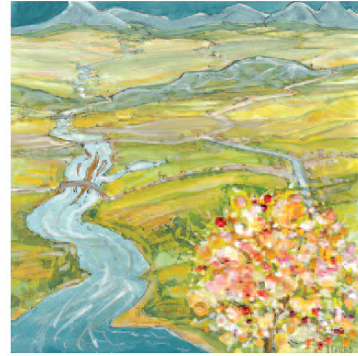


The following story is from the book

*The Central Figures*

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Two*



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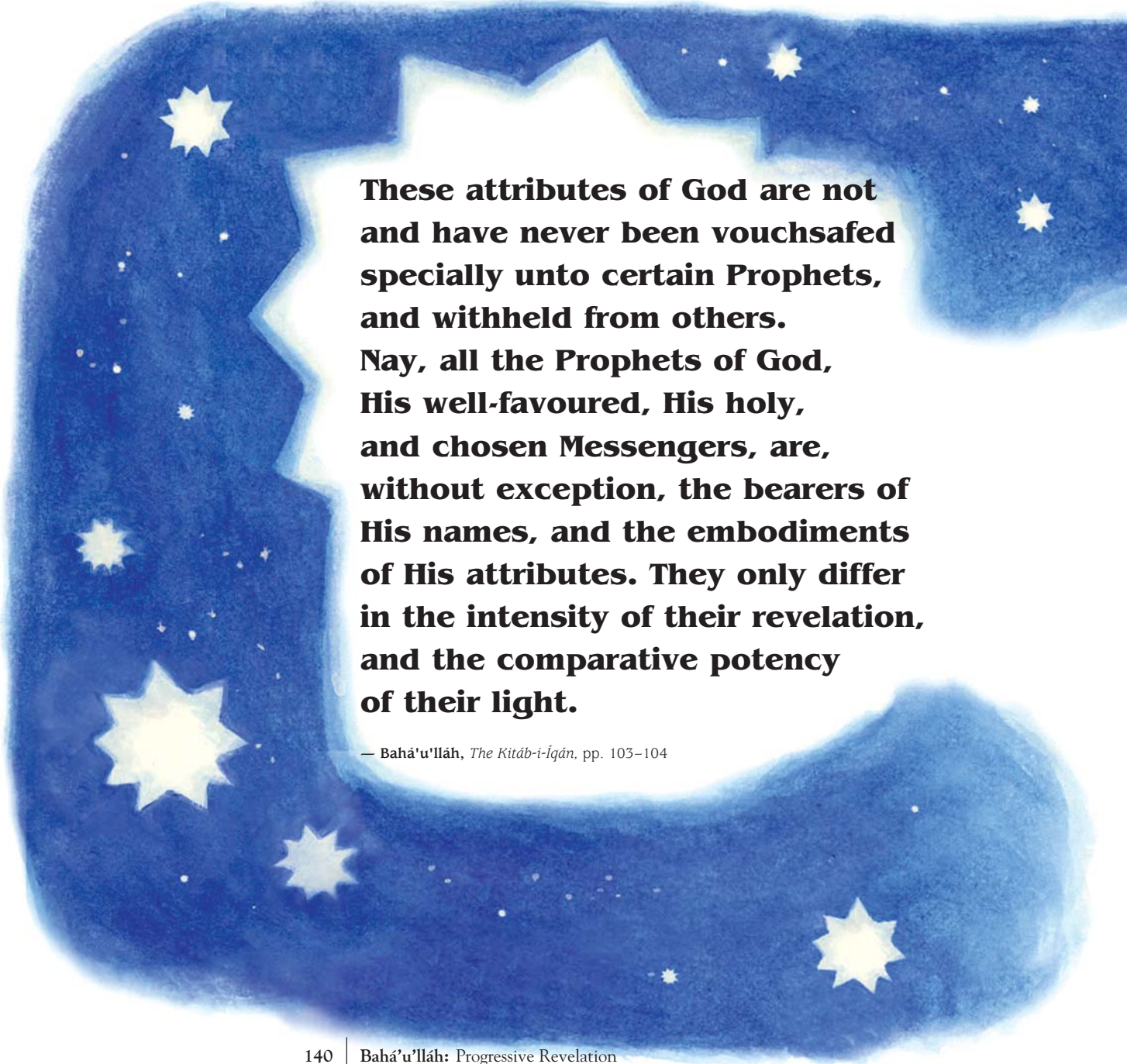
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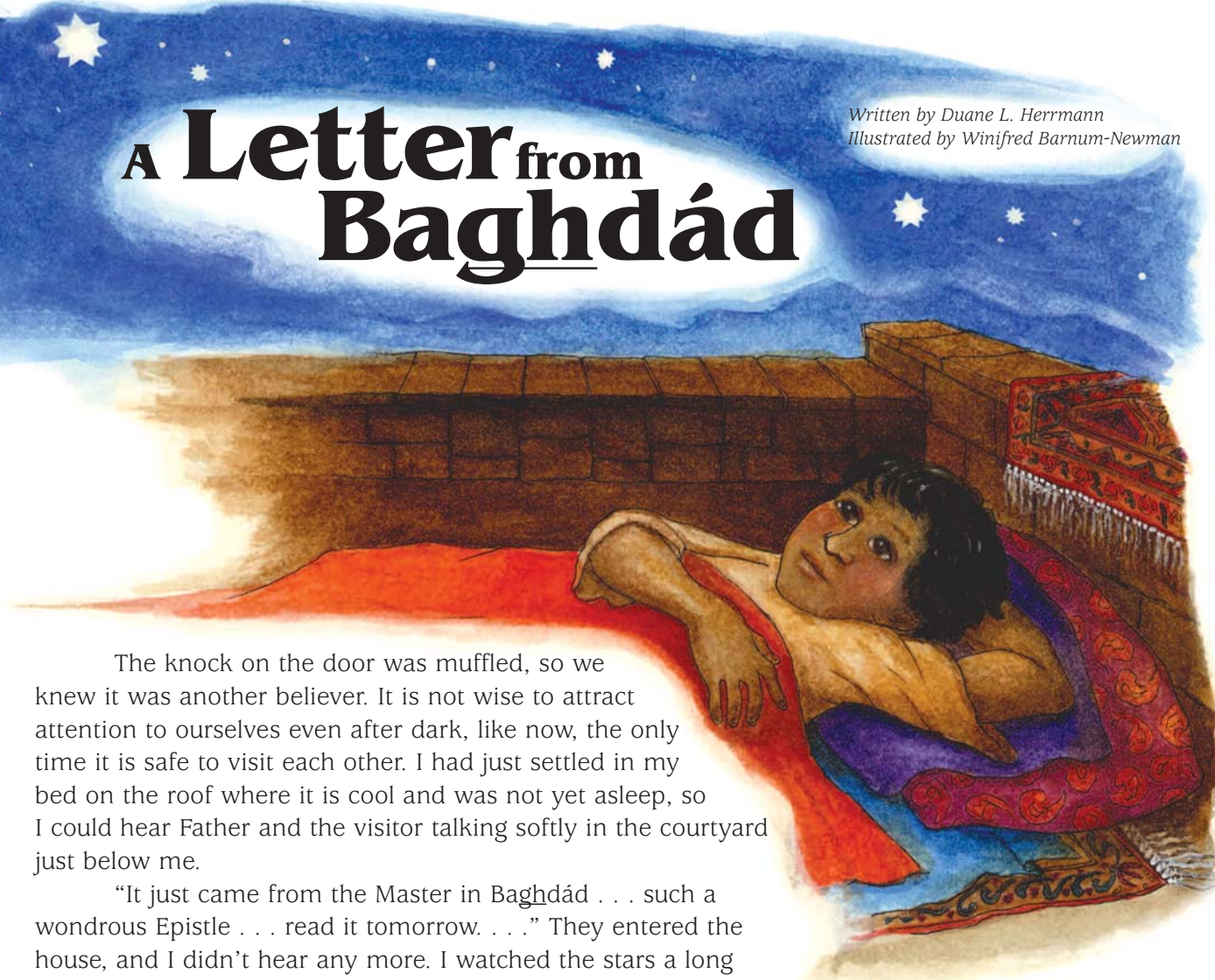


**These attributes of God are not and have never been vouchsafed specially unto certain Prophets, and withheld from others. Nay, all the Prophets of God, His well-favoured, His holy, and chosen Messengers, are, without exception, the bearers of His names, and the embodiments of His attributes. They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light.**

