
Let us have trust and hope,
Yesterday's provide lessons,
Tomorrows are the new hope,
Let us light the lamps of faith,
Let us make efforts for the future,
Good wishes of the friends,
Unconditional love of the loved ones,
And a little bit of motivation,
That's all we desire — -
To realise our dreams,
To achieve our ambitions,
To smile through each tear,
To have a blessed new year!

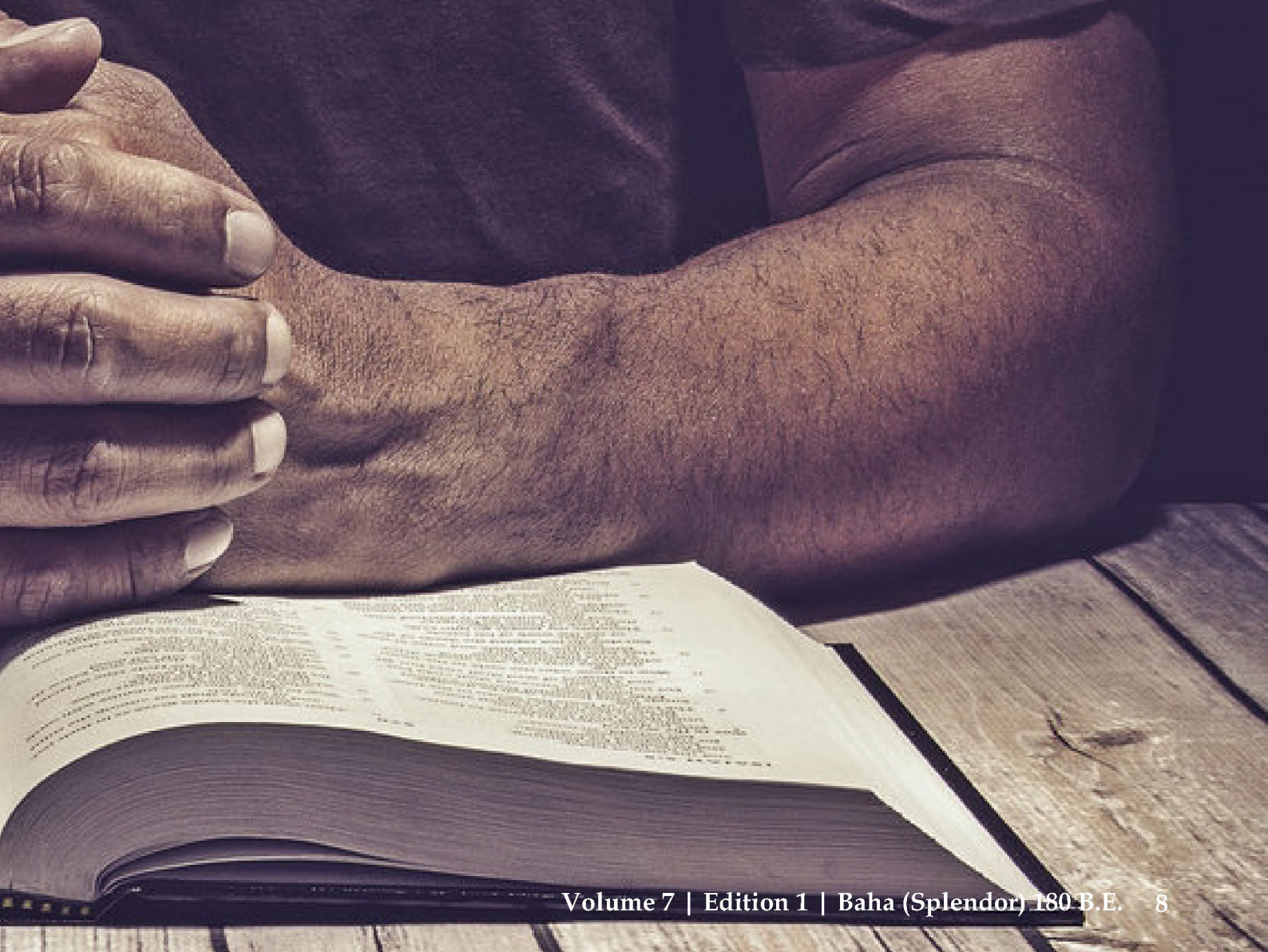
Chitrangada Sharan

DIVINE LAWS

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

Say: This is the Hidden knowledge which never changes because it begins with al-ta' (nine), which indicates the treasured, manifest, well-fortified and unapproachable Name. The inheritance which We have assigned especially for the offspring is of the favour (fadl) of God that they may thank their Lord, the Merciful, the Compassionate. These are the stipulations of God. Do not transgress them because of your own passions. Follow what you are commanded to do by the Rising-place of Explanation (al- Bayan). The sincere ones will see the stipulations of God, the Water of Life to the people of (all) religions, and the Lamp of Wisdom and Prosperity to those who are in the earths and heavens.

