

TO BE A BAHÁ'Í

FROM NEW BELIEVERS TO
NEW TEACHERS IN THE CAUSE OF GOD



The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good . . .

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

NOVEMBER, 2003

Glorified art Thou, O Lord my God! I give Thee thanks inasmuch as Thou hast called me into being in Thy days, and infused into me Thy love and Thy knowledge. I beseech Thee, by Thy name whereby the goodly pearls of Thy wisdom and Thine utterance were brought forth out of the treasuries of the hearts of such of Thy servants as are nigh unto Thee, and through which the Day-Star of Thy Name, the Compassionate, hath shed its radiance upon all that are in Thy heaven and on Thy earth, to supply me, by Thy grace and bounty, with Thy wondrous and hidden bounties.

These are the earliest days of my life, O my God, which Thou hast linked with Thine own days. Now that Thou hast conferred upon me so great an honor, withhold not from me the things Thou hast ordained for Thy chosen ones.

I am, O my God, but a tiny seed which Thou hast sown in the soil of Thy love, and caused to spring forth by the hand of Thy bounty. This seed craveth, therefore, in its inmost being, for the waters of Thy mercy and the living fountain of Thy grace. Send down upon it, from the heaven of Thy loving-kindness, that which will enable it to flourish beneath Thy shadow and within the borders of Thy court. Thou art He Who watereth the hearts of all that have recognized Thee from Thy plenteous stream and the fountain of Thy living waters.

Praised be God, the Lord of the worlds.

☞ A SPIRITUAL FRAMEWORK FOR SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING ☞

The purpose of this program is to inspire the new believers and assist them in their path of self-directed learning of the creative word. To accomplish this, the program is structured using a learning model derived from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh:

“Then, so much as capacity and capability allow, ye needs must
deck the tree of being with fruits such as
knowledge, wisdom, spiritual perception and eloquent speech.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Bahá'í Education, #9, p. 3

Most learning experiences start and end with knowledge and wisdom, but using this model the learner can achieve a deeper level of understanding. He or she internalizes what is learned by applying it to his or her own everyday experiences and actions.

The activities in this program are organized to achieve these four aspects of learning:

Knowledge

A keen awareness of information and facts. The remembering and recalling of previously learned materials.

Wisdom

True comprehension and insight into the meaning of information and facts.

Spiritual Perception

A penetrating inner vision and the internalization of what is being learned.

Eloquent Speech

The ability to speak or act in a way that manifests one's learning.

This program attempts to engage the mind and heart in a variety of activities such as reading, discussing, listening, reflecting and expressing through the arts. Some of the activities and methods used in this course are derived from those developed for the Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education program. Extensive study of the Sacred Writings was undertaken in order to develop a program that uses diverse methods compatible with the teaching methods described therein. Not only will each mind and heart be touched when different methods are used, but one is also taken beyond the bounds of their usual learning modes so that new horizons and vistas can be discovered.

You are welcomed and encouraged to read more about the different methods of teaching and learning suggested in our Holy Texts in the book *Foundations for a Spiritual Education* available through the Bahá'í Distribution Service.

PART ONE

THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THIS DAY OF GOD

**My Relationship with Bahá'u'lláh
The Magnificence of this Day of God**

PART TWO

THE VERITIES OF THE FAITH

**The Transformation of Civilization
Applying the Healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to a Suffering Humanity**

PART THREE

THE TWIN DUTIES: A PRESCRIPTION FOR THIS AGE

**Recognition and Obedience
The Covenant and Daily Life: The Love Between God and Us
His Call, Our Actions
Tests and Difficulties
Aims, Origins and Purposes of the Administrative Order**

PART FOUR

MOVING TO ACTION

**Personal Spiritual Development
Memorization
Service and Action
Conclusion of Session / Questions and Answers**

☞ KEY REFERENCE QUOTATION ☞

This course derives its focus and outline from the following quotation of the Guardian, Shoghi Effendi:

“Above all, the utmost endeavor should be exerted by your Assembly to familiarize the newly enrolled believers with the fundamental and spiritual verities of the Faith, and with the origins, the aims and purposes, as well as the processes of a divinely appointed Administrative Order, to acquaint them more fully with the history of the Faith, to instill in them a deeper understanding of the Covenants of both Bahá’u’lláh and of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, to enrich their spiritual life, to rouse them to a greater effort and a closer participation in both the teaching of the Faith and the administration of its activities, and to inspire them to make the necessary sacrifices for the furtherance of its vital interests. For as the body of the avowed supporters of the Faith is enlarged, and the basis of the structure of the Administrative Order is broadened, and the fame of the rising community spreads far and wide, a parallel progress must be achieved, if the fruits already garnered are to endure, in the spiritual quickening of its members and the deepening of their inner life.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI
*The Importance of Deepening Our Knowledge and Understanding
of the Faith, #89, pages 26-27*

☞ THE MAGNIFICENCE OF THIS DAY OF GOD ☞

“Every Prophet Whom the Almighty and Peerless Creator hath purposed to send to the peoples of the earth hath been entrusted with a Message, and charged to act in a manner that would best meet the requirements of the age in which He appeared. God’s purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquillity of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, pages 79-80

“We have, at the bidding of the Omnipotent Ordainer, breathed a new life into every human frame, and instilled into every word a fresh potency. All created things proclaim the evidences of this world-wide regeneration.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, pgs. 92-93

The Magnificence of this Day of God, continued

“Great indeed is this Day! The allusions made to it in all the Sacred Scriptures as the Day of God attest its greatness. The soul of every Prophet of God, of every Divine Messenger, hath thirsted for this wondrous Day. All the divers kindreds of the earth have, likewise, yearned to attain it.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh, p. 11

“The time foreordained unto the peoples and kindreds of the earth is now come. The promises of God, as recorded in the holy Scriptures, have all been fulfilled. Out of Zion hath gone forth the Law of God, and Jerusalem, and the hills and land thereof, are filled with the glory of His Revelation

“In the Book of Isaiah it is written: ‘Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty.’ No man that meditateth upon this verse can fail to recognize the greatness of this Cause, or doubt the exalted character of this Day – the Day of God Himself. This same verse is followed by these words: ‘And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that Day.’ This is the Day which the Pen of the Most High hath glorified in all the holy Scriptures. There is no verse in them that doth not declare the glory of His holy Name, and no Book that doth not testify unto the loftiness of this most exalted theme. Were We to make mention of all that hath been revealed in these heavenly Books and holy Scriptures concerning this Revelation, this Tablet would assume impossible dimensions.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Babá'u'lláh, pgs. 12-13

““The purpose underlying all creation is the revelation of this most sublime, this most holy Day, the Day known as the Day of God, in His Books and Scriptures’ ‘This is the Day in which God’s most excellent favors have been poured out upon men, the Day in which His most mighty grace hath been infused into all created things’ ‘A fleeting moment, in this Day, excelleth centuries of a bygone age’ ‘The world of being shineth, in this Day, with the resplendency of this Divine Revelation. All created beings extol its saving grace, and sing its praises. The universe is wrapt in a ecstasy of joy and gladness Well is it with him that hath lived to see this Day, and hath recognized its station’ ‘This Day a different Sun hath arisen, and a different Heaven hath been adorned with its stars and its planets. The world is another world, and the Cause another Cause’ ‘Peerless is this Day, for it is as the eye to past ages and centuries and as a light unto the darkness of the times’ ‘Should the greatness of this Day be revealed in its fullness, every man would forsake a myriad lives in his longing to partake, though it be for one moment, of its great glory – how much more this world and its corruptible treasures!’”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, pages 77-79

