

# The Story of the Snake and Its Skin

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“How come the only animals I ever see out here are dead?”

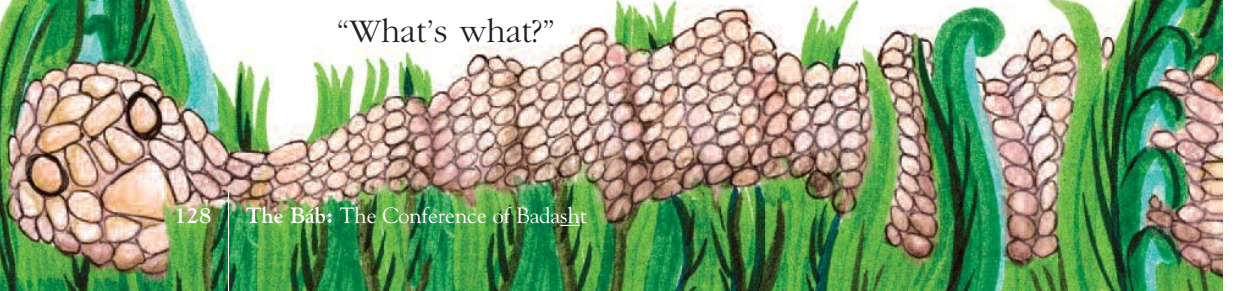
“C’mon, Susi, you’re not dead . . . YET!” yelled Marta as she lunged forward with the goofball menace of an older sibling.

Susi held firm, “Cut it out, Marta! I’m trying to ask you a *question*.”

“Okay, okay . . .” relented Marta. “So what’s your question?”

Susi pointed toward something that looked like a single nylon stocking lying in the grass. “What’s *that*?” she asked.

“What’s what?”



“That thing! Ugh! What is it? Is it dead?”

Marta crept up for a look. “Oh! It’s a part of a snake.”

Susi joined her sister in a huddle over the skin. “What happened to the snake? Did it die?”

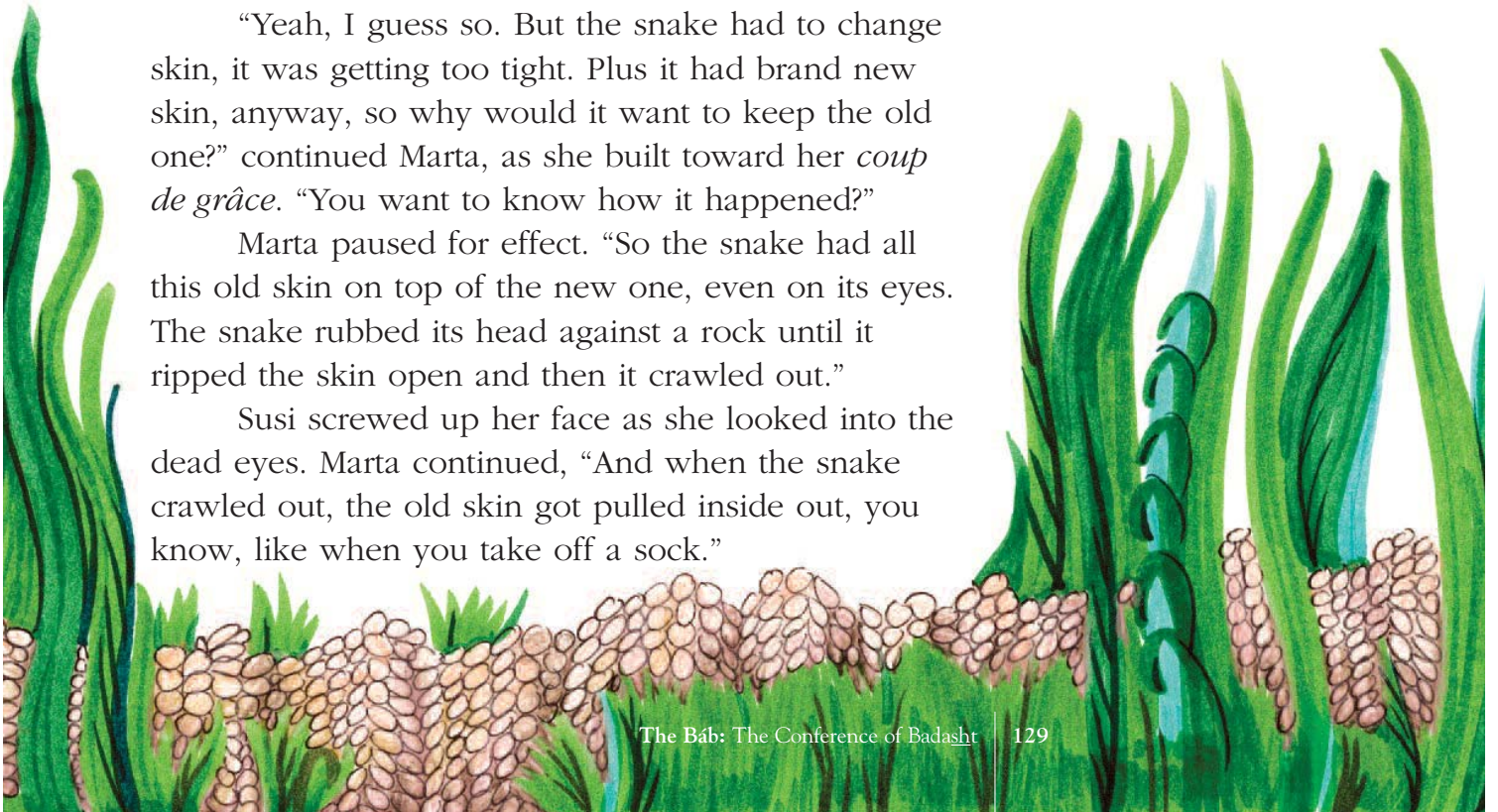
Marta grabbed a stick and plucked their find from a tangle of grass. She held it up so her sister could take a closer look. “We just learned about this in science. Snakes are supposed to change their skins when they get bigger.”

