

**TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES
AT THE TIME OF THE BÁB'S APPEARANCE**

**THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF
THE WORLD OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
FAITHFULNESS, PRAYERFULNESS, STUDIOUSNESS**

It should not be forgotten that it was the kings of the earth and the world's religious leaders who, above all other categories of men, were made the direct recipients of the Message proclaimed by both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.... It would be no exaggeration to say that in most of the countries of the European and Asiatic continents absolutism, on the one hand, and complete subservience to ecclesiastical hierarchies, on the other, were still the outstanding features of the political and religious life of the masses.

Shoghi Effendi, *The Promised Day Is Come*, p. 19

The Guardian would, therefore, strongly urge you to get increasingly familiar with the literature of the Cause, to study and investigate all its aspects, whether spiritual, social or administrative, so that you may, in a not distant future be able to rank among the distinguished and outstanding teachers and exponents of the Movement.

On behalf of Shoghi Effendi, 10 September 1933, quoted in the "Deepening" compilation
The Compilation of Compilations, Vol. 1, p. 219

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To become familiar with the statements from the Writings about the condition of the world at this time
- To become familiar with conditions of the world and the major historical world events in the nineteenth century
- To become familiar with the state of the arts and sciences of this period

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Take trips to the local library and museums of cultural history to research books, prints, music and films about the nineteenth century.
- Form cooperative interest groups around topics of Nineteenth Century arts and sciences for investigation, exploration, projects and sharing.
- Create posters sharing the major events surrounding 1844 in sciences, arts and politics.
- Memorize passages from the Writings describing this time.



WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand the connection between the conditions of the world and the coming of the Manifestation

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Read and discuss the Sacred Writings that refer to the conditions of the world and the coming of the Báb.
- Create visual interpretations of world conditions described by Shoghi Effendi and scholars.
- Listen to music of the time and experience the arts of the time (dance the waltz, paint impressionistic paintings).
- In small groups research the conditions of the world.

**TOPIC: THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE
WORLD OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To perceive the great importance of the coming of the Báb in terms of the world's social and political needs

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Research and prepare a dramatic presentation illustrating the importance of the coming of the Báb.
- Share and discuss participant understanding and opinions regarding the condition of the world in the nineteenth century and the coming of the Báb.
- Show understanding of the connection between the Manifestation and the conditions of time through a poem.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE

- To explain the cultural and political history and geography of the world in a way that will deepen one's understanding of the Revelation of God

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Hold a nineteenth century fireside in preparation of understanding the need for the coming of the Manifestation, incorporating the following activities into the fireside.
- Make charts, illustrated time lines and prepare other types of visual displays showing cultural and historical events in the nineteenth century.
- Memorize and recite with music, chanting or singing, the scriptures and quotations from previous revelations or Bahá'í scriptures regarding the coming of the Báb and circumstances of the time.
- Exhibit and perform learnings about the conditions of the time.

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Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: LIVING CONDITIONS IN THE EARLY 1800's

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES: To become familiar with the conditions of the world and the major historical world events in the 19th century; To become familiar with the state of the arts and sciences of this period

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards recognition of God; Use of stories; Use of the arts; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HR.

Materials Needed:

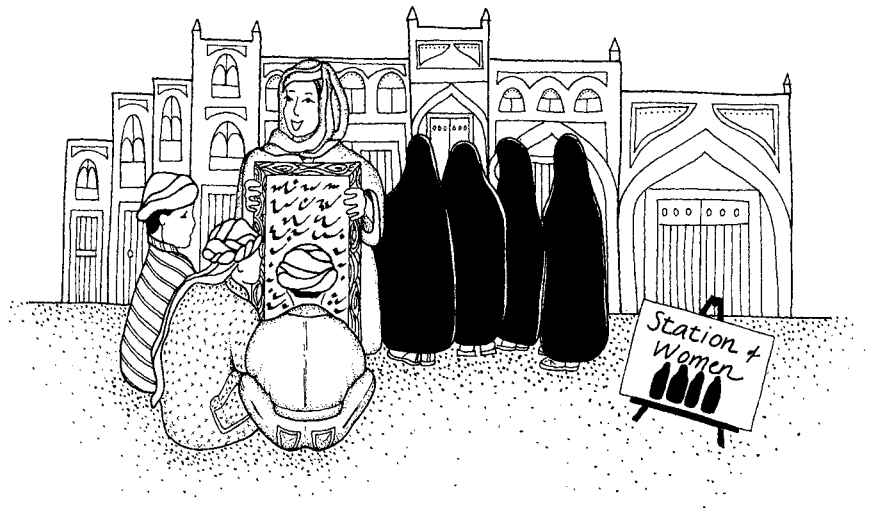
- reference books, videos, history multimedia on the 1800's
- paper, pens, cut-out pictures, crayons, colored pencils
- copies of Resource Pages 10-14

Advance Preparation: Prepare to teach the class by reading and reflecting on the quotations on page 3.

1. Pose the question, "What was the world like when God sent us the Báb?"
2. Invite the students to work in small groups, each group to research the living conditions and important events of a different continent during the early 1800s.
3. Encourage each group to create a visual display incorporating such information as:
 - conditions of wealth or poverty
 - forms of government or authority
 - modes of transportation and communication
 - accepted ideas of what the world was like
 - art, music, or literature
 - science, technology, or medicine
 - the station and rights of women
 - the organization of family life
4. Invite each group to share their completed display, and to perform a skit about a historical situation, event or belief that they found particularly interesting.
5. After performing and acknowledging all skits, read aloud at least twice the following quotation:

...for the peace and unity of the world the Báb gave up His life.

(Abdu'l-Bahá, *Paris Talks*, p. 171)



TOPIC: THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE WORLD OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Discuss: What were some of the conditions that needed to change to bring about the peace and unity of the world? Why did the Báb give up His life?