The Magnificence of this Day of God, continued

“That which was applicable to human needs during the early history of the race can neither meet nor satisfy the demands of this day, this period of newness and consummation The gifts and blessings of the period of youth, although timely and sufficient during the adolescence of mankind, are now incapable of meeting the requirements of its maturity.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ

Quoted in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, page 165

“The Revelation of Bahá’u’lláh, whose supreme mission is none other but the achievement of this organic and spiritual unity of the whole body of nations, should . . . be regarded as signaling through its advent the coming of age of the entire human race. It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the ever-changing fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, nor even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man’s collective life on this planet.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI

The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh, page 163

☞ A CHASTE AND HOLY LIFE ☞

“Such a chaste and holy life, with its implications of modesty, purity, temperance, decency, and clean-mindedness, involves no less than the exercise of moderation in all that pertains to dress, language, amusements, and all artistic and literary avocations. It demands daily vigilance in the control of one’s carnal desires and corrupt inclinations. It calls for the abandonment of a frivolous conduct, with its excessive attachment to trivial and often misdirected pleasures. It requires total abstinence from all alcoholic drinks, from opium, and from similar habit-forming drugs. It condemns the prostitution of art and of literature, the practices of nudism and of companionate marriage, infidelity in marital relationships, and all manner of promiscuity, of easy familiarity, and of sexual vices...”

SHOGHI EFFENDI
The Advent of Divine Justice, p. 30

“They whom God hath endued with insight will readily recognize that the precepts laid down by God constitute the highest means for the maintenance of order in the world and the security of its peoples

O ye peoples of the world! Know assuredly that My commandments are the lamps of My loving providence among My servants, and the keys of My mercy for My creatures. Thus hath it been sent down from the heaven of the Will of your Lord, the Lord of Revelation

Say: From My laws the sweet smelling savor of My garment can be smelled, and by their aid the standards of victory will be planted upon the highest peaks. The Tongue of My power hath, from the heaven of My omnipotent glory, addressed to My creation these words: “Observe My commandments, for the love of My beauty.” Happy is the lover that hath inhaled the divine fragrance of his Best-Beloved from these words, laden with the perfume of a grace which no tongue can describe. By My life! He who hath drunk the choice wine of fairness from the hands of My bountiful favour, will circle around My commandments that shine above the Dayspring of My creation.

Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, pgs. 331-333

“ . . . with regard to the peoples who clamour for freedom: the moderate freedom which guarantees the welfare of the world of mankind and maintains and preserves the universal relationships, is found in its fullest power and extension in the teachings of Bahá’u’lláh.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 305

“The Bahá’í standard is very high, more particularly when compared with the thoroughly rotten morals of the present world. But this standard of ours will produce healthier, happier, nobler people, and induce stabler marriages. . . .”

SHOGHI EFFENDI
The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1, p. 49

“Become ye intoxicated with the wine of the love of God, and not with that which deadeneth your minds, O ye that adore Him! Verily, it hath been forbidden unto every believer, whether man or woman. . . .”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH
Quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 33

“O my friend! Thou art the day-star of the heavens of My holiness, let not the defilement of the world eclipse thy splendor. Rend asunder the veil of heedlessness, that from behind the clouds thou mayest emerge resplendent and array all things with the apparel of life.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *The Hidden Words of Bahá’u’lláh*, Persian no. 73, p. 47

☞ MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE ☞

“Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place, and the city, and the heart, and the mountain, and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and the land, and the sea, and the island, and the meadow where mention of God hath been made, and His praise glorified.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Bahá'í Prayers

“The parents must exert every effort to rear their offspring to be religious, for should the children not attain this greatest of adornments, they will not obey their parents, which in a certain sense means that they will not obey God. Indeed, such children will show no consideration to anyone, and will do exactly as they please.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Bahá'í Education, #14. p. 4

“The fruits of the tree of existence are trustworthiness, loyalty, truthfulness and purity. After the recognition of the oneness of the Lord, exalted be He, the most important of all duties is to have due regard for the rights of one's parents. This matter hath been mentioned in all the Books of God. . . .”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1, p. 385

“Marriage, among the mass of the people, is a physical bond, and this union can only be temporary, since it is foredoomed to a physical separation at the close.

Among the people of Bahá, however, marriage must be a union of the body and of the spirit as well, for here both husband and wife are aglow with the same wine, both are enamoured of the same matchless Face, both live and move through the same spirit., both are illumined by the same glory. This connection between them is a spiritual one, hence it is a bond that will abide forever. Likewise do they enjoy strong and lasting ties in the physical world as well, for if the marriage is based both on the spirit and the body, that union is a true one, hence it will endure. If, however, the bond is physical and nothing more, it is sure to be only temporary, and must inexorably end in separation.

When, therefore, the people of Bahá undertake to marry, the union must be a true relationship, a spiritual coming together as well as a physical one, so that throughout every phase of life, and in all the worlds of God, their union will endure; for this real oneness is a gleaming out of the love of God.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, p. 117

“If love and agreement are manifest in a single family, that family will advance, become illumined and spiritual; but if enmity and hatred exist within it, destruction and dispersion are inevitable. . . .”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
The Promulgation of Universal Peace, pgs. 144-145

“According to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh the family, being a human unit, must be educated according to the rules of sanctity. All the virtues must be taught the family. The integrity of the family bond must be constantly considered, and the rights of the individual members must not be transgressed. The rights of the son, the father, the mother – none of them must be transgressed, none of them must be arbitrary. Just as the son has certain obligations to his father, the father, likewise, has certain obligations to his son. The mother, the sister and other members of the household have their certain prerogatives. All these rights and prerogatives must be conserved, yet the unity of the family must be sustained. The injury of one shall be considered the injury of all; the comfort of each, the comfort of all; the honor of one, the honor of all.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 168

“O Children of Men! Know ye not why We created you all from the same dust? That no one should exalt himself over the other. Ponder at all times in your hearts how ye were created. Since We have created you all from one same substance it is incumbent on you to be even as one soul, to walk with the same feet, eat with the same mouth and dwell in the same land, that from your inmost being, by your deeds and actions, the signs of oneness and the essence of detachment may be made manifest. Such is my counsel to you, O concourse of light! Heed ye this counsel that ye may obtain the fruit of holiness from the tree of wondrous glory.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Hidden Words of Bahá'u'lláh*, Arabic no. 68

“The incomparable Creator hath created all men from one same substance, and hath exalted their reality above the rest of His creatures.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 81

“He Who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 214

“All humanity are the children of God, they belong to the same family, to the same original race. There can be no multiplicity of races, since all are the descendants of Adam. This signifies that racial assumption and distinction are nothing but superstition. In the estimate of God there are no English, French, Germans, Turkish or Persians. All these in the presence of God are equal; they are of one race and creation; God did not make these divisions. These distinctions have had their origin in man himself. Therefore, as they are against the plan and purpose of reality, they are false and imaginary. We are of one physical race, even as we are of one physical plan of material body – each endowed with two eyes, two ears, one head, two feet.”

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 299

“World order can be founded only on an unshakable consciousness of the oneness of mankind, a spiritual truth which all the human sciences confirm. Anthropology, physiology, psychology, recognize only one human species, albeit infinitely varied in the secondary aspects of life. Recognition of this truth requires abandonment of prejudice – prejudice of every kind – race, class, color, creed, nation, sex, degree of material civilization, everything which enables people to consider themselves superior to others.”