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



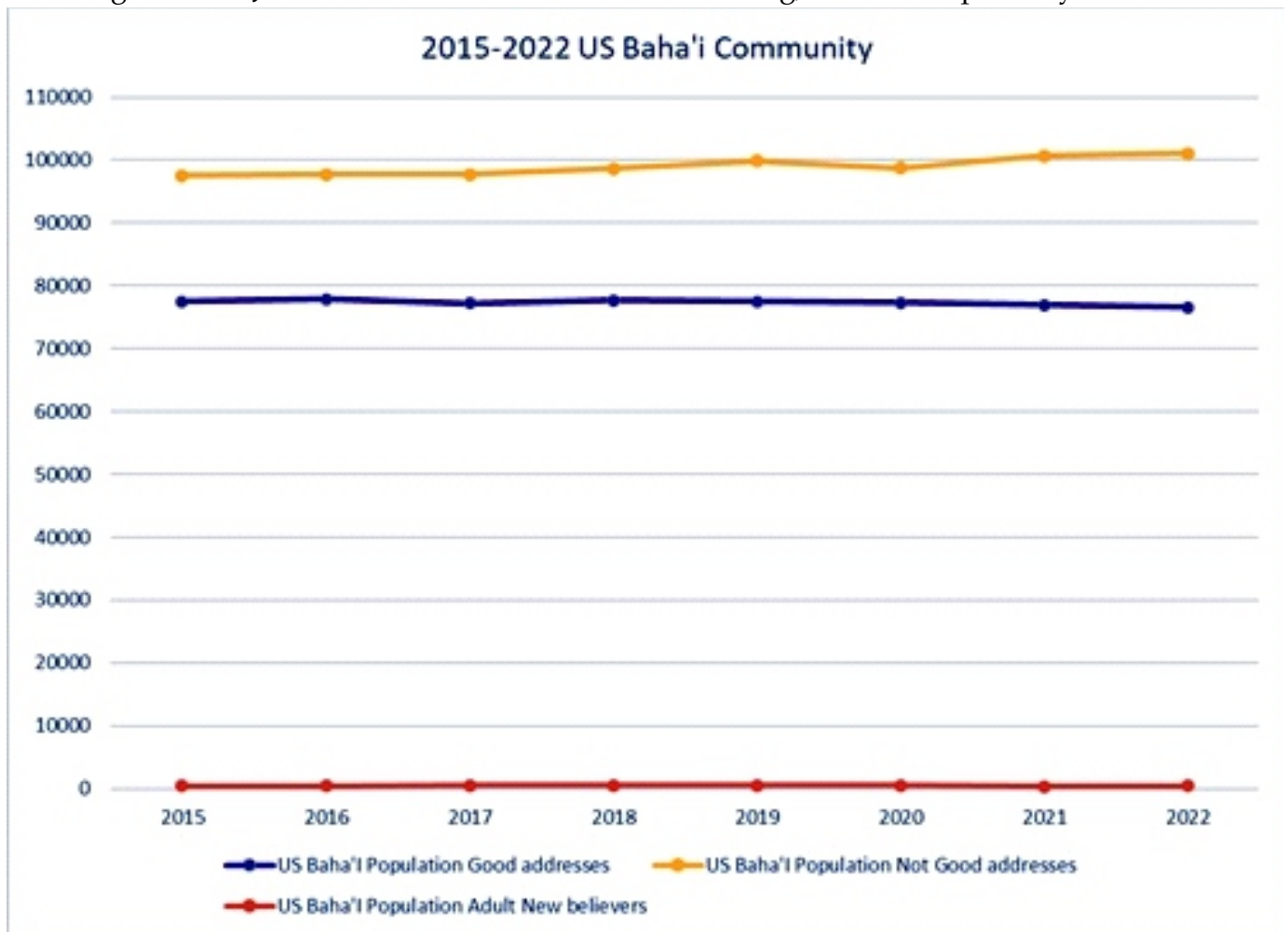


1912 - Abdu'l Baha greeting guests, New Jersey (USA)

ALARMING DECLINE IN THE BAHAI POPULATION OF THE UNITED STATES

– GUEST ARTICLE

The effect of Administration on the expansion of Baha'is across the world has been observed. Although the UHJ asserts that the numbers are increasing, we have repeatedly shown that the

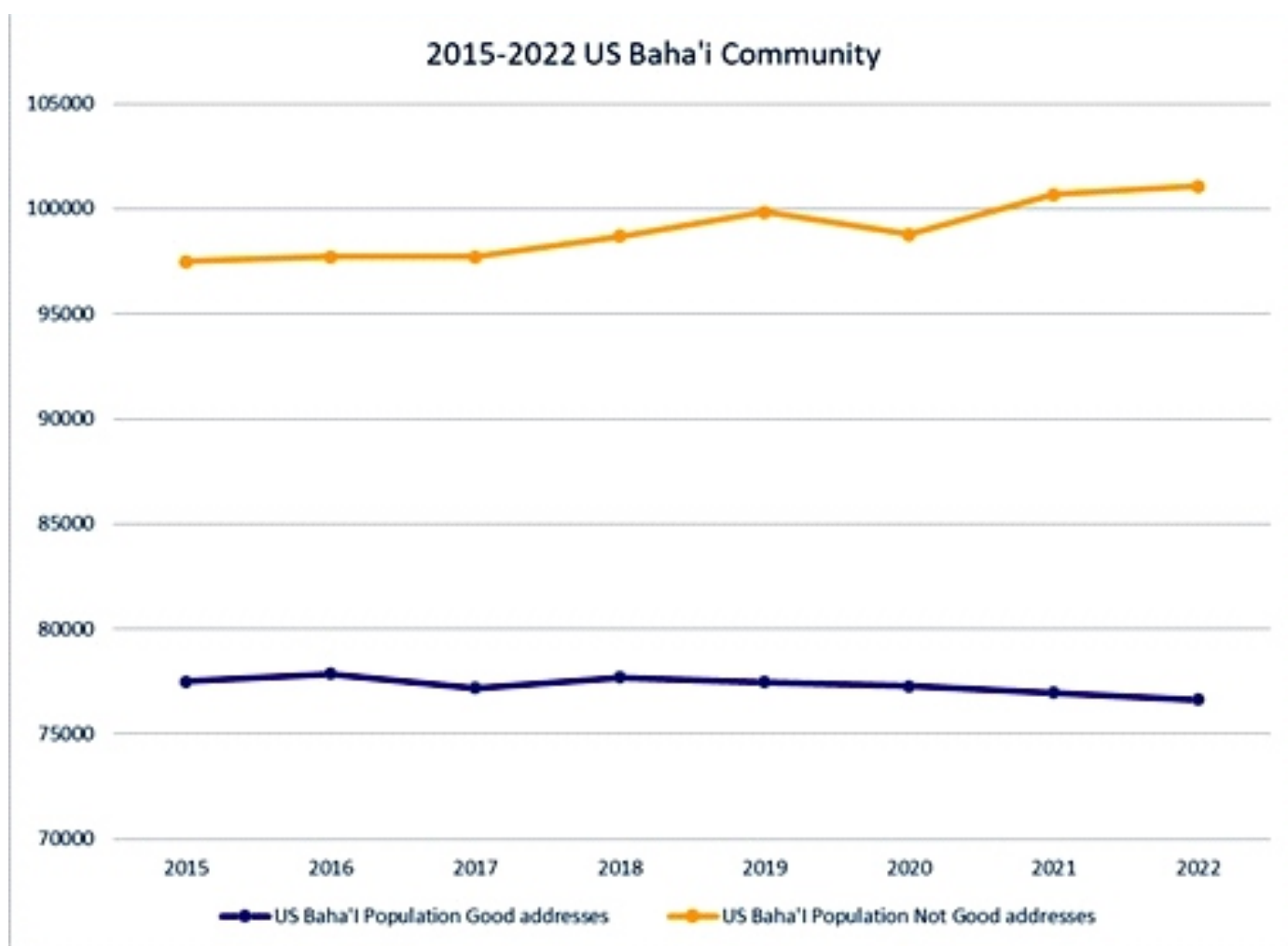


numbers are really declining, and in a dramatic way. Today, I'll provide another disheartening finding that will help you see why there are fewer Baha'is in the US. The number of Baha'is in the US is declining at a pace of 300 per year. At this rate, it is thus impossible to predict where the Baha'i population will be in 20 years. Mind amazing.

