

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 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



*"Well is it with him
who fixeth his gaze
upon the Order
of Bahá'u'lláh,
and rendereth thanks
unto his Lord.
For He will assuredly
be made manifest.
God hath indeed
irrevocably ordained it
in the Bayán."*

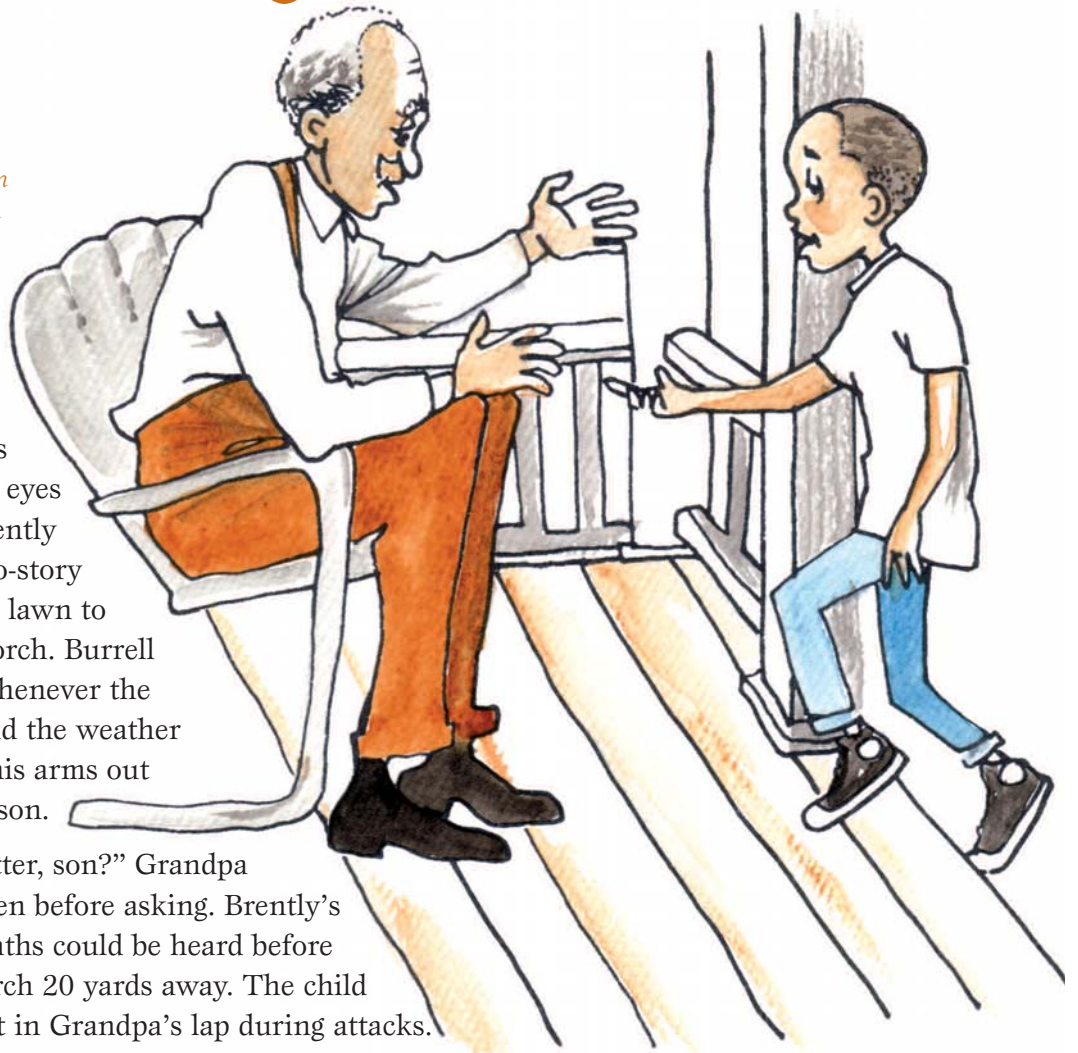
— **The Báb**, quoted in Shoghi Effendi,
God Passes By, p. 25

Sacred Moments on Grandpa's Lap

*Written by Liz Donaldson
Illustrated by Cam Herth*

“Grandpa,” Brently’s imploring 7-year-old eyes looked panicked. Brently trudged from his two-story house across the dry lawn to Grandpa Burrell’s porch. Burrell was a porch-sitter whenever the chores were done and the weather allowed it. He held his arms out to his favorite grandson.