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Promise of World Peace*, Part III, p. 28

“Exalted, immensely exalted is He Who hath removed differences and established harmony. Glorified, infinitely glorified is He Who hath caused discord to cease, and decreed solidarity and unity. Praised be God, the Pen of the Most High hath lifted distinctions from between His servants and handmaidens, and through His consummate favors and all-encompassing mercy, hath conferred upon all a station and rank of the same plane. He hath broken the back of vain imaginings with the sword of utterance and hath obliterated the perils of idle fancies through the pervasive power of His might.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 2*, p.357

“And among the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh is the equality of women and men. The world of humanity has two wings – one is women and the other men. Not until both wings are equally developed can the bird fly. Should one wing remain weak, flight is impossible. Not until the world of women becomes equal to the world of men in the acquisition of virtues and perfections, can success and prosperity be attained as they ought to be.”

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá*, p. 302

☞ FELLOWSHIP AND THE POWER OF UNITY ☞

“O ye loved ones of the Lord! This is the hour when ye must associate with all the earth’s peoples in extreme kindliness and love, and be to them the signs and tokens of God’s great mercy. Ye must become the very soul of the world, the living spirit in the body of the children of men. In this wondrous Age, at this time when the Ancient Beauty, the Most Great Name, bearing unnumbered gifts, hath risen above the horizon of the world, the Word of God hath infused such awesome power into the inmost essence of humankind that He hath stripped men’s human qualities of all effect, and hath, with His all-conquering might, unified the peoples in a vast sea of oneness.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 342

“The love which exists between the hearts of believers is prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits. This love is attained through the knowledge of God, so that men see the Divine Love reflected in the heart. Each sees in the other the Beauty of God reflected in the soul, and finding this point of similarity, they are attracted to one another in love. This love will make all men the waves of one sea, this love will make them all the stars of one heaven and the fruits of one tree. This love will bring the realization of true accord, the foundation of real unity.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Paris Talks*, pgs. 180-181

“Naught but the celestial potency of the Word of God, which ruleth and transcendeth the realities of all things, is capable of harmonizing the divergent thoughts, sentiments, ideas, and convictions of the children of men. Verily, it is the penetrating power in all things, the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 292

“If a small number of people gather lovingly together, with absolute purity and sanctity, with their hearts free of the world, experiencing the emotions of the Kingdom and the powerful magnetic forces of the Divine, and being at one in their happy fellowship, that gathering will exert its influence over all the earth. The nature of that band of people, the words they speak, the deeds they do, will unleash the bestowals of Heaven, and provide a foretaste of eternal bliss. The hosts of the company on high will defend them . . . and will come down to their aid.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 342

“Whensoever holy souls, drawing on the powers of heaven, shall arise with such qualities of the spirit, and march in unison, rank on rank, every one of those souls will be even as one thousand, and the surging waves of that mighty ocean will be even as the battalions of the concourse on high. . . .”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 260

“The friends must realize the Power of the Holy Spirit which is manifest and quickening them at this time through the appearance of Bahá’u’lláh. There is no force of heaven or earth which can affect them if they place themselves wholly under the influence of the Holy Spirit and under its guidance. . . .”

SHOGHI EFFENDI *The Power of Divine Assistance*, p. 224

CONSULTATION

“The Great Being saith: The heaven of divine wisdom is illumined with the two luminaries of consultation and compassion. Take ye counsel together in all matters, inasmuch as consultation is the lamp of guidance which leadeth the way, and is the bestower of understanding.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 168

“Consultation bestoweth greater awareness and transmuteth conjecture into certitude. It is a shining light which, in a dark world, leadeth the way and guideth. For everything there is and will continue to be a station of perfection and maturity. The maturity of the gift of understanding is made manifest through consultation.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *Consultation: A Compilation*, #3, p. 3

“In all things it is necessary to consult. This matter should be forcibly stressed by thee, so that consultation may be observed by all. The intent of what hath been revealed from the Pen of the Most High is that consultation may be fully carried out among the friends, inasmuch as it is and will always be a cause of awareness and of awakening and a source of good and well-being.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *Consultation: A Compilation*, #5, p. 3

“Regarding thy question about consultation of a father with his son, or a son with his father, in matters of trade and commerce, consultation is one of the fundamental elements of the foundation of the Law of God. Such consultation is assuredly acceptable, whether between father and son, or with others. There is nothing better than this. Man must consult in all things for this will lead him to the depths of each problem and enable him to find the right solution.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Consultation: A Compilation*, #18, p. 9

“Let us also bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority, but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá’í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion and prudence on the one hand and fellowship, candor and courage on the other.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI *Bahá’í Administration*, pgs. 63-64

“A Bahá’í who has a problem may wish to make his own decision upon it after prayer and after weighing all the aspects of it in his own mind; he may prefer to seek the counsel of individual friends or of professional counselors such as his doctor or lawyer so that he can consider such advice when making his decision; or in a case where several people are involved, such as a family situation, he may want to gather together those who are affected so that they may arrive at a collective decision. There is also no objection whatever to a Bahá’í asking a group of people to consult together on a problem facing him.

It should be borne in mind that all consultation is aimed at arriving at a solution to a problem and is quite different from the sort of group baring of the soul that is popular in some circles these days and which borders on the kind of confession that is forbidden in the Faith. On the subject of confession the Guardian’s secretary wrote on his behalf to an individual believer: “We are forbidden to confess to any person, as do the Catholics to their priests, our sins and shortcomings, or to do so in public, as some religious sects do. However, if we spontaneously desire to acknowledge we have been wrong in something, or that we have some fault of character, and ask another person’s forgiveness or pardon, we are quite free to do so. The Guardian wants to point out, however, that we are not obliged to do so. It rests entirely with the individual.”

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 109

Applying the Healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to a Suffering Humanity

- 1 Name a problem facing humanity that is a major concern to you and those in your school, community, workplace, or family.
- 2 According to the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, what are the root causes of this problem?
- 3 What are the Bahá'í Teachings on this issue?
- 4 Prepare a brief presentation (a written paragraph, a skit, song, artistic representation) that explains Bahá'u'lláh's Teachings on this subject. Include at least one quotation from the Sacred Writings.

 PERSONAL REFLECTION 

“God’s purpose in sending His Prophets unto men is twofold. The first is to liberate the children of men from the darkness of ignorance, and guide them to the light of true understanding. The second is to ensure the peace and tranquility of mankind, and provide all the means by which they can be established.”

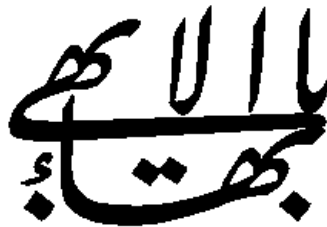
BAHÁ’U’LLÁH
Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh, pp. 79-80

☞ THE GREATEST NAME ☞

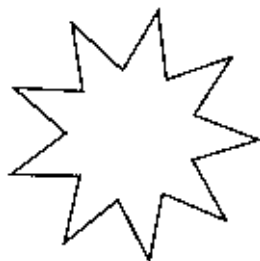
Of particular sacred significance to Bahá'ís are calligraphic forms of the word “Bahá” (Arabic for “Glory”), known as the Greatest Name, a reference to Bahá'u'lláh. The following symbol is engraved on personal rings (which is why it is also referred to as the “ringstone symbol”) and on buildings to establish their Bahá'í identity. The three levels of the ringstone symbol represent the world of God, the Creator, the world of His Manifestations, and the world of man. The vertical line joins the three horizontal bars together in the same way that the Divine Messengers of God form the link between the world of God and the world of man. The twin five-pointed stars on either side of the design represent the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, the twin Messengers of God for this age. The ringstone symbol was designed by ‘Abdu'l-Bahá and rendered by Mishkín-Qalam, a close companion of His and the leading calligrapher of Persia.