Susi was peering at the skin. “It’s all ripped up at the head. That must have hurt.”

“Yeah, I guess so. But the snake had to change skin, it was getting too tight. Plus it had brand new skin, anyway, so why would it want to keep the old one?” continued Marta, as she built toward her *coup de grâce*. “You want to know how it happened?”

Marta paused for effect. “So the snake had all this old skin on top of the new one, even on its eyes. The snake rubbed its head against a rock until it ripped the skin open and then it crawled out.”

Susi screwed up her face as she looked into the dead eyes. Marta continued, “And when the snake crawled out, the old skin got pulled inside out, you know, like when you take off a sock.”





“Not like a sock!” protested Susi. “It’s not like a *sock!*”

“Why not?” responded Marta. “It’s just like a sock.”

“No, it’s not,” replied Susi emphatically. She proceeded to explain. “Think about it. Humans made socks. *God* made the snake. It’s more like . . .”

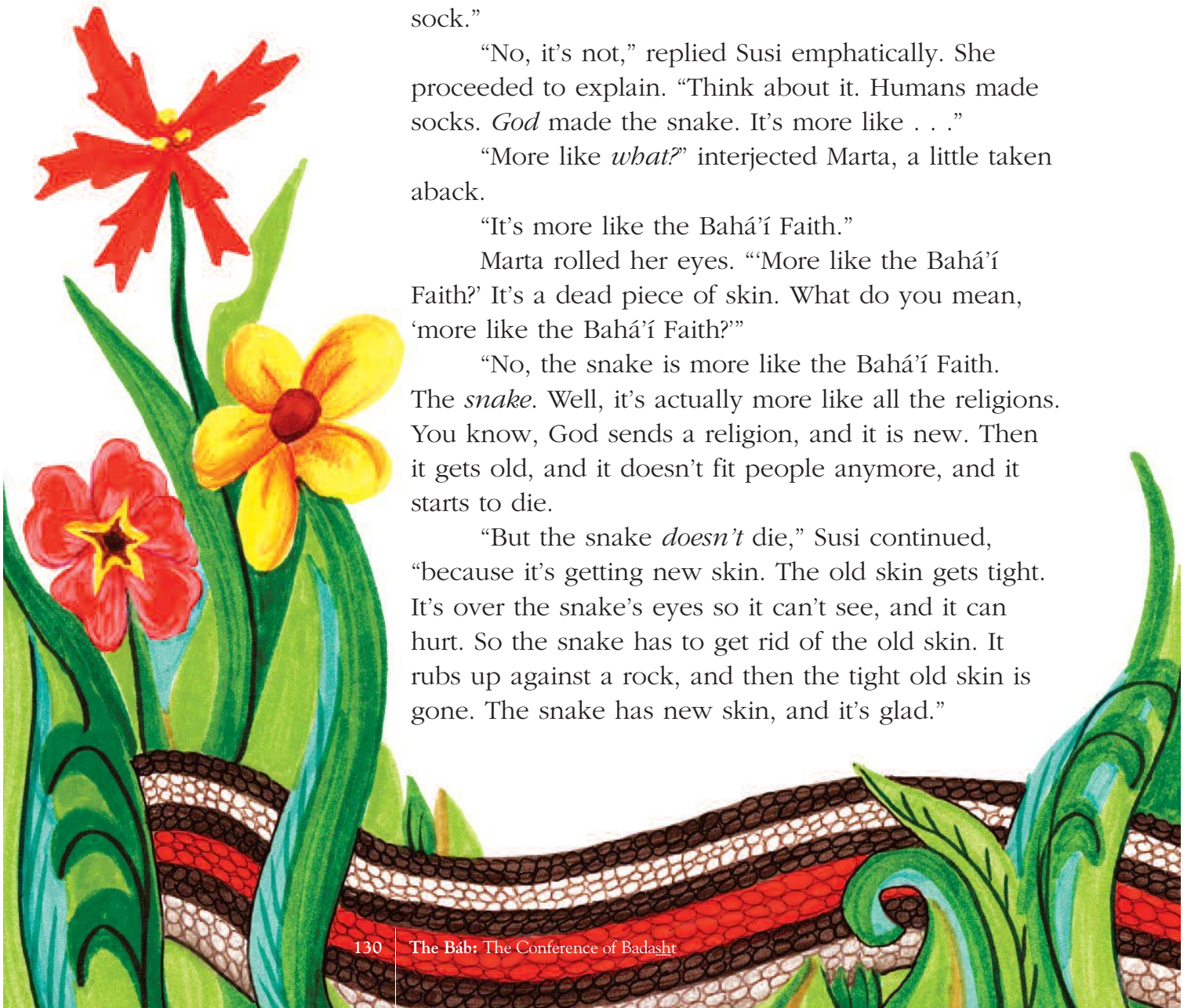
“More like *what?*” interjected Marta, a little taken aback.

“It’s more like the Bahá’í Faith.”

Marta rolled her eyes. “More like the Bahá’í Faith? It’s a dead piece of skin. What do you mean, ‘more like the Bahá’í Faith?’”

“No, the snake is more like the Bahá’í Faith. The *snake*. Well, it’s actually more like all the religions. You know, God sends a religion, and it is new. Then it gets old, and it doesn’t fit people anymore, and it starts to die.

