

The following story is from the book

*The Central Figures*

*Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Two*



These stories are lovingly provided to download as a convenience to teachers or communities otherwise unable to acquire the book. Each book in this storybook series also includes an appendix with questions for discussion and reflection, a glossary of words and phrases used in the stories, a bibliography, and an index.

These books may be purchased from the Louhelen Bahá'í School bookstore for \$15.25 each, including shipping in the United States, or \$23.00 to most international locations. Email: [Louhelen@usbnc.org](mailto:Louhelen@usbnc.org) for details.

Graphic Design by Pepper Peterson Oldziej

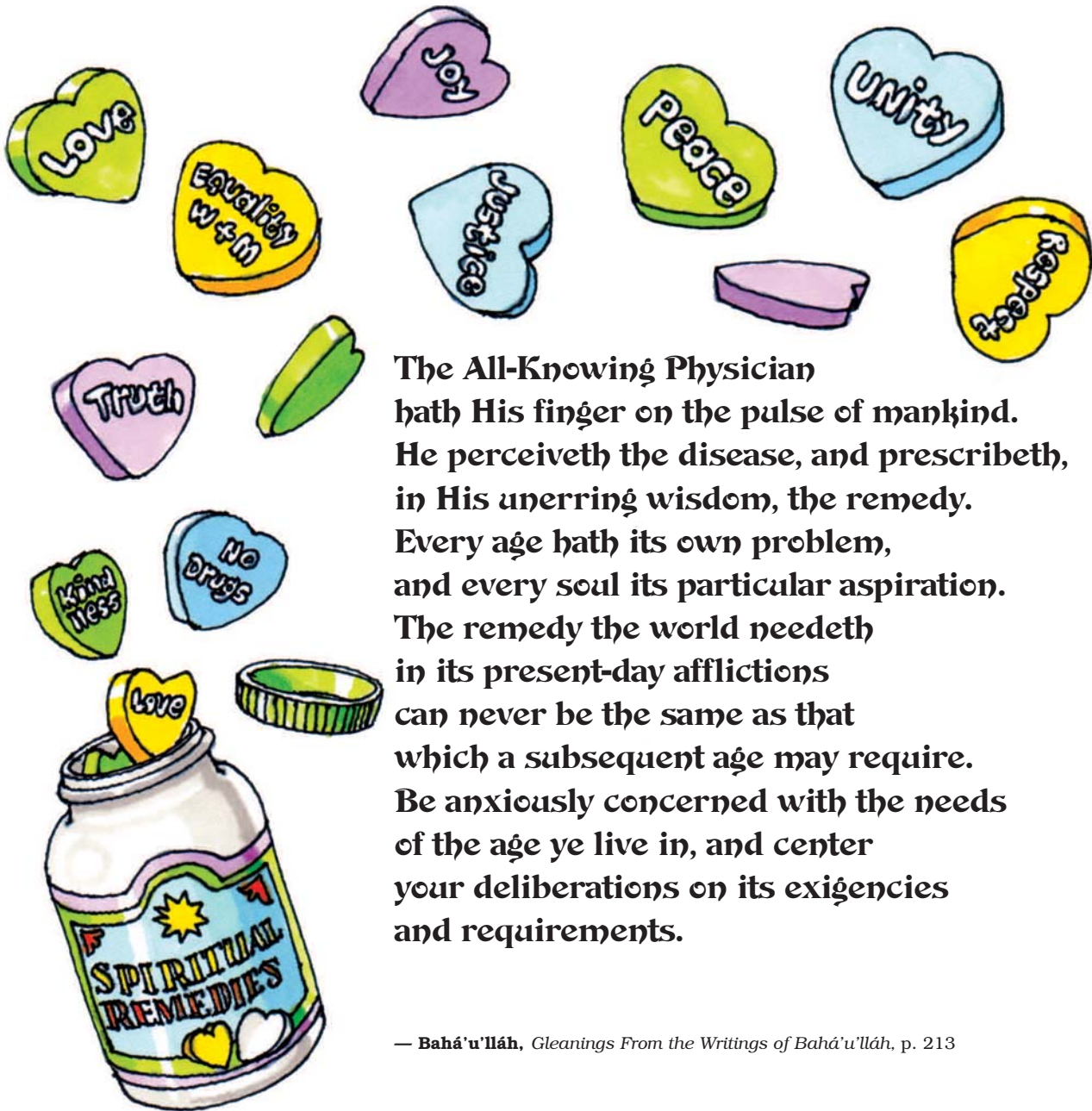
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886  
Copyright © 2002 by the National Spiritual Assembly  
of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America  
All rights reserved  
Published 2002  
05 04 03 02 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