Another calligraphic form of the Greatest Name involves an invocation in Arabic, “Yá-Bahá'u'l-Abhá,” which says: “O Glory of the All Glorious.” It is displayed in Bahá'í homes and places of Bahá'í activity. It looks like this:



A simple nine-pointed star is often used by Bahá'ís as a symbol of their Faith. The number nine has significance in the Bahá'í Revelation. Nine years after the announcement of the Báb in Shiraz, Bahá'u'lláh received the intimation of His mission in the dungeon in Teheran. Nine, as the highest single-digit number, symbolizes completeness. Since the Bahá'í Faith claims to be the fulfillment of the expectations of all prior religions, this symbol, as used for example in nine-sided Bahá'í temples, reflects that sense of fulfillment and completeness. The five-pointed star is actually the symbol which is designated as the symbol of the Bahá'í Faith. In the writings we find: “. . . Strictly speaking the five-pointed star is the symbol of our Faith, as used by the Báb and explained by Him” (from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian, *Lights of Guidance*, p. 110).



☞ THE TWIN DUTIES: A PRESCRIPTION FOR THIS AGE ☞

“The first duty prescribed by God for His servants is the recognition of Him Who is the Dayspring of His Revelation and the Fountain of His laws, Who representeth the Godhead in both the Kingdom of His Cause and the world of creation. Whoso achieveth this duty hath attained unto all good; and whoso is deprived thereof hath gone astray, though he be the author of every righteous deed. It behoveth every one who reacheth this most sublime station, this summit of transcendent glory, to observe every ordinance of Him Who is the Desire of the world. These twin duties are inseparable. Neither is acceptable without the other. Thus hath it been decreed by Him Who is the Source of Divine inspiration.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
The Kitáb-i-Aqdas, p. 19

☞ THE SHORT OBLIGATORY PRAYER ☞

Sbear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee.
I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty
and to Thy wealth.
There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
Prayers and Meditations, p. 314

The Short Obligatory Prayer is one of three daily obligatory prayers revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. Each prayer has specific instructions for how and when they should be performed. Before reciting any one of them, the believer is asked to wash his hands and face (called “ablutions”), as a symbol of preparing him or herself for the sacred act of performing the obligatory prayer. We are also instructed to point in the direction of the “Point of Adoration,” in this case, the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh in Bahjí, Israel (due East from the United States) when reciting these prayers.

The Short Obligatory Prayer is to be recited once in 24 hours, at noon. According to the Writings, by noon is meant between noon and sunset. The believer is free to choose any one of the three prayers specifically revealed to fulfill this daily obligation. All three prayers, along with their respective instructions, may be found in almost any book of Bahá'í prayers.

☞ THE COVENANT ☞

“The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh*, pgs. 156-157

“Think not that We have revealed unto you a mere code of laws. Nay, rather, We have unsealed the choice Wine with the fingers of might and power. To this beareth witness that which the Pen of Revelation hath revealed. Meditate upon this, O men of insight!”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 21

“Today the dynamic power of the world of existence is the power of the Covenant which like unto an artery pulsateth in the body of the contingent world and protecteth Bahá’í unity The purpose of the Blessed Beauty in entering into this Covenant and Testament was to gather all existent beings around one point so that the thoughtless souls, who in every cycle and generation have been the cause of dissension, may not undermine the Cause. He hath, therefore, commanded that whatever emanateth from the Center of the Covenant is right and is under His protection and favor, while all else is error.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, pgs. 208-9

“There is, for example, the Greater Covenant which every Manifestation of God makes with His followers, promising that in the fullness of time a new Manifestation will be sent, and taking from them the undertaking to accept Him when this occurs. There is also the Lesser Covenant that a Manifestation of God makes with His followers that they will accept His appointed successor after Him.”

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Power of the Covenant, Part II*, p. 4

“A dynamic process, divinely propelled, possessed of undreamt-of potentialities, world-embracing in scope, world-transforming in its ultimate consequences, had been set in motion on that memorable night when the Báb communicated the purpose of His mission to Mullá Husayn in an obscure corner of Shiráz. It acquired a tremendous momentum with the first intimations of Bahá’u’lláh’s dawning Revelation It was finally consummated by the laws and ordinances He [Bahá’u’lláh] formulated, by the principles which He enunciated and by the institutions which He ordained

“To direct and canalize these forces let loose by this Heaven-sent process, and to insure their harmonious and continuous operation after His ascension, an instrument divinely ordained, invested with indisputable authority, organically linked with the Author of the Revelation Himself, was clearly indispensable. That instrument Bahá’u’lláh had expressly provided through the institution of the Covenant”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *God Passes By*, pgs. 237-238

“The Covenant is, moreover, embedded in the Writings of Bahá’u’lláh Himself. Thus . . . to accept Bahá’u’lláh is to accept His Covenant; to reject His Covenant is to reject Him.”

From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice, *The Covenant*, p. 18

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

“Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My Words, that ye may unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom that lie hid in its depths.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pgs. 85-86

“Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all. Pride not yourselves on much reading of the verses or on a multitude of pious acts by night and day; for were a man to read a single verse with joy and radiance it would be better for him than to read with lassitude all the Holy Books of God, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pgs. 73-74

“Intone, O My servant, the verses of God that have been received by thee, as intoned by them who have drawn nigh unto Him, that the sweetness of thy melody may kindle thine own soul, and attract the hearts of all men. Whoso reciteth, in the privacy of his chamber, the verses revealed by God, the scattering angels of the Almighty shall scatter abroad the fragrance of the words uttered by his mouth, and shall cause the heart of every righteous man to throb. Though he may, at first, remain unaware of its effect, yet the virtue of the grace vouchsafed unto him must needs sooner or later exercise its influence upon his soul. Thus have the mysteries of the Revelation of God been decreed by virtue of the Will of Him Who is the source of power and wisdom.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pgs. 294-295

“It is seemly that the servant should, after each prayer, supplicate God to bestow mercy and forgiveness upon his parents. Thereupon God’s call will be raised: ‘Thousand upon thousand of what thou hast asked for thy parents shall be thy recompense!’ Blessed is he who remembereth his parents when communing with God. There is, verily, no God but Him, the Mighty, the Well-Beloved.”

THE BÁB *Selections From the Writings of the Báb*, p. 94

“Praise be to God, thy heart is engaged in the commemoration of God, thy soul is gladdened by the glad tidings of God and thou art absorbed in prayer. The state of prayer is the best of conditions, for man is then associating with God. Prayer verily bestoweth life, particularly when offered in private and at times, such as midnight, when freed from daily cares.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 202

“These children are even as young plants, and teaching them the prayers is as letting the rain pour down upon them, that they may wax tender and fresh, and the soft breezes of the love of God may blow over them, making them to tremble with joy.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 139

“There are no set forms of meditation prescribed in the teachings, no plan, as such, for inner development. The friends are urged – nay enjoined – to pray, and they also should meditate, but the manner of doing the latter is left entirely to the individual.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 35

“Prayer and meditation are very important factors in deepening the spiritual life of the individual, but with them must go also action and example, as these are the tangible results of the former. Both are essential.