Australia and India are unable to match such a steady reduction. The Haifans are not the fastest-growing sect, as the International House of Justice continues to assert, and it is time to start embracing reality. They should admit that their cult, which is founded on a forged will, is fading away quickly.

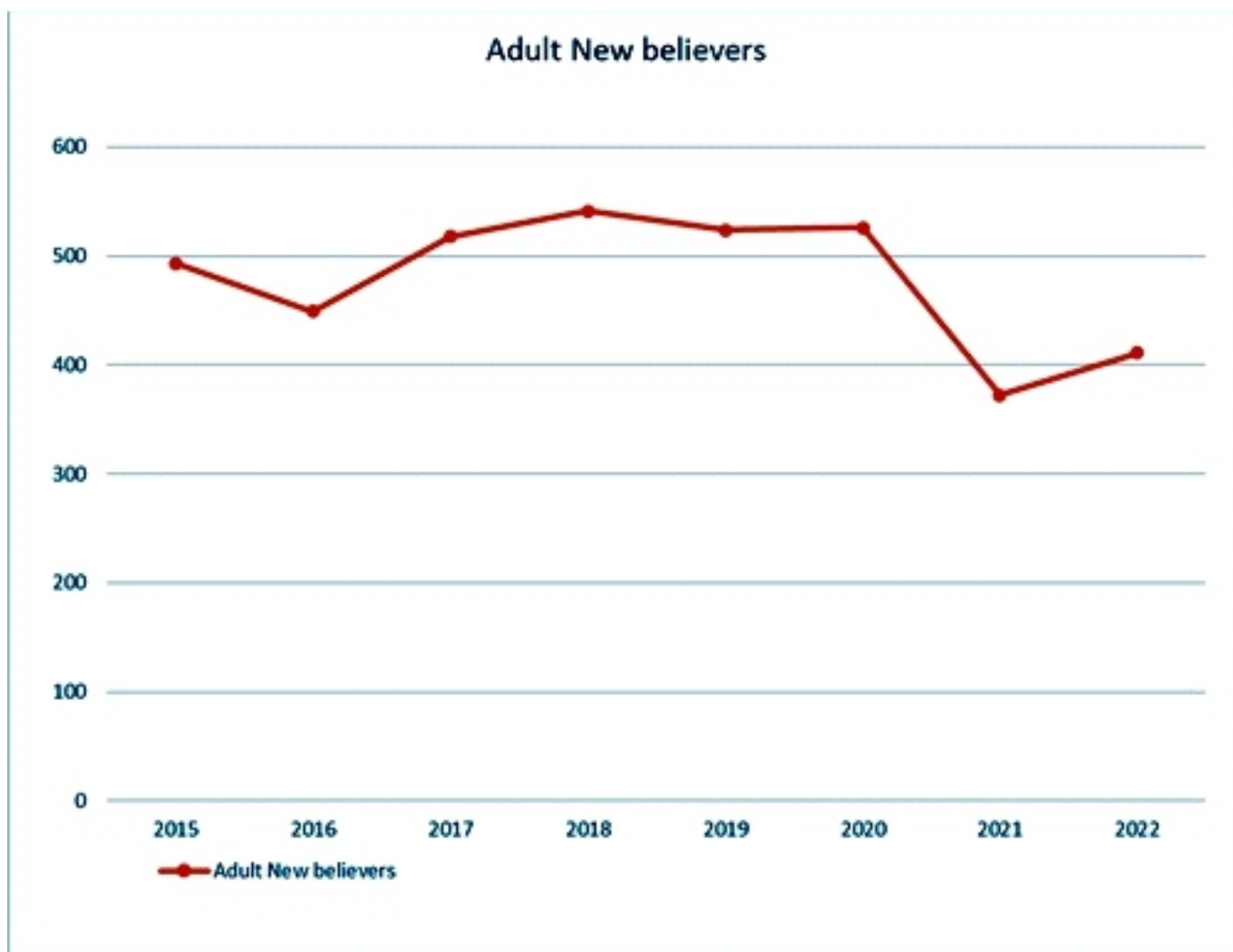
According to page 19 of the US Annual Report for 2022, the SRP provides data for regional and local areas, while the NSA Statistics Office creates community statistics.

Please see the statistics from the US Annual Report, 2015–2022, in the charts above.



According to statistics for the US's last seven years, the overall population is declining by a net 300 people per year, with the adult Baha'is having a negative and falling slope and the bad addresses having an upward and positive slope.

The registration of adults becomes essential to not only the human resources of the Cause but also the financial resources because only enrolled Haifan Baha'is are permitted to vote, donate towards different Baha'i Funds, and perform elected and appointed roles during the last seven years. It



would be advantageous to have the precise quantitative facts and knowledge required to understand our own reality since the House of Justice indicates that friends and institutions should be able to read their own realities.

The Free Baha'is have warned the faithful for a very long time about the perils of departing from the authentic teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, and how such departures can only result in the degradation of the faithful's spirituality and an abject lack of interest in it.

An Haifan Baha'i does not desire to be close to Baha'u'llah; rather, he desires to be a part of the administration, to hold jobs there, and to occasionally be appointed to various boards. The spirituality of the Baha'is has suffered greatly as a result of this lack of interest. The loss of spirituality, or lack thereof, is evidenced by the enormous number of Baha'is who leave the Cause on an annual basis.

Let's just hope that this doesn't have a significant influence on other sects. The faithful should not be forced to follow the Ruhi Curriculum; instead, we should jointly start focusing more on the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah and on our original texts, such as the Hidden Words and Tablets of Baha'u'llah. It is painful to witness the spirituality and religion of the faithful being so completely eradicated from their hearts, and it begs the question: Does the Baha'i administration truly accomplish anything other than collect Huququ'llah and spend it as they choose without providing the faithful with an account? I really wish there had been a way for people to confront the Administration and put an end to the Huququ'llah Scam, which is taking place in the name of

the Cause.

