

THE

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# CARAVAN

"IN THIS MOVEMENT  
THERE WILL NEVER  
BE ANY  
PAID MINISTERS."

CAN A BAHAI  
BE BURIED IN A  
NON-BAHAI  
GRAVEYARD?

OF ABDU'L BAHA

KNOW MORE INSIDE.





# Table of Contents

1. Prayer of Baha'u'llah
2. Foreward
3. Divine Laws of Baha'u'llah
4. Poem – If You Can
5. Correspondence between the High Commissioner of Palestine and Ruth White
6. Clergy in the Baha'i Cause
7. Inspiring Quotes
8. Brief Introduction to the Letters of the Living (Huruf-i-Hayy)
9. Picture: Courtyard of Elijah's Cave. The rooms above were used by both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha
10. The Baha'i Religion and its enemy the Baha'i Organization - Part 4
11. Blast from the Past
12. The Baha'is of Azerbaijan
13. Free Baha'i Activities
14. Know your Heritage
15. Some Questions Answered
16. Investigation of Reality
17. Declarations
18. Did you know?
19. Throwback

# Prayer



O LORD! Verily, Thou art potent to do whatsoever Thou willest - PRAYER

O my God! O my God! I testify that this is Thy Day which hath been mentioned in Thy Books, Thy Epistles, Thy Psalms and Thy Tablets. In it Thou hast manifested that which was hidden in Thy Knowledge and stored up in the repositories of Thine unfailing protection. I beseech Thee, O Lord of the world, by Thy Most Great Name whereby the limbs of the people were shaken, to assist Thy servants and Thy handmaidens to become steadfast in Thy Cause and to arise in Thy service.

Verily, Thou art potent to do whatsoever Thou willest, and in Thy grasp are the reins of all things. Thou protectest whomsoever Thou willest through Thy Power and Dominion. And verily, Thou art the Almighty, the All-Subduing, the Most Powerful.

**-Prayer of Baha'u'llah**

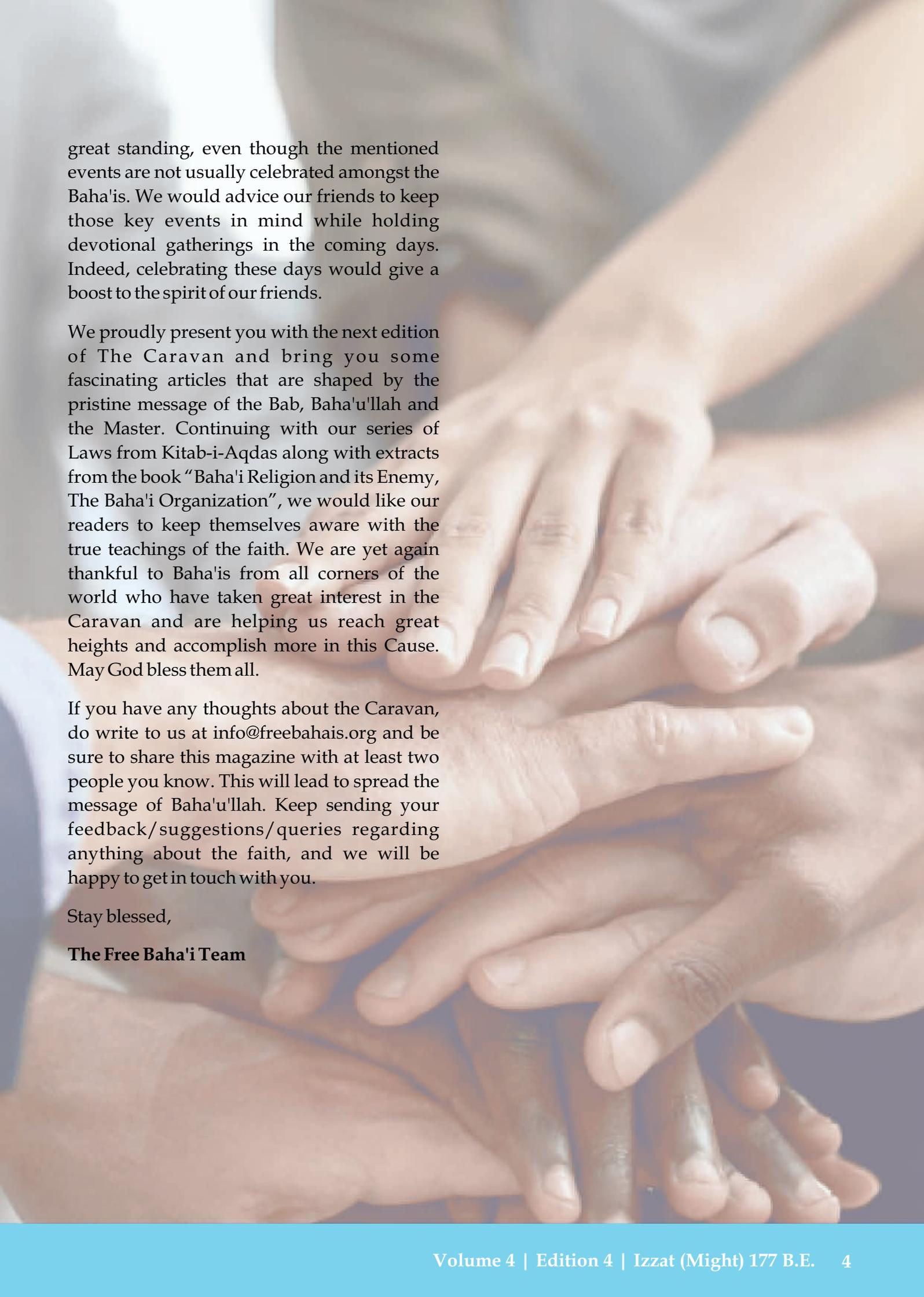
# Foreword

It is such a wonderful feeling to be a part of the Cause of Baha'u'llah and work for the propagation of the immaculate message to achieve world peace, unity and harmony. This Caravan Magazine is our step towards that. With the start of the month of Izzat (Might), we present you this beautiful Edition aimed at propagating the true teachings of the Baha'i faith.

“O son of man! Transgress not thy limits, nor claim that which beseemeth thee not. Prostrate thyself before the countenance of thy God, the Lord of might and power.” - Baha'u'llah

Each month is named after an attribute or name of God - such as Glory, Dominion, Knowledge, Might. The month of Izzat (Might) starts from 7th September, this year and goes on until 25th September 2020. This period in the Baha'i history is very important and there is a series of events that took place

during this time. It was during this period when Baha'u'llah accepted the Babi religion in the year 1844 AD. It was this same period when the Bab declared himself to be the Mahdi in 1845 AD and a year later after enforcing a lot of restrictions on the Bab's movement, he had to leave Shiraz for Isfahan, both being the cities of Iran. Moving further, in the year 1852 AD, while imprisoned for four months in the Siyah-Chal in Tehran, Baha'u'llah received his first intimations that he is the promised one foretold by the Bab. It was in this same period in 1908 AD that Abdu'l Baha was released from a lifetime of exile and imprisonment at the age of 64 years. Post that in 1911, Abdu'l Baha went on a world tour to spread the message of the Cause and while in the United Kingdom he gave his first address to a Western audience in City Temple, London. The English translation was articulated by Tudor Pole, one of the earliest British Baha'is. All-in-all, Izzat is a month of



great standing, even though the mentioned events are not usually celebrated amongst the Baha'is. We would advise our friends to keep those key events in mind while holding devotional gatherings in the coming days. Indeed, celebrating these days would give a boost to the spirit of our friends.

We proudly present you with the next edition of The Caravan and bring you some fascinating articles that are shaped by the pristine message of the Bab, Baha'u'llah and the Master. Continuing with our series of Laws from Kitab-i-Aqdas along with extracts from the book "Baha'i Religion and its Enemy, The Baha'i Organization", we would like our readers to keep themselves aware with the true teachings of the faith. We are yet again thankful to Baha'is from all corners of the world who have taken great interest in the Caravan and are helping us reach great heights and accomplish more in this Cause. May God bless them all.

If you have any thoughts about the Caravan, do write to us at [info@freebahais.org](mailto:info@freebahais.org) and be sure to share this magazine with at least two people you know. This will lead to spread the message of Baha'u'llah. Keep sending your feedback/suggestions/queries regarding anything about the faith, and we will be happy to get in touch with you.