Illustrations: cover © 2002 David S. Ruhe; pp. 3–4, 12, 40–44 Courtesy of the Audio Visual Department of the Bahá'í World Center, Haifa, Israel; p. 23 Courtesy of the National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois; pp. 1–3, 7–11, 15–17, 19, 21–22 © 1979 Pepper Oldziej; pp. 4–6, 14, 20 © 1999 Pepper Oldziej; pp. 18, 24 © 2002 Haydar Barnes; pp. 25–28 © 2002 Ed Phillips; pp. 46–49, 51 © 2002 Cam Herth; pp. 45, 52–60 © 2002 Marilyn Lindsley; pp. 61–78 © 2002 Carla Trimble; pp. 79–94 © 2002 Beth Farkas; pp. 113–128 © 2002 Cindy Pacileo; p. 114 © 2002 Carl Cordini; pp. 129–146 © 2002 Winifred Barnum Newman; p. 168 © 2002 Majid Nolley and Omid Nolley; pp. 169–172 © 2002 Leona Hosack. All other illustrations © 2002 National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States.

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

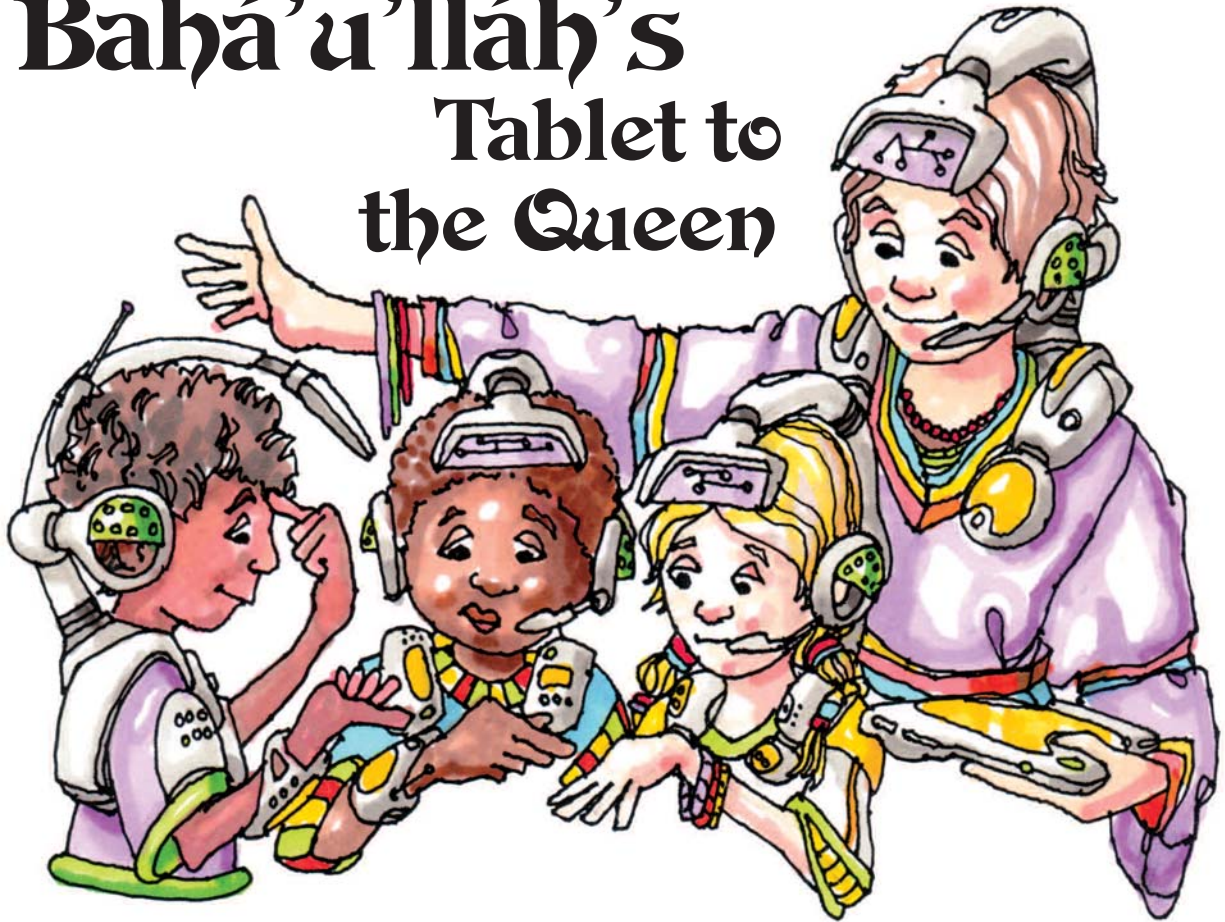
  
Bahá'í Publishing Trust  
Wilmette, Illinois



**The All-Knowing Physician  
hath His finger on the pulse of mankind.  
He perceiveth the disease, and prescribeth,  
in His unerring wisdom, the remedy.  
Every age hath its own problem,  
and every soul its particular aspiration.  
The remedy the world needeth  
in its present-day afflictions  
can never be the same as that  
which a subsequent age may require.  
Be anxiously concerned with the needs  
of the age ye live in, and center  
your deliberations on its exigencies  
and requirements.**

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings From the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 213

# Bahá'u'lláh's Tablet to the Queen



“Today we’re going to do a little experiment, class,” announced the teacher as the day began. “I want you all to form a line—in order by the color of your skin: lightest over here and darkest over there.”

“By the color of our skin?”

“That’s odd . . .”

The students were bewildered why their teacher would choose skin color as a distinguishing feature. They knew that skin was all different colors!

“Compare the color of your skin. If your skin is lighter than the next person, stand on this side of him or her. If your skin is darker, stand on that side.”

**Imagine it is 200  
years in the future . . .**

*Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
Illustrated by Keith Kresge*