Some Baha'i sects hold the opinion that the current Administration which was introduced by Shoghi Effendi, is invalid since the Master's Will and Testament were purportedly forged. Shoghi Effendi forcibly took the post of Guardianship in line with this forged Will and Testament, and he set up an administration that did not follow the Master's and Baha'u'llah's teachings. We, the Free Baha'is suffer painful anguish when we see individuals leaving the faith, which is clearly a result of the forgery of the Master's Will and Testament. May Baha'u'llah provide us with the perseverance and divine support we require to serve the Cause with the utmost sincerity.

-Richard



INTRODUCING

THE CARAVAN

APP!



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)

INSPIRING QUOTES



“Regard not the all-sufficing power of God as an idle fancy. It is that genuine faith which thou cherishest for the Manifestation of God in every Dispensation. It is such faith which sufficeth above all the things that exist on the earth, whereas no created thing on earth besides faith would suffice thee. If thou art not a believer, the Tree of divine Truth would condemn thee to extinction. If thou art a believer, thy faith shall be sufficient for thee above all things that exist on earth, even though thou possess nothing.”

— The Bab

“Happy is the man who will arise to serve My Cause, and glorify My beauteous Name. Take hold of My Book with the power of My might, and cleave tenaciously to whatsoever commandment thy Lord, the Ordainer, the All-Wise, hath prescribed therein. Behold, O Mu ammadd, how the sayings and doings of the followers of Shí'ih Islám have dulled the joy and fervor of its early days, and tarnished the pristine brilliancy of its light. In its primitive days, whilst they still adhered to the precepts associated with the name of their Prophet, the Lord of mankind, their career was marked by an unbroken chain of victories and triumphs. As they gradually strayed from the path of their Ideal Leader and Master, as they turned away from the Light of God and corrupted the principle of His Divine unity, and as they increasingly centered their attention upon them who were only the revealers of the potency of His Word, their power was turned into weakness, their glory into shame, their courage into fear. Thou dost witness to what a pass they have come. Behold, how they have joined partners with Him Who is the Focal-Point of Divine unity. Behold how their evil doings have hindered them from recognizing, in the Day of Resurrection, the Word of Truth, exalted be His glory. We cherish the hope that this people will henceforth shield themselves from vain hopes and idle fancies, and will attain to a true understanding of the meaning of Divine unity.”

— Baha'u'llah

" Praise be to God! Man ever aspires to greater heights and loftier goals. He ever seeks to attain a world surpassing that which he inhabits, and to ascend to a degree above that which he occupies. This love of transcendence is one of the hallmarks of man. I am astonished that certain philosophers in Europe and America have consented to lower themselves to the animal realm and so to regress, whereas all existence must ever aspire towards exaltation. And yet, were you to call one of them an animal, he would be most hurt and offended.”

— Abdu'l Baha

FREE BAHAI ACTIVITIES

"O friends! It behoveth you to refresh and revive your souls through the gracious favours which in this Divine, this soul-stirring Springtime are being showered upon you." – Baha'u'llah

Dear Baha'i faithful,

Allah'u'Abha!

We'd like to extend our warmest greetings on the joyous occasion of Naw Ruz, the Baha'i new year that is observed by Baha'is all around the world. We are introducing a few new sections in the Caravan Magazine to coincide with the start of the new Baha'i year.

First of all, a friend from Australia requested that we restart our series of shared book excerpts since he thought it was intriguing. This new addition, "A fraudulent testament devalues the Baha'i religion into political Shoghism," was authored by Hermann Zimmer, one of the early German Baha'is. The Will and Testament of Abdu'l Baha, according to Mr. Zimmer, is a false document. Shoghi Effendi altered it for his own benefit in order to submit a Guardianship application. He turned into a power-hungry individual who excommunicated every member of Abdu'l Baha's family, including his own parents, in order to establish himself as the world's ruler.

He violated the most basic tenet of the Baha'i Faith "Independent Investigation of the Truth" and labeled the followers of the Baha'i Faith as "Harmful Elements", as "Enemies" or "Crazy". This book will teach readers some astounding truths concerning Abdu'l Baha's Will and Testament, which will undoubtedly open everyone's eyes.

The fact that the Caravan is moving and that more and more people are banding together to rebel against the Administration gives the Free Baha'is great pride. The Free Baha'is are escaping the grip of Administration and joining this Caravan, albeit they are fewer in number. They are actively working to propagate the Baha'u'llah word in the manner that the Master taught it. They don't utilize any artificial teaching techniques, such as Ruhi Curriculums, where both the instructor and the pupils are confused and the teacher's main goal is to appease the Administration by telling them how many Ruhi courses are held in each cluster.

Following the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah, the Free Baha'is of Thailand, in order to show compassion and love to all people and respect all religions equally, decided to hold a seminar around the new year where key

figures from different communities were present. It was attended by 158 people, and the theme of this event was 'The earth is but one country, and Mankind its citizens', which is also the message of Baha'u'llah. Sadly, friends are taught to hate Baha'is who do not follow administration in the Ruhi Courses, despite the fact that Jesus Christ, who was killed for the sins of mankind, never harbored hatred for anybody. Can the administration provide any writings or statements made by Baha'u'llah or the Master that refer to Ruhi Classes? Due to the pressure of the Administration and its limitations, an increasing number of Baha'is are now abandoning their faith – refer to the Guest Article in this magazine for more details.

A few friends from the United States and Germany wrote to us to express their belief that the Ruhi Courses were developed by the Administration with the intention of distracting Baha'is from Baha'u'llah's true teachings. He believes that by doing this, the Baha'is won't enquire into the accounting of the cash being raised in the name of Huququ'llah. For instance, where are these billions of dollars being spent? Another Canadian acquaintance wrote to us and inquired as to why the UHJ withheld the statement of accounts. Where is the hard-earned money of the faithful being spent?

And although the Baha'is want the UHJ to handle further issues of a similar type, it seems that they lack the motivation to do so.

Finally, we'd want to let you know that our Canadian friends are doing a terrific job of answering questions from the faithful addressed to our official ID and assisting us with the layout of all of our periodicals. We are really appreciative of their generosity and wish them well in all of their future endeavors. Our first book will be published shortly under the direction of the Free Baha'i Publishing Trust. We'll keep you informed about its availability and the precise launch date.

Warmest Baha'i regards,

Free Baha'i Team





SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Email 1:

Who is currently in charge of the free Bahais in the absence of the Guardian?

Answer:

Hi Sunny,

Allah'u'Abha!

I appreciate your inquiry; it appears that you are new to the Free Baha'i teachings. We adhere to the pure teachings of Baha'u'llah and the Master. Let me use a quotation from the Master to help you understand why we think there is no longer a living Guardian of the religion after his departure.