6. Encourage students to share one interesting fact about this period with another person before the next class.

ACTIVITY: THE NEED FOR A NEW REVELATION

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the connection between the conditions of the world and the coming of a manifestation

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive the great importance of the coming of the Báb in terms of the world's social and political needs

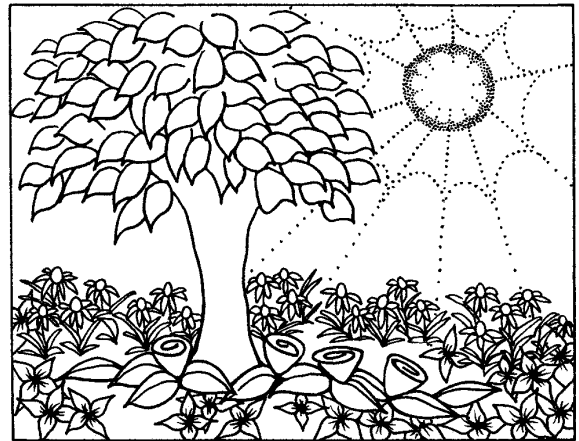
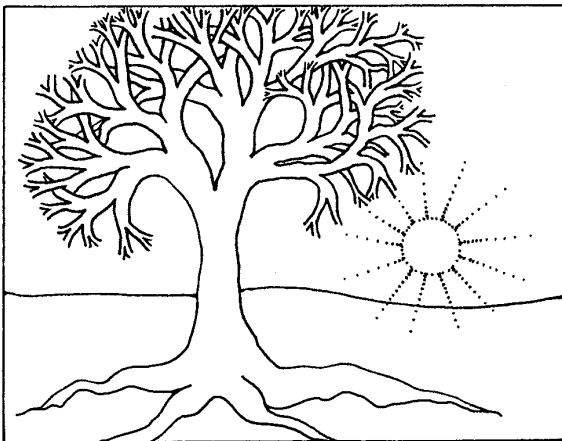
INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of the Sacred Writings; Use of consultation; Use of the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HR.

Materials Needed:

- copies of Resource Page 15
- displays from previous activity
- art materials, such as paper, paint, paint brushes, etc.

1. Distribute copies of Resource Page 15. Read it aloud at least twice.
2. Invite one or two students to restate the meaning of the passage in their own words.
3. Discuss: Think about the condition of the world just before the advent of the Báb. Was it spring, summer, fall or winter? What evidence do we have for that season in human history?
4. Explain that the Báb was like a Gardener, pruning trees by abolishing old teachings and planting seeds of new teachings
5. Use art to strengthen the analogy. Invite the students to paint the same scene of a garden, or field, etc. twice—once in winter, using only shades of gray; then in spring, adding flowers, leaves on trees, grass, etc.
6. Encourage the students to share these paintings with a family member before the next class.



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TOPIC: THE HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE WORLD OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

ACTIVITY: THE WORLD IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the connection between the conditions of the world and the coming of a manifestation

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Use of stories; Use of consultation

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 30 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- *The Central Figures: The Báb, Volume Two* (available 2004)

1. Read the stories related to this topic aloud.
2. Discuss the questions provided in the appendix of that book.
3. Discuss: What additional evidence do these stories provide for the need for a new Revelation from God?

ACTIVITY: SPIRITUAL SPRINGTIME

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To explain the cultural and political history and geography of the world in a way that will deepen one's understanding of the revelation of God

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Education directed towards recognition of God; Use of research; Use of consultation; Use of the arts

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HR.

Materials Needed:

- chart paper and markers
- poster paper
- magazines
- scissors and glue

Advance Preparation: Write the following quotation on chart paper and display in the classroom:

Consider this present century of radiance, and compare it with the past centuries. What a vast difference exists between them! How minds have developed! How perceptions have deepened! How discoveries have increased! What great projects have been accomplished! How many realities have become manifest! How many mysteries of creation have been probed and penetrated! What is the cause of this? It is through the efficacy of the spiritual springtime in which we are living. Day by day the world attains a new bounty.

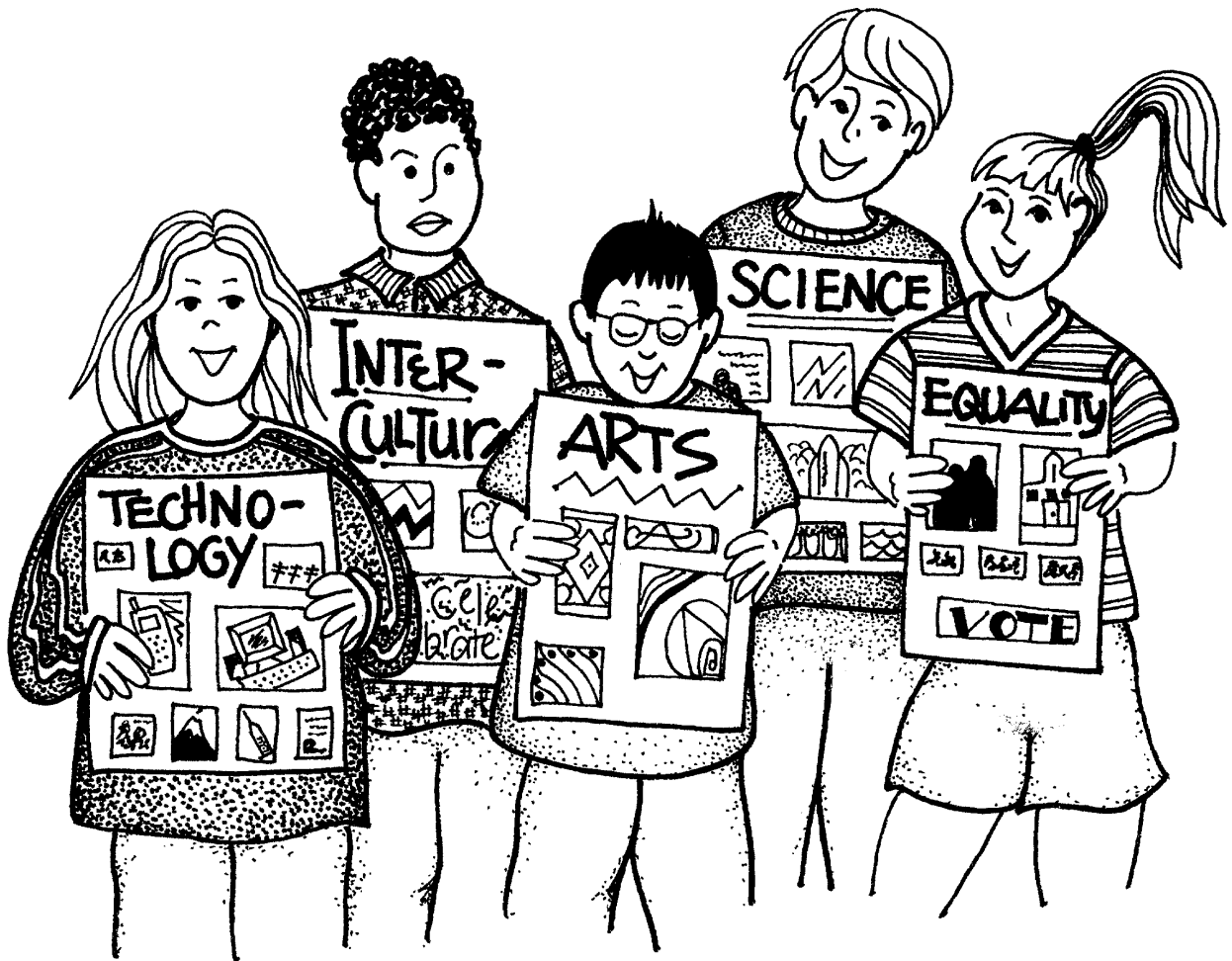
Abdu'l-Bahá, The Promulgation of Universal Peace, p. 278



