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The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Two



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Graphic Design by Pepper Peterson Oldziey

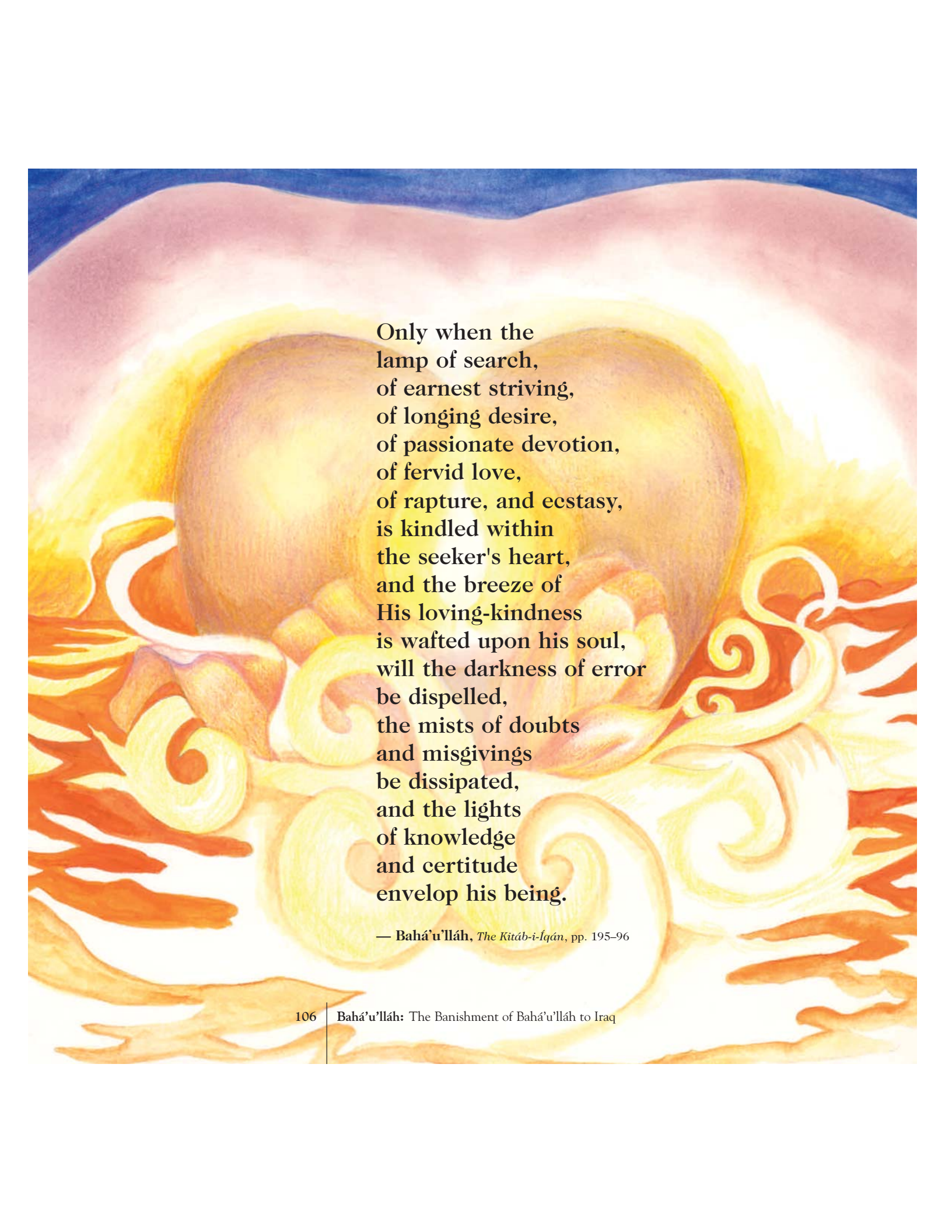
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886
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Published 2002
05 04 03 02 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

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Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education • Stories
National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States


Bahá'í Publishing Trust
Wilmette, Illinois

A watercolor illustration of a glowing heart, rendered in shades of pink, orange, and yellow. The heart is the central focus, surrounded by swirling, flame-like patterns in warm tones. The background is a soft, hazy blue. The overall effect is one of warmth and spiritual light.