Abdu'l Baha has said: "There are no officers in this Cause. I do not and have not appointed any one to perform any special services, but I encourage every one 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, Volume 8)

Anybody who acknowledges Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha as their supreme beings is a Baha'i and a representative of the faith. There are no clergy in the religion. This is what sets the Baha'i Faith apart from other faiths.

I hope that clarifies your query. Please get in touch with us if you need any further information or have any questions. We'll be glad to assist you!

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 2:

Can you recommend some excellent books that I can give to my coworker who is curious about the Baha'i faith?

Answer:

Hi James,

Allah'u'Abha!

We advise talking about the tenets of the Baha'i Faith with your co-worker and the books we suggest are Kitab-i-Iqan (The Book of Certitude) by Baha'u'llah and Paris Talks by Abdu'l-Baha.

Other interesting books can be 'The Bahai Religion and its enemy the Baha'i Organization' by Lady Ruth White, it should be read by each and every Baha'i.

If you have any more questions, feel free to write back to us.

Thanks and regards,

Team Free Baha'is



Email 3:

Can you share Abdul Baha's advise, if any, to deal with personal loss?

Answer:

Hi Nyla,

Allah'u'Abha!

I wish you the strength to get through this trying time. I'm sending prayers and positive energy your way.

Personal loss is extremely upsetting and can lead to severe sadness. You can use prayer to help you cope with a personal loss. Let me share a prayer from the Lord; it will undoubtedly be very beneficial!

O my Lord, my Beloved, my Desire! Befriend me in my loneliness and accompany me in my exile. Remove my sorrow. Cause me to be devoted to Thy beauty. Withdraw me from all else save Thee. Attract me through Thy fragrances of holiness. Cause me to be associated in Thy Kingdom with those who are severed from all else save Thee, who long to serve Thy sacred threshold and who stand to work in Thy Cause. Enable me to be one of Thy maidservants who have attained to Thy good pleasure. Thou art the Gracious, the Generous. - Abdu'l Baha



Please get in contact if you have any other queries. The Free Baha'is team is praying for you, so please keep us informed on your status.

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is

Email 4:

I want to hold a prayer meet at my residence in Albany, New York. Do I have to follow any procedure guidelines?

Answer:

Hi Adi,

Allah'u'Abha!

We're glad to hear that you want to throw an event at your house to further the Cause's message. May He give you the strength to engage in more of these things and may He make them successful for you.

In the Baha'i Faith, there is no Administration and no established protocol for holding meetings. The meeting might take place in person or via the internet. Collectively pray, respond to visitors' inquiries, and especially discuss the tenets of the faith. Your main focus should be on highlighting the Master's and Baha'u'llah's teachings and making them pleased through these activities.

Reading passages from books like Kitab-i-Aqdas and Kitab-i-Iqan at these gatherings is another intriguing activity that may be done. What better way to introduce our acquaintances to the source texts of the Cause?

Please get in contact if you have any other queries. We will be happy to help you.

Regards,

Team Free Baha'is





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

BOOK EXTRACT – A FRAUDULENT TESTAMENT DEVALUES THE BAHAI RELIGION INTO POLITICAL SHOGHISM

BY HERMANN ZIMMER

PART 1

FOREWORD

The Bahai religion, which originated in Persia, was still designated as a sect at the beginning of this century as, for example, in O. Spengler's *The Decline of the West* (1). Today, however, it is considered an independent religion, particularly as defined in the field of comparative religions, in spite of its relatively small number of believers.(2) The personality of the founder Baha'u'llah is seen by the Bahais as the returning Christ. In my 1950 publication "The Return of Christ of which the Prophecies Speak...", I presented the preliminary conditions deemed necessary for his second coming as the presupposition for the Bahais and for the Protestant Christians as well. The prominent representatives of this church could not, however, follow my argument about the person of the new manifestation of God. The parallel might be this: It was also impossible for the Jewish theologians of almost 2,000 years ago to recognize Jesus.

After being exiled from their homeland of Persia, Baha'u'llah and his son Abdul Baha had to settle at first in Bagdad close to the Persian border in what was then the Turkish

Empire. But Baha'u'llah's personal magnetism in the area of the Persian border was so strong that the Mohammedan spiritual leaders of Persia demanded a further exile which was then carried out. Constantinople and Adrianople (today Edirne) in European Turkey were the next places of banishment. From there the prisoners of the Turkish government were sent further on to the "Greatest Prison" at Akka, where the small group of exiles arrived at the end of August, 1868. This old city, known from the Crusades and from Napoleon I's Egyptian Campaign, lies at one end of the Bay of Haifa.

Two months later the Swabian "Templers" landed at the other end of this bay at the foot of Mount Carmel. There were approximately one hundred emigrants from Wurttemberg, Germany led by Christof Hoffmann, a student of theology and the son of G. W. Hoffmann, the one-time founder of the "Holy Korntal" (near Stuttgart). Based on his study of the words of the Bible and the prophecies of Johann Albrecht Bengel, all of which had come to pass except the last — the return of



Will Fraud

Christ — , Hoffmann believed nevertheless that this time had come. "The gathering of God's people in the smallest and most closely knit circle... the insoluble bond for a renewed Christian community must lead the way" before the new spiritual kingdom could be established. This community was his "Temple", a group of families of all vocations who came together from all over Swabia and prepared themselves at Kirschenhardthof between Winnenden and Marbach to leave for the emigration to Palestine because it was there that Christ would return.

There was friendly contact between these Swabian colonists who were waiting for the Lord and the prisoners of the Turkish government who were finally released after years of the most gruelling detention and could now move freely in Akka and the surrounding area. However, Baha'u'llah and Abdul Baha must have complied with the Turkish authorities not to teach in public. In so doing, the word of Isaiah 42: 2 was fulfilled: "He will neither shout nor cry and his voice will not be heard in the streets."

Do not the accomplishments of colonization of these Swabian settlers, who had to work under severe conditions for several years while waiting for the Lord, form a "red carpet" for Baha'u'llah, whom the Bahais view as the returning Christ, as the Manifestation of God for our time?