SHOGHI EFFENDI *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 2*, p. 241

DEEPENING AND EDUCATION

“Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide. Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament, and whoso turneth away from these holy verses in this Day is of those who throughout eternity have turned away from God. Fear ye God, O My servants, one and all.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pgs. 73-74

“Gather ye together with the utmost joy and fellowship and recite the verses revealed by the merciful Lord. By so doing the doors to true knowledge will be opened to your inner beings, and ye will then feel your souls endowed with steadfastness and your hearts filled with radiant joy.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, #6, p. 2

“Peruse My verses with joy and radiance. Verily they will attract you unto God and will enable you to detach yourselves from aught else save Him. Thus have ye been admonished in God’s Holy Writ and in this resplendent Tablet.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, #7, p. 2

“It is incumbent upon every man of insight and understanding to strive to translate that which hath been written into reality and action. . . .”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Gleanings From the Writings of Babá’u’lláh*, p. 250

“O My servants! My holy, My divinely ordained Revelation may be likened unto an ocean in whose depths are concealed innumerable pearls of great price, of surpassing luster. It is the duty of every seeker to bestir himself and strive to attain the shores of this ocean, so that he may, in proportion to the eagerness of his search and the efforts he hath exerted, partake of such benefits as have been pre-ordained in God’s irrevocable and hidden Tablets. . . .”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Gleanings From the Writings of Babá’u’lláh*, p. 326

“The understanding of His Words and the comprehension of the utterances of the Birds of Heaven are in no wise dependent upon human learning. They depend solely upon purity of heart, chastity of soul, and freedom of spirit. . . .”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH, *Kitáb-i-Íqán*, p. 217

“And from amongst all creatures He hath singled out man, to grant him His most wondrous gift, and hath made him to attain the bounties of the Company on High. That most precious of gifts is attainment unto His unfailing guidance, that the inner reality of humankind should become as a niche to hold this lamp; and when the scattering splendors of this light do beat against the bright glass of the heart, the heart’s purity maketh the beams to blaze out even stronger than before, and to shine in glory on the minds and souls of men.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, #27, p. 8

“Wherefore, O ye illumined youth, strive by night and by day to unravel the mysteries of the mind and spirit, and to grasp the secrets of the Day of God. Inform yourselves of the evidences that the Most Great Name hath dawned. . . .”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, #35, p. 11

“Knowledge is love. Study, listen to the exhortations, think, try to understand the wisdom and greatness of God. The soil must be fertilized before the seed can be sown.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Importance of Deepening our Knowledge and Understanding of the Faith*, #68, p. 19

☞ TEACHING AND PIONEERING ☞

“O Friends! You must all be so ablaze in this day with the fire of the love God that the heat thereof may be manifest in all your veins, your limbs and members of your body, and the peoples of the world may be ignited by this heat and turn to the horizon of the Beloved.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Teaching: The Greatest Gift of God*, p. 6

“Moderation is indeed highly desirable. Every person who in some degree turneth towards the truth can himself later comprehend most of what he seeketh. However, if at the outset a word is uttered beyond his capacity, he will refuse to hear it and will arise in opposition.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Teaching: The Greatest Gift of God*, p. 6

“Should any one among you be incapable of grasping a certain truth, or be striving to comprehend it, show forth, when conversing with him, a spirit of extreme kindness and good-will. Help him to see and recognize the truth, without esteeming yourself to be, in the least, superior to him, or to be possessed of greater endowments.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Gleanings From the Writings of Babá'u'lláh*, p. 8

“Whoso ariseth, in this Day, to aid Our Cause, and summoneth to his assistance the hosts of a praiseworthy character, and upright conduct, the influence from such an action will, most certainly, be diffused throughout the whole world.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, Quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 24

“With hearts overflowing with the love of God, with tongues commemorating the mention of God, with eyes turned to the Kingdom of God, they must deliver the Glad Tidings of the manifestation of the Lord of Hosts to all the people. Know ye of a certainty that whatever gathering ye enter, the waves of the Holy Spirit are surging over it, and the heavenly grace of the Blessed Beauty encompasseth that gathering.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Tablets of the Divine Plan*, pgs. 38-39

“The aim is this: The intention of the teacher must be pure, his heart independent, his spirit attracted, his thought at peace, his resolution firm, his magnanimity exalted and in the love of God a shining torch. Should he become as such, his sanctified breath will even affect the rock; otherwise there will be no result whatsoever. As long as a soul is not perfected, how can he efface the defects of others. Unless he is detached from aught else save God, how can he teach severance to others?”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 51

“The friends of God should weave bonds of fellowship with others and show absolute love and affection towards them. These links have a deep influence on people and they will listen. When the friends sense receptivity to the Word of God, they should deliver the Message with wisdom. They must first try and remove any apprehensions in the people they teach. In fact, every one of the believers should choose one person every year and try to establish ties of friendship with him, so that all his fear would disappear. Only then, and gradually, must he teach that person. This is the best method.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Teaching: The Greatest Gift of God*, p. 13

“There are innumerable ways of teaching the Cause. You can choose the one that suits best your nature and capacity.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Teaching: The Greatest Gift of God*, p. 22

☞ THE LAW OF HUQÚQU'LLÁH ☞

“Beseech ye God that He may enable everyone to discharge the obligation of Huqúq, inasmuch as the progress and promotion of the Cause of God depend on material means.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Huqúqu'lláh*, #1, p. 1

“It is incumbent upon everyone to discharge the obligation of Huqúq. The advantages gained from this deed revert to the persons themselves. However, the acceptance of the offerings dependeth on the spirit of joy, fellowship and contentment that the righteous souls who fulfill this injunction will manifest. If such is the attitude acceptance is permissible, and not otherwise. Verily thy Lord is the All-Sufficing, the All-Praised.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Huqúqu'lláh*, #4, p. 2

“Should a person acquire one hundred mithqals of gold, nineteen mithqals thereof belong unto God, the Creator of earth and heaven. Take heed, O people, lest ye deprive yourselves of this great bounty. We have prescribed this law unto you while We are wholly independent of you and of all that are in the heavens and on the earth. Indeed there lie concealed in this command, mysteries and benefits which are beyond the comprehension of anyone save God, the All-Knowing, the All-Informed. Say, through this injunction God desireth to purify your possessions and enable you to draw nigh unto such stations as none can attain, except those whom God may please. Verily, He is the Generous, the Gracious, the Bountiful.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *Huqúqu'lláh*, #10, p. 3-4

“As to the way the Huqúq must be paid: Having deducted the expenses incurred during the year, any excess of income derived from one's property, profession or business is subject to the payment of Huqúq.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Huqúqu'lláh*, #69, p. 25

“O friends of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá! The Lord, as a sign of His infinite bounties, hath graciously favored His servants by providing for a fixed money offering (Huqúq), to be dutifully presented unto Him, though He, the True One, and His servants have been at all times independent of all created things, and God verily is the All-Possessing, exalted above the need of any gift from His creatures. This fixed money offering, however, causeth the people to become firm and steadfast and draweth Divine increase upon them.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 15

“The paying of the Huqúq is a spiritual obligation; the friends must not be obliged by the assemblies to pay it, but they should be encouraged to fulfil this spiritual obligation laid upon them in the Aqdas.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Huqúqu'lláh*, #92, p. 31

☞ GIVING TO THE FUNDS ☞

“We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the source of all wealth and all good – this is the secret of right living.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 32

“It is the sacred obligation of every conscientious and faithful servant of Bahá’u’lláh, who desires to see His Cause advance, to contribute freely and generously for the increase of that Fund. The members of the Spiritual Assembly will at their own discretion expend it to promote the teaching Campaign, to help the needy, to establish educational Bahá’í institutions, to extend in every way possible their sphere of service. I cherish the hope that all the friends, realizing the necessity of this measure will bestir themselves and contribute, however modestly at first, towards the speedy establishment and the increase of that Fund.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Bahá’í Administration*, pgs. 41-42

“Even though Shoghi Effendi would urge every believer to sacrifice as much as possible for the sake of contributing towards the fund of the National Assembly, yet he would discourage the friends to incur debts for that purpose. We are asked to give what we have, not what we do not possess, especially if such an act causes suffering to others. In such matters we should use judgement and wisdom and take into our confidence other devoted Bahá’ís.”