Only when the
lamp of search,
of earnest striving,
of longing desire,
of passionate devotion,
of fervid love,
of rapture, and ecstasy,
is kindled within
the seeker's heart,
and the breeze of
His loving-kindness
is wafted upon his soul,
will the darkness of error
be dispelled,
the mists of doubts
and misgivings
be dissipated,
and the lights
of knowledge
and certitude
envelop his being.

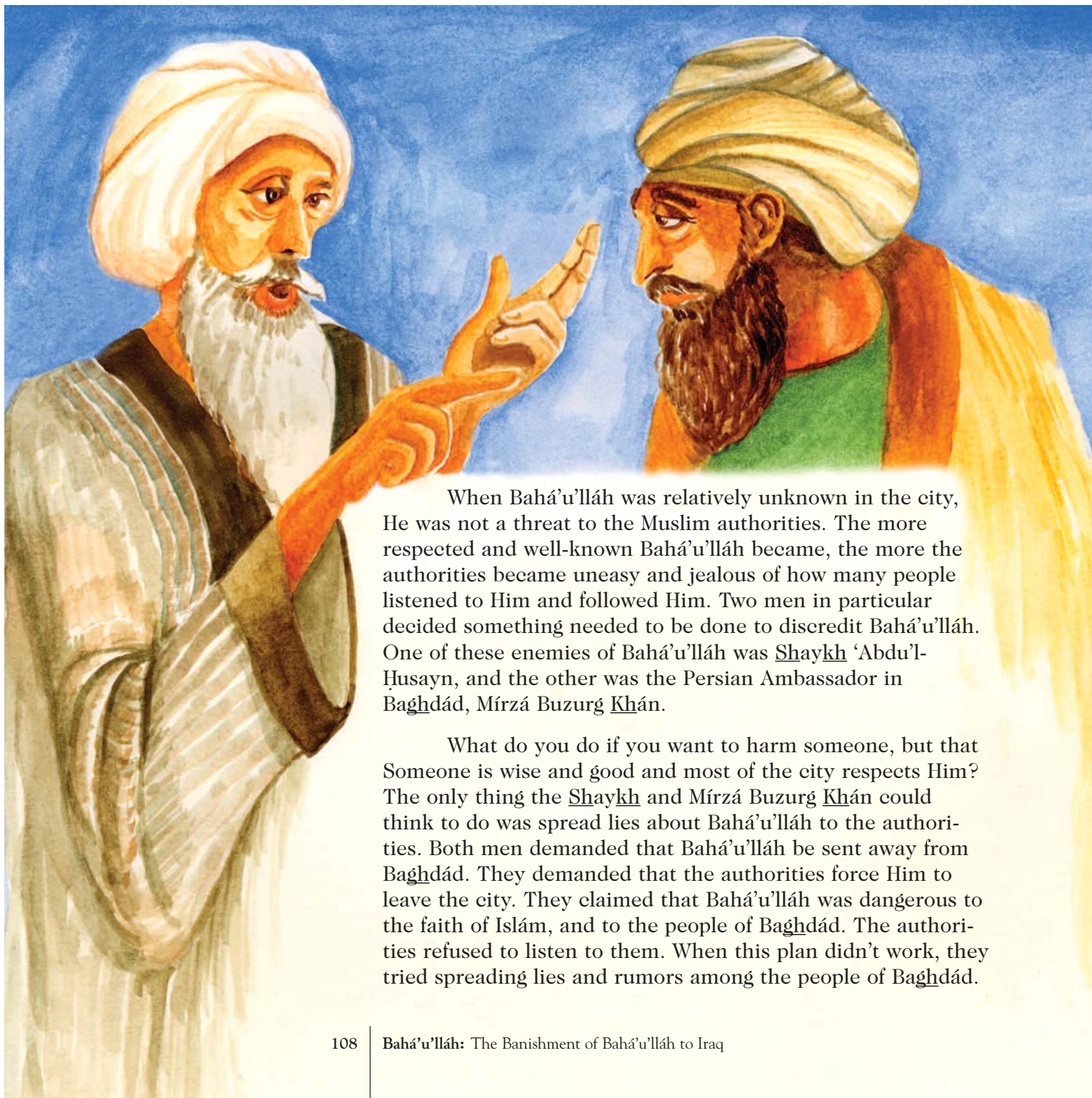
— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 195–96