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1. Invite one or more students to read the posted quotation aloud. Explain that the class will be looking for evidence of the spiritual springtime around us.
2. Invite the students to create a new visual display, using photographs from current news magazines. Choose pictures of:
 - technologies, sciences
 - international/inter-cultural endeavors
 - progress for women
 - health, education, and human services
 - fine arts, literature, and hand-crafts
3. While creating the display, discuss the importance of looking at the world around us: What is the evidence of spiritual springtime? What are some current events that show that the world is becoming united? How can our understanding of the past help us have confidence in the future?
4. Encourage the students to find and bring to the next class news stories that show examples of human progress



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Resource Pages

The Nineteenth Century

excerpted from *The Nineteenth Century*, by E. R. Chamberlin

The 19th century was like a bridge connecting the past with the present, the old with the new.

Event/Sphere	Beginning of the Century	Changes During the Century
Land travel	By foot or by animal	Steam trains, railways, first automobiles
Sea travel	Ships propelled by wind	Iron and steel ships powered by steam
Where most people lived	Country villages	Growing towns and cities
Where food came from	Kitchen garden or local farm	Canning allowed food produced on one side of the world to be eaten much later elsewhere
Inventions		Photography, gas lights, electric motors, typewriters
Families	Children as young as five worked in factories, farms, mines and shops	Trade unions grew, wages began to rise and working hours got shorter; child labor began to be limited in some places
Farming	Poor farmers split their farms between their sons so farms became smaller and produced less; farm work was hard, back-breaking manual labor	Larger farms developed, railways improved markets, tools improved from the scythe to machines like seed drills, steam threshers, and combine harvesters
Earning a living	People worked at their own pace in or near their homes	Factory workers forced to start work and finish at regular times; industrial accidents, diseases and deaths were horrifyingly common
Growth of cities	22 European and no American cities had more than 100,000 people	84 European and 53 American cities had more than 100,000 people
Crime	Laws enforced by army, night watchmen, and private action; Britain had over 200 hanging offenses including shoplifting, stealing bread, wrecking a factory machine	First police forces set up to provide public law enforcement; fewer hangings within law, but lynchings of blacks in USA
Health and medicine	Diseases like cholera, smallpox and typhus killed thousands; most families lost at least one child before its fifth birthday	Improved hygiene, better living conditions; antiseptics, anaesthetics helped make death rates fall

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Communications	Travel in person, send a messenger, slow and irregular letter delivery	Public postal services; electric telegraph, telephones, newspapers
Education	Only rich could afford school; mostly for boys	Free, compulsory public education for all; girls gradually included
Religion	Country church center of local life; most people thought the world was created by God	Church plays smaller role in life of city dwellers; educated people begin to question belief in God; scientists challenge Bible beliefs about creation of the world.
Revolutionaries	Working people accepted lot in life	Workers in European countries revolt; trade unions become legal; workers fight employers for better pay and working conditions
Nations old and new	People feel drawn toward other people who speak the same language and have similar customs, but no sense of nationalism	Nations formed from smaller kingdoms and states into one country (ex. Italy and Germany)
Women's issues	Women were property of their husbands; not allowed to vote; girls were not valued as highly as boys; women had few choices in education, jobs or marriage partners; wore uncomfortable clothing such as tight corsets and cage crinolines; many women and babies died in childbirth	More girls attended school; women become teachers, factory workers, nurses and ultimately, a few doctors; wore comfortable clothing which allowed them to exercise and feel stronger; medical advances, healthier diets, sterilized tools helped women and babies survive; could vote in local elections
African American status	Trade in slaves widespread; Slavery legal	Slave trade outlawed; slavery abolished; development and entrenchment of segregation after Civil War; Ku Klux Klan and lynchings terrorize blacks
American Indian status	Conflict with European settlers, most of North America belonged to sovereign Indian nations	Conflict with European settlers and pioneers intensified; Indian tribes removed from lands and forced onto reservations; efforts to destroy Indian way of life

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Major Historical World Events in the 19th Century

The birth of the Bahá'í Faith occurred almost exactly in the middle of the 19th century. The 19th century was a time of tremendous change and turmoil. The powerful effects of the new Revelation from God were stirring up the world. People all around the world were helping to break the chains of past centuries. Sometimes people did not even know they were helping to change the world. Sometimes people did not choose to help, either. But willingly, or unwillingly, God was stirring up the world. People were thinking new ideas. Tremendous changes happened. The process of change began before the 19th century and continues in our own time. It was during the 19th century that the process of change really speeded up. Change in the world has been speeding up ever since!

