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The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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Graphic Design by Pepper Peterson Oldziey

Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886
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Published 2003
06 05 04 03 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




For Love of Bahá'u'lláh

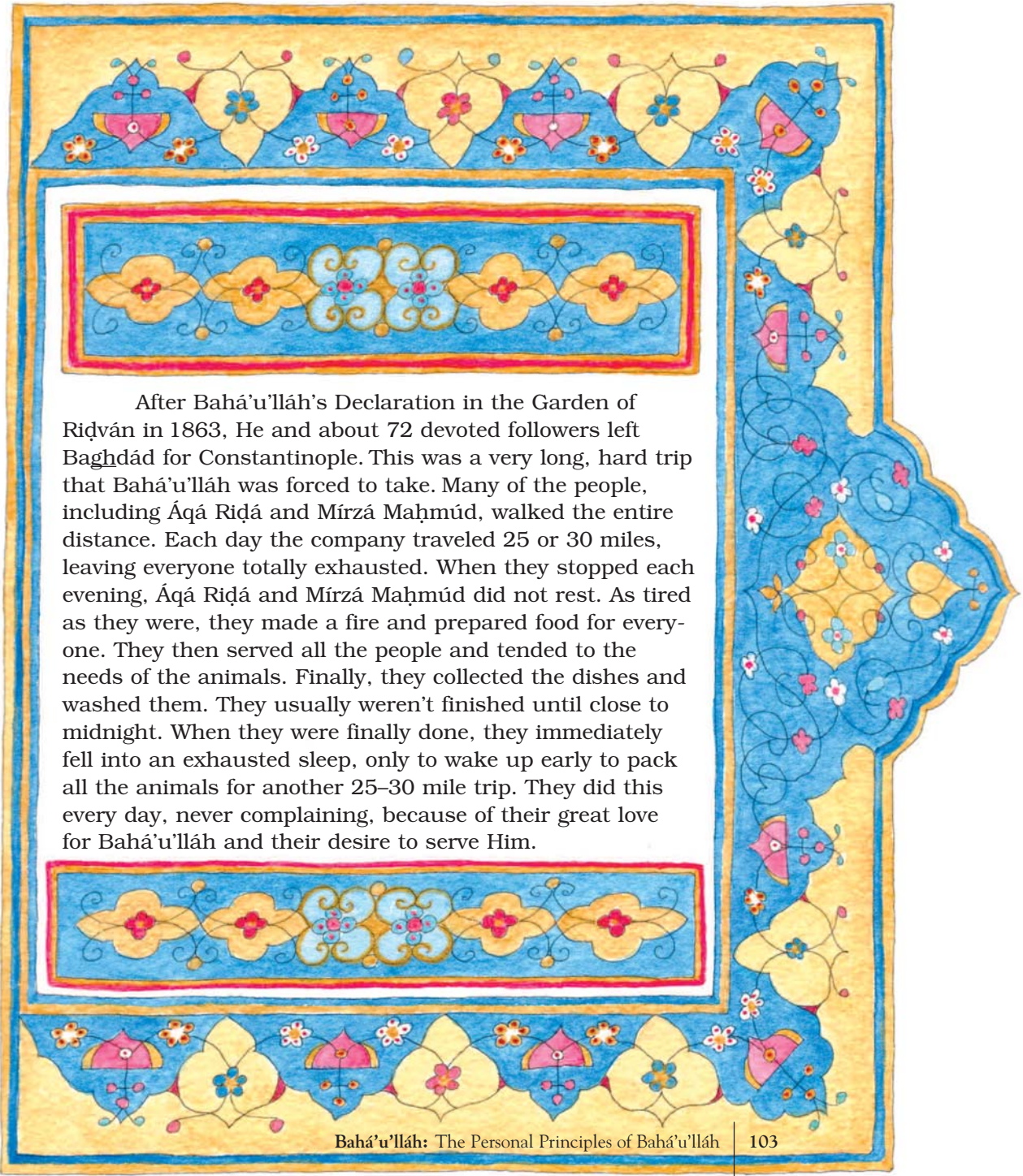


Written by Roxana Sinex • Illustrated by Jeannie Hunt

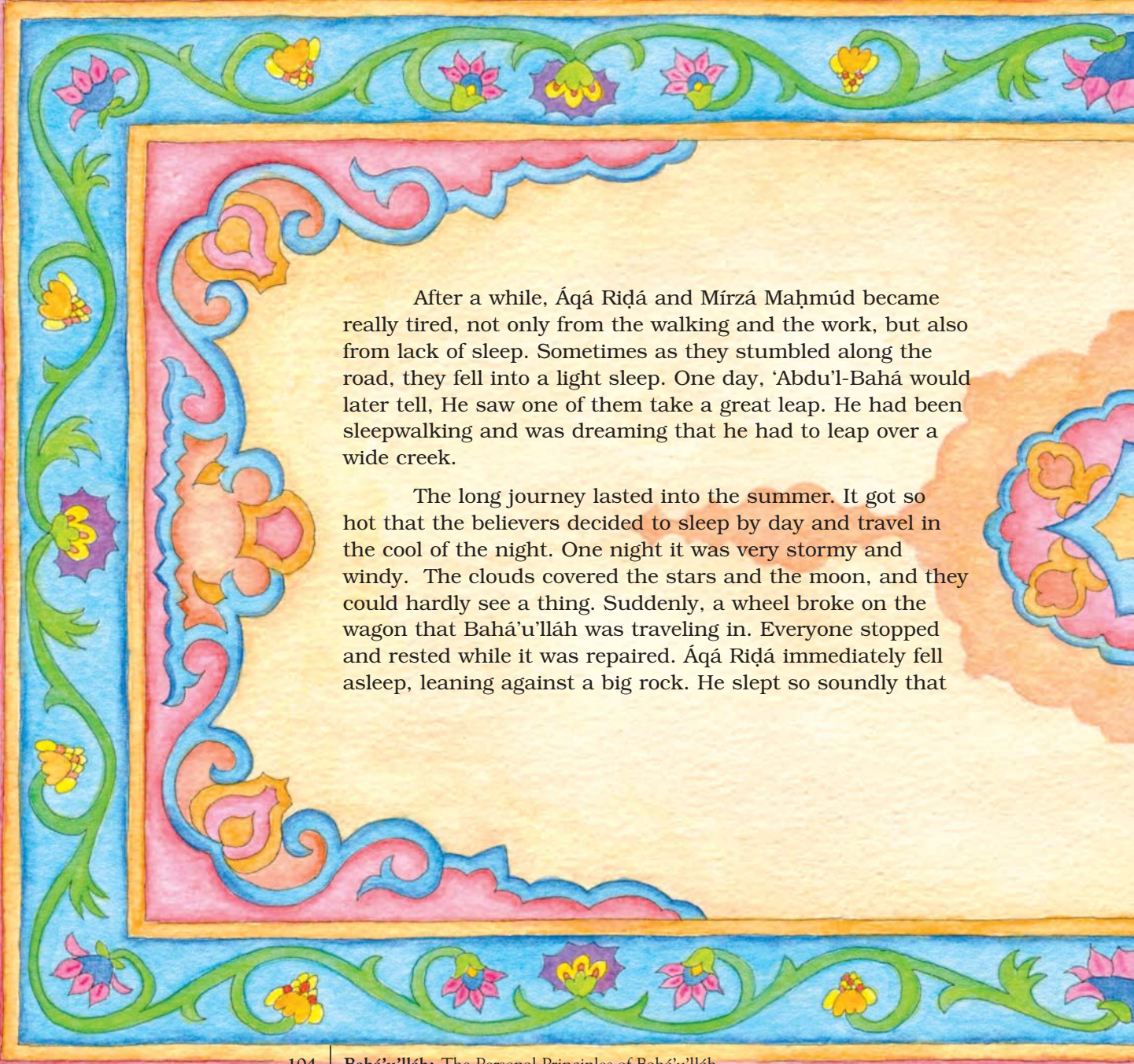
Two of the best examples of selfless devotion are Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd-i-Káshání. These two men loved Bahá'u'lláh so much that they gave up all they possessed in order to serve Him. For almost 40 years, they followed Him in His exiles and imprisonments, performing any useful deed that they could think of to make Bahá'u'lláh's difficult life more comfortable.

Mírzá Maḥmúd came to Baghdád as a youth, where he met Áqá Riḍá, a new Bábí. They and five other believers prayed all night long, filled with joy and happiness. In the day, they would go out to earn money and then put together all they had earned to buy their evening meal. Some days there was almost nothing to eat, but because they were close to Bahá'u'lláh, they didn't care.