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Íqán*, pp. 103–104

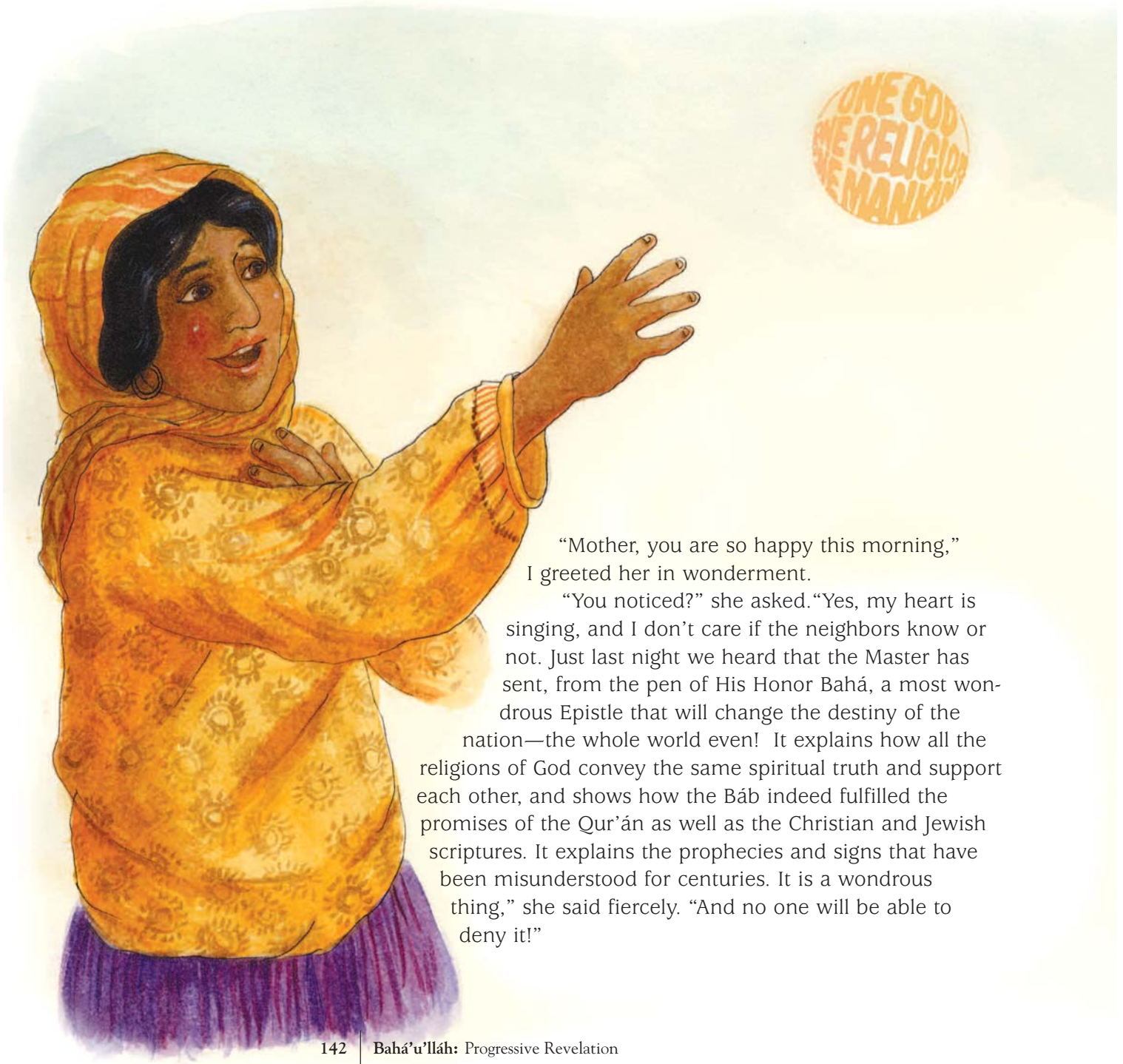
# A Letter from Baghdád

Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
Illustrated by Winifred Barnum-Newman



The knock on the door was muffled, so we knew it was another believer. It is not wise to attract attention to ourselves even after dark, like now, the only time it is safe to visit each other. I had just settled in my bed on the roof where it is cool and was not yet asleep, so I could hear Father and the visitor talking softly in the courtyard just below me.

