

The following story is from the book  
*The Central Figures*

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Three*



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

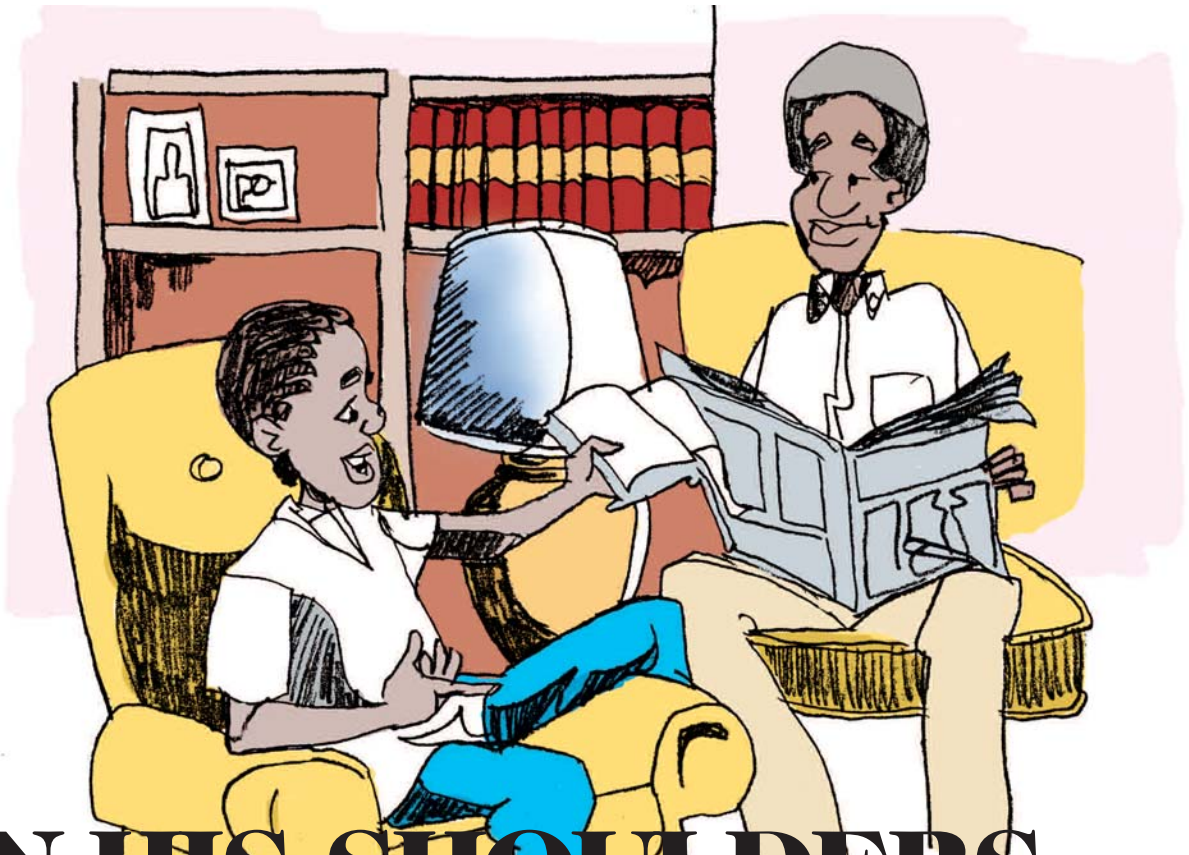
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886  
Copyright © 2003 by the National Spiritual Assembly  
of the Bahá'ís of the United States of America  
All rights reserved  
Published 2003  
06 05 04 03 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America

Illustrations: cover © 2002 David S. Ruhe; pp. 35–36 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. 21, 32, 33–38, 55, 62–69, 75, 91, 94 Photographs courtesy of Pepper Oldziej; pp. 163, 166–169 © 2003 Pepper Oldziej; p. 136 © 2003 Autumn-Grace Dougherty; pp. 25–28 © 2002 Ed Phillips; pp. 10–15, 96–101 © 2003 Cam Herth; pp. 4, 56–61 © 2003 Carrie Kneisler; pp. 2, 6–9, 90, 92–93, 122–128 © 2003 Carla Trimble; pp. 1, 5, 44–54 © 2003 Beth Farkas; pp. 71–74, 137–140, 157–162 © 2003 Cindy Pacileo; pp. 70, 156 © 2003 Carl Cordini; pp. 107–112, 129, 141–146, 164–165 © 2003 Winifred Barnum Newman; pp. 113–117, 148–151 © 2003 Barbara Trauger; pp. 147, 152–155 © 2003 Omid Nolley and Majid Nolley; pp. 84–87, 89 © 2003 Leona Hosack, pp. 95, 102–106 © 2003 Jeanine Hunt. The illustrations appearing on pp. 109–110 include images reprinted with permission from *Children's Stories from the Dawn-Breakers* (Wilmette, IL: Bellwood Press, 2000), pp. 77 and 83. All other illustrations © 2003 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



# ON HIS SHOULDERS

*Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
Illustrated by Cam Herth*

“The government shall be upon his shoulder . . .”

“What does this mean Dad?” Trosten asked his father as he looked up from the Bible. “How can someone carry a government? That’s weird!” His Bahá’í class was studying Christianity, and Trosten was working on his assignment to look up prophecies about Bahá’u’lláh.

“Well, son,” his father looked up and thought a moment. “It means to be responsible for it. For instance, I’m responsible for my family. I’m responsible for raising my children. The kind of adult you become is a result of the kind of father I have been, so figuratively, I carry you on my shoulders.