THE PROCESS OF MINGLING LONG-ISOLATED PEOPLES AND CULTURES

For thousands of years, the people of the world lived apart. Transportation was very slow. People did not travel to other places very often. People often lived entirely to themselves in family units or groups of families (clans). Sometimes, people lived in larger groups of clans (tribes) or lived in villages or cities. But most people did not have contact with people far away. People on one continent did not even know that there were other people living on other continents! It was kind of like people lived in isolated little 'worlds.' They did not even suspect that other people lived in other little 'worlds' elsewhere!

All this began to change about 500 years ago. European explorers visited other continents. Although people had been living in these other places for thousands of years, the European explorers said that they had 'discovered' them. The explorers did not respect the people they 'discovered.' The explorers invaded the people's lands and conquered them. They took the people's land for their own use. The conquests caused immense suffering, conflict and war.

The European nations and the new, powerful American nation created a system of colonies. Their empires completely covered the world. This system of colonies and empires brought people into contact with strangers from far away. During the 19th century, these changes happened faster than ever before. The world changed very, very fast. People who had been strangers came into contact. Changes in transportation and communications brought more even contact. Humanity was on the move during the 19th century like never before in history. By choice or not, the world began to change rapidly:

Process of Mingling Long-Isolated Peoples and Cultures: Forced & Imposed Contact

1800+	Trans-Atlantic trade in African slaves continues
1800-1900	European nations and USA take over colonies in Asia, Africa, Latin America
1830-1834	'Great Trek' of Dutch Boers in South Africa settles new white-dominated areas
1801-1815	Napoleon's armies invade many countries in Europe and create an empire
1814-1890	USA forcibly removes Indian people from their lands, white settlers pour west
1818-1828	Shaka's Zulu kingdom expanded and dominated tribes in southern Africa
1879-1890s	Africa partitioned into colonial territories, basis of current nations

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Process of Mingling Long-Isolated Peoples and Cultures: Seeking a Better Life & Freedom

1846-1850	Famines in Ireland cause massive immigration to USA
1848	Refugees from failed revolutions in Germany and France immigrate to USA
1848-1869	California Gold Rush and railway building brings thousands of Chinese to USA
1867-1869	Famines in Sweden cause massive immigration to USA
1860+	Large immigration from Europe to USA seeking freedom from military draft
1880+	Violent repression causes massive Jewish immigration to Europe and USA

Process of Mingling Long-Isolated Peoples and Cultures: Transportation Improvements

1814	Invention of Stephenson's 'Rocket' (steam locomotive)
1830	First successful public railway (Britain)
1869	Completion of Suez Canal
1869	Completion of transcontinental railroad in USA
1879	Frozen meat from Australia goes on sale in London, England
1885	Completion of transcontinental railroad in Canada
1885+	First successful automobiles
1891	Construction of Russian transcontinental railroad begun

Process of Mingling Long-Isolated Peoples and Cultures: Communication Improvements

1814	Modern cylindrical printing press, makes printing for mass market easier
1844	Invention of the telegraph
1848	Associated Press founded as international news-gathering association
1858	First message sent by transatlantic telegraph
1861	First transcontinental telegraph message in USA
1876	Telephone invented
1895	Radio invented

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING WORLD-MINDEDNESS

During the 19th century people also began to learn more and more about the world around them. Science and investigation blossomed. People learned things that had never been known before. They began to understand the causes of things. They learned what made people sick. They learned why living things grow. They began to learn that all people on earth had come from the same ancestors. People began to believe that all humans were entitled to respect. They began to believe that the same laws should protect all. Some people began to wonder if the different gods that people worshiped, might actually be the same God. People began to believe that humans overcome ancient problems. World-mindedness began to grow.

Process of Developing World-Mindedness: Advance of Cultural Exchange

1800s	Revolt in art, music, philosophy against 'classical' rules and traditions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Romanticism, Realism and Impressionism: radical change from classic style in art• Romantic movement in music: radical change from classic style in music• Romantic thought challenges traditional culture with liberal ideas & social protest• Socialist thought challenges traditional culture with political-economic revolution
1800s	Themes of Nationalism vs. Internationalism influence art, music, philosophy

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- 1800+ Slave trade introduces West African music to USA: background for blues and jazz
- 1851 First World's Fair (London)
- 1884 World Standard Time adopted
- 1893 Columbian World Exposition held in Chicago
- 1893 World Parliament of Religions held in connection with Columbian Exposition
- 1896 First Olympic games of modern time

Process of Developing World-Mindedness: Advance of Human Rights & International Law

- 1807 Slave trade outlawed in the British Empire; importation of slaves banned in USA
- 1833 Slavery is abolished in British Empire
- 1815 Congress of Vienna demonstrates first formal modern concern for human rights
- 1829 Colonial authorities outlaw *sati* (tradition of wife-burning) in India
- 1839-1842 *Amistad* slave ship revolt and trial intensifies anti-slavery debate in USA
- 1848 World's first women's rights convention held in Seneca Falls, NY
- 1850 Tahirih is killed, she is widely proclaimed as first women's rights cause martyr
- 1861 Serfs are emancipated in Russia
- 1864 First Geneva Convention defines international rules for wounded war prisoners
- 1869 Women granted the right to vote (some places in USA and Britain)
- 1862 Slaves are emancipated amidst the Civil War in the USA
- 1891 Berne Peace Bureau founded (leading to International Court of the Hague)
- 1899 International Peace Conference provides additional rules on conduct of war

Process of Nation-Building and Demands for Self-Determination

- 1811-1825 Era of independence movements in Latin America; Spanish colonial rule ends
- 1822 Liberia founded as homeland for freed slaves
- 1824 First trade unions permitted (Britain)
- 1821-1838 Efforts to create a united Federation of Central America
- 1848 Karl Marx publishes the *Communist Manifesto* against economic injustice
- 1851 Taiping Rebellion in China
- 1857 Sepoy Mutiny, first Indian War for Independence from British rule
- 1861 Unification of Italy as a single nation
- 1867 Canada granted self-rule by Britain
- 1868+ Meiji Restoration enables Japan to modernize and challenge European nations
- 1871 Unification of Germany as a single nation
- 1850-1880 Growth of indigenous African literature and newspapers with anti-colonial views
- 1896 Ethiopia defeats Italians and retains its freedom from colonial control