Stay blessed,

**The Free Baha'i Team**

# Divine Laws

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

Say: From My stipulations there passes the sweet smell (ʿarf) of My gown and by them the standards of victory are erected on hillocks and hills. The tongue of My power (qudrati) has spoken in the might (jabarut) of My greatness, addressing My people, (saying), "Perform my stipulations out of love for My beauty (jamali)". Blessed is the lover who found the sweet smell of the beloved (coming) out of this word from which aromas of grace were diffused, that they be not described (only) by remembrances!

I swear by My life (la ʿamri), whoever drinks of pure wine (rahiq) of equity from the hands of the benefits will make the circuit of My commands which arise from the horizon of new things (al-abda').

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



# IF YOU CAN

If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too:  
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream – and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same.  
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings,  
And never breathe a word about your loss:  
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,

And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings – nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much:  
If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And – which is more – you'll be a Man, my son!

– Rudyard Kipling



# Correspondence

Correspondence between the High Commissioner of Palestine and Ruth White, regarding the alleged Will of Abdu'l Baha

## Part 3

By

Ruth White

March, 1932.

GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE

In case of reply please

Quote the date of this letter and the following

No. Y/58/31

(Registered)

Chief Secretary's Office,

Jerusalem

Palestine

10th July, 1931

Madam,

I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 5th June, on the subject of the will of the late Sir Abdu'l Baha Abbas, and to say that the Government do not feel disposed to take any further administrative actions in the matter.

I am, Madam

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) Ruhi  
Abdulhady

For CHIEF SECRETARY



Mrs . H. Lawrence White,  
Butler Hall, 88 Morningside Drive,  
New York City, U.S.A

The reader will note that the High Commissioner, in his letter of November 25th asks for photographs of the alleged will in order to compare these photographs with the document from which they had been photographed. This letter astonished me as well as disappointed me as it is so evidently evaded the thing I had asked for. I never doubted nor did anyone else, that the photographs which I had received through Shoghi Effendi were photographs of the alleged will. There could have been no motive in his sending over photographs of something else and saying that they were photographs of this document.

What I had asked for, and what Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell, the expert in London, had said should be done, was for experts to go to Haifa and make a long and careful study of the original alleged will in order to ascertain many things that cannot be ascertained from a photograph such as, for instance, the chemical analysis of the ink and its age, water marks on the paper and the age of this paper, evidences of erasures, or of the piercing together of paper and many other things familiar to handwriting experts. This would have required weeks, and perhaps months of careful research by experts, and yet Ruhi confesses that so brief a time was consumed, in looking over the photographs, that he waited in the office while this was being done. And now, in order to deceive the Baha'is, Shoghi Effendi pretends that the comparison of the photographs of the alleged will with document from which they had been photographed is an authentication of the alleged will.

At first the statements emanating from Shoghi

Effendi were worded very cautiously through clearly intended to mislead. Thus in a letter written through his secretary to Mr E.E. Kluge of Chicago, dated July 10,1931, he says:

“It might interest you to know, however, that the Will in its entirety has been closely examined by the experts appointed by the Palestine Government authorities. Not even the slightest objection or the faintest doubt has been expressed concerning its authenticity by them.”

Here the implication is made that the alleged will was examined by the authorities with a view to ascertain whether or not it was authentic and that the result was that nothing could be discovered that impugned its authenticity. How far this is from the truth can be seen from the correspondence between the Palestine Secretariat and myself previously given here.

Those who begin to deceive by the implication of their words are likely soon to proceed to plain prevarication, and it is hard to regard as anything else another letter from Shoghi Effendi dated December 1, 1931 to Mrs. Carroll Smith of Dallas, Texas. Mrs. Smith wrote to Shoghi and stated that it had been reported to her that an official comparison had been made of the will with documents known positively to be in the handwriting of Abdu'l Baha, and she ends the letter as follows:

"Please tell me if such an official comparison really has been made and let the believers know that as a result the Palestine Government certified that the Will was in the Master's handwriting and was genuine..."

To this Shoghi Effendi replied through his secretary, Ruhi Afnan, in a letter part of which is as follows:

“About five or six months ago Mrs. White – who is at the head of this movement to set the Master's Will aside – wrote the High

Commissioner in Palestine on the subject and asked him to find about the authenticity of the document. The High Commissioner wrote to the Governor of Haifa and sent the Government expert to verify the handwriting. Shoghi Effendi was written on the subject and asked to send the Will to the Government. He sent me with the Will and the expert studied it before me and the governor in the office of the latter. The expert compared the original Will with the handwriting of the Master which Mrs. White has sent him as authentic samples. He said that they were both written by the same person, and that the person who had decided otherwise does not know what he is speaking about. The Expert was an Englishman who knows nothing of the Cause or the Baha'is and was absolutely impartial. I think the High Commissioner sent to Mrs. White the result of his findings but she preferred to keep quiet about it."

This statement of Shoghi Effendi asserts that "The expert compared the original Will with the handwriting of Abdu'l Baha which Mrs. White had sent him as authentic samples." This absolutely conflicts with the statement of the High Commissioner in his letter dated May 19, 1931 that "the photographs appeared to be genuine reproductions of the document produced as the will of the deceased." As Shoghi Effendi's statement stands it means that the photographs of the two samples of the authentic writings of Abdu'l Baha which I had procured from two Bibles, in two different churches, one in America and one in England, were duplicates of a will which had been written in the Orient and buried under ground years before. This as the reader can see is not only sheer nonsense but was written with intent to deceive.

I wish to call the attention of the reader to another point also. Shoghi Effendi wrote to Mr. Kluge that experts examined the will, later he wrote to Mrs. Smith that only one expert examined the will—an Englishman. The extracts from these two letters are as follows:

"...the Will in its entirety has been closely examined by experts...not even the slightest objection or the faintest doubt has been expressed concerning its authenticity by them."

Six months later he wrote to Mrs. Smith through his secretary as follows:

"The High Commissioner wrote to the governor of Haifa and sent the Government expert to verify the handwriting....the expert studied it before me and the governor in the office of the latter. The expert compared the original Will....He said that they were both written by the same person...The expert was an Englishman..."

After this final statement of the High Commissioner in his letter of May 19th, the reader will note that I again urged him in my letter of June 5th to make the examination I had asked for, and his last letter to me, dated July 10th shows that the Government would not take the actions I had asked for, as the following statement shows:

"I am directed...to say that the Government do not feel disposed to take any further administrative actions in the matter."

The "further administrative actions" I had asked for was an examination of the alleged will by experts which would have required weeks and perhaps months of careful work. If the Government really had had the alleged will examined by the experts, and had made a definite report showing whether it was spurious or authentic, then as that was all I had asked for there would have been no sense in their replying that, "The Government do not feel disposed to take any further administrative actions in the matter."

Furthermore if there had been any authentication of the document wouldn't Shoghi Effendi have been only too eager to have blazoned this to the Baha'i world, considering that for four years I had publicly

challenged him with the fact that this document was spurious? Wouldn't he have gloried in publishing such a report in all the Baha'i publications thereby trying to prove me wrong? But this he did not do. He has kept silent on the subject, except where he could not do otherwise in the two letters already cited. For in these two letters of Mr. Kluge and Mrs. Smith, he was asked point blank whether there had been an official authentication of the alleged will, and he therefore was placed in the embarrassing position which necessitated a reply. His policy has been, and still is to keep quiet, and caution the Baha'is to keep as quiet as possible about the matter hoping that by so doing it will die. But it will not die. What will die is the papistry that Shoghi Effendi and his coterie have set up. For in this enlightened age it is impossible for the people to revert to this mediaeval institution; especially as it is wholly irreconcilable with the Baha'i teachings. The reader may ascertain for himself the truth of the statement that the papist group is rapidly diminishing by looking in THE WORLD ALMANAC for 1931 on page 391. There he will find that in 1916 the number of Baha'is in the United States and Canada was listed as 2,884. But since this group became papists under Shoghi Effendi their numbers have diminished to 1,247 under his "Guardianship." On the other hand all the groups who have rejected Shoghi Effendi are rapidly increasing with the result that the largest number of Baha'is are in the ranks of those who are no longer under this papist domination.

There are three attitudes of mind among the Baha'is today toward the alleged will of Abdu'l Baha. First there is the attitude of this papist group, known under the name of "Spiritual Assemblies", "Local Assemblies" and "National Spiritual Assemblies of Baha'is". The members of this group accept Shoghi Effendi as the "Guardian" Whom they believe they are commanded to obey as if he were God, likewise feeling under the

obligation to pay a tax to him, according to the directions given in the alleged will.