These Swabian emigrants, the founders of the Palestinian colonies that later flourished, had achieved their plans to realize the teachings of Christ in their community. "The esteem for the Germans who transposed the teachings of Jesus into action in Haifa, Jaffa and Saron in the foreign religious environment of Islam was passed on by word of mouth. The Arabs told of them at night around the campfires and the caravans carried the news of this noble Christian attitude deep into the Near East." (3)

Professor Edward G. Browne of Cambridge University, an English Orientalist who has become well known through his works about Persia, was so intrigued by Count Gobineau's brilliant description of the Bab (the forerunner of Baha'u'llah as John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus) and his

movement that he decided to learn more about this movement and its further developments in the Bahai movement in the land of its origin. In 1890, he went to see Baha'u'llah in Akka and described his impressions in the following way:

"The face of him, on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: Praise be to God that thou hast attained!... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment ... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled — what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" shall come ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind ..." (4)

Baha'u'llah died in 1892. His son and successor, Abdul Baha, remained a prisoner of the Turkish government until the Revolution of the Young Turks in 1908 and the overthrow of the Sultan Abdul Hamid. This newly recovered freedom gave Abdul Baha, called "Master", the chance to give special impetus to the Bahai religion by his winning personality during his trip to Europe and the USA. This was the high point of the Bahai movement, when the largest numbers of believers were counted in Europe as well as in the USA. The eminent esteem and judgement of this man was seen at his funeral in 1921 in Haifa. According to contemporary reports there were relatively only few Bahais who followed his coffin but thousands of Jews, Mohammedans and Christians. He had lived the new religion. He was the "servant of God" (English for Abdul Baha) and through his brilliant gift of speech, he had also won the hearts of many believers of the other three great religions.

After this absolute high point in the history of the Bahai religion came the journey into the abyss. A grandson of Abdul Baha, Shoghi Effendi Rabbani, established himself afterwards in Haifa as the "Guardian" by means of an alleged testament of Abdul Baha. He became the unseen power behind the Bahai religion. If Abdul Baha had explained that this religion could not be compressed into an organization, Shoghi in turn built up an administration. The spirit completely disappeared behind the form.

The degree of belief could be measured by the amount of offerings. The Levantine Shoghi had studied at the Universities of Beirut and Oxford but the history of Tetzels, the seller of indulgences, seems to have escaped him — or did he count on Christianity having forgotten it? He also bet on this forgetfulness in studying the "Constantinian Grant" and the "Pseudo-Isidore Decrees" which were the work of the "greatest counterfeiter of all time"

According to a recognized expert on the organization of the Christian church from its beginning.(5) In comparing this work with the alleged testament of Abdul Baha which made Shoghi Rabbani the "Guardian" and a kind of world dictator and world pope, one is surprised about so many similar power-hungry ideas. Not the power of a fascinating personality, as Professor Browne of Cambridge found in Baha'u'llah or in Abdul Baha, as Lady Blomfield later presented it in a description of the visit of the Master in London, but of power per se.

Power had especially seduced Shoghi; thus, it can be no surprise to anyone if his methods rely heavily on the basic tenets of Machiavelli. "One does not defend a dominion with a rosary in hand" — also not with the Bahai rosary. Is this not a very plausible explanation for the excommunication of half of the extended family of Abdul Baha within a few weeks in 1941? He handled the critical voices which were soon raised with skillful psychology. A censorship was imposed in the first quarter year of his "Guardian office" within his own ranks.

Excommunicated former members, who wanted to awaken their brothers in faith with critical publications in compliance with one of the most important principles of the Bahai religion — "Independent investigation of truth" — were represented as "harmful elements", as "enemies" or as "crazy", even when what they said made complete sense. Time brings wisdom. They let the whole thing slide. Today, all these publications which so heavily burdened the alleged testament of Abdul Baha or the "Guardian office" have been swept away from the American book market, whether new or second-hand. The administration has bought them up and thereby rendered them harmless.

The Persian Sabet, who had moved from the Orient to the West, now began his book about

the Bahai religion published in 1967: *Der gespaltene Himmel* (The Divided Heaven) with its first chapter 'The Fall of Christianity'. There is much proof from recognized cultural critics as well as others that Christianity has passed into the "winter" of its life.

However, the "Fall of the Bahai religion", which at an age of only about 100 years could still be in the spring of its lifetime, is more than obvious. Why was the Bahai religion in the USSR so strongly suppressed in 1928 and completely prohibited in 1938 after, as we will show, it was unusually encouraged there in the middle of the 20's? Why was the Bahai religion banned in 1960 in the United Arab Republic; that is, in Egypt and Syria? (6) The fault is certainly not that of the opposition of the Mohammedan clergy alone because Sabet himself emphasized, "Religion was separated from politics".(7) Because the earlier struggle for power by the Mohammedan clergy is remembered only too well in the Islamic nations, they want to hear nothing, in Persia for example, of Bahai celebration days, Bahai marriage, Bahai officials, Bahai periodicals and books, and a Bahai delegation in Parliament — the very idea!

In the course of the following investigation there is plentiful opportunity to become familiar with the excursions of the Bahai Administration into politics. When M. Y. Bengavriel speaks in connection with the teachings of Baha'u'llah about "this most unpolitical religion in the world", he is thinking about the Bahai religion as it was presented by Abdul Baha. Ben-gavriel certainly could not have heard or found out about the "state within a state", as the Bahai Administration of the Guardian was designated in 1930.(8) Also, the resistance which the Persian government raised against the Bahai Administration might be attributed to their recognition of this striving for power. Sabet gives the reasons: "Bahais as officials are not allowed, Bahai marriage, celebration

days and the like are not recognized by the government, the countless Spiritual Assemblies of Bahais which number more than a thousand in Persia...(9) We Westerners stand at too far a distance from Oriental customs to be able to judge them. However, I venture to give an opinion nevertheless: In Persia, too, "a state within a state" is refused, just as it is in the USSR or in the United Arab Republic. It would be hard for Sabet to prove that Baha'u'llah or Abdul Baha had put any such value on these things.

One realizes again that since all Christian denominations are tolerated in the USSR as well as in the UAR, there must be special reasons for this ban. On the side of the Free Bahais, it seems to have been the alleged Will and Testament of Abdul Baha which has effected the transformation of the "most unpolitical religion in the world" into a political religion. The former secretary of Abdul Baha, Ahmad Sohrab, also expresses his opinion about it when he says, "The Bahai Administration has seen fit to feature the Will above and beyond everything that has been written and spoken by the Founders of the Cause ... Nothing else matters; only the Will, the Will, the Will!... It, and it alone, is the Cause." (10)

On the following pages the proof is presented: a complete turnabout of the Bahai religion has taken place through the alleged testament of Abdul Baha with the Guardianship and the Bahai Administration. As unbelievable as it may sound, it has turned into an instrument of power politics.