Process of Developing Scientific Investigation

- 1800-1900 Rapid industrialization in Europe and America. Many important inventions
- 1818 First successful blood transfusion
- 1846 Planet Neptune discovered
- 1858 Charles Darwin publishes *The Origin of Species* (theory of evolution)
- 1880 Successful immunization against disease
- 1895 X-rays discovered
- 1895 First use of antiseptic in surgery

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from *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*
for activity: The Need for a New Revelation

Reflect upon the material springtime. When winter comes, the trees are leafless, the fields and meadows withered, the flowers die away into dustheaps; in prairie, mountain and garden no freshness lingers, no beauty is visible, no verdure can be seen. Everything is clad in the robe of death. Wherever you look around, you will find the expression of death and decay. But when the spring comes, the showers descend, the sun floods the meadows and plains with light; you will observe creation clad in a new robe of expression. The showers have made the meadows green and verdant. The warm breezes have caused the trees to put on their garments of leaves. They have blossomed and soon will produce new, fresh and delightful fruits. Everything appears endowed with a newness of life; a new animus and spirit is everywhere visible. The spring has resuscitated all phenomena and has adorned the earth with beauty as it willeth.

Even so is the spiritual springtime when it comes. When the holy, divine Manifestations or Prophets appear in the world, a cycle of radiance, an age of mercy dawns. Everything is renewed. Minds, hearts and all human forces are reformed, perfections are quickened, sciences, discoveries and investigations are stimulated afresh, and everything appertaining to the virtues of the human world is revitalized.

Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation Of Universal Peace*, pp. 277-8

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star "Táhirih and Elizabeth Cady Stanton" Jul/Aug 93
"Write Bahá'í History Reports" Mar/Apr 98

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Multimedia:

Chronicle Encyclopedia of History, New York : DK Multimedia, 1997
Events that Changed the World, Toronto, Ont. : ICE Integrated Communications & Entertainment, 1995
Geosafari History, Carson, CA : Educational Insights, 2000
The Oregon Trail Pioneer Adventures, Cambridge, MA : Learning Company, 1997
The Women's Movement in the United States: an Interactive Encyclopedia, Santa Barbara, CA : ABC-CLIO Interactive, 1999
Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego?, Novato, CA : Broderbund, 1997

Music:

Games:

Poetry:

Lesson Plans:

Bahá'í School Lesson Plans, Grade 8, "Heroic Age of the Faith" p. 4

List other favorite resources:

19th Century Girls & Women, Bobbie Kalman, New York : Crabtree Pub., 1997
The 1800s, James Miller, book editor, San Diego, Calif. : Greenhaven Press, 2001
The ABC-CLIO World History Companion to the Industrial Revolution, Peter N. Stearns, John H. Hinshaw, Santa Barbara, CA : ABC-CLIO, 1996
The Age of Discovery, Brian and Brenda Williams, New York : P. Bedrick Books, 1993
Modern Times, Glòria & Oriol Vergés, New York : Barron's, 1988
The Nineteenth Century, E.R. Chamberlin, Morristown, NJ : Silver Burdett, 1983
The Nineteenth Century, Michael Pollard, New York : Facts on File, 1993
The Nineteenth Century: Europe, 1789-1914, edited by T.C.W. Blanning, Oxford ; New York : Oxford University Press, 2000
The World 100 Years Ago, Michael Wynn Jones, New York, N.Y. : McKay, 1976

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.

**TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH SOCIAL AND
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HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF IRAN
IN THE 19TH CENTURY**

**SPIRITUAL QUALITIES RELEVANT TO THIS TOPIC:
PRAYERFULNESS, TOLERANCE, UNITY**

In the early part of the nineteenth century the horizon of Persia was shrouded in great darkness and ignorance. The people of that country were in a condition of barbarism. Hatred and bigotry prevailed among the various religions; bloodshed and hostility were frequent among sects and denominations of belief. There were no evidences of affiliation and unity; violent prejudice and antagonism ruled the hearts of men.

Abdu'l-Bahá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 341

If the younger Bahá'í generation, in who Shoghi Effendi has great hopes, take the pains of studying the Cause deeply and thoroughly read its history, find its underlying principles and become both well informed and energetic, they surely can achieve a great deal.

From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi: *Dawn of a New Day*, p. 3

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TOPIC: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF IRAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES



KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVES

- To know the geographic location of Iran
- To know some of the historical and political conditions of Iran
- To become familiar with the culture of Iran

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Locate Iran and its neighboring countries on a world map and become familiar with its major geographical features and cities—particularly those that have significance in Bábí and Bahá'í history.
- Prepare interview questions for Iranian individuals and families to learn more about their culture and their homeland. Write oral histories of these people.
- Research and prepare an illustrated timeline of the cultural and political history of Iran.
- Share slide shows or picture books of Iran, especially including pictures of nineteenth century Iran.



WISDOM OBJECTIVE

- To understand the connection between the historical, political and cultural setting of Iran and the Revelation of the Báb

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Use the Writings of the Guardian, and other historical sources, to learn about the historical and political conditions of Iran. Use art media to illustrate these conditions.
- Consider Divine Wisdom for the appearance of the Báb in Iran, given this country's condition in the last century.
- Use analogy of emergency of need for a physician when a person is very ill. Then, have learners find and list the ills through collage, and contrast it with a collage that symbolizes the Revelation of the Báb.

TOPIC: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF IRAN
IN THE 19TH CENTURY



SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE

- To perceive the relevance of the coming of the Manifestation to the conditions and needs of Iran and how this relates to one's own relationship to this revelation

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Compare the conditions of the world in the nineteenth century with present conditions, and consider these conditions in the context of the appearance of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
- Compare one's own illnesses when a doctor was needed, and how valuable and crucial the medicine had been, to the spiritual ills of humankind and the need for this spiritual medicine.



ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVES

- To establish bonds of understanding and connections with the believers from the cradle of the Faith
- To retell information about the history, geography and culture of Iran in the nineteenth century

SUGGESTED LEARNING ACTIVITIES

- Give oral or visual presentations of the results of their research into the historical and social context of Iran and the appearance of the Báb.
- Celebrate the culture and history of Iran through performing and exhibiting the work done for a deepening, fireside, Holy Day observance or other community event.

**GOAL: TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES
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Sample Activities

ACTIVITY: THE GEOGRAPHY OF IRAN

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the geographic location of Iran

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Education directed towards recognition of God; Use of the arts; Use of questioning; Use of music

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- copies of Resource Page 25 or 26
- markers
- Persian music and player

1. Playing Persian music in the background, invite students to discover the land where the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were born, the land described by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in these words:

This fairest of lands was once a lamp, streaming with the rays of Divine knowledge, of science and art, of nobility and high achievement, of wisdom and valor.

Abdu'l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 9

2. Assist the students to locate Iran on a globe or wall map of the world. Explain that Iran used to be called Persia. Explore where Iran is in relation to the continents, the Equator, the Holy Land, students' homes, and other favorite locations.
3. Provide each student with a map of Iran, selecting either Resource Page 25 or 26.
4. Encourage the students to locate (or label, if using the blank map):

Shiráz	Tabríz
Badasht	Persian Gulf
Tíhrán	Máh-Kú
Shrine of Shaykh Tabarsí	Caspian Sea
borders of Iraq, Turkey, Russia, Afghanistan and Pakistan	



5. Color in, lightly, the mountain ranges along the northern and southwestern borders, and the sea and the gulf.
6. Explain that the class will study important events in the life of the Báb that take place in these locations.

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ACTIVITY: SHARE THE CULTURE AND ARTS OF IRAN

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To become familiar with the culture of Iran

ELOQUENT SPEECH OBJECTIVE: To establish bonds of understanding and connections with the believers from the cradle of the faith

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Use of the arts; Use of manipulatives; Use of music

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 45 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- examples of Persian art, such as rugs, pottery, silver, works of art, or photos of these items from library books
- Persian refreshments such as dates, pomegranates, pistachios, or baklava
- Persian music and player

Advance Preparation: Invite Persian members of the community to come to your class to tell stories about Persian culture, holidays, family life, historic contributions to civilization. If possible, invite them to bring and show examples of Persian culture: rugs, pottery, silver, works of art, etc.

1. Welcome your guests and introduce them to the students. Assist students to show courtesy and hospitality to their guests. Play Persian music, if possible, during this time of greeting.
2. Invite students to listen to the guests' stories and admire the arts and music of Persia.
3. Read the following words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá:
4. Encourage students to serve refreshments, such as dates, pomegranates, pistachios or baklava to their guests and each other. Thank your guests for their visit.

This fairest of lands was once a lamp, streaming with the rays of Divine knowledge, of science and art, of nobility and high achievement, of wisdom and valor.

Abdu'l-Bahá, The Secret of Divine Civilization, p. 9

ACTIVITY: PERSIA'S CONDITION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

KNOWLEDGE OBJECTIVE: To know the historical and political conditions of Iran

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Engage the mind and heart; Direct use of the Sacred Writings; Use of reflection; Use of stories

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 20 MIN.

Materials Needed:

- materials from previous activity, if possible
- Resource Page 24
- *The Central Figures: The Báb, Volume Two* (available 2004)

1. Remove the cultural items. Explain that over time, this beautiful civilization became very ugly and dark.
2. Read 'Abdu'l-Bahá's words about the fall of Persia, Resource Page 24.
3. When available, read stories about this topic in *The Central Figures: The Báb, Volume Two*, and discuss the questions provided in the appendix of that book.

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TOPIC: HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXT OF IRAN IN THE 19TH CENTURY

ACTIVITY: PERSIA'S SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WISDOM OBJECTIVE: To understand the connection between the historical, political and cultural setting of Iran and the Revelation of the Báb

SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION OBJECTIVE: To perceive the relevance of the coming of the Manifestation to the conditions and needs of Iran and how this relates to one's own relationship to this revelation

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS AND LEARNING TOOLS: Direct use of Bahá'í Sacred Writings; Education directed towards recognition of God; Use of the drama; Use of consultation.

SUGGESTED TIME FOR ACTIVITY: 1 HR.

Materials Needed:

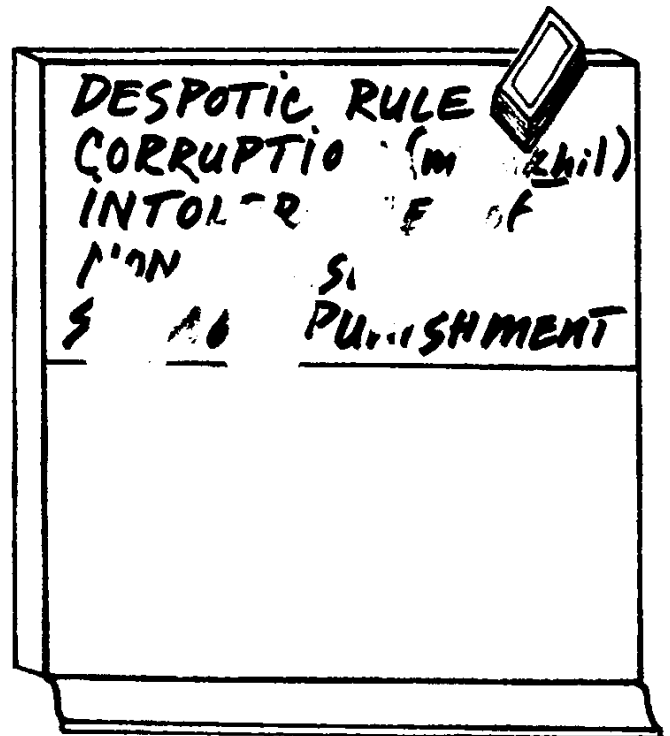
- copies of Resource Pages 27-28
- white board and markers

1. Distribute copies of Resource Pages 27-28.

Invite students to work in pairs to explore one of Persia's social issues. Encourage each team to carefully read the paragraph provided for one of these issues. Circulate among the students to assure comprehension and answer questions.