“It just came from the Master in Baghdád . . . such a wondrous Epistle . . . read it tomorrow. . . .” They entered the house, and I didn’t hear any more. I watched the stars a long time before I slept, and I kept wondering what the Master could have sent to our village that was so wonderful. In the morning, I woke up later than usual and found that Mother had a glow and excitement about her. She was even more excited than on special occasions.



“Mother, you are so happy this morning,”  
I greeted her in wonderment.

“You noticed?” she asked. “Yes, my heart is singing, and I don’t care if the neighbors know or not. Just last night we heard that the Master has sent, from the pen of His Honor Bahá, a most wondrous Epistle that will change the destiny of the nation—the whole world even! It explains how all the religions of God convey the same spiritual truth and support each other, and shows how the Báb indeed fulfilled the promises of the Qur’án as well as the Christian and Jewish scriptures. It explains the prophecies and signs that have been misunderstood for centuries. It is a wondrous thing,” she said fiercely. “And no one will be able to deny it!”

I was startled by her conviction, by her new-found certainty in the truth. She had always believed in the Báb, no matter how dark the circumstances, but the last several years she had seemed restless, as if her heart was not content. She had plenty to do with keeping the house and taking care of us children and father, but something was missing. Now, she fairly danced around the house and she looked younger than I could remember. The change was so drastic: overnight. Was it all because of hearing about the Letter? This didn't make sense, but it was the only thing that did make sense. I hurried out to help Father. Maybe he could explain it to me.

Father and Javad, my older brother, were already hard at work in the field when I arrived. Many weeds needed to be pulled so they wouldn't take precious moisture from the crop. I started at the side nearest to Father and began to work my way toward him. "Father," I said when I got close enough to him to talk. "Mother seems so different this morning. Can you tell me why?"

"Only when we're working side-by-side in the middle of the field where no one can hear us," he said in a low voice so that only I could hear. I nodded and continued to work my way toward him and to the middle of the field. I was anxious to hear an explanation, but I knew better than to rush my work. Pulling weeds, my father had explained, is the same as approaching any other problem (and weeds are a problem!). Each weed has to be dealt with in the way most appropriate to remove it. If one kind of weed is pulled too quickly, the stem breaks off and leaves the roots in the ground to grow a new stem. Then it is even harder to pull up. When that happens, you need to dig with your fingers under the center of the roots and pull them up.



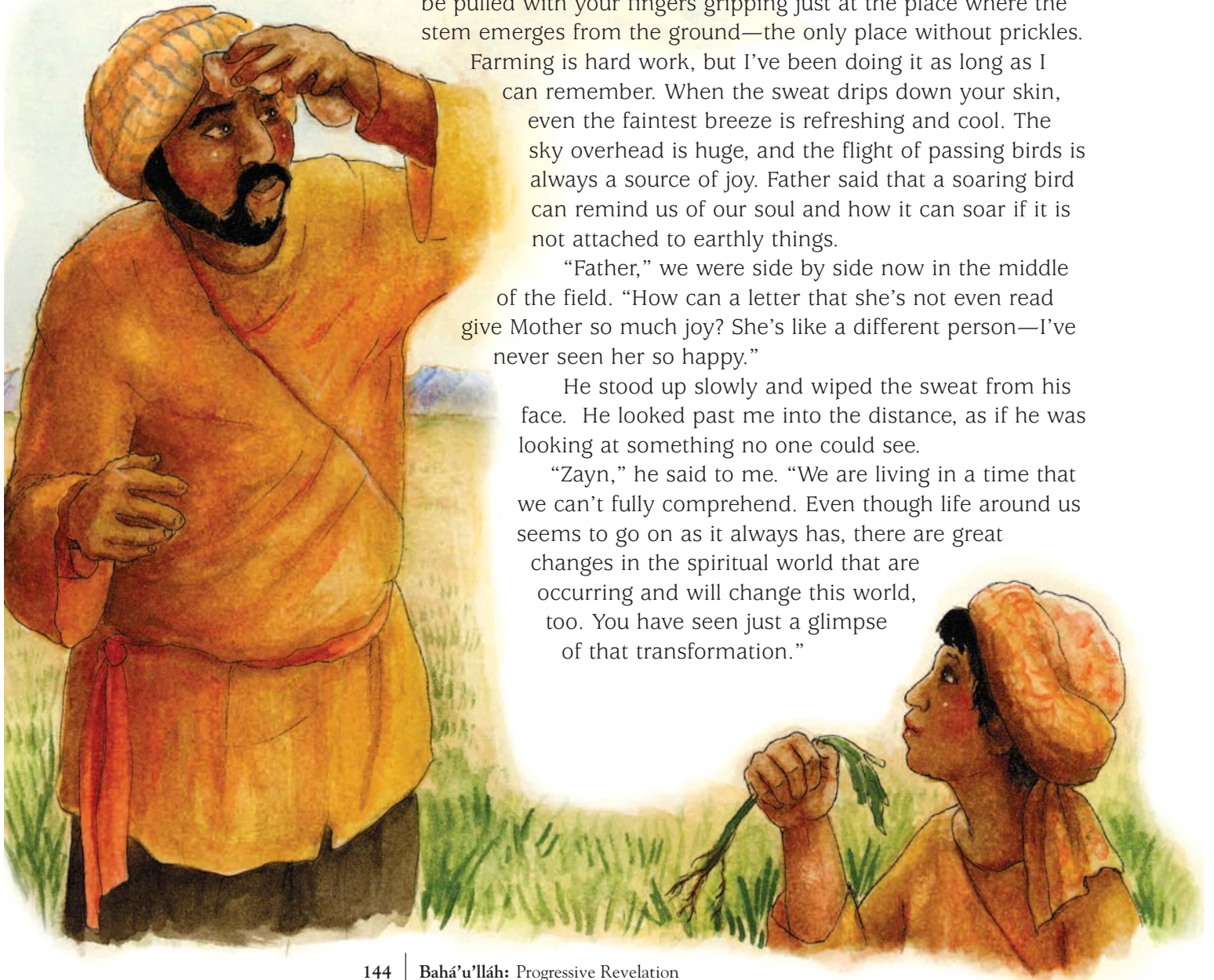
Other weeds, if jerked too quickly, stay in the ground, but the leaves strip off the stem and leave your hands full of bits of leaves and sticky sap. Some weeds have prickles and can only be pulled with your fingers gripping just at the place where the stem emerges from the ground—the only place without prickles.