Hatred and Miracles

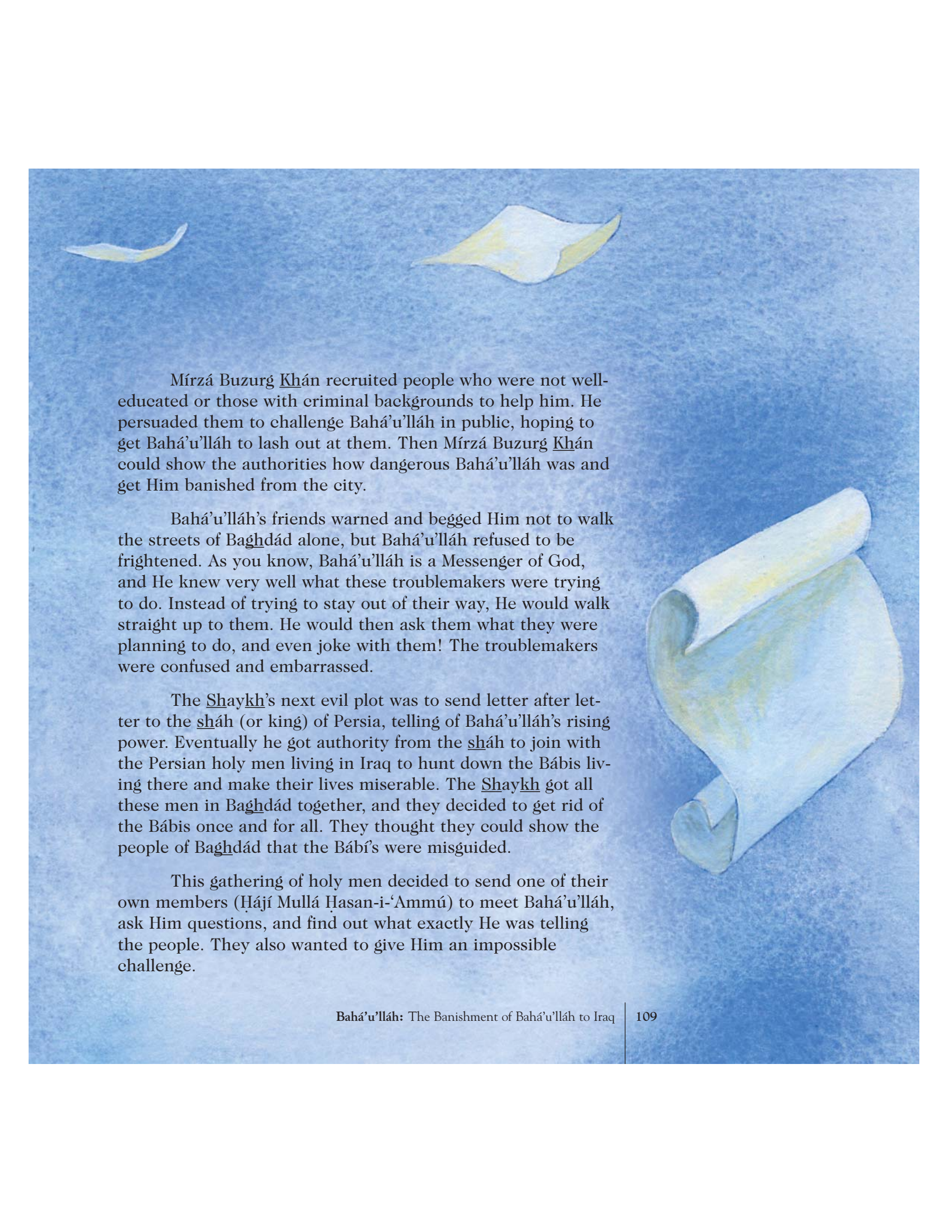
*Written by Regina Blum
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*

For almost ten years, Bahá'u'lláh lived in Baghdad, Iraq, meeting with the followers of the Báb, with the people living in the city, and with the Muslim holy men. Bahá'u'lláh was always kind, loving, and truthful with everyone He encountered. Since there were no radios, televisions, or telephones in those days, the only way news spread was by word-of-mouth. Gradually His reputation grew throughout the city as a Man of great wisdom and perfect character. Despite the lack of modern ways of communicating, hundreds of people knew of Him and came to love Him.