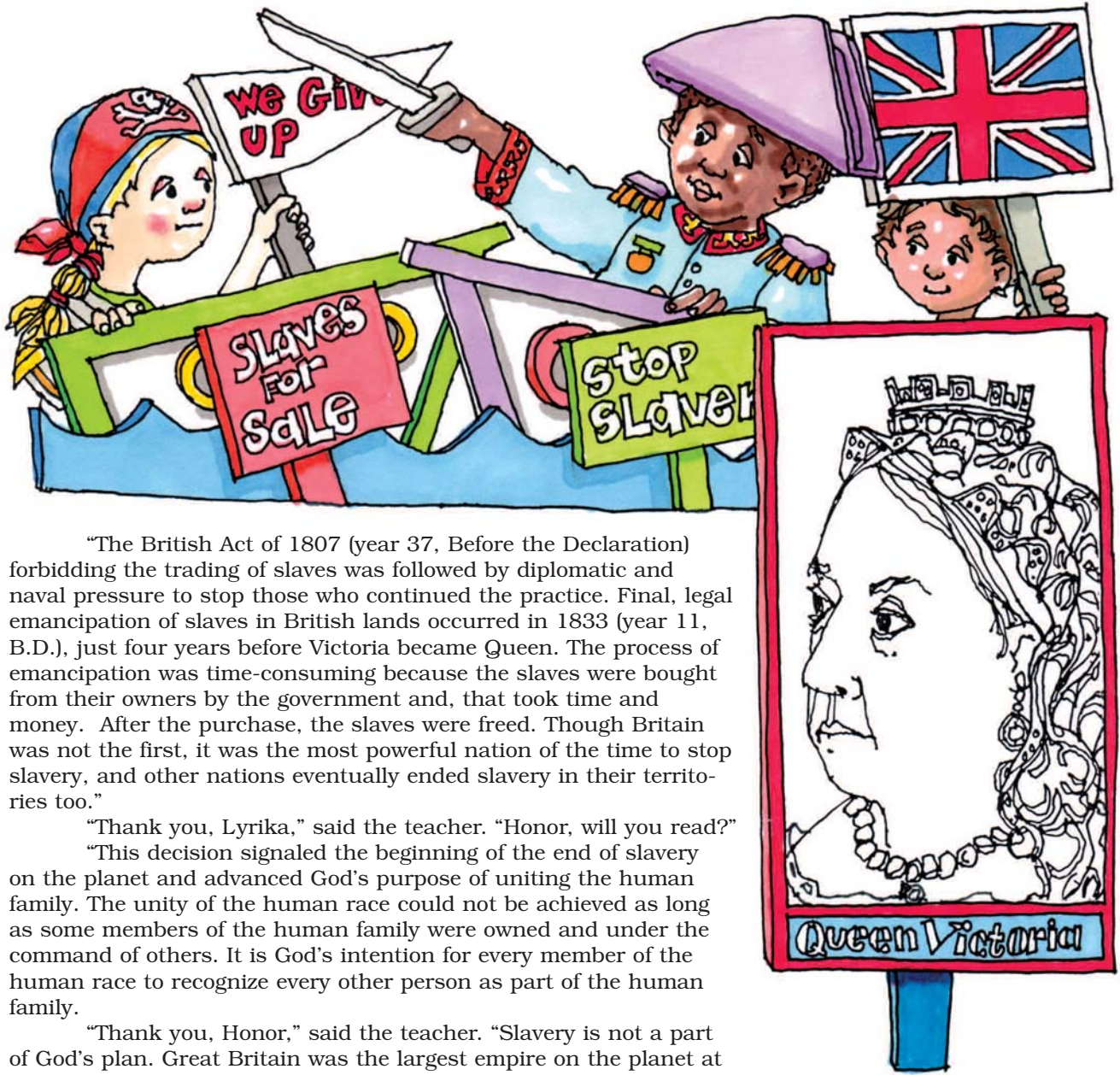


After several minutes of milling around and holding arms next to one another, a line was formed with the skin of the children gradually fading from dark to light. It was an amusing exercise to see who was standing next to whom. The students had never been arranged by the color of their skin, and they were surprised to see who they ended up next to. They had never thought about skin color as a way to separate or divide people; skin color had no importance. “Now I’m going to give each one of you an envelope. Do not open it until later in class when we will all open them together.” Their curiosity was raised as they took their envelopes and looked at each other in bewilderment. “Now, take your seats and turn to page 6 in your workbook and write the date at the top of the page. Rafiq, what is today’s date?”

“The sixth of Qudrat, 362.”

“Thank you,” said the teacher. “Lyrika, will you begin reading the first paragraph?”

“Bahá’u’lláh, as Muḥammad before Him,” she began, “wrote to the most powerful rulers of His time. Among these was Queen Victoria of the British Empire. The British Empire was the leading slave trader in the world. By the last century before the Báb the British controlled at least half of the transatlantic slave trade. Recognizing somewhat the oneness of the human family, religious and humanitarian leaders and organizations had propelled the abolition of slavery to the front of British politics.



“The British Act of 1807 (year 37, Before the Declaration) forbidding the trading of slaves was followed by diplomatic and naval pressure to stop those who continued the practice. Final, legal emancipation of slaves in British lands occurred in 1833 (year 11, B.D.), just four years before Victoria became Queen. The process of emancipation was time-consuming because the slaves were bought from their owners by the government and, that took time and money. After the purchase, the slaves were freed. Though Britain was not the first, it was the most powerful nation of the time to stop slavery, and other nations eventually ended slavery in their territories too.”