Farming is hard work, but I've been doing it as long as I can remember. When the sweat drips down your skin, even the faintest breeze is refreshing and cool. The sky overhead is huge, and the flight of passing birds is always a source of joy. Father said that a soaring bird can remind us of our soul and how it can soar if it is not attached to earthly things.

"Father," we were side by side now in the middle of the field. "How can a letter that she's not even read give Mother so much joy? She's like a different person—I've never seen her so happy."

He stood up slowly and wiped the sweat from his face. He looked past me into the distance, as if he was looking at something no one could see.

"Zayn," he said to me. "We are living in a time that we can't fully comprehend. Even though life around us seems to go on as it always has, there are great changes in the spiritual world that are occurring and will change this world, too. You have seen just a glimpse of that transformation."



“This Letter, ‘The Epistle of the Uncle,’ is confirmation of the first ray of a new spiritual day.” He continued. It is evidence of the power that will accomplish the change.”

“The uncle?” I asked. “Whose uncle?”

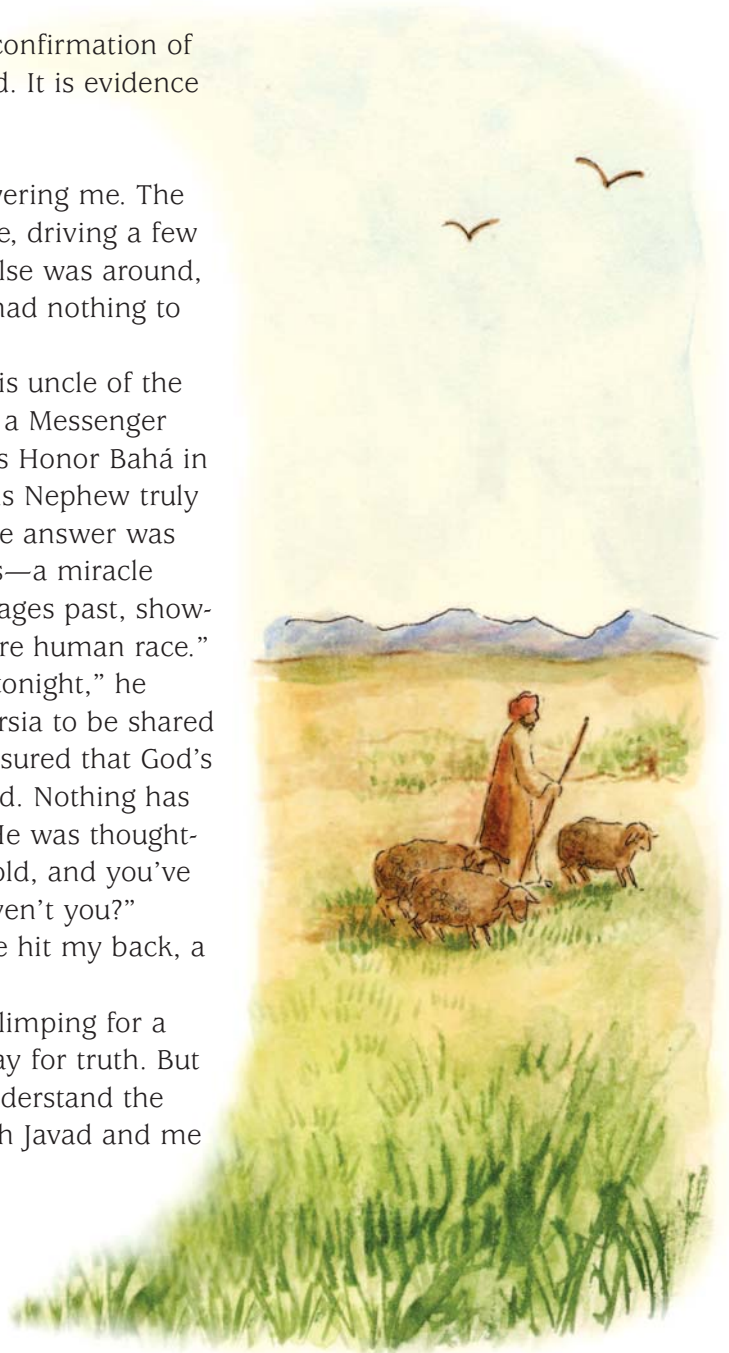
Father looked around quickly before answering me. The only person we could see was a boy at a distance, driving a few sheep. He was too far away to hear us. No one else was around, except Javad, and he was also a believer, so we had nothing to fear from him.

“The uncle of the Báb,” he answered. “This uncle of the Báb could not believe that his Nephew truly was a Messenger from God. The uncle attained the presence of His Honor Bahá in Baghdád and asked how he could be sure that his Nephew truly was the Messenger we have been waiting for. The answer was revealed in the space of two days and two nights—a miracle itself. The Epistle explains the plan of God from ages past, showing God’s grand plan for the salvation of the entire human race.”