The second attitude of mind is that of certain dissident Baha'is who although they have thrown off the authority of Shoghi Effendi still nominally accept as authentic the alleged will of Abdu'l Baha on which this authority is based. This attitude is not a very consistent one for a Baha'i who believes that Abdu'l Baha bequeathed the powers of "Guardian" to Shoghi and yet refuses to follow the latter is disobeying what he thinks are the commands of Abdu'l Baha. It is setting a harmful example to future generations to violate deliberately what one believes to be an important teaching of Abdu'l Baha.

However I am confident that the Power which has guided these Baha'is in breaking away from the Papistry of Haifa will lead them further in the right path and that they will ultimately completely reject this so-called Will.

(to be continued...)

# 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



“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

“I was but a man like others, asleep upon My couch, when lo, the breezes of the All-Glorious were wafted over Me, and taught Me the knowledge of all that hath been. This thing is not from Me, but from One Who is Almighty and All-Knowing. And He bade Me lift up My voice between earth and heaven, and for this there befell Me what hath caused the tears of every man of understanding to flow.”

— Baha'u'llah

" The education and training of children is among the most meritorious acts of humankind and draweth down the grace and favor of the All-Merciful, for education is the indispensable foundation of all human excellence and alloweth man to work his way to the heights of abiding glory."

— Abdu'l Baha



# BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE LETTERS OF THE LIVING (HURUF-I-HAYY)

Between May and July 1844, seventeen men and one woman became the first followers of the Bab (Ali Muhammad Shirazi), a young merchant from the city of Shiraz in southern Iran who claimed to be both a Messenger of God and the herald of another greater than He. These eighteen individuals were adherents of the Shaykhi school of thought—based on the teachings of Shaykh Ahmad Ahsa'i (1753–1826) and Siyyid Kazim Rashti (d. 31 December 1843/1 January 1844)—and had been seeking spiritual direction after Siyyid Kazim died without appointing a successor. The Bab named these eighteen initial believers in his mission as the Letters of the Living (Hurufu-i-Hayy in Arabic).

Here's the list of people who are popularly known to be a part of the Letters of Living.

Mulla Husayn Bushru'i (c. 1814–49): The first to declare his belief in the Bab in Shiraz on 23 May 1844; given the title Babu'l-Bab i.e. Gate of the Gate by the Bab; original leader of a group

of Babis attacked near Babul (Barfurush) in northern Iran in October 1848 and later besieged at the nearby shrine of Shaykh Tabarsi until May 1849; killed there on 2 February 1849.

Mirza Muhammad Hasan Bushru'i (d. 1849): Younger brother of Mulla Husayn; accompanied Mulla Husayn on his travels; badly wounded in the same battle at Shaykh Tabarsi in which Mulla Husayn was killed; according to some accounts, then served as leader of the Babi forces; subsequently killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mirza Muhammad Baqir Bushru'i (d. 1849): Nephew of Mulla Husayn; according to some accounts, led the forces at Shaykh Tabarsi after Mulla Husayn was killed and Mirza Muhammad Hasan was wounded; killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mulla Ali Bastami (d. 1846): The second to recognize the Bab; directed by Him to announce His advent in the Shiite shrine cities of Iraq; arrested, tried in Baghdad in January



1845, and sentenced to work for life in the imperial naval docks; died in an Istanbul prison, becoming the first Babi martyr.

Mulla Khuda-Bakhsh Quchani (later named Mulla Ali Razi): Returned to Karbala from Shiraz; did not actively participate in the Babi community.

Mulla Hasan Bajistani: Active at first in propagating the Babi Cause; later retired to Karbala, considering himself unworthy of the station conferred by the Bab on the Letters of the Living; visited Baha'u'llah in Baghdad (between 1853 and 1863).

Siyyid Husayn Yazdi (d. 1852): Accompanied the Bab as His secretary during His imprisonment in Maku and Chihriq; known as Katib (the Amanuensis); executed during an outbreak of persecutions in 1852 that followed an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the shah by a small group of Babis seeking revenge for the execution of the Bab.

Mirza Muhammad Rawdih-Khan Yazdi:

Returned from Shiraz to Yazd; because of persecution of the Babis, chose not to reveal his beliefs but continued to teach the Babi Faith covertly to the end of his life.

Sa'id Hindi: Went to India and converted one or two persons there before contact with him ceased.

Mulla Mahmud Khu'i (d. 1849): Killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mulla Jalil Urumi (d. 1849): Taught the Babi Faith especially in Azerbaijan and Qazvin; killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mulla Ahmad Abdal Maraghi'i (d. 1849): Present at the Conference of Badasht, a gathering of the Bab's followers held in 1848; killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mulla Baqir Tabrizi (d. c. 1881): Assisted Tahirih in Karbala, then travelled to Iran with her; present at Badasht; visited the Bab in Azerbaijan and acted as intermediary for the Bab's correspondence and other items that He wished delivered to Baha'u'llah; became a

follower of Baha'u'llah after visiting Him in Baghdad; travelled twice to Acre; with Baha'u'llah's permission, spent his last years in Istanbul; the last surviving Letter of the Living.

Mulla Yusuf Ardibili (d. 1849): Noted for his learning and eloquence; played an active and prominent role among the Babis; killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mirza Muhammad Ali Qazvini (d. 1849): Son of Mulla Abdu'l Vahhab, a mujtahid (preeminent religious scholar) of Qazvin; cousin and brother-in-law of Tahirih, closely associated with her in Karbala; entrusted by her with a sealed letter and a verbal message to be delivered to the Promised One whom they both sought; present at Badasht; killed at Shaykh Tabarsi.

Mirza Hadi Qazvini: Brother of Mirza Muhammad Ali Qazvini; distanced himself from the Babis and played no important role; recipient of several letters from Baha'u'llah; 2 became a follower of Mirza Yahya (Azal); some lists replace him with Mulla Muhammad Miyamayi, who actively propagated the new religion in Mayamey (Miyamay), 3 a small town and district near Shahrud in northeastern Iran.

Fatimih Baraghani (c. 1814–52) (who received the title Tahirih, the Pure One): A prominent Shaykhi and an accomplished poet; the only woman among the Letters of the Living; having been accorded the distinction of becoming a Letter of the Living on the basis of a message she sent via her brother-in-law, the only Letter not to have met the Bab personally; a participant at the Conference of Badasht, appearing there without her veil to signal a new era; executed in September 1852 during the persecutions that decimated the Babi ranks after the unsuccessful attempt to assassinate the shah.

Mulla Muhammad-Ali Barfurushi (c. 1822–49)

(titled Quddus, the Most Holy): The last Letter of the Living; accompanied the Bab on His pilgrimage to Mecca (1844–45); present at Badasht and subsequently arrested and detained in Sari for more than three months; having been released through the efforts of Mulla Husayn, joined the Babi forces at Shaykh Tabarsi in late 1848; played a leading role in the Babi defense; taken prisoner on 10 May 1849, following the final siege at Shaykh Tabarsi, tortured, and then killed on 16 May 1849 in Barfurush (Babul), the town of his birth; ranked by Baha'u'llah as having been second only to the Bab.

Although the Bab seems to have written a tablet to each of the letters, the names are not on any of them so the identities cannot be confirmed. Of these the most distinguished are Mulla Husayn, Tahirih and Quddus. Tahirih is singled out because she is the only woman and recognised the Bab without even meeting him. She sent a letter of belief through her brother-in-law and was sure he would find the Bab. It should be noted that most of the Letters died in Babi uprisings before Baha'u'llah declared himself to be the Manifestation of God and started the Baha'i Faith.

With thanks,

**Charles B.**





**1930 - Courtyard of Elijah's Cave. The rooms above were used by both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha**



# THE BAHÁ'Í RELIGION AND ITS ENEMY, THE BAHÁ'Í ORGANIZATION – PART 4

*(An extract from Lady Ruth White's book)*

(...continued)

The definition of an “Assembly,” is given in the following by Abdu'l Baha:

“ 'Assembly' means the diffusion of the fragrance of God.

“'Assembly' means humility and friendliness towards the believers of God. 'Assembly' means the promotion of the word of God. 'Assembly' means to be sanctified and holy from all else save God. Such is the spiritual assembly. Such is the divine meeting. Such is the Lordly congregation. The ultimate desire of Abdu'l Baha is the organization of such assemblies, and he is their servant. For this servitude is the crown of eternal sovereignty, and this thralldom is freedom in both worlds.