It was only a short time before the English translation was ready for printing that I received the biography of the Guardian written by his wife, Ruhiyyih Khanum, *The Priceless Pearl* (London 1969). This book extensively confirms my judgements of Shoghi Effendi: "The Guardian was always keenly interested in political matters..." (p. 33).

"Shoghi Effendi had the qualities of true statesmanship" (p. 350). The Guardian's wife herself pronounces the exact judgement which I prove later on: "The Faith grew with us into something vastly different from what had existed before" (p. 437). "Shoghi Effendi said the Cause of God would ... become a state religion and eventually the Bahai state itself would emerge ..." (p. 440).

The Guardian's favorite book was *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, a work of the English historian Edward Gibbon. "There was a small Everyman's copy of part of it next to his bed when he died." (p. 38) The trend of the Guardian in the direction of politics is clear to be seen for every Bahai long after his death. On his grave at the Great Northern London Cemetery a marble column with globe and gilded eagle has been erected. Although only the African continent is marked on this globe, this combination reminds us very much of the military badges of the Roman Emperors and their legions with whom the Bahai writing-table-Caesar felt so united mentally.

But the Guardian has not only falsified Abdul Baha's testament, as the following pages will show, but he has also turned the Testament of Baha'u'llah, the Manifestation of God for our time into something just the opposite. There it says "The government of the earth has been vouchsafed unto them (to the Kings, i. e. to the governors). But the hearts of men He decreed unto Himself," [Book of the Covenant in Bahai World Faith, 1971, p. 209.)

1. *Untergang des Abendlandes*, Vol. II. 1922, p. 280
2. Rosenkranz, *Die Bahai*, 1949, p. 56
3. Zimmer, *Wiederkunft Christi*, 1950, p. 17, from a lecture by the author Karl Gotz, 1936.
4. Edward G. Browne, *A Traveller's Narrative*, 1930, p. XXXIX f.

5. J. Haller, Nikolaus I. und Pseudo-Isidor, 1936, p. 163.

6. M. Y. Ben-gavriel, Das Verbot der Optimisten, Stuttgarter Zeitung of August 31, 1960.

7. loc. cit. p. 103.

8. A. Diebold, Brief an die Bahai-Freunde, Stuttgart, May 1930, p. 8.

9. Sabet, loc. cit., p. 103.

10. A. Sohrab, Silence, p. 422.



KNOW YOUR HERITAGE



Three of the robes worn by Baha'u'llah displayed in the Baha'i International Archives

WEBSPLORE



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The ossification of the Administrative Order exists particularly at the higher levels.

How does membership in the [International Teaching Centre](#) lead to election to the Universal House of Justice?

How is it that with its nine members elected every five years from the male membership in good standing of the worldwide Bahá'í community by an electoral college consisting of all the members of each Bahá'í National Spiritual Assembly throughout the world, the membership of the Universal House of Justice consists exclusively of men who have previously been appointed to the [International Teaching Centre](#) by the Universal House of Justice?

With no overt campaigning or politicking permitted, upon what does the electoral college base its election of new members to the Universal House of Justice?

In the [Bahá'í electoral system](#), the exposure of potential candidates to electors is a premium. Members of the [International Teaching Centre](#) routinely travel throughout the world, giving them vital face-time with members of the National Spiritual Assemblies who serve as electors for the Universal House of Justice.

Consider the cases of [Stephen Birkland](#) and Stephen Hall. [Stephen Birkland](#) was appointed to the [International Teaching Centre](#) in 2008 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010. Stephen Hall was appointed to the [International Teaching Centre](#) in 2005 and elected to the Universal House of Justice in 2010.

In [a letter dated October 20, 2008](#), the Universal House of Justice called for a series of [41 Regional Conferences](#) intended to mark the mid-point of the [Five Year Plan](#) and motivate participants to re-dedicate themselves to the goals of the [Plan](#) upon returning home. The [Regional Conferences](#) were held from November 1, 2008 through March 1, 2009.

In that period, [Stephen Birkland](#) attended the following [Bahá'í Regional Conferences](#)...

Date	Location of Bahá'í Regional Conference
November 1-2, 2008	Lusaka, Zambia
November 8-9, 2008	Johannesburg, South Africa
November 29-30, 2008	Antofagasta, Chile
December 6-7, 2008	Atlanta, Georgia, United States of America
January 17-18, 2009	Vancouver, Canada
February 7-8, 2009	Frankfurt, Germany
February 21-22, 2009	Accra, Ghana

Source: [Bahá'í World News Service search for "Stephen Birkland"](#)

“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!

BLAST FROM THE PAST

HOW to MAKE a NEW HISTORY for MANKIND

by DR. STEPHEN S. WISE

Rabbi of the Free Synagogue, President of the Jewish Institute of Religion

“*Die Welt-Geschichte ist das Welt-Gericht*”, spake the great German poet. World history is world-judgment. As people so priest: as people so history. History can hardly be expected to rise higher than the level of the life it chronicles.

If the old history or the history of the past was the history of war and strife, of struggle and battle,—was this not so because men had not emerged from the stage of struggle and conflict?

For history is never creative but always reverberative. Humankind is, as I see it, coming to a clearer realization than ever in its annals of the ugliness of strife and of the beauty of concord. War is said to be the great developer of mankind. It evokes the worst in and out of mankind, though so splendid are the capacities of the human spirit that even some of the by-products of war's hideous evocation are not without beauty. The hell of war itself cannot blot out the heavenly radiance of mankind.

We are beginning to grow up, to put away the childish things and toys of war, to deny hospitality to fear in our hearts. We are beginning, albeit faintly and slowly, to comprehend that if the history of mankind's past was written in the terms of fear and hate and murder, organized or unorganized, the history of the future must be writ in the terms of something better than anything the world has yet known. That better will be the spirit of cooperation rooted in the soil of understanding, forbearance, sympathy.

The page of religion in the old history is not altogether honorable. It may be that one should put it “the page of the church.” Happily and unhappily, religion and church are not interchangeable. Oft-times the church has expressed the truth of religion; oft-times, alas, the church has crushed the truth and withered the beauty of religion. Whether religion will help to write the New History of mankind will depend upon the answer to the question, “Will the Church, using the term in its most inclusive sense, rise at last to the power of incarnating the truth and the beauty and the nobility and the glory of religion?”