“Thank you, Lyrika,” said the teacher. “Honor, will you read?”

“This decision signaled the beginning of the end of slavery on the planet and advanced God’s purpose of uniting the human family. The unity of the human race could not be achieved as long as some members of the human family were owned and under the command of others. It is God’s intention for every member of the human race to recognize every other person as part of the human family.”

“Thank you, Honor,” said the teacher. “Slavery is not a part of God’s plan. Great Britain was the largest empire on the planet at the time. The British abolition of slavery was a significant advance on the human path toward oneness.”



“Radiance,” the teacher asked, “What did Bahá’u’lláh say about Queen Victoria’s action?”

Radiance answered from memory, reciting part of the Tablet to the Queen: “We have been informed that thou hast forbidden the trading in slaves, both men and women. This verily is what God hath enjoined in this wondrous Revelation.”\*

“Very good, Radiance, that was perfect,” praised her teacher. “Rafiq, what did Bahá’u’lláh promise the Queen as a result?”

Rafiq began to recite, “God hath, truly, destined a reward for thee, because of this. He, verily, will pay the doer of good his due recompense . . .”

“Very good, also,” praised the teacher. “Queen Victoria and her government had accomplished a very great change in society. Think of all the thousands of years, in nearly every culture around the world, where slavery had been accepted as normal—or generation after generation. Can you imagine what life was like when people lived separated by skin color, and some, usually the darker ones, were slaves of others?”

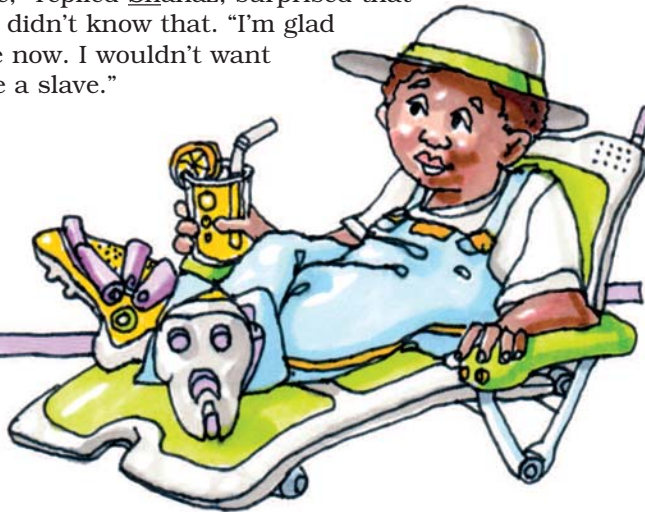
“How could they do that?” Shanáz was unable to believe what she was hearing. “I mean, that would be awful!!”

“It wouldn’t be very much fun either,” added Rafiq.

“The idea of owning someone else is stupid!” said Radiance. “Slaves were the ones who had to do all the work.”

“That’s what computers and robots are for,” objected Tom.

“There weren’t any computers or robots before Bahá’u’lláh came,” replied Shanáz, surprised that Tom didn’t know that. “I’m glad I live now. I wouldn’t want to be a slave.”



\*Bahá’u’lláh. *The Proclamation of Bahá’u’lláh*, pp. 33-34

“Slaves didn’t want to be slaves,” said their teacher. “And many times the people with the darkest skins had to do the hardest work. Lighter skinned people could do easier work.”

“That’s worse than stupid!!” exclaimed Tom. “It’s insane—those people were insane!”

“The people didn’t know any better,” said their teacher. Bahá’u’lláh had not yet come to tell people that we are all part of the same family. It took two centuries after slavery ended before everyone understood that we are all one family. Now take out the envelopes you were given earlier. A letter is on each one: a “D,” or an “L,” or an “O.” Inside is a paper telling you what the letter means and your position in society and the work you would be doing in slavery times.”

“I’m a slave?!” exclaimed Tom, the first to open his envelope. “I have to do all the hard work? No way!”

“I’m a slave who does easy work? But I’m strong!” objected Rafiq.