“Therefore, O friends, strive with heart and soul, so that you may become a life member

and an eternal organ of the Heavenly Assembly, and the meeting of the Kingdom of Abha!...”

Star of the West, Sept. 8th, 1916; pages 96,  
97

His method of teaching was by way of tests. That is, he kept repeating the universal principles of the Baha'i Religion, if people could not learn by precept, then they must learn by the more severe path of experience. Therefore, those who loved organization and who applied the Baha'i teachings wrongly by trying to confine the universal to the sectarian and limited organization, must learn through the afflictions and failures and disharmonies that befall them. He said to the Spiritual Committee of Consultation when they asked him concerning their duties:

“The first duty of the members is to effect their own unity and harmony, in order to obtain good results. If there be no unity, or the Committee becomes the cause of in harmony, undoubtedly, it is better that it does not exist. If the Committee of Consultation, or the general assembly becomes the cause of unhappiness it must be abandoned. How pleased I was with the friends in California. They said: 'We do not want a Committee of Consultation lest we fall into the thought of leadership and superiority and become the cause of dissension. But, now, praise be to God, we are serving according to our capacity and have no thought or aim, except the spreading of the fragrances of God.'”

Star of the West: Aug. 20, 1917.

Abdu'l Baha knew that it was impossible for the Baha'is to affect their own unity by the mechanical means of organization or by belonging to Assemblies. For the ideal Assembly is the attainment to the spiritual condition that the Disciples of Christ experienced when they gathered together after His crucifixion. This is also the meaning of the resurrection, according to Abdu'l Baha in the following:

“...the meaning of Christ's resurrection is as follows: the disciples were troubled and agitated after the martyrdom of Christ. The Reality of Christ, which signified his teachings, his bounties, his perfections, and his spiritual power, was hidden and concealed for two or three days after his martyrdom, and was not resplendent and manifest. No, rather it was lost: for the believers were few in number and were troubled and agitated. The Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body: and when after three days tire disciples became assured and steadfast, and began to serve the Cause of Christ, and resolved to spread the divine teachings, putting his counsels into practice,

and arising to serve him, the Reality of Christ became resplendent and his bounty appeared; his religion found life, his teachings and his admonitions became evident and visible. In other words, the Cause of Christ was like a lifeless body, until the life and the bounty of the Holy Spirit surrounded it.”

Some Answered Questions; pages 120, 121.

And again he said:

“Regarding the Spiritual Assembly (Board of Consultation, Working Committee, House of Spirituality), this is not the House of Justice. It is a purely Spiritual Assembly, and belongs to spiritual matters, and that is, to teach the Cause of God, and diffuse the fragrance of God.”

“If the believers arise in the accomplishment of this work, the existence of the Spiritual Assembly will not become absolutely necessary or obligatory. The aim is to teach the Cause of God and spread the fragrance of God. In California they have no Board, but the teaching of the Cause is being done.”

Instructions of Abdu'l Baha, November 1, to the members of the spiritual meeting.

The leaders of the Baha'i organization and Shoghi Effendi cite the following by Baha'u'llah as proof that their stand towards organization is correct, and that the individual conscience must be subordinated to the group:

“Among the people are those who glory in a desire for liberty. Know that the animal is the symbol of liberty and the manifestation thereof; hence it behooveth man to put himself under laws which will protect him against the ignorance of himself, and the injury of the deceitful. Liberty is confined to compliance with the Commandments of God. If ye adopt that which He hath revealed for you from the Heaven of Inspiration, ye will find yourselves

in perfect and pure freedom.”

The Baha'i Magazine-, March, 1923

Baha'u'llah speaks here of two kinds of liberty. First, the liberty of the animal who lives without laws; secondly, the spiritual liberty that man attains if he follows the commands of God. The kind of liberty which the animal is the symbol of he says is an impossibility for mankind. We cannot live without government as the anarchist's advocate—each man being a law unto himself. But in matters of religion both Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha show that there must be liberty and freedom of conscience for there are as many paths to God as there are individuals. But in matters of government the individual conscience must be subordinated to the group, because the conscience of many people is of such a low grade that they would legalize many things harmful to mankind if they could, as for instance, the selling of opium. Therefore, the conscience of the minority must be subordinated to the majority, who do not desire these things.

In order to gain control over the Baha'i Religion, the leaders of the Baha'i organization and Shoghi Effendi have deliberately garbled two things. They have incorporated into their by-laws the laws that deal with the future state interpolating them in such a manner as to make it an article of faith that the individual conscience must be subordinated to the Spiritual Assembly, of their making. This is as diametrically opposed to the intentions of Baha'u'llah as it would be if the Baha'is affirmed that their organization was the House of Parliament and then tried to arrogate to themselves its political powers. Like children acting in a charade they have gone through the whole performance of playing at being members of the embryonic House of Justice, and demanded of the Baha'is that obedience which Baha'u'llah said should be given only to the State, whether the state be

the present state, or that which will come into existence later.

The most important part of the Baha'i teachings is this very question—that God has given man free-will, and no earthly priest craft, nor dictator, must interfere with man's using that free-will in matters of faith, and the inner relation between the soul and God. This is the meaning of the spiritual democracy that Abdu'l Baha so often speaks of—religion percolating through all the affairs of our daily life, and an ideal government coming into existence as a result of the change of man's belief. All the evils in the world are caused by leaders who have tried to control the conscience of man. The fear of God is then replaced by the fear of the controlling group. Religious dictators differ from a Lenine or his successors only in this respect. The dictators of Russia say: “You must not believe in God at all.” Religious dictators say: “You must not believe in any conception of God, except what we tell you to believe.”

The more people lose their faith in God the more readily do they fall under the domination of some dictator, who terrorizes them through this, that or the other fear. Lenine is said philosophy teaches that the individual is of no importance and the state, or collective man is everything. This is just the twist that the leaders of the Baha'i organization have tried to give to the Baha'i Religion, with the difference only that in the latter case the collective man is embodied in the Church, while in the former case it is embodied in the State, but in reality, it is embodied in a supreme dictator.

Contrary to the inverted teachings that the leaders of the Baha'i organization are promulgating, are the universal and inspiring teachings of Baha'u'llah and of Abdu'l Baha as follows: Man freed from all priest craft must endeavor to put into practice the Baha'i teachings, and to promulgate them each one

according to his capacity. When the majority of the peoples of the world become sufficiently interested in the first aspect of the Baha'i Religion, then only will the second aspect come into existence in exactly the same manner in which the graduating class comes into the existence of the child only as he masters all the other grades leading up to it.

Concerning the House of Justice, Baha'u'llah wrote in "The Tablet of the World:"

"The greatest Foundations upon which depends the administration of people are the following:

'First: The ministers (Counsellors, i. e. members) of the House of Justice must promote the Most Great Peace, in order that the world may be freed from onerous expenditures. This Matter is obligatory and indispensable; for warfare and conflict are the foundation of trouble and distress.

'Second: Languages must be reduced to one, and that one language must be taught in all the schools of the world.'

Pages 28, 29.

In the "Glad Tidings" Baha'u'llah again refers to these Counsellors as follows:

"...Their Majesties, the Kings – May God assist them – or the Counsellors of the earth must consult together, and appoint one of the existing languages, or a new language, and instruct the children therein, in all the schools of the world..."

Page 84

"The affairs of the people are placed in charge of the men (i. e., members) of the House of Justice of God. They are the trustees of God among His servants and the day-springs of command in His countries."

Page 89.

"Administrative affairs are all in charge of the House of Justice; but acts of worship must be observed according as they are revealed in the Book."

Page 90.

Also in "Some Answered Questions" Abdu'l Baha says:

". . . the General House, of Justice, if it be established under the necessary conditions – with members elected from all the people – that House of Justice will be under the protection and the guardianship of God..."

A footnote explains the House of Justice as follows:

"Baitu'l-Adl, i.e. the House of Justice, is an institution designed by Baha'u'llah for the administration of the future city. The General House of Justice will determine the laws of the nation, and the International House of Justice will act as a tribunal of arbitration."

Page 198.