2. Divide a chalkboard or whiteboard in half. Leave one side blank. Encourage each team to record their observations of Persia's social issues on the other half of the board.
3. Discuss: Who could possibly help make such terrible conditions better?
4. Assure them that God sends His Teachers to us in times of our greatest need.
5. Compare wiping the eraser across the board with the coming of God's Manifestation. First, wipe across the blank side, the one with no obvious problems: how noticeable is it? Then wipe across the side with all the problems listed: how noticeable is that?

6. Continue erasing the board as you explain that The Báb's Teachings wipe away the ugly, evil ways that had overtaken Persia.



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7. Brainstorm possible remedies to these problems, such as justice, fairness, trustworthiness, consultation, kindness, respect for all religions, etc.
8. Encourage each team to create a brief dramatic skit to role-play SOLUTIONS to these terrible problems, as found in the teachings of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.
9. Encourage the students to think of appropriate ways to use these same spiritual qualities in their lives this week. Remember to invite them to describe their experiences at the beginning of the next class.



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Resource Pages

PERSIA'S CONDITION IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

"In former times," he writes, "Persia was verily the heart of the world and shone among the nations like a lighted taper. Her glory and prosperity broke from the horizon of humanity like the true dawn disseminating the light of knowledge and illumining the nations of the East and West. The fame of her victorious kings reached the ears of the dwellers at the poles of the earth. The majesty of her king of kings humbled the monarchs of Greece and Rome. Her governing wisdom filled the sages with awe, and the rulers of the continents fashioned their laws upon her polity. The Persians being distinguished among the nations of the earth as a people of conquerors, and justly admired for their civilisation and learning, their country became the glorious centre of all the sciences and arts, the mine of culture and a fount of virtues. . . . How is it that this excellent country now, by reason of our sloth, vanity, and indifference, from the lack of knowledge and organisation, from the poverty of the zeal and ambition of her people, has suffered the rays of her prosperity to be darkened and well nigh extinguished?"

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, quoted in *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxx

In Persia previous to the middle of the nineteenth century among the various tribes and peoples, sects and denominations there existed the greatest animosity, strife and hatred. At that time, too, all the other nations of the East were in the same condition. Religionists were hostile and bigoted, sects were at enmity, races hated each other, tribes were constantly at war; everywhere antagonism and conflict prevailed. Men shunned and were suspicious of each other. The man who could kill a number of his fellow creatures was glorified for his heroism and strength. Among religionists it was esteemed a praiseworthy deed to take the life of one who held an opposite belief. At this time Bahá'u'lláh arose and declared His mission. He founded the oneness of the world of humanity, proclaimed that all are servants of the loving and merciful God Who has created, nourished and provided for all. . .

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Promulgation of Universal Peace*, pp. 119-120



Flag description:

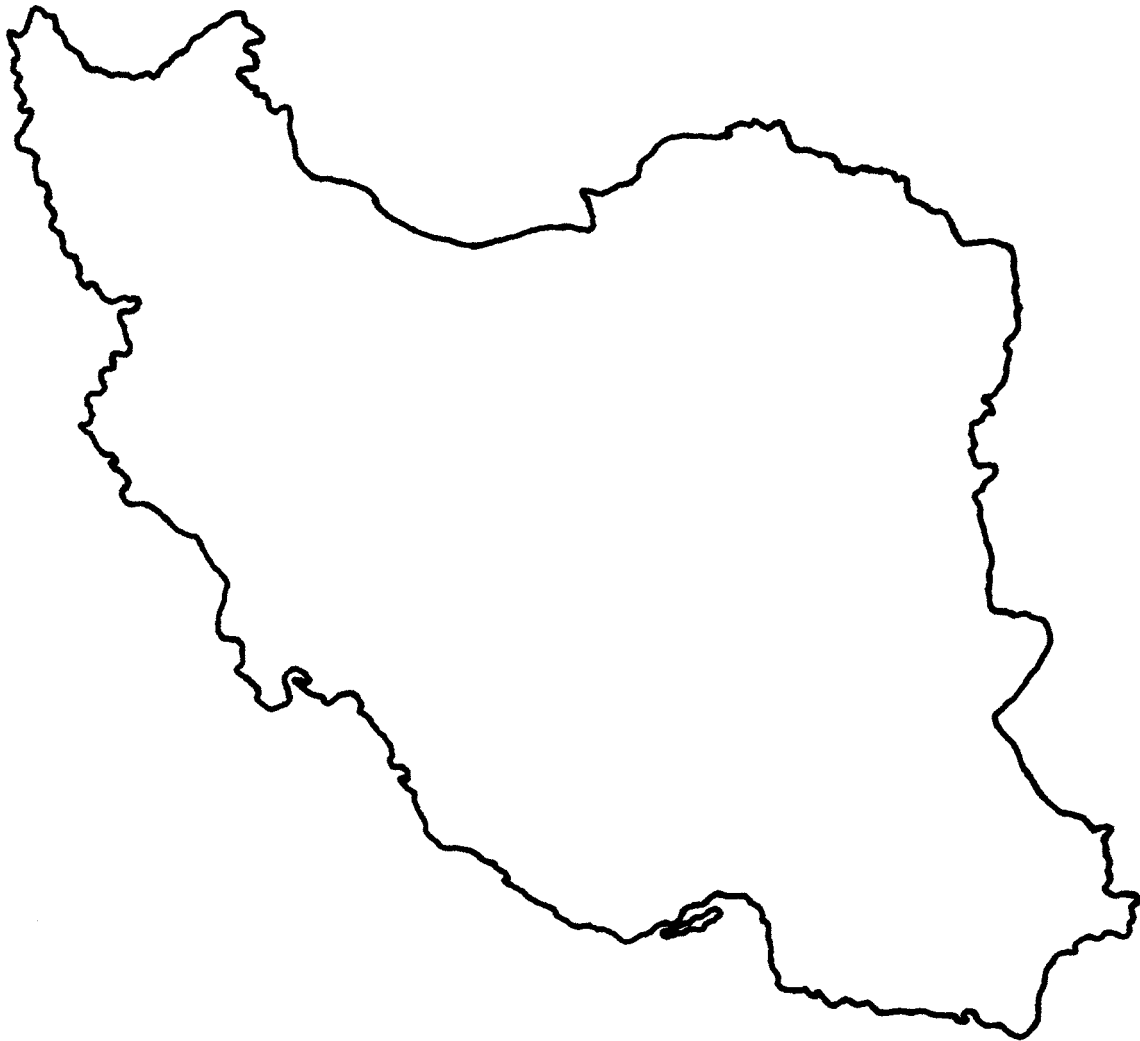
Three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word Allah)

In red is centered in the white band; Allah Akbar (God is great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom edge of the green band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band.