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 536

“Our contributions to the Faith are the surest way of lifting once and for all time the burden of hunger and misery from mankind, for it is only through the System of Bahá’u’lláh – Divine in origin – that the world can be gotten on its feet, and want, fear, hunger, war, etc., be eliminated. Non-Bahá’ís cannot contribute to our work or do it for us; so really our first obligation is to support our own teaching work, as this will lead to the healing of the nations.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Directives of the Guardian*, p. 15

“The National Fund must be firmly established, generously supported, and universally and continuously upheld, for it is the prerequisite of future progress and achievement.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 532

“I have urged them to support consistently and whole-heartedly the very essential and vital institutions of the National Fund and the National Assembly. It must be made clear to them all that continuous support to these twin institutions is the corner-stone of all future achievements, the mainspring from which all future blessings will flow.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 533

“There is no objection to the . . . Spiritual Assembly keeping a record of the name of contributors, and sums received; but no pressure must ever be brought on the Bahá’ís to contribute, it must be voluntary, and should be considered confidential, unless the friends themselves wish to mention it openly.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 541

“Great is thy blessedness inasmuch as thou hast been faithful to the Covenant of God and His Testament. . . . Dedicate thyself to the service of the Cause of thy Lord, cherish His remembrance in thy heart and celebrate His praise in such wise that every wayward and heedless soul may thereby be roused from slumber.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 262

“In accordance with the explicit text of the Kitáb-i-Aqdas Bahá’u’lláh hath made the Center of the Covenant the Interpreter of His Word – a Covenant so firm and mighty that from the beginning of time until the present day no religious Dispensation hath produced its like.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ Quoted in *The World Order of Bahá’u’lláh*, p. 136

“ . . . the power of the Covenant will protect the Cause of Bahá’u’lláh from the doubts of the people of error. It is the fortified fortress of the Cause of God and the firm pillar of the religion of God. Today no power can conserve the oneness of the Bahá’í world save the Covenant of God; otherwise differences like unto a most great tempest will encompass the Bahá’í world. It is evident that the axis of the oneness of the world of humanity is the power of the covenant and nothing else Therefore, in the beginning the believers must make their steps firm in the Covenant so that the confirmations of Bahá’u’lláh may encircle them from all sides, the cohorts of the Supreme Concurrence may become their supporters and helpers, and the exhortations and advices of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, like unto the pictures engraved on stone, may remain permanent and ineffaceable in the tablets of all hearts.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Tablets of the Divine Plan*, p. 49

“ . . . under the Covenant of God, Shoghi Effendi was, during his ministry as Guardian of the Cause, the point of authority in the Faith to which all were to turn . . . The same thing applies to the position occupied by the Universal House of Justice in its relationship to the friends.”

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 121

“Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the Truth and the Purpose of God Himself.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *The Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 19

“We exhort the men of the House of Justice and command them to ensure the protection and safeguarding of men, women and children. It is incumbent upon them to have the utmost regard for the interests of the people at all times and under all conditions. Blessed is the ruler who succoureth the captive, and the rich one who careth for the poor, and the just one who secureth from the wrong doer the rights of the downtrodden, and happy the trustee who observeth that which the Ordainer, the Ancient of days hath prescribed unto him.”

BAHÁ’U’LLÁH *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*, pgs. 69-70

“The National Spiritual Assemblies, like unto two pillars, will be gradually and firmly established in every country on the strong and fortified foundations of the Local Assemblies. On these pillars, the mighty edifice, the Universal House of Justice, will be erected, raising high its noble frame above the world of existence. The unity of the followers of Bahá’u’lláh will thus be realized and fulfilled from one end of the earth to the other.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI *The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1*, p. 333

☞ THE FEAST, FASTING AND LIVING THE LIFE ☞

“Verily, it is enjoined upon you to offer a feast, once in every month, though only water be served; for God hath purposed to bind hearts together, albeit through both earthly and heavenly means.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p.40

“Let the beloved of God gather together and associate most lovingly and spiritually and happily with one another, conducting themselves with the greatest courtesy and self-restraint. Let them read the holy verses, as well as essays which are of benefit, and the letters of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá; encourage and inspire one another to love each and all; chant the prayers with serenity and joy; give eloquent talks, and praise the matchless Lord.

The host, with complete self-effacement, showing kindness to all, must be a comfort to each one, and serve the friends with his own hands.

If the Feast is befittingly held, in the manner described, then this supper will verily be the Lord’s Supper, for its fruits will be the very fruits of that Supper, and its influence the same.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Stirring the Spirit: Celebrating the Institution of the Nineteen Day Feast*, p. 7

“As to the Nineteen Day Feast, it rejoiceth mind and heart. If this feast be held in the proper fashion, the friends will, once in nineteen days, find themselves spiritually restored, and endued with a power that is not of this world.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Selections From the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*, p. 91

“O God! Dispel all those elements which are the cause of discord, and prepare for us all those things which are the cause of unity and accord! O God! Descend upon us Heavenly Fragrance and change this Gathering into a gathering of Heaven! Grant to us every benefit and every food. Prepare for us the Food of Love! Give to us the Food of Knowledge! Bestow upon us the Food of Heavenly Illumination!”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ, *Star of the West*, vol. IV, no.7, p. 120

“How often the beloved Master was heard to say: Should each one of the friends take upon himself to carry out, in all its integrity and implications, only one of the teachings of the Faith, with devotion, detachment, constancy and perseverance and exemplify it in all his deeds and pursuits of life, the world would become another world and the face of the earth would mirror forth the splendors of the Abhá Paradise. Consider what marvellous changes would be effected if the beloved of the Merciful conducted themselves, both in their individual and collective capacities, in accordance with the counsels and exhortations which have streamed from the Pen of Glory.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Living the Life*, p. 1

“Indeed the believers have not yet fully learned to draw on each other’s love for strength and consolation in time of need. The Cause of God is endowed with tremendous powers, and the reason the believers do not gain more from it is because they have not learned to fully draw on these mighty forces of love and strength and harmony generated by the Faith.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Living the Life*, p. 9

“We must realize our imperfection and not permit ourselves to get too upset over the unfortunate things which occur, sometimes in Conventions, sometimes in Assemblies or on committees, etc. Such things are essentially superficial and in time will be outgrown.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Living the Life*, p. 9

☞ OTHER LAWS, ORDINANCES, AND PRINCIPLES ☞

Some other laws, ordinances, and principles Bahá'u'lláh has revealed for our benefit include:

- Gossip, backbiting, conflict, and contention are forbidden.
- Everyone must engage in work, through trade or profession, for Bahá'u'lláh has made work obligatory and exalted it to the rank of worship.
- Everyone must obey the government and its laws and must behave toward it with loyalty, honesty, and truthfulness.
- All children must be taught to read and write and be given a spiritual education.
- Those who are able must journey, or make a “pilgrimage,” to certain specified Bahá'í holy places if they can afford it, if they are able to do so, and if no obstacle stands in the way.
- Every Bahá'í must write a will.
- The dead must be buried no further than one hour's journey from the place of death and must not be cremated. Also, a specific prayer must be said before burial.
- Outside of the marriage between a man and a woman, sexual relationships are prohibited.
- Using alcoholic drinks, intoxicants, and habit-forming drugs such as heroin, hashish, marijuana, LSD, peyote, and similar substances are prohibited, unless they are prescribed by a physician.
- Gambling is forbidden.
- Carrying arms is forbidden, except under certain circumstances explained in the Bahá'í writings.
- Everyone is advised to refer to the sacred writings when differences arise.
- Everyone is urged to consult competent doctors when ill.