The history of the past contained the record of bitter strife and murderous conflict, stimulated, sanctioned, glorified by the church. Unless religion begin to work mightily and resistlessly for concord and amity among men, one wonders whether the church will be. One does not doubt that the church would not deserve to continue to be. The supreme teachers of the human spirit have been men of peace and not of war, never bringers of the sword of strife, ever bearers of the torch of peace. So may it be! Have we not caught glimpses of a new life and after that a New History of humankind? May the banner of religion, not religions, be upheld by them that are to be in the vanguard of such triumphant march of the eternal spirit as shall bring hurt to none and help to all, defeat to none and victory to all the sons of men.

(Reference: The New History Magazine, October, 1931)

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."

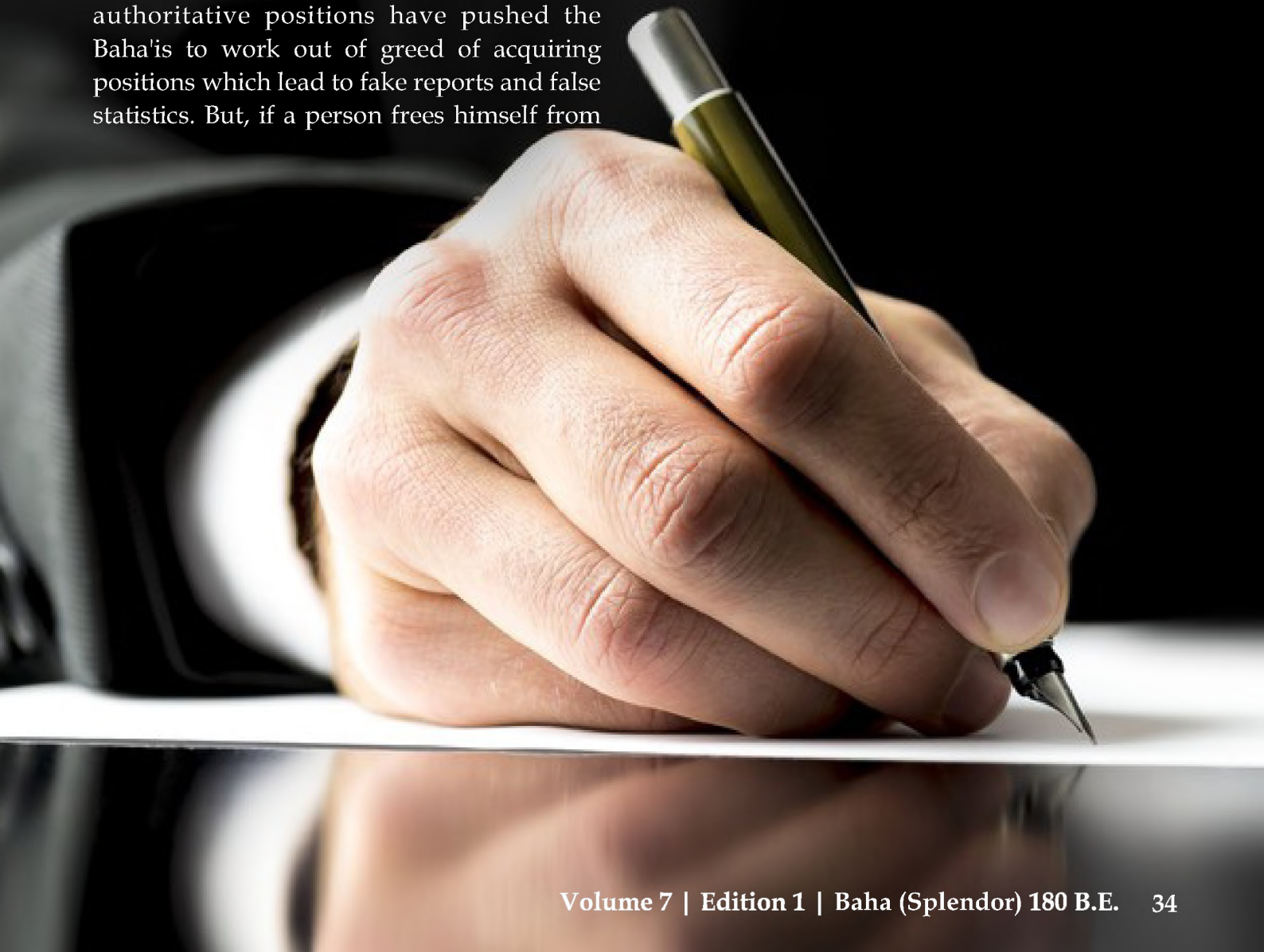
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

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?



DID YOU KNOW ?



The Baha'i faith has always been about doing service for those who are not themselves Baha'is. This has been the objective of the Cause since the beginning, as we can see from numerous narrations from the lives of Baha'u'llah and the Master. Let me quote one such incident below. While Abdu'l Baha was living in a Paris hotel, among those who often came to see Him was a poor, black man. He was not a Baha'i, but he loved Abdu'l Baha very much. One day when he came to visit, someone told him that the management did not like to have him—a poor black man—come, because it was not consistent with the standards of the hotel. The poor man went away. When Abdu'l Baha learned of this, He sent for the man responsible. He told him that he must find His friend; He was not happy that he should have been turned away. Abdu'l Baha said, 'I did not come to see expensive hotels or furnishings, but to meet My friends. I did not come to Paris to conform to the customs of Paris, but to establish the standard of Baha'u'llah.' Abdu'l Baha accomplished more than merely giving lectures, though. To show his wealthy visitors the teachings of Baha'u'llah, he went into impoverished regions and invited the most disadvantaged individuals into their homes. He "walked the walk," as they say. This was Baha'u'llah's message, and Abdu'l Baha provided an example for everyone, but Shoghi Effendi was appointed the example after his death, and the UHJ and the Administration now

solely follow his acts and hence we can see where the faith is moving. If I may ask, what was the Baha'u'llah standard that the Master is referring to here? Was the intention to collect money for Huququ'llah from every Baha'i and use it to luxuriate the UHJ and Administration members? In light of the aforementioned occurrence and the teachings of the Master, we Free Baha'is cordially ask all Baha'i friends worldwide to utilise their Huququ'llah funds for the advancement of society rather than entrusting them to those who are not legally permitted to receive them. By doing this, we may all, in reality, follow in the footsteps of Baha'u'llah and the Master and contribute significantly to the global growth of the Baha'i faith.

THROWBACK



1906 - Abdu'l Baha and the Kinney family – Saffa and Vafa

Saffa and Vafa Kinney were pillars of the Faith, immensely blessed by the Master. Edward was his birth name, but everyone knew him by the name the Master gave him, Saffa -- Serenity; and they called Carrie by the name the Master gave her, Vafa -- Certitude.

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