When Bahá'u'lláh was relatively unknown in the city, He was not a threat to the Muslim authorities. The more respected and well-known Bahá'u'lláh became, the more the authorities became uneasy and jealous of how many people listened to Him and followed Him. Two men in particular decided something needed to be done to discredit Bahá'u'lláh. One of these enemies of Bahá'u'lláh was Shaykh 'Abdu'l-Ḥusayn, and the other was the Persian Ambassador in Baghdád, Mírzá Buzurg Khán.

What do you do if you want to harm someone, but that Someone is wise and good and most of the city respects Him? The only thing the Shaykh and Mírzá Buzurg Khán could think to do was spread lies about Bahá'u'lláh to the authorities. Both men demanded that Bahá'u'lláh be sent away from Baghdád. They demanded that the authorities force Him to leave the city. They claimed that Bahá'u'lláh was dangerous to the faith of Islám, and to the people of Baghdád. The authorities refused to listen to them. When this plan didn't work, they tried spreading lies and rumors among the people of Baghdád.



Mírzá Buzurg Khán recruited people who were not well-educated or those with criminal backgrounds to help him. He persuaded them to challenge Bahá'u'lláh in public, hoping to get Bahá'u'lláh to lash out at them. Then Mírzá Buzurg Khán could show the authorities how dangerous Bahá'u'lláh was and get Him banished from the city.

Bahá'u'lláh's friends warned and begged Him not to walk the streets of Baghdád alone, but Bahá'u'lláh refused to be frightened. As you know, Bahá'u'lláh is a Messenger of God, and He knew very well what these troublemakers were trying to do. Instead of trying to stay out of their way, He would walk straight up to them. He would then ask them what they were planning to do, and even joke with them! The troublemakers were confused and embarrassed.

The Shaykh's next evil plot was to send letter after letter to the sháh (or king) of Persia, telling of Bahá'u'lláh's rising power. Eventually he got authority from the sháh to join with the Persian holy men living in Iraq to hunt down the Bábis living there and make their lives miserable. The Shaykh got all these men in Baghdád together, and they decided to get rid of the Bábis once and for all. They thought they could show the people of Baghdád that the Bábí's were misguided.

This gathering of holy men decided to send one of their own members (Hájí Mullá Hasan-i-'Ammú) to meet Bahá'u'lláh, ask Him questions, and find out what exactly He was telling the people. They also wanted to give Him an impossible challenge.