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Outline Map of Iran for



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MAP OF IRAN



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Persia's Social Issues in the Nineteenth Century

Absolute Rule

At the time when the Báb declared His Mission, the government of the country was ... “a Church-State.” Venal, cruel, and immoral as it was, it was formally religious. Muslim orthodoxy was its basis and permeated to the core both it and the social lives of the people. But otherwise there were no laws, statutes, or charters to guide the direction of public affairs....The Shah was despot, and his arbitrary rule was reflected all down the official scale through every minister and governor to the lowliest clerk or remotest headman. No civil tribunal existed to check or modify the power of the monarch or the authority which he might choose to delegate to his subordinates. If there was a law, it was his word. He could do as he pleased. It was his to appoint or to dismiss all ministers, officials, officers, and judges. He had power of life and death without appeal over all members of his household and of his court, whether civil or military. The right to take life was vested in him alone; and so were all the functions of government, legislative, executive, and judicial. His royal prerogative was limited by no written restraint whatever.

(Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxv-xxvi)

Bribes

Government, nay, life itself, in that country may be said to consist for the most part of an exchange of presents....A negotiation, in which two parties are involved as donor and recipient, as superior and subordinate, or even as equal contracting agents, cannot take place in Persia without the party who can be represented as the author of the favour or service claiming and receiving a definite cash return for what he has done or given.... In no country that I have ever seen or heard of in the world, is the system so open, so shameless, or so universal as in Persia. So far from being limited to the sphere of domestic economy or to commercial transactions, it permeates every walk and inspires most of the actions of life. By its operation, generosity or gratuitous service may be said to have been erased in Persia from the category of social virtues....

(Lord Curzon, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxvi-xxviii)

Prison and Punishment

Nothing is more shocking to the European reader, in pursuing his way through the crime-stained and bloody pages of Persian history during the last and, in a happily less degree, during the present century, than the record of savage punishments and abominable tortures....Up till quite a recent period, well within the borders of the present reign, condemned criminals have been crucified, blown from guns, buried alive, impaled, shod like horses, torn asunder by being bound to the heads of two trees bent together and then allowed to spring back to their natural position, converted into human torches, flayed while living.

(Lord Curzon, quoted by Shoghi Effendi, *The Dawn-Breakers*, p. xxviii-xxix)

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Religions Prejudice

It was dangerous for a Jew or a Zoroastrian to walk in the street on a rainy day, for if his wet garment should touch a Muhammadan, the Muslim was defiled, and the other might have to atone for the offense with his life. If a Muhammadan took money from a Jew, Zoroastrian or Christian he had to wash it before he could put it in his pocket. If a Jew found his child giving a glass of water to a poor Muhammadan beggar he would dash the glass from the child's hand, for curses rather than kindness should be the portion of infidels! The Muslims themselves were divided into numerous sects, among whom strife was often bitter and fierce. The Zoroastrians did not join much in these mutual recriminations, but lived in communities apart, refusing to associate with their fellow countrymen of other faiths.

J. E. Esslemont, *Babá'u'lláh and the New Era*, p. 12

Status of Women

The status of woman in former times was exceedingly deplorable, for it was the belief of the Orient that it was best for woman to be ignorant. It was considered preferable that she should not know reading or writing in order that she might not be informed of events in the world. Woman was considered to be created for rearing children and attending to the duties of the household. If she pursued educational courses, it was deemed contrary to chastity; hence women were made prisoners of the household. The houses did not even have windows opening upon the outside world.

'Abdu'l-Abhá, *The Promulgation of Universal Peace*, p. 166

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LIST OF ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Stories & Articles:

Brilliant Star: "The Thief-Afnan Stories" Nov/Dec 94
Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era, pp. 10-11
Bahá'í Teaching Guide for Children, Intermediate, p. 145
The Dawn-Breakers: Nabil's Narrative, Introduction

Worksheets and Coloring Pages:

Bahá'í School Lesson Plans, Grade 8, "Heroic Age of the Faith," p. 8

Activities:

Brilliant Star: "Timeline Cards (Share a Persian Tradition)" Jul/Aug 94
"A Persian Naw-Rúz" Mar/Apr 95

Music:

Ává, Ává
Celestial Melodies, Irandocht Enayati
Desire of the Heart, Narges
Glad Tidings, Dawn-Breakers
Glad Tidings, Sonbol
In His Remembrance, Sonbol
Love Is Always There, Parvin Davari
Narges, Narges
Tender Seedlings: Persian Prayers for Children, Jena Productions, Taghvai, Mosrefzadeh

Games:

Poetry:

Videos:

Iran, Lonely Planet Pilot Productions, Oakland, CA: 1999

List other favorite resources:

God Passes By
Hour of the Dawn, Ch. 14
Iran, by Mary Virginia Fox, Chicago : Childrens Press, 1991
Iran, Renfield Sanders, New York : Chelsea House Publishers, 1990
Iran, by Elma Schemenauer, Plymouth, MN : Child's World, 2001
Iran, written by Maria O'Shea, Milwaukee, WI : Gareth Stevens Pub., 2000
Iran / by Cheres Cartlidge, San Diego, CA : Lucent Books ; Detroit, MI ; Thomson/Gale, 2002

If you find any additional resources, please notify the National Teacher Training Center, or submit your findings to the Educational Materials web site.