“I’m an owner? I don’t have to do any work at all? But that’s not fair!” said another.

“I don’t want to be a slave, it’s not fair!”

“This isn’t right, you can’t just make someone a slave!”

“No way!”

The objections and outrage continued for a few minutes as each child registered shock and dismay over this unexpected turn of events. None of them were happy, and all decided it was not fair.

“You are absolutely right,” agreed their teacher. “It is not fair to make someone a slave, or to decide the work they will do based only on the color of their skin. That is exactly why Bahá’u’lláh forbade slavery. It is not fair.”

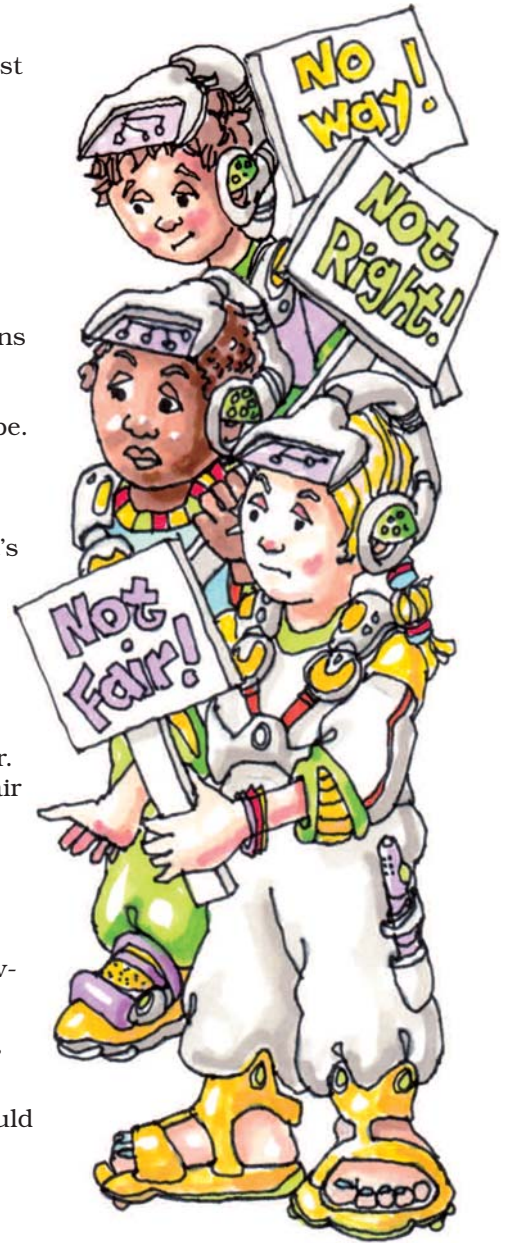
“I’m glad I live now,” said Lyrika.

“Me too,” agreed Radiance.

