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*The Central Figures*

# Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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Graphic Design by Pepper Peterson Oldziej

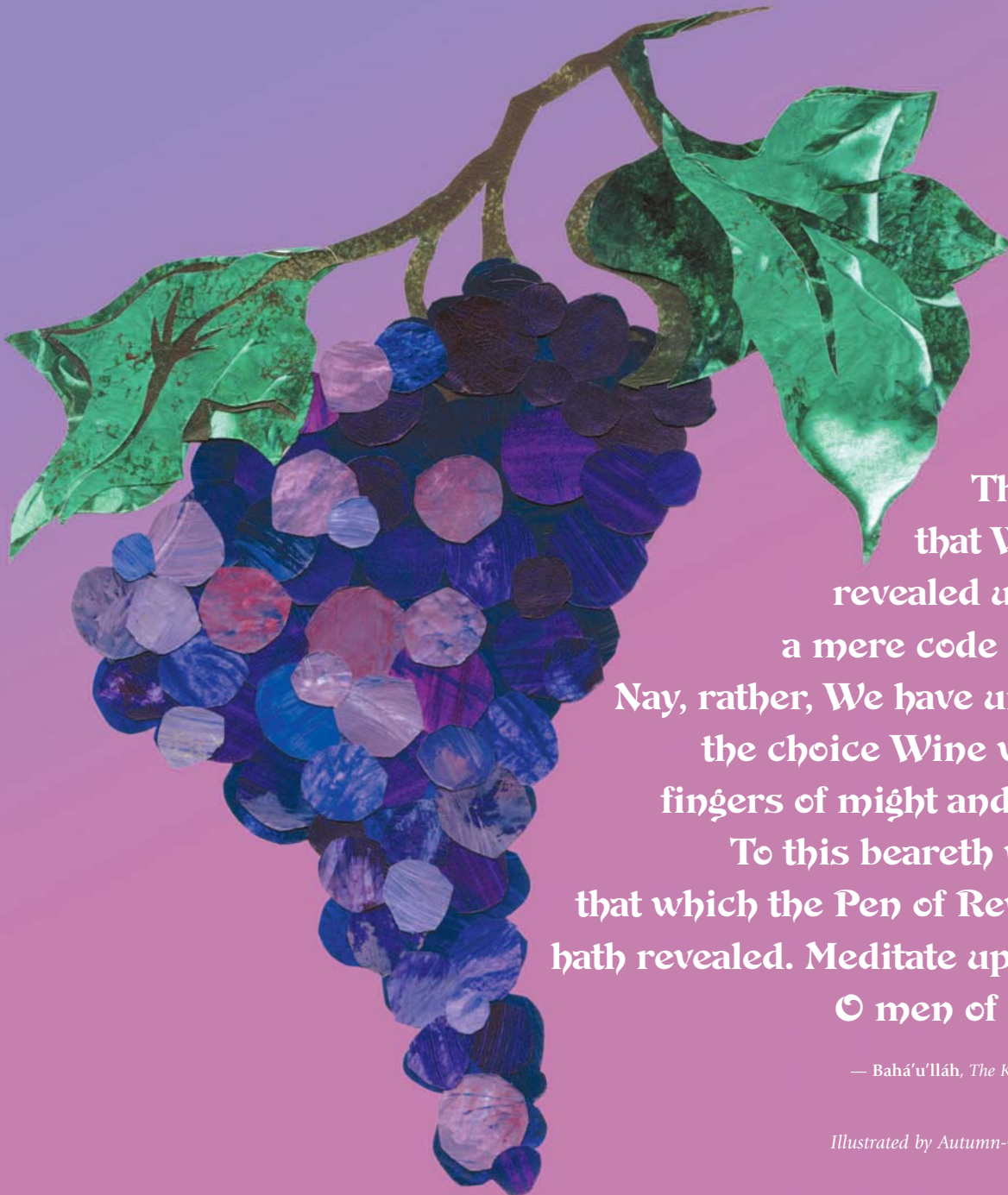
Bahá'í Publishing Trust, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-2886  
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Published 2003  
06 05 04 03 4 3 2 1

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



Think not  
that We have  
revealed unto you  
a mere code of laws.  
Nay, rather, We have unsealed  
the choice Wine with the  
fingers of might and power.  
To this beareth witness  
that which the Pen of Revelation  
hath revealed. Meditate upon this,  
O men of insight!