When Abdu'l Baha was asked whether the local Houses of Justice would be in each city or one in each state, whether the International House of Justice would be elected directly or indirectly he replied:

"Each state, for instance New York, will have one House of Justice. The cities (of that state) will be under that House of Justice. The nations will choose directly the International House of Justice and everything will be in its hands. For instance, Syria will have a House of Justice. The people will elect it. Then this House of Justice of Syria (as a state under the Turkish Empire) will elect the House of Justice of Constantinople. Then Constantinople, London, Paris, Washington and so on will elect the International House of Justice."

The Light of the World; Pages 102, 103.

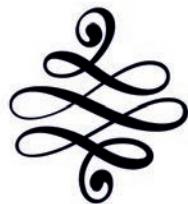
Again in "Ten Days in the Light of Acca' he states:

"The House of Justice will be appointed by the people. It must be obeyed because it is the Law of God expressed through the people by their own will and voice.

"It is the center of true government and must be obeyed in all things. It is the Law of God embodied in the people, reflecting His Will and their need and desire; not blindly following command."

Page 24.

**To be continued...**



*“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 Can the Youth of the Universities and Schools Contribute to the Realization of a United States of the World?"

FIRST PRIZE PAPER

By RUSSELL M. COOPER

*L'Institut Universitaire de Hautes Etudes Internationales*

The history of mankind is a story of expanding loyalties. From the family to the tribe, the city, the state, and the nation, the social group has gradually enlarged while the individuals have seen their interests broaden, their interdependence increase, and their government become increasingly complex and remote. Motivated sometimes by fear, sometimes by a kindred ambition, less units have joined together for the good of the whole. Each new union has brought new advantages and new problems, new forms of government and new loyalties, but each has retained the identity of its components and permitted the narrow loyalties to harmonize with the new.

The world is now embarking on the last stage of this social evolution. Faced with the common dangers of war, disease, and famine, the nations must unite or perish. It is no human or geographical foe this time which compels union for defense. Rather it is the intangible but mortally real danger that the new community, contracted to a unit by modern science and business, will disintegrate by its own explosive forces unless these energies are harnessed and controlled. In response to irresistible necessity, a new federation is evolving before our eyes, an organism surpassing nations and empires, a veritable United States of the World.

Out of the suffering and disillusion of the Great War, there developed a new spirit and a new institution, the League of Nations. To be sure, it is but a loose confederation of sovereign

and jealous states still lacking in authority and prestige, but it presages the development of the future. National governments are still the ultimate authorities in international affairs, and the League is but the channel through which they operate. But the history of all such confederations indicates that they must either draw constantly closer or dissolve. If international society is to survive, we may anticipate a gradual development of the League from a confederation to a federal union wherein the several states will continue to administer local affairs but the world government will become increasingly important in the international field.

Such a process will involve many drastic changes and innovations, though none more remarkable than the achievements of the past fifteen years. It will mean that the League will act increasingly in its own right and not solely at the suffrance of nationally-minded governments. Its legislative, executive, judicial and administrative officials will operate directly upon individuals and private institutions as well as upon the states. The international government will doubtless continue to be financed by its several units, but it will become increasingly divorced from national politics in the enactment and execution of its legislation, and each of its statesmen will be more sensitive to world opinion than to that of his fatherland. Only then will the League cease to be the instrument of the nations and assume a sovereignty of its own.

To those who reject such a conception as too distant and Utopian for practical consideration, one can simply reply that the ideal is even now tangibly being realized. The drafting of League conventions and recommendations is more and more being undertaken by experts and technicians rather than by foreign office officials. When the annual conference of the International Labor Organization meets to consider new labor reforms, the government delegates are balanced by those representing management and labor. The Economic Consultative Committee which was created in 1927 to suggest ways of improving the world economic organization is composed of "persons competent in industry, commerce, agriculture, finance, transport, labor questions and questions relative to consumption." The Advisory Council of the Health Section, the Central Opium Board, and the Financial Committee, all are chosen because of expert qualifications for their respective fields or because they represent vitally-affected interests. With an increasingly intelligent public opinion mobilized to insure the adoption and effective application of these draft conventions, one can expect great advances through these "unnational" and non-political, though often popularly representative, technicians, an effective severance of government from demagoguery which might profitably be studied by the older national units.

By anti-war pacts and adherence to the Optional Clause of the World Court Statute, most nations have relinquished their ancient prerogatives of war-making, and have acknowledged the authority of a higher body for the settlement of justiciable disputes. Should the Permanent Court

be given appellate jurisdiction over international cases in national courts and if it should be supplemented by inferior tribunals at strategic points of the globe, one may witness even greater invasions into traditional national sovereignty. The scope and effectiveness of the League executive and administrative function, whether applied directly or through national officials, will depend largely upon the enlightenment and alertness of public opinion. Indeed, as has been shown in such cases as Germany, Italy, and the United States of America, a permanent union will come only when the populations bestow their highest allegiance upon the new institution and insist on its proper development.

The growth of an international mind is therefore equally important with the establishment of the world organization. The spinner in Manchester must realize his interdependence with the iron-puddler of Pittsburgh. The barriers to international good will must be dissolved. Man must be taught to insist upon the abolition of excessive tariffs and restraints to trade. He must eliminate imperial conflicts by restraining the narrow cupidity which gives them rise. He must renounce the whole system of militarism and armed defense as a diseased vestigial organ from an old system, equally fatal to the new. He must work intelligently and cooperatively toward the new international state where each will find his greatest good in the welfare of the whole.

For the achievement of this world state the youth now studying in the universities and schools occupy a strategic position. They can escape nationalistic handicaps and train themselves from the beginning for participation in the new international community.

If the student is specializing in some chosen field, he should discover its international aspects, learn to speak French and English, and prepare for the role of an expert. If he is training for politics, he should resolve to place the interests of the world government before every other. If he is preparing to be an educator, a minister, or a publicist, his responsibility for properly instructing the masses is paramount and exacting. Whatever his field, he will find in it challenging opportunities for world contributions, if he will only seek now to understand the issues and prepare for active participation.

But the unique contribution of the student must come in the present as well as the future. Indeed, in the active grappling with immediate problems, he will receive much of his best training for the future. Let him become thoroughly informed on the is-

ssues of the moment and encourage his fellows to join through forums and lectures, by League model assemblies and casual discussions, in petitions and resolutions to arouse people's interest and make their voice heard in the capital of the nation. Let him challenge jingoism and narrow nationalism wherever discovered. Let him refuse to participate and actively oppose compulsory military training as a vicious phase of the outlawed war system. Let him learn how to lead and to suffer.

With a youth that is aroused and alert to the great mission of the present age, a youth which understands the possibilities and needs of the new international order and is determined to succeed, we may confidently look forward to a federated world state, not as an ephemeral mirage in the far-distant future, but as the accomplished fact of our generation.

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(Reference: New History Magazine, Volume II, Number XI, August 1933)

# THE BAHÁ'IS OF AZERBAIJAN

Azerbaijan being Iran's neighbourhood country, has a close connection with the Baha'i faith since the time of the Bab. The impact of the teachings of the Bab was seen in Azerbaijan, as much as it was witnessed in Iran. Since 1850, small Baha'i communities established themselves in different parts of Azerbaijan, namely Ordubad, Baku, Balakhani, Ganja, Barda, Goychay, Salyan, Khilli (present day Neftchala), Shaki, Shamakhy, etc. Soon, the community of Baku counted the largest number of faithful in the region and in 1860 obtained official acknowledgement from the authorities. These small communities also recognized the newly proclaimed position of Baha'u'llah. Soon there was more public awareness and some favour from leaders of the wider community. At the same time, the Baha'i community of Baku broadened its communication with other Baha'is in Russia, Turkey and Ashkhabad and

did much work printing materials in Turkish.

Around 1902, relations with the government were decent but with the general population there was no satisfactory tranquillity on account of the people. The Baha'is of Baku were also in contact with the communities in the United States. The community could have peaked at about 2000 people, second only to that of Ashqabad. The Nakhjavani family was said to have played major roles in the spreading of the faith.

From 1922, Soviet officials launched their initial campaigns against the Baha'is including deportation of Baha'i of the Persian citizens back to their country and exiled others to Siberia. All the publications, schools as well as collective meetings were banned. By about 1937, only Baku and Ashgabat assemblies were still operational, although the associates of the Baku assembly had been



### 1906 - Azerbaijan Baha'i Community

elected three times in just two years since the first two set of members were all arrested and banished to Siberia. The third set elected were mostly women due to apparent ins and outs.