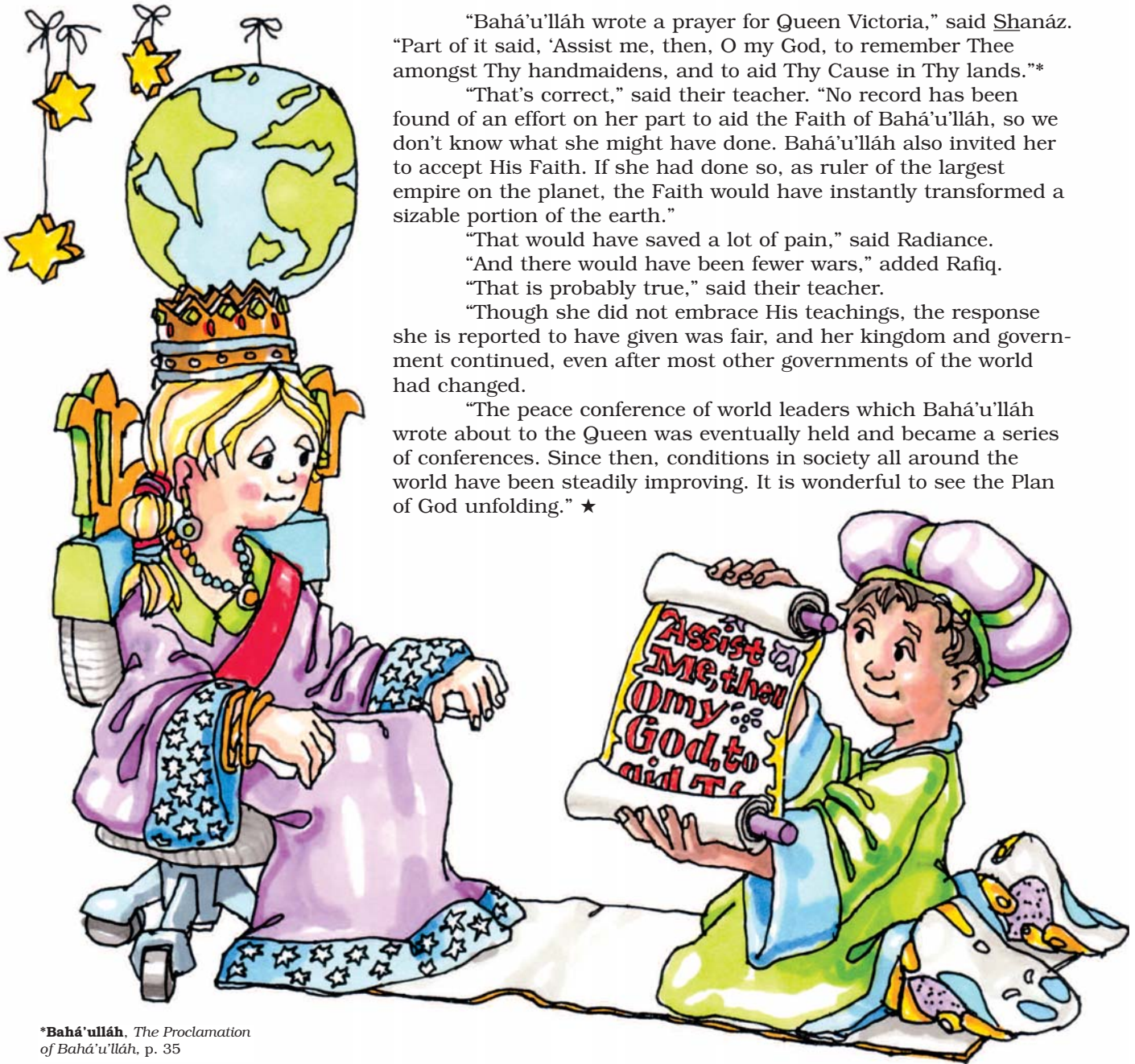
“Now that you have experienced some of the outrage of slavery,” the teacher said, “what are some other subjects Bahá’u’lláh wrote about in His Tablet to the Queen?”

“He praised Queen Victoria for representative government,” answered Honor.

“And He wrote about how the governments of the world could establish peace,” added Rafiq.







\*Bahá'ulláh. *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 35

“Bahá'u'lláh wrote a prayer for Queen Victoria,” said Shanáz. “Part of it said, ‘Assist me, then, O my God, to remember Thee amongst Thy handmaidens, and to aid Thy Cause in Thy lands.’”\*

“That’s correct,” said their teacher. “No record has been found of an effort on her part to aid the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, so we don’t know what she might have done. Bahá'u'lláh also invited her to accept His Faith. If she had done so, as ruler of the largest empire on the planet, the Faith would have instantly transformed a sizable portion of the earth.”

“That would have saved a lot of pain,” said Radiance.

“And there would have been fewer wars,” added Rafiq.

“That is probably true,” said their teacher.

“Though she did not embrace His teachings, the response she is reported to have given was fair, and her kingdom and government continued, even after most other governments of the world had changed.

“The peace conference of world leaders which Bahá'u'lláh wrote about to the Queen was eventually held and became a series of conferences. Since then, conditions in society all around the world have been steadily improving. It is wonderful to see the Plan of God unfolding.” ★