☞ IN THE DAYS OF THE GUARDIAN ☞

A Talk by the Hand of the Cause of God Leroy Ioas
Transcribed from a recording made in Johannesburg, South Africa
October 31, 1958

“ . . . I want to say a few words now about the Guardianship. I’ve told you about the life of the Guardian, his guidance, his foreknowledge. Shoghi Effendi was a very remarkable young man, and of course, he just worshipped ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

“And when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away, the whole world became dark for him. All light had gone out. And when he came to the Holy Land, he had in mind, from the things ‘Abdu’l-Bahá had said to him, and I am telling you what he said, that ‘I had in mind that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá would give me the honor of calling the great conclave . . . together . . . which would elect the Universal House of Justice. And I thought in His Will and Testament that that was probably what He was instructing be done.’

“ ‘But,’ he said, ‘instead of that, I found that I was appointed the Guardian of the Cause of God.’

“He said, ‘I didn’t want to be the Guardian of the Cause. In the first place, I didn’t think I was worthy. Next place, I didn’t want to face these responsibilities’

“ ‘I didn’t want to be the Guardian. I knew what it meant. I knew that my life as a human being was over. I didn’t want it, and I didn’t want to face it. So as you’ll remember, I left the Holy Land. And I went up into the mountains of Switzerland, and I fought with myself until I conquered myself. Then I came back and I turned myself over to God, and I was the Guardian.’

“ ‘Now,’ he said, ‘Every Bahá’í in the world, every person in the world, has to do exactly that same thing. Whether you’re a Hand of the Cause, whether you’re a Knight of Bahá’u’lláh, whether you’re a member of a national assembly, whether you’re a teacher, whether you’re a pioneer, whether you’re an administrator, regardless of what you are, with anything in the Cause, every Bahá’í must fight with himself and conquer himself. And when he has conquered himself, then he becomes a true instrument for the service of the Cause of God. And not until then! . . . This is what every Bahá’í in the world should know.’

“And this is one of the main things I want you to get out of this talk tonight. The Guardian’s instructions that every individual must fight with himself, must conquer himself, must overcome his lower nature, must overcome his self, and turn himself over to God, so that the Holy Spirit can function through you. For when the Holy Spirit functions through you, then you will gain victory after victory. Because the Holy Spirit is the creative aspect of God and it cannot do other than win victories and make successes for the Cause.”

☞ PERSONAL REFLECTION ☞

“O Son of Man! My calamity is My providence, outwardly it is fire and vengeance, but inwardly it is light and mercy. Hasten thereunto that thou mayest become an eternal light and an immortal spirit. This is My command unto thee, do thou observe it.”

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH
The Hidden Words, Arabic #51

“Ye are the lights which shall be diffused; ye are the waves which shall spread and overflow the world Another commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another even as I love you Never forget this; look at one another with the eye of perfection; look at me , follow me, be as I am Ye must die to yourselves and to the world, so shall ye be born again and enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Behold a candle how it gives its light. It weeps its life away drop by drop in order to give forth its flame of light.”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ
Cited in *An Early Pilgrimage*, p. 41-42



- What is a daily habit I need to acquire?

- What qualities do I need for sharing the Faith with others?

- What is an area of knowledge in which I need to expand?

- What book will I read first?

- How will I structure my daily prayers and meditations?

- How will I be involved in community life, service and teaching?

- What one step can I take today that will bring my life more into accord with the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh?

Who is Bahá'u'lláh?

What is the Bahá'í Faith?

Why become a Bahá'í?

“The Pioneer”

for all the lovely ladies

POET ROGER WHITE, Another Song, Another Season

Ye are . . . the soft-flowing waters upon which must depend the very life of all men . . . the breezes
of spring that are wafted over the world . . . Through you the countenance
of the world hath been wreathed in smiles, and the brightness of His light shone forth.

BAHÁ'U'LLÁH

I You will meet her anywhere,
the river, market, roadside, bus,
in Carcross, Nairobi, Liverpool, Duluth,
and the old girl will be smiling: she knows.
The sincere costume, the workworn hands, say little.
Satin or leather, the good, earnest face
belongs on a chocolate box, affirms,
could endorse nutritional causes on billboards
or in glossy magazines;
but she has far greater power
than Westinghouse or General Mills.
I warn you, she is dangerous.
In her bag there is a weapon
more potent than a gun.
If her lips move noiselessly
she is not litanizing her grievances
nor reading subway signs.
She carries more than recipes in her head.

II It is fatal to speak to her,
no comment so mundane
she cannot bend it to her own design.
Chance a remark about the weather
and she may tell you of The Tempest,
leave you re-examining the roots of social unrest
and worrying about the fate of the House of Hapsburg.
She is not dismayed by headlines, calls them as her witness,
carries answers like neat balls of coloured yarn,
familiarly handled, spun of truth.
The mysteries are few and she lives with them companionably,
sibyl or saint, mystic or madwoman,
in ready-made dress and sensible shoes.

III She has faced it, reconciled it all,
the whole human struggle,
the journey from the cave,
the love and the ashes,
the song and the blood,
the suffering, the stillborn, the greed,
ordered, forgiven, reconciled it all.
Her compassion spans eras and epochs,
finds room for Luther King, Lenin, Lao-tse,
all our lost leaders,
sorted, accommodated like the memory
of good or wayward children she has known; finds room
for the Aztec, Ibo, Tlingit, Vietnamese –
she might be one of them.
Fashions in indignation puzzle her.
It did not come as news that black is beautiful
(may be herself black);
knows Eskimos (or is one);

calls the Kalahari Bushmen brothers;
counts the Maoris as friends;
would have shielded the hapless
of Nagasaki, warsaw, Buchenwald,
with her own body, if she could.
Long ago she wept and worked for causes
not then named,
knows symptom from disease
and is not resigned to evil.

IV No, you do not imagine her authority;
dynasties might dissolve before it
or her concern melt mountains.
She is dangerous; she cannot be dismissed.
Your eloquent despair does not dissuade her:
“The future is inestimably glorious,
and when one considers the life to come . . .”
You will want to hurt her, destroy her dream,
but her words hang like heavy golden pears
and she knows your hunger.
Evan as you strike she heals you
and in so doing heals herself.
You may crush her but she will not die –
she yields like grass
and is as indestructible.
She knows what you defend;
many times a midwife, she understands rebirth.
Your credentials don't impress her; she tinkers with souls.

V Do not accept the invitation to her home
to meet her friend from Adelaide, Tíhrán, Kaduna;
they are conspirators and drink from the same well.
Her own certitude is baked
into the cakes she serves with tea
tasting of her own contentment
that leaves you crazed,
thirsting forever for assurance.
Be warned, she is dangerous.

VI The moment is selected.
You will not see all heaven's angels,
all ancient good,
the very weight of history
rush to her support as she gathers breath
(her smile never more gentle) –
“Have you heard the Message of Bahá'u'lláh?” –
nor will you know that God Himself
throughout all worlds
gives ear to your reply.