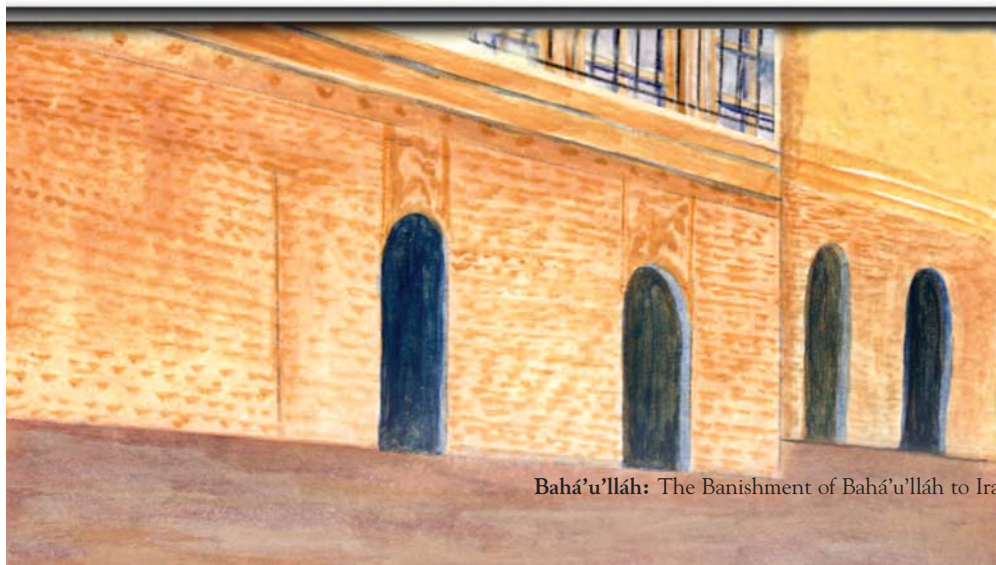
Hájí Mullá Hasan made an appointment to interview Bahá'u'lláh at His home. As soon as he arrived at Bahá'u'lláh's home and introduced himself, an amazing thing happened. Hájí Mullá Hasan was overwhelmed by the power and majesty of Bahá'u'lláh and could barely speak. He quickly understood that what he knew about spiritual truth was nothing compared to what Bahá'u'lláh knew. Hájí Mullá Hasan's understanding was like a small drop compared to Bahá'u'lláh's ocean of knowledge. Bahá'u'lláh calmly and skillfully answered all of Hájí Mullá Hasan's questions.

He sat silently in Bahá'u'lláh's presence. He felt foolish asking Bahá'u'lláh what the holy men wanted him to ask. The gathering of holy men had been convinced that they could prove how wrong Bahá'u'lláh was. Their plan was to make Him look like a fraud so the people of Baghdád would turn to them, not Bahá'u'lláh, for guidance. They wanted Bahá'u'lláh to perform a miracle, but they did not expect that Bahá'u'lláh could actually make a miracle happen!

Slowly, Ḥájí Mullá Ḥasan told Bahá'u'lláh that the holy men wanted Him to perform a miracle—to prove that the Bábi religion was from God. With a deep sigh, Bahá'u'lláh looked into Ḥájí Mullá Ḥasan's eyes and said to him:


Although you have no right to ask this, for God should test His creatures, and they should not test God, still I allow and accept this request . . . [They] must assemble, and with one accord, choose one miracle, and write that, after the performance of this miracle they will no longer entertain doubts about Me, and that all will acknowledge and confess the truth of My Cause. Let them seal this paper, and bring it to Me. This must be the accepted criterion: if the miracle is performed, no doubt will remain for them; and if not, We shall be convicted of imposture.

So, Bahá'u'lláh accepted the challenge of performing a miracle—but on two conditions. The first condition was that everyone had to agree what the miracle would be. And then, if Bahá'u'lláh performed an amazing act, the holy men had to accept the truth of Bahá'u'lláh's words. They had to tell everyone that Bahá'u'lláh's Message was truly from God.



Bahá'u'lláh: The Banishment of Bahá'u'lláh to Iraq





Hájí Mullá Hasan humbly thanked Bahá'u'lláh and said good-bye, promising to share His answer with the holy men.

Guess what happened next? The holy men of Islám in the city of Baghdád got together again and talked and argued and talked some more. They argued about what miracle they would ask Bahá'u'lláh to perform. It would have to be a big miracle, some said, something that many people would be able to see. Others argued that it didn't matter how big the amazing act was, but that it had to be very difficult. It had to be so difficult that no one else could copy it. The holy men argued for days about what the miracle should be. They could not come to an agreement. They could not decide what to tell Bahá'u'lláh. Hájí Mullá Hasan told Bahá'u'lláh about their dilemma. Bahá'u'lláh then said: "We have, through this all-satisfying, all-embracing message which We sent, revealed and vindicated the miracles of all the Prophets, inasmuch as We left the choice to the [holy men] themselves, undertaking to reveal whatever they would decide upon."

Bahá'u'lláh showed the ignorant, suspicious holy men the biggest and most difficult-to-copy miracle of all—Himself! But most of them couldn't see His perfection—His quiet wisdom, complete understanding, and absolute love for everyone.

This is the true miracle of all the Messengers of God. ★