From 1988, the Baha'is of the city of Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan became active. The Baha'i community has existed almost from the time the religion was founded in neighbouring Persia in 1844. During the Soviet period, Azerbaijani faithful practiced the Baha'i faith secretly, but with the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, it again revived. In 1992 the Parliament of Azerbaijan adopted the law of religious liberty and thus the Free Baha'is gained an opportunity to be officially recognised as a religion in the country. In 1993, the Governing Board of the Ministry of Justice of the Azerbaijan Republic gave official permission for the functioning of the Baha'i Community of Baku.

The international observers have criticized Azerbaijan for religious freedom, but local Baha'is express no dissatisfaction with the government's treatment of their faith. They have, however, faced challenges particularly in the autonomous republic of Nakhchivan, where the faithful have reported harassment.

Free Baha'is being a small community spends most of their time at in-house gatherings where people from families, friends and neighbours are made part of. Some faithful also organise workshops for children, lectures for adults, and social-welfare projects. Faithful also organise specially gatherings in Baku for kids to sing songs and make drawings highlighting religious unity. All in the name of Baha'u'llah and the Master. Azerbaijan offers a perfect blend of religious tolerance and multiculturalism, and hence the followers of the Free Baha'i faith become a



**1926 - A group of Baha'i children in Baku receiving instructions in the principles of character building**

natural fit for the country. I wish great victory to the followers of Baha'u'llah to spread the message of peace and unity in this region and may the dream of the Master come true. Keep growing!



# Free Baha'i Activities

*“He is God!*

*O Thou Almighty Lord!*

*Strengthen all mankind that they may do according to the instructions and teachings recorded in these writings, so that wars and strifes may be eliminated from the world of man; that the roots of enmity may be destroyed and the foundations of love and affection be established; that the hearts may be filled with love and the souls be attracted; that wisdom may advance and the faces become brightened and illumined; that there be no more wars and strifes and that reconciliation and peace appear; that the Unity of the world of man may pitch its tent on the “apex of the horizons,” so that peoples and parties become as one nation, that different continents become as one continent and the whole earth as one land; that the sects of antagonizing and dogmatic religions be unified; that the world of creation be adorned and all the people of the earth abide in unity and peace.*

*Verily, Thou art the Giver, the Bestower, the Beholder!!*

(Tablets of Abdu'l Baha Vol 1).

Dear Baha'i faithful

Allah'u'Abha

We would like to extend our heartfelt congratulations to our friends from Singapore for initiating the reading sessions of the Tablets of Abdu'l Baha with 8 new friends who have recently accepted the message of

Baha'u'llah. Some of our friends there made copies of these holy books and have started reading sessions conducted on a weekly basis. This is indeed an act of grace by the Singapore Free Baha'i community. We have recommended them to teach to our new friends the Life of our master a role model for Baha'i service. As per the Master, service to humanity is of the Highest importance and the Master, Himself, spent most of His life in teaching and traveling to spread and impart the message of Baha'u'llah.

Another good news is that a new friend from Azerbaijan, fed up with the antics of the Administration there, has shown his deep interest in Free Baha'i faith. After clearing a few of his doubts he has relinquished his association with the Administration and has embraced the empowering principles of the Free Baha'i faith. He will shortly start a small website in Azerbaijan to spread the beautiful and joyous message of Baha'u'llah.

Our dearest friends from Canada have requested for a webinar, where the faithful can meet and share their experiences of life and service during these hard times of the global pandemic.

This suggestion has been seconded by a lot of other friends from a diverse range of territories and we have received a special request to ensure that those who have newly accepted the faith are definitely made part of

this exercise so as to make connections with them and take feedback about their experience in this enlightening journey in accepting the truth of Baha'u'llah. The Agenda of this webinar would be to improve connections and to discuss on a global level, ideas and plans to further serve humanity and to work for achieving peace amongst all mankind. The date and time for such a meet would be shared well in advance on our website and in the meantime the faithful can send us abstracts of any topic they feel merits a presentation in the meeting.

The Thailand Baha'i community has been organizing dawn prayers in their neighborhood with their colleagues on regular basis. We have suggested them to also start some basic teaching like History of The Bab and an introduction to the concept of Manifestation and also to Baha'u'llah, so that friends as well as participants from the wider community can relate more to these prayers.

Some of our dearest friends from Africa have asked us to send Pioneering / Travel teachers for their respective territories, but regrettably, as of now we do not have any such program, although we will make note of the idea behind the same.

With regards to the book - "The Alleged Will

and Testament of Abdu'l Baha, An Analysis" proof reading of the same is completed by friends in Canada, however unfortunately due to the current pandemic the publishing of the same has been indefinitely delayed.

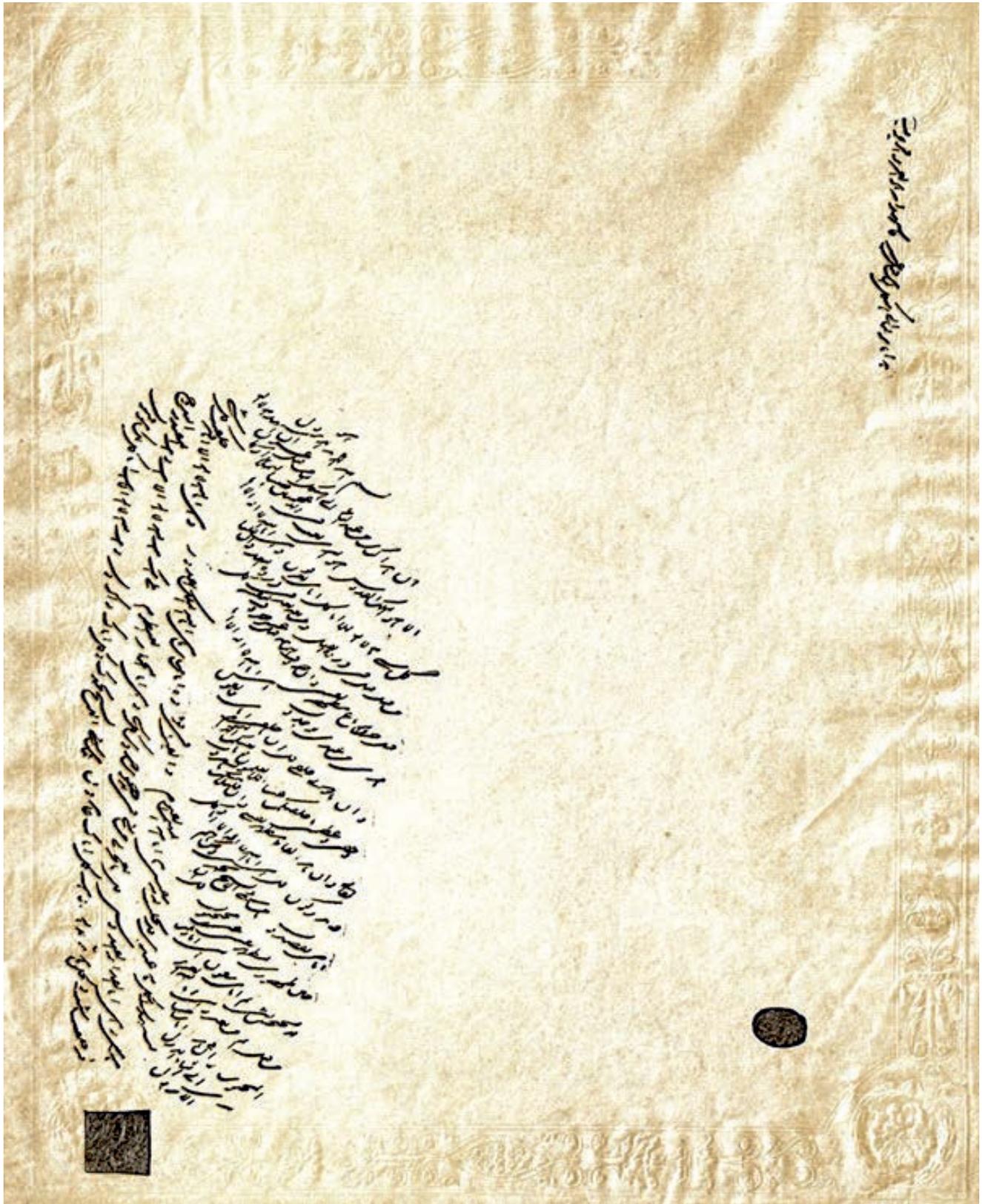
We are extremely humbled by the sheer amount of dedication and output of work that is happening within the Free Baha'i Ecosystem today. This result is due to the breaking of the shackles of Administration and performing service out of love for Baha'u'llah and not for any positions. We would like to thank our Free Baha'i worldwide community for their services to mankind, where without becoming any officers, each individual is a Guardian of his own faith. Let's work together to spread love and unity amongst mankind as Baha'u'llah has said "The Earth is but one country, and mankind it's citizen."