“What’s a matter, son?” Grandpa knew the answer even before asking. Brently’s asthma-strained breaths could be heard before he’d left his own porch 20 yards away. The child often sought comfort in Grandpa’s lap during attacks.



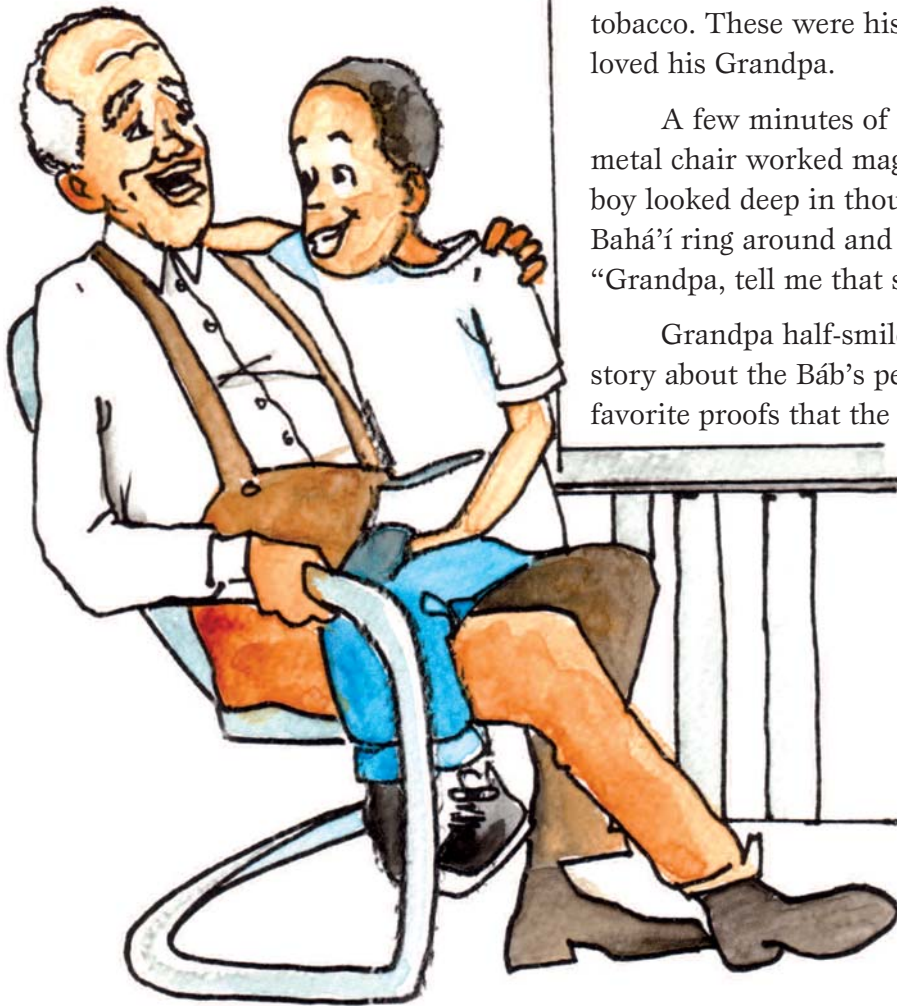
“It’s bad, Grandpa,” Brently wheezed, climbing onto Grandpa Burrell. The Kansas sky was vividly blue with just a few clouds, the temperature in the nineties; this was harvest weather—hot, dry, and breezy—bringing asthmatic people like Brently a heap of trouble.

Brently’s long brown legs reached the ground as he draped himself over Grandpa. He smelled the familiar smells of being on Grandpa’s lap: peppermints and pipe tobacco. These were his favorite smells because he so loved his Grandpa.