I tell you, she is dangerous!

☞ TRUE BAHÁ'ÍS ☞

“He is a true Bahá'í who strives by day and by night to progress and advance along the path of human endeavor, whose most cherished desire is so to live and act as to enrich and illuminate the world, whose source of inspiration is the essence of Divine virtue, whose aim in life is so to conduct himself as to be the cause of infinite progress. Only when he attains unto such perfect gifts can it be said of him that he is a true Bahá'í. For in this holy Dispensation, the crowning glory of bygone ages and cycles, true Faith is no mere acknowledgement of the Unity of God, but rather the living of a life that will manifest all the perfections and virtues implied in such belief. . . .”

‘ABDU’L-BAHÁ *Excellence in All Things*, p. 372

“The great thing is to ‘live the life’ – to have our lives so saturated with the Divine teachings and the Bahá'í Spirit that people cannot fail to see a joy, a power, a love, a purity, a radiance, an efficiency in our character and work that will distinguish us from worldly-minded people and make people wonder what is the secret of this new life in us. We must become entirely selfless and devoted to God so that every day and every moment we seek to do only what God would have us do and in the way He would have us do it. If we do this sincerely then we shall have perfect unity and harmony with each other. Where there is want of harmony, there is lack of the true Bahá'í Spirit. Unless we can show this transformation in our lives, this new power, this mutual love and harmony, then the Bahá'í teachings are but a name to us.”

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 2, p. 3

“Let us bear in mind that the keynote of the Cause of God is not dictatorial authority but humble fellowship, not arbitrary power, but the spirit of frank and loving consultation. Nothing short of the spirit of a true Bahá'í can hope to reconcile the principles of mercy and justice, of freedom and submission, of the sanctity of the right of the individual and of self-surrender, of vigilance, discretion, and prudence on the one hand, and fellowship, candor, and courage on the other.”

SHOGHI EFFENDI, *Bahá'í Administration*, pgs. 63-64

“If we could perceive the true reality of things we would see that the greatest of all battles raging in the world today is the spiritual battle. If the believers like yourself, young and eager and full of life, desire to win laurels for true and undying heroism, then let them join in the spiritual battle – whatever their physical occupation may be – which involves the very soul of man. The hardest and the noblest task in the world today is to be a true Bahá'í; this requires that we defeat not only the current evils prevailing all over the world, but the weaknesses, attachments to the past, prejudices, and selfishnesses that may be inherited and acquired within our own characters; that we give forth a shining and incorruptible example to our fellow-men.”

ON BEHALF OF SHOGHI EFFENDI, *The Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 1, p. 381

True Bahá'ís, Continued

“On page 25 of *The Advent of Divine Justice* the beloved Guardian is describing the requirements not only of chastity, but of ‘a chaste and holy life’ – both the adjectives are important. One of the signs of a decadent society, a sign which is very evident in the world today, is an almost frenetic devotion to pleasure and diversion, an insatiable thirst for amusement, a fanatical devotion to games and sport, a reluctance to treat any matter seriously, and a scornful, derisory attitude towards virtue and solid worth. Abandonment of ‘a frivolous conduct’ does not imply that a Bahá’í must be sour-faced or perpetually solemn. Humor, happiness, joy are characteristics of a true Bahá’í life. Frivolity palls and eventually leads to boredom and emptiness, but true happiness and joy and humor that are parts of a balanced life that includes serious thought, compassion and humble servitude to God, are characteristics that enrich life and add to its radiance. Shoghi Effendi’s choice of words was always significant, and each one is important in understanding his guidance. In this particular passage, he does not forbid ‘trivial’ pleasures, but he does warn against ‘excessive attachment’ to them and indicates that they can often be ‘misdirected.’ One is reminded of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s caution that we should not let a pastime become a waste of time.”

ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *The Compilation of Compilations*, Vol. 1 pgs. 53-54

“You have asked if the mere declaration of faith by a new-comer suffices to recognize him as a Bahá’í, and whether living the Bahá’í life should not be regarded as the basis of admission into the Faith. You should bear in mind that the signature on a card, in the sense that it represents a record of the date of the declaration and data about the declarant, is to satisfy administrative requirements enabling the enrollment of the new believer in the community. The deeper implications of the act of declaration of faith are between the individual and God. Shoghi Effendi has made several statements on this important subject, and we have been asked to share with you the following two excerpts from letters written on his behalf to individual believers:

‘There is a difference between character and faith; it is often very hard to accept this fact and put up with it, but the fact remains that a person may believe in and love the Cause – even to being ready to die for it – and yet not have a good personal character, or possess traits at variance with the teachings. We should try to change, to let the Power of God help recreate us and make us true Bahá’ís in deed as well as in belief. But sometimes the process is slow, sometimes it never happens because the individual does not try hard enough. But these things cause us suffering and are a test to us in our fellow-believers, most especially if we love them and have been their teacher!’

‘The process of becoming a Bahá’í is necessarily slow and gradual. The essential is not that the beginner should have a full and detailed knowledge of the Cause, a thing which is obviously impossible in the vast majority of cases, but that he should, by an act of his own will, be willing to uphold and follow the truth and guidance set forth in the Teachings, and thus open his heart and mind to the reality of the Manifestation.’”

ON BEHALF OF THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE, *Lights of Guidance*, pgs. 75-76

☞ INFORMATION ☞

Permanent Bahá'í Schools and Institutes in the United States

Bosch Bahá'í School
500 Comstock Lane
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 423-3387
(408) 423-7564 FAX
email: bosch@usbnc.org

Green Acre Bahá'í School
188 Main Street
Eliot, ME 03903
(207) 439-7200
(207) 439-7202 FAX
email: greenacre@usbnc.org

Louhelen Bahá'í School
National Teacher Training Center
3208 South State Road
Davison, MI 48423
(810) 653-5033
(810) 653-7181 FAX
email: louhelen@usbnc.org

Louis Gregory Bahá'í Institute
Rt. 2, Box 71
Hemingway, SC 29554
(803) 558-5093
(803) 558-2921 FAX
email: lgi@usbnc.org

Native American Bahá'í Institute
P.O. Boc 3167
Houck, AZ 86506
(602) 521-1064
(602) 521-1063 FAX
email: nabi@usbnc.org

National Education and Schools Office
Bahá'í National Center, Wilmette, IL 60091, (708) 733-3492, (708) 733-3502 FAX, email: schools@usbnc.org

Bahá'í Funds

National Bahá'í Fund
112 Linden Avenue
Wilmette, IL 60091.

Local Bahá'í Fund
(Check with the nearest
Local Spiritual Assembly.)

Bahá'í International Fund
P.O. Box 155
Haifa, Israel 31-000
(Or make check payable to "National Bahá'í Fund"
and earmark for International Bahá'í Fund or Arc.
Send to National Bahá'í Fund, Wilmette, IL 60091.)

Continental Bahá'í Fund
Make check payable to "National Bahá'í Fund"
and earmark for Continental Bahá'í Fund.
Send to National Bahá'í Fund, Wilmette, IL 60091.

Huqúqu'lláh

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National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

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- Course Two: Circles of Unity
- Course Three: The Seeker's Quest
- Course Four: Every Believer Is a Teacher
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Programs for Developing Patterns of Bahá'í Life

Teacher/Facilitator Training for each of the following programs is offered at the National Teacher Training Center, Louhelen Bahá'í School (810) 653-5033 NTTC@usbnc.org

- Training for Teachers of Children and Youth
- Parenting
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- Marriage and Family Life for Couples
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- Youth Empowerment
- Equality of Women and Men

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