Warmest Baha'i regards

Free Baha'i team.



# Know Your Heritage



The Bab's Tablet to the Eighteenth Letter of the Living - Quddus



# Some Questions Answered

Email 1:

Joining  Inbox x



**michael**  michael.m...@gmail.com>  
to info ▾

Tue, Jul 7, 5:44 AM



Dear free bahai community,

I'm interested in becoming a free bahai. I was part of the nsa/uhj bahais for ten years and that was from 2002 to 2012. When I left and join a Christian church but it didn't feel home. That was like for a year. Now I'm not part any spiritual community now and been for like That for awhile. I'm ready to get back to true bahatism.

Thanks,  
Mike

Answer:

Alla'u'Abha Michael,

Thank you for writing to us. We are glad to know about you and about your interest in joining the Baha'i faith.

As mentioned in the teachings on Baha'u'llah,

“The man who lives the life according to the teachings of Baha'u'llah is already a Baha'i. On the other hand, a man may call himself a Baha'i for fifty years, and if he does not live the life he is not a Baha'i.”

So, if you're following the teachings of Baha'u'llah and Abdu'l Baha, and keeping away from the path of deviation, you're a Baha'i. Following the teachings and walking on the path shown by the great Manifestation is important and should be our prime focus. Just to keep you informed, we the Free Baha'is do not believe in signing a card or declaring yourself in the Baha'i faith.

Now that you have been attracted towards the teachings of Baha'u'llah, it would be great if you can write to us about your journey and what made you accept the Free Baha'i faith. And if you're okay, we would like to publish your story in our upcoming magazine.

Do go through our website, read all the content available there and if you have any queries, do write us back.

Have a great day ahead!

Regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**



Email 2:

## Speaker in 1934 ➤ Inbox x

**Tamala**  [tamala@mail.usf.edu](mailto:tamala@mail.usf.edu)  
to info ▾

I am writing my PhD dissertation on Madeleine Slade (aka Mira Behn or Mirabai)- a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi's. Slade states in her autobiography that she spoke at/to The New History Society and the timeframe would have been somewhere between October and November of 1934. I was wondering if you had any record of this her visit/speech. Thank you for your time,

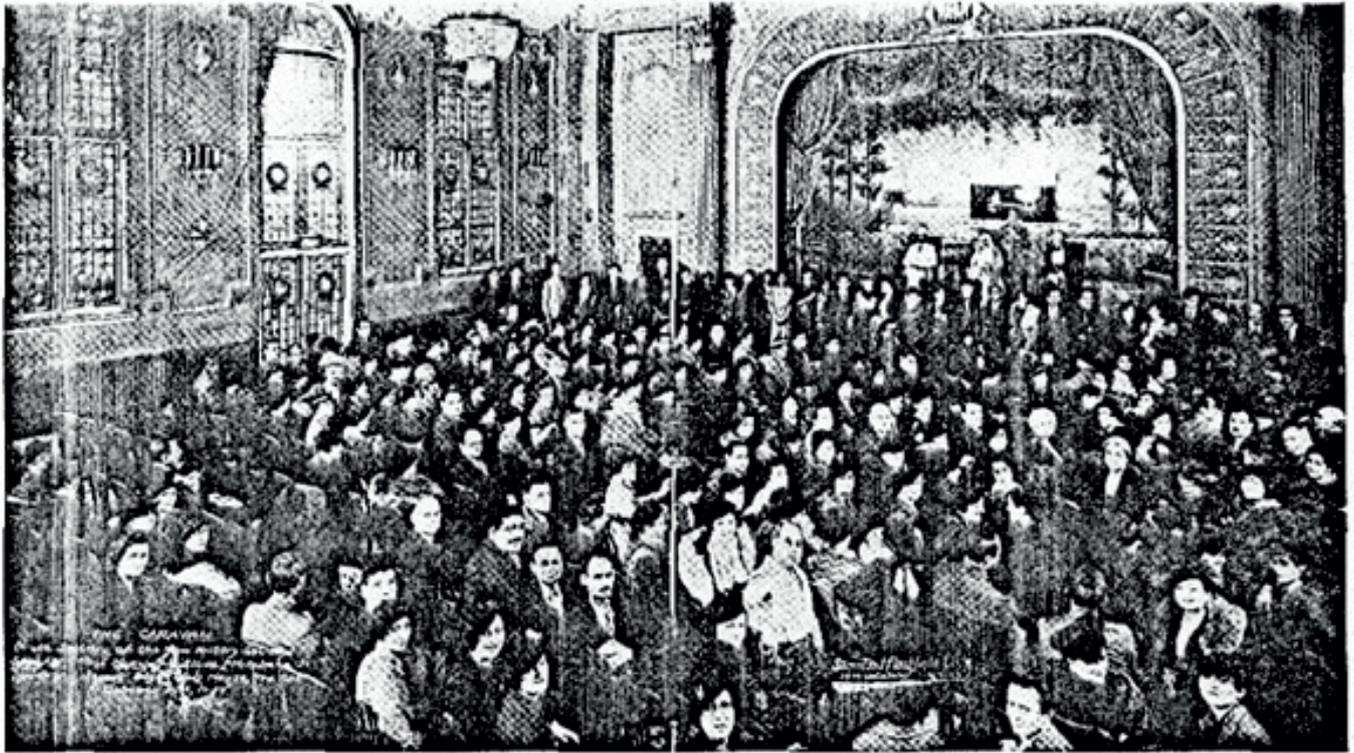
Answer:

Hi Tamala,

Thanks for writing to us. We are extremely sorry for late replying to your email, but unfortunately it went into junk and last week when we were going through the spam folder,

we found your email. We immediately shared it with our research team and here is what they have helped us with. Hope you find this useful.

**Team Free Baha'is**



Meeting held in New York, in honor of Mirabehn (Madeleine) 29, 1934, under the auspices of The New History Society. Platform group, from left to right:—Dr. H. T. Mazumdar,

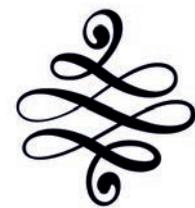
Slide) spiritual daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, on October of The New History Society. Mirabehn, M. A. Sohrab and Hon. Lewis Stuyvesant Chanler.

The reference for that image the book 'Broken Silence', pg. 263.

Do write back if you have any more questions.

Thanks,

**Team Free Baha'is**



Email 3:

Funerals.  Inbox x



**Zolani**  [zolanib@info.com](mailto:zolanib@info.com)  
to info ▾

Tue, Jun 30, 1:27 AM



Allah'uabha.

One of the current challenges for those of us who are not with the Haifa Bahais is funerals. Can we discuss this in our magazine? To be clear, how do we go about this?

Regards,

Lawrence

zolanib@info.com

Re

Answer:

Hi Zolani,

Allah'u'Abha!

As per Kitab-i-Aqdas, there is no restriction regarding a Baha'i getting burial done in the graveyard of some other community. Rather, it is important that burial is done as per Baha'i laws. It is better that the Free Baha'is work for humanity, love, peace and harmony. And as far as the graveyard is concerned, there is no specific law mentioned in Aqdas or even in the teachings of Baha'u'llah that the Baha'is should be buried in Baha'i graveyard only.

Regarding discussing this in the magazine, we would want you to help us write an article that can be included in our next edition, if you are interested? Do let us know.

Also, let us know if you have any other questions, and we will be more than happy to help.

Have a great day!

Regards,

**Team Free Baha'is**



## Email 4:

I would like to ask you about the Baha'i Laws regarding giving money to the homeless and beggars. I'm aware of the general laws regarding mendicancy, but I was wondering if there is anything more specific and also how fellow friends deal with the problem.

I live in a post-Soviet capital city, and because I am more obviously middle class, I am constantly asked for money. Sometimes those who ask me are obviously able-bodied and could in principle find real work, but sometimes they are obviously very destitute and/or suffering from a severe physical disability, mental illness or addiction. Post-Soviet societies also do not have any systems in place to help homeless and beggars: if a person does not have family support, they are basically left to die. There do exist some charities to help them, but on the one hand,

there are just too many such people, and on the other hand, charities here can be corrupt.