“We have the privilege of hearing it read tonight,” he said. Copies are being taken throughout all of Persia to be shared so that all the believers can be comforted and assured that God’s plan is on course, despite the Báb being martyred. Nothing has ended; the power of God has not been stilled.” He was thoughtful for a moment. “Zayn, you are now 12 years old, and you’ve had rocks thrown at you for being a believer, haven’t you?”

“Yes,” I answered. “Last fall. A small stone hit my back, a larger one hit my leg.”

“I remembered that,” he said. “You were limping for a few days.” He paused. “It was a small price to pay for truth. But because of that, I think you can now begin to understand the sufferings of the Messengers. You may come with Javad and me tonight to hear the Epistle being read.”



I was stunned. I could be included in such a holy gathering? I resolved to sit as quietly and respectfully as possible. I worked the rest of the day without even noticing the weeds or the heat. My heart was anxious to hear the blessed words. I tried to imagine what they might be, but eventually gave up. We quit work before sunset, bathed as if for prayer, and even put on special clean clothes. Our mother and sister would not be coming. It is not safe for them to be out of the house after dark.

As the shadows of night began to cloak the village, the three of us made our way quietly to the home of the believer where the Epistle would be read.

The room was nearly full when we entered. Lights were in a corner where a stranger sat, so I knew he was the traveler with the Epistle. I quickly found a tiny spot and squeezed into it. Almost every believer I knew was there, well—men, at least. We would share with my sister and mother when we returned home.

After a few more believers arrived, the stranger was introduced and he began to read:

**“In the Name of Our Lord, the Exalted,  
the Most High.**

**“No man shall attain the shores of the ocean  
of true understanding except he be detached  
from all that is in heaven and on earth.**

**Sanctify your souls, O ye peoples of the world . . .” ★**