“And, when you were little, I carried you on my shoulders, literally, so you could see from high up and see more. This verse of the Bible refers to Bahá’u’lláh and the government He would create and be responsible for. The government of the Bahá’í community is a model for the rest of the people if they want to see how a different kind of government will work.” He paused. “And you are a part of that government.”

“Me?!” Trosten exclaimed. “I’m just a kid! I’m not part of any government.”

“Think a moment,” his father advised gently. “What do we call the government of the Bahá’í community?”

“The government of the Bahá’í community?” Trosten repeated thoughtfully. “Oh! You mean the Universal House of Justice?”

“Yes, and . . .”

“And the National Assembly?”

“Yes, and . . .”

“And the local Assembly.”

“Yes, and . . .”

At this, Trosten looked blank. Then his father asked, “Who plans the children’s portion of Feast?”

“Well, the Children’s Feast Committee.” Trosten knew that answer.

“And who is a member of the Children’s Feast Committee?”

“Well, there’s Mr. Loving—he’s the boss . . .”

“Do you mean, chairman?”

“Yeah, he tells us to start the meeting and not talk about other things.”

“That is the job of the chair of the meeting. I know Franklin Nathaniel Loving. He’s good at consultation. He should be—he’s Frank N. Loving. Who else is on the committee?”

“DuAnna Lawrence, Jamshid Cox, Radiance Smith, Keahi Tucker, . . . uh, that’s all.”





"I think you missed one other person. Who else goes to the committee meetings?"

"OH!" Trosten's eyes lit up. "I do!"

"Yes," his father agreed. "You are a youth member of that committee of the local Spiritual Assembly and so you are a part of Bahá'u'lláh's government."

"Wow!"

"And," his father asked. "Who else in the family is part of Bahá'u'lláh's government?"

"Huh? You mean more of us are involved?"

"Yes."

"Well, you go visit Bahá'ís in other cities."

"Yes, that is some of what I do. I visit people on behalf of our Auxiliary Board member."

"You're an assistant!" Trosten remembered proudly.

"Yes, and being an assistant is also part of Bahá'u'lláh's government."

"It is?" Trosten looked doubtful. Assistants weren't in the line of Assemblies.

"Bahá'u'lláh made His government in a very special way. It has the councils of nine members, the Assemblies, that consult together and make decisions for the community—like planning Feasts and Holy Day celebrations. It also has individuals who work separately. They are the assistants, the Auxiliary Board members, the Continental Counselors and the Hands of the Cause. They all do many, many different things, but none of them makes rules for other people. They help, advise, and encourage people and Assemblies."

"And the Guardian!" Trosten announced. "He was in charge before the House of Justice."

"Yes, he was the Head of the Faith before the Universal House of Justice. He helped educate the Bahá'ís on how to build the Administrative Order and how it should function. For instance: the

Guardian said that each Assembly is responsible for preserving the history of that Bahá'í community. Assistants do many things, but my job is to help Assemblies and individuals do that. Nearly every city government and library has some kind of records, or old newspapers, that can be looked at for information about the early believers in that place."

"Wow!"

"The fact that Bahá'u'lláh created this government as part of His religion, and because the Bahá'í Faith cannot be separated from the government, is proof of the station of Bahá'u'lláh—that He fulfilled prophecies in different holy books. That is information that is often overlooked. And that means that your service in the Administrative Order, and mine, are all part of the fulfillment of those prophecies."

"Awesome!"

"Another special thing about Bahá'u'lláh's government is that every person who is part of it knows they are not important. What is important is the responsibility they exercise—the service they give. And we all do it for Bahá'u'lláh. No one needs to thank you for the job. You are not doing it for them. You are doing it because you love Bahá'u'lláh. It is nice to receive thanks, and good to thank those who assist you. But if we only serve God in order to get some reward, then we are doing it for the wrong reason. Selfless service is the highest level of service."



“All of our services for God should be done just because we love God. God has given each of us so much. This is our opportunity to give a little back. I do things for you simply because I love you, and that’s the same reason I do things for Bahá’u’lláh—because I love Him.”

“I do too!”

“All right. Now,” father asked, “what did you do in your last committee meeting?”

Trosten rolled his eyes as he did when he thought something was beyond belief. “We talked about making hats.”

“Hats?”

“Yes, Feast hats.” He nodded. “The committee wanted a surprise for Feast that would be fun.”

“They certainly sound surprising.”

“But it’s so weird! I want Feast to be more fun, but this is weird.”

“I see,” his father nodded wisely. “And who will wear these hats?”

“Everybody,” Trosten said, rolling his eyes again.

“And why did the committee think making hats was a good idea?”

“The little kids thought it would be fun, and Mr. Loving agreed.”

“Do you think it will be fun?” his father asked.

“I thought the idea was crazy, Dad.” Trosten looked up sideways at his father and grinned sheepishly. “Then I remembered what you said about unity, and that we don’t really know what it means. It might even mean supporting an idea that we’re not wild about in order to allow diversity to flourish and be supportive of the rest of the community. So I’m OK with it now.”



“I also asked about drumming. We haven’t done that before. Why not? Rafiq can drum softly during prayers, and then LaNoy can play her flute. We definitely need more music at Feast. Then, during the social time, we’re going to make the hats, and the drumming and flute can go full-blast!” Trosten grinned widely.

“And do you think maybe people could wear the Feast hats while dancing to Rafiq’s drumming?” father asked.

“Yes!” Trosten exploded.  
“We can do more than one thing at Feast!”

“I love you, Trosten,” his Dad said, “and I’m proud that you are part of Bahá’u’lláh’s government. Our Feast just gets better and better.” ★