Normally, I do not give money, and I assume that they aren't interested in food or some other service. This is only an assumption; I don't ask them because usually they ask me when I'm already busy or in a hurry and hence don't want to stop. I know Abdu'l-Baha would probably stop and literally give them his pants! But that's a difficult standard to live by in my life right now.

I will give money to elderly who are begging, and I will give money to people who may be singing or playing an instrument (I see that as working and providing a service). But in general, I feel guilty.

---

Answer:

Hi Christopher,

Allah'u'Abha!

That's a wonderful question and we would love to guide you on that bit seeking help from the teachings of Baha'u'llah and the Master.

Let us quote here an extract from Kitab-i-Aqdas:

“It is not permissible to beg, and when one is asked (for money), it is 'forbidden' for him to give. It has been ordained that everyone earn his living.”

So, the above extract clearly instructs that it is not allowed to beg or even give anything to

the beggar. This is probably because giving money to the beggars just makes them lazy and they turn away from exerting for the sake of their daily bread.

Now comes the next thing which is, how do we help the poor? We the Free Baha'i encourage our friends to give to organizations that specialize in taking care of the poor. The reason for this is to avoid helping beggars who do it for the wrong reasons, examples are those who do it because they're lazy despite being very capable to work, those faking poverty or handicaps, etc. Giving to roadside beggars can have the unintended side effect of creating incentives that lead to all manner of abuse and misery. Instead giving to institutions that serve the poor is a far more effective way of alleviating their sufferings.



If you closely follow our Caravan Magazine, you would identify how much the Free Baha'is are engrossed in helping the poor and the needy in different parts of the society. We encourage our friends to spend their Huququ'llah to those organisations who take care of the poor, and with that we are trying spread the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

Hope that answers your question. In case you need any further clarification or have any other questions, do write back to us and we will be more than happy to help.

Have a great day!

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

# 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."

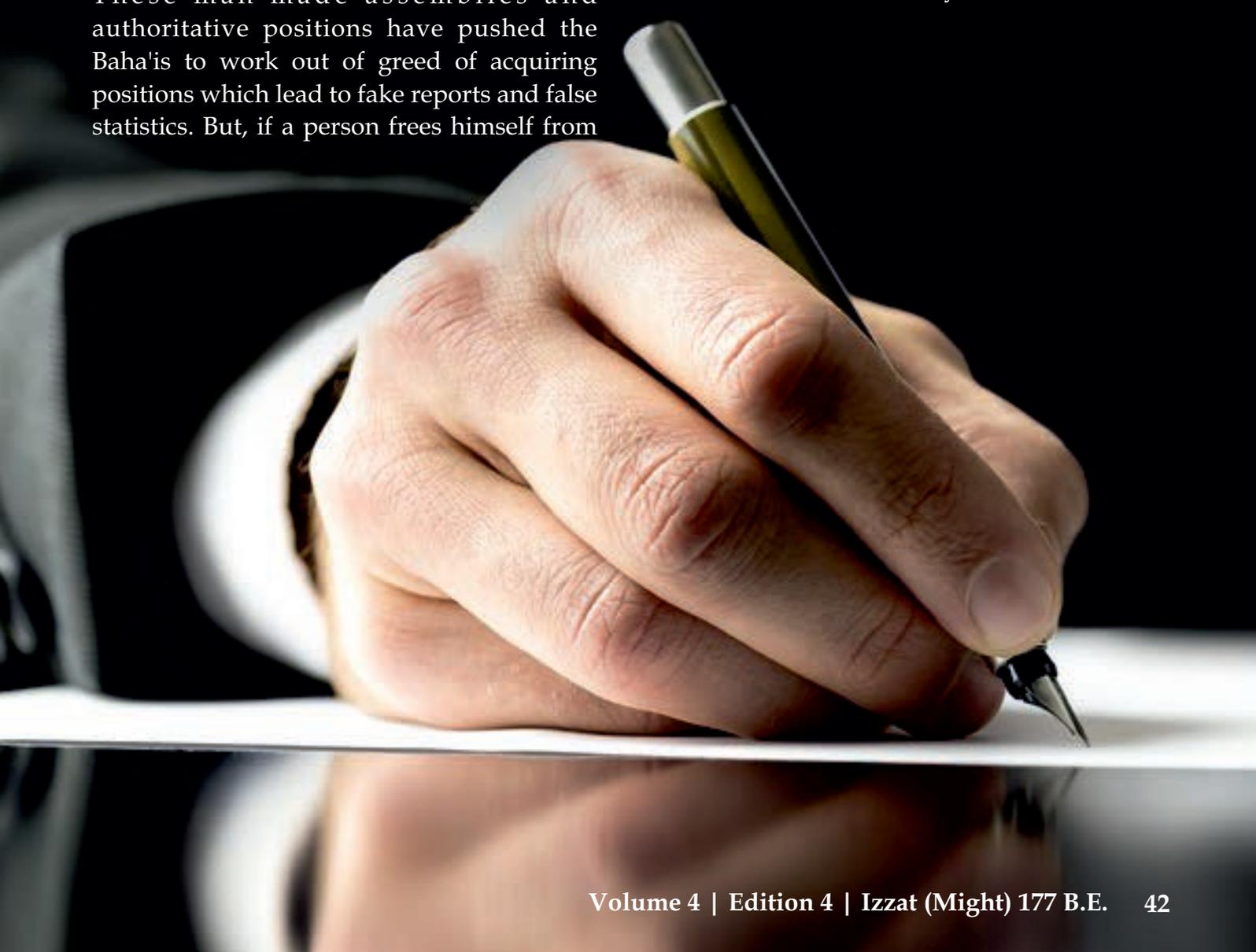
(Reference: Star of the West, Vol. 8, pg. 116)

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 ?

Whenever Abdu'l Baha went into presence of the Almighty, he used to simply keep aside the world and focus on the Lord alone. Let's go through the interesting narration mentioned below to get a better understanding.

On repeated request by a Baha'i when Abdu'l Baha was in New York, He called to him that ardent Baha'i and said "If you will come to Me at dawn tomorrow, I will teach you to pray."

Delighted, Mr. M arose at four and crossed the city, arriving for his lesson at six. With what exultant expectation he must have greeted this opportunity! He found Abdu'l Baha already at prayer, kneeling by the side of the bed. Mr. M followed suit, taking care to place himself directly across. Seeing that Abdu'l Baha was quite lost in His Own reverie Mr. M began to pray silently for his friends, his family and finally for the crowned heads of Europe. No word was uttered by the quiet Man before him. He went over all the prayers he knew then, and repeated them twice, three times - still no sound broke the expectant hush.

Mr M surreptitiously rubbed one knee and wondered vaguely about his back. He began again, hearing as he did so, the birds heralding the dawn outside the window. An hour passed, and finally two. Mr. M was quite numb now. His eyes, roving along the wall, caught sight of a large crack. He dallied with a touch of indignation but let his gaze pass again to the still figure across the bed.

The ecstasy that he saw arrested him and he drank deeply of the sight. Suddenly he wanted to pray like that. Selfish desires were forgotten. Sorrow, conflict, and even his immediate surroundings were as if they had never been. He was conscious of only one thing, a passionate desire to draw near to God.

Closing his eyes again he set the world firmly aside, and amazingly his heart teemed with prayer, eager, joyous, tumultuous prayer. He felt cleansed by humility and lighted by a new peace. Abdu'l Baha had taught him to pray!

The "Master of Akka" immediately aroused and came to him. His eyes rested smilingly upon the newly humbled Mr. M. "When you pray", He said, "You must not think of your aching body, nor of the birds outside the window, nor of the cracks in the wall!"

He became very serious then, and added, "When you wish to pray you must first know that you are standing in the presence of the Almighty!"

(Reference: Annamarie Honnold, Vignettes from the Life of Abdu'l Baha, no. 27, p 131-2)

# Throwback



**1927 - The Mosque at Haifa where Abdu'l Baha frequently worshipped**  
Hussein Rabbani, Jean Bolles and Emogene Hoagg in the courtyard of the  
Mosque in Haifa where Abdu'l Baha frequently worshipped

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**[www.freebahais.org](http://www.freebahais.org) | [info@freebahais.org](mailto:info@freebahais.org)**

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