A few minutes of squeaky rocking on the rusty metal chair worked magic on Brently’s breathing. The boy looked deep in thought as he twirled Grandpa’s Bahá’í ring around and around his deep brown pinkie. “Grandpa, tell me that story again.”

Grandpa half-smiled, guessing which story; the story about the Báb’s pens and seals. It was one of his favorite proofs that the Báb knew Bahá’u’lláh was the One His Own Teachings pointed to. “Which story, Brent?”

“You know, the one about the blue paper.”



Burrell sighed happily at being asked to recount this special, sacred story. He scanned the sky, whose winds had shoved a few more clouds overhead than even a moment ago.

“Back in June 1850, in Persia, it was summer like it is here. It felt like a big crisis was about to happen. A young merchant, ‘Alí Muḥammad, had gotten very famous by claiming to be someone special: the Promised One of Islám. That’s Who the Muslim people were waiting for, just like Christians were waiting for Christ to come again. ‘Alí Muḥammad, the Báb, had gotten some of the clergy real upset by His claims, because people believed in Him.”

“Grandpa, what does ‘clergy’ mean?”

“It means the people who lead a religion. Christians have preachers like Muslims have mullás . . . Anyway, many people loved ‘Alí Muḥammad’s Teachings. Those that fell in love with the Teachings became His followers: they were known as Bábís. When the Bábís learned these Teachings and lived by them, they became better people.

“The Báb’s Message spread like wildfire. Thousands of people began to follow Him, and that scared the Muslims that were in power. Some mullás felt really threatened by this kind, loving, honest Man. They figured if people followed the Báb, Muslims wouldn’t have as much influence as they used to. They figured right. See, in Persia, religious leaders were very respected. People listened to their opinions, and that made them very powerful.”



The sky had clouded up and was starting to rumble. “What did they have to worry about if the Báb was teaching good things that made people better?” Brently asked.

“If enough Muslims became Bábís, then people wouldn’t be putting mullás up on a pedestal anymore,” answered Grandpa. “Then some mullás began to look into the Bábí Faith to see what all the fuss was about. Those mullás with pure hearts saw the good in the Revelation. Those mullás who liked power more than they loved truth were the ones who tried to destroy the Bábís and this new religion.”

Just then, Grandpa’s story was interrupted by a strong gust of wind that brought with it the smell of rain. “The Báb knew His time on this earth was short,” continued Grandpa, holding his grandson a little closer. “Even though He never met Bahá’u’lláh face to face, He sent His pens and seals to Him through Mullá Báqir, who was a devoted follower of the Báb. This was about a month before the Báb was killed. It was a clue to the Bábís to look to Bahá’u’lláh when the Báb was gone.”

“Can you tell me again what a seal is?” asked Brently, who watched as large raindrops appeared on the porch.

“His seals were like His signature. Closing a letter up and then pressing the seals in melted wax on the sealed envelope was like saying, ‘I wrote this.’ No one could forge the Báb’s Writings because they didn’t have these seals. Now, the Báb was a Messenger from God, so His seals were a treasure. By sending these to Bahá’u’lláh, He hinted to the believers that Bahá’u’lláh was the One the Báb had promised would be coming, ‘He Whom God will make manifest.’ The Báb placed these seals, rings, and remaining Writings in a special box and put the key to the box in an envelope. He gave these to Mullá Báqir who traveled many long miles to Qum, to give them to Mullá ‘Abdu’l Karím, another trusted Bábí. That man’s job was to get them to Bahá’u’lláh.”

“Many people urged Mullá ‘Abdu’l Karím to open the box. From that special box he pulled out a sheet of blue paper that looked like it had a beautiful star painted on it. A closer look showed the star was made of tiny words, elegantly written in perfect penmanship. The star was made up of tiny, tiny letters that spelled out the name Bahá over and over again in 360 different ways.”

“And Bahá means Glory,” finished a smiling Brently, with a strong, easy voice free from breathlessness.

Then an odd thing happened—the clouds broke, letting the sun shine through. The old man smiled as Brently gave him a hug and jumped off the porch for a better view of the emerging rainbow. ★