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, p. 21

*Illustrated by Autumn-Grace Dougherty*



# Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl and the River of Mercy

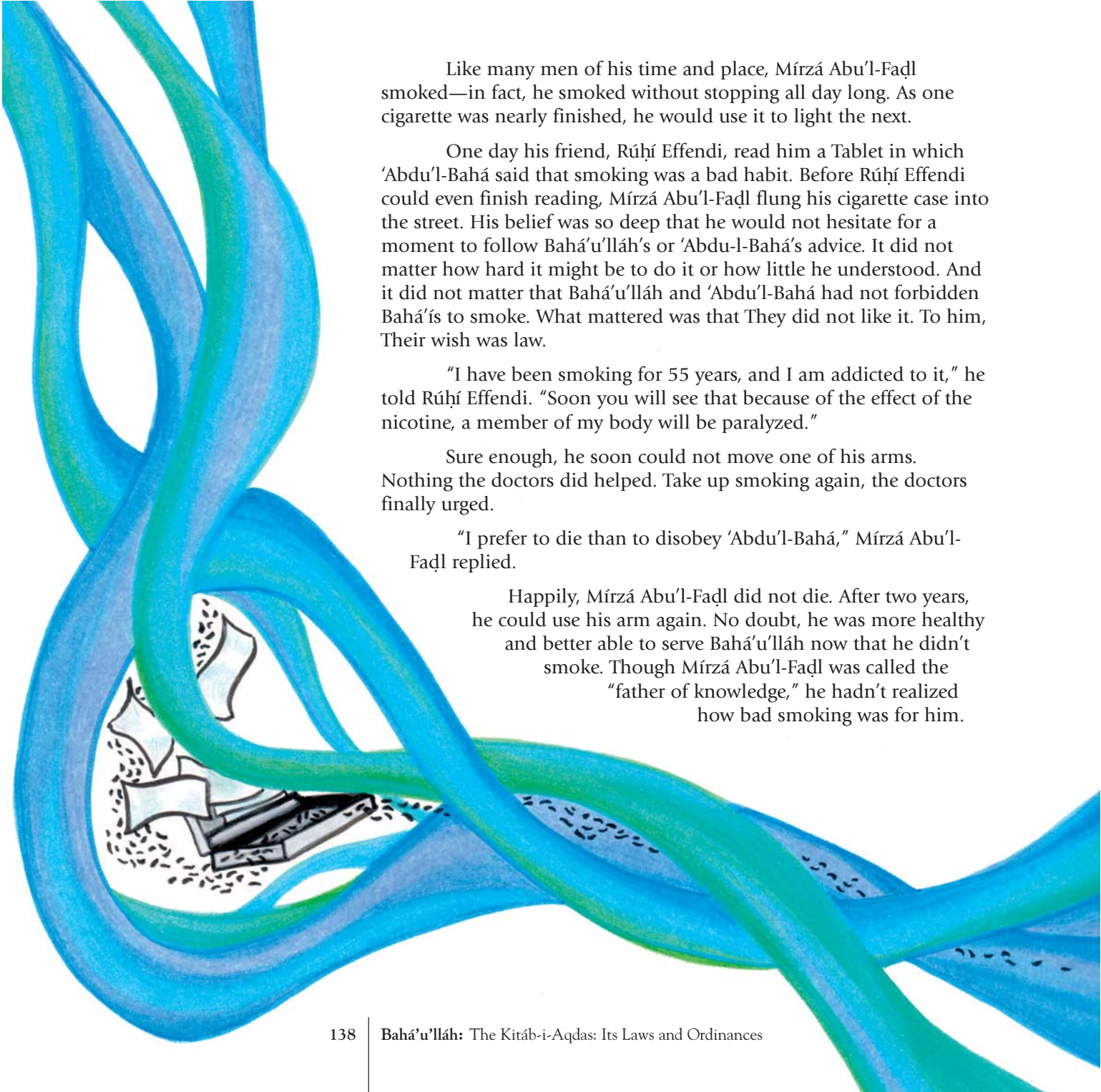
“O Master, why do you hide from me? If you are a chosen one of God, I will accept and follow you!” cried Shaykh Badru’d-Din. He had listened carefully as the man spoke. He knew that Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl was a scholar who studied the Qu’rán. But Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl was so wise that Shaykh Badru’d-Din felt he must be more than a scholar—he must be a Messenger of God!

But Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl only laughed. Though he was called the “father of knowledge” because he knew so much, Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl had learned much more since he had become a Bahá’í. He had been full of foolish ideas before—and he still had much to learn! Shaykh Badru’d-Din was so excited because of what Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl had learned from Bahá’u’lláh and ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. Go and meet ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl told his admirer.

Shaykh Badru’d-Din did. Then he returned and told Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl in wonder, “When I attained the presence of the Master, I realized that you are no more than a drop in relation to that billowing ocean.”

Mírzá Abu’l-Faḍl threw open his arms and hugged his friend. “Now I know that you have recognized the truth.”

*Written by Gail Radley  
Illustrated by Cindy Pacileo*



Like many men of his time and place, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl smoked—in fact, he smoked without stopping all day long. As one cigarette was nearly finished, he would use it to light the next.

One day his friend, Rúḥí Effendi, read him a Tablet in which 'Abdu'l-Bahá said that smoking was a bad habit. Before Rúḥí Effendi could even finish reading, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl flung his cigarette case into the street. His belief was so deep that he would not hesitate for a moment to follow Bahá'u'lláh's or 'Abdu'l-Bahá's advice. It did not matter how hard it might be to do it or how little he understood. And it did not matter that Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá had not forbidden Bahá'ís to smoke. What mattered was that They did not like it. To him, Their wish was law.

"I have been smoking for 55 years, and I am addicted to it," he told Rúḥí Effendi. "Soon you will see that because of the effect of the nicotine, a member of my body will be paralyzed."

Sure enough, he soon could not move one of his arms. Nothing the doctors did helped. Take up smoking again, the doctors finally urged.

"I prefer to die than to disobey 'Abdu'l-Bahá," Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl replied.

Happily, Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl did not die. After two years, he could use his arm again. No doubt, he was more healthy and better able to serve Bahá'u'lláh now that he didn't smoke. Though Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl was called the "father of knowledge," he hadn't realized how bad smoking was for him.

"The laws of God are like unto the ocean," Bahá'u'lláh wrote to one of His followers, "and the children of men as fish." The ocean is deep and full of mysteries. The fish swimming in the ocean depend on it for life, though they understand little of it.

The laws of God are written in Bahá'u'lláh's Most Holy Book, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas. Bahá'u'lláh describes the book as "a heaven," the "unerring Balance," and the "river of mercy." When everyone truly follows His laws, the world will come together in peace and love.

Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl knew many things. But the most important thing he knew was that he needed to step into God's "river of mercy." Because Bahá'u'lláh's wishes are God's Own wishes, they would lead to the greatest good for himself and for all the world—whether Mírzá Abu'l-Faḍl understood them perfectly or not! ★