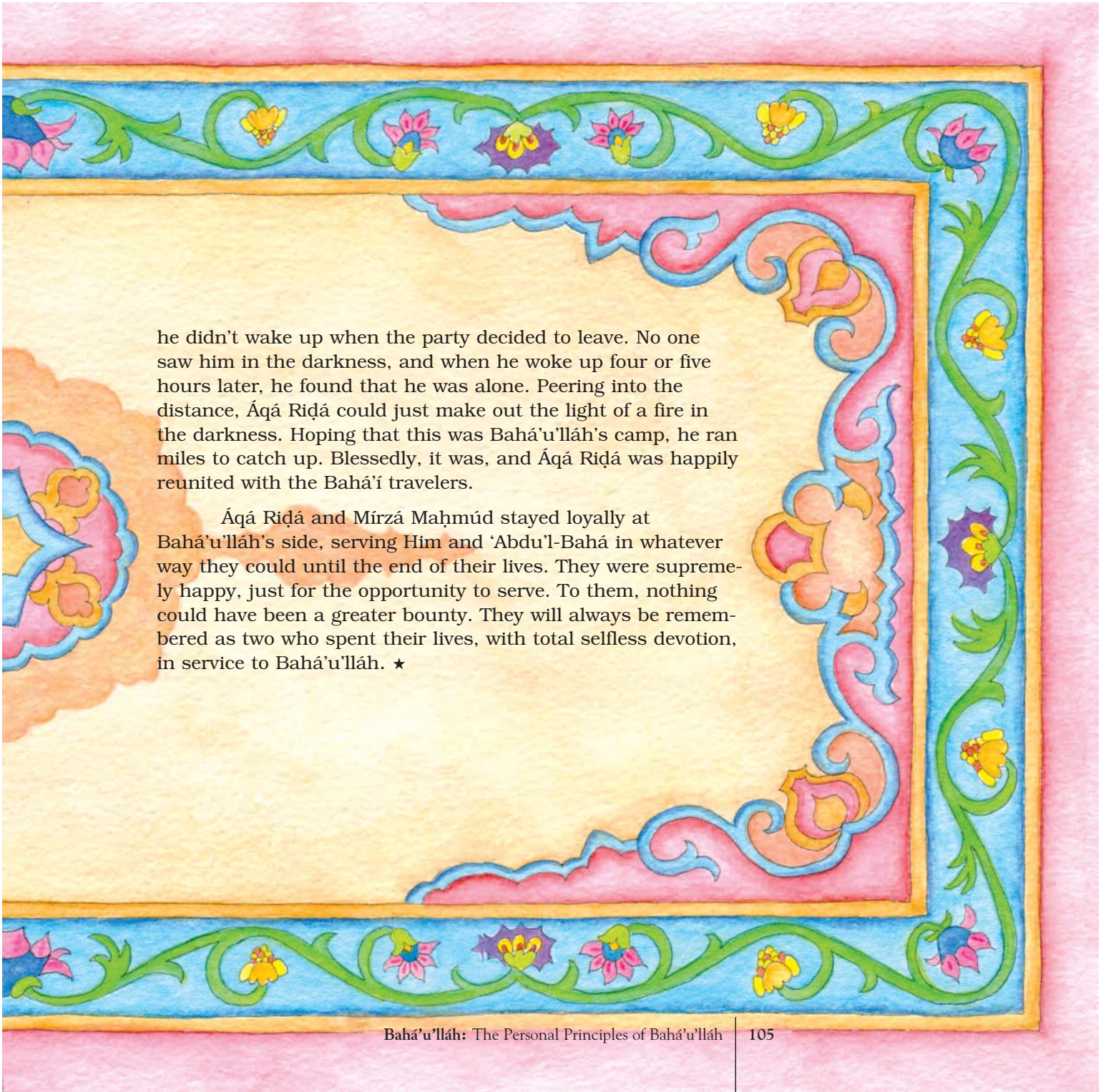


After Bahá'u'lláh's Declaration in the Garden of Riḍván in 1863, He and about 72 devoted followers left Baghdád for Constantinople. This was a very long, hard trip that Bahá'u'lláh was forced to take. Many of the people, including Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd, walked the entire distance. Each day the company traveled 25 or 30 miles, leaving everyone totally exhausted. When they stopped each evening, Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd did not rest. As tired as they were, they made a fire and prepared food for everyone. They then served all the people and tended to the needs of the animals. Finally, they collected the dishes and washed them. They usually weren't finished until close to midnight. When they were finally done, they immediately fell into an exhausted sleep, only to wake up early to pack all the animals for another 25–30 mile trip. They did this every day, never complaining, because of their great love for Bahá'u'lláh and their desire to serve Him.



After a while, Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd became really tired, not only from the walking and the work, but also from lack of sleep. Sometimes as they stumbled along the road, they fell into a light sleep. One day, 'Abdu'l-Bahá would later tell, He saw one of them take a great leap. He had been sleepwalking and was dreaming that he had to leap over a wide creek.

The long journey lasted into the summer. It got so hot that the believers decided to sleep by day and travel in the cool of the night. One night it was very stormy and windy. The clouds covered the stars and the moon, and they could hardly see a thing. Suddenly, a wheel broke on the wagon that Bahá'u'lláh was traveling in. Everyone stopped and rested while it was repaired. Áqá Riḍá immediately fell asleep, leaning against a big rock. He slept so soundly that



he didn't wake up when the party decided to leave. No one saw him in the darkness, and when he woke up four or five hours later, he found that he was alone. Peering into the distance, Áqá Riḍá could just make out the light of a fire in the darkness. Hoping that this was Bahá'u'lláh's camp, he ran miles to catch up. Blessedly, it was, and Áqá Riḍá was happily reunited with the Bahá'í travelers.

Áqá Riḍá and Mírzá Maḥmúd stayed loyally at Bahá'u'lláh's side, serving Him and 'Abdu'l-Bahá in whatever way they could until the end of their lives. They were supremely happy, just for the opportunity to serve. To them, nothing could have been a greater bounty. They will always be remembered as two who spent their lives, with total selfless devotion, in service to Bahá'u'lláh. ★