“But the snake *doesn’t* die,” Susi continued, “because it’s getting new skin. The old skin gets tight. It’s over the snake’s eyes so it can’t see, and it can hurt. So the snake has to get rid of the old skin. It rubs up against a rock, and then the tight old skin is gone. The snake has new skin, and it’s glad.”



Marta thought for a second. “Yeah, but the Báb had to suffer more than the snake. When all the mullás wanted to keep their power, it was like the dead skin wanted to hang on longer and try to get rid of the new skin.”

Susi responded, “Good thing that the Báb and the Bábís were there, so we could have this new skin.”

“Yeah,” Marta agreed. “And isn’t it kind of awesome? I mean, like, Ṭáhirih—when she appeared at Badasht without her veil on, it was like new skin. She just shed all that old skin at Badasht. They all did, really. Remember what Ṭáhirih said? ‘This day is the day of festivity and universal rejoicing, the day on which the fetters of the past are burst asunder.’ They burst through their old skin at Badasht and showed the world their new skin—the teachings of the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh.”

“*Thank God!*” exclaimed Susi.

“Yeah, tell me about it!” Marta shuddered. “Man, how would you like to have to wear one of those things?”

“You mean a veil?” asked Susi.

“No, that old snake skin!” Marta held up their find.

As she did, the same idea entered both sisters’ heads. They looked at each other conspiratorially and grinned: “Hey! Let’s go show Mom and Dad!” ★

