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*The Central Figures*

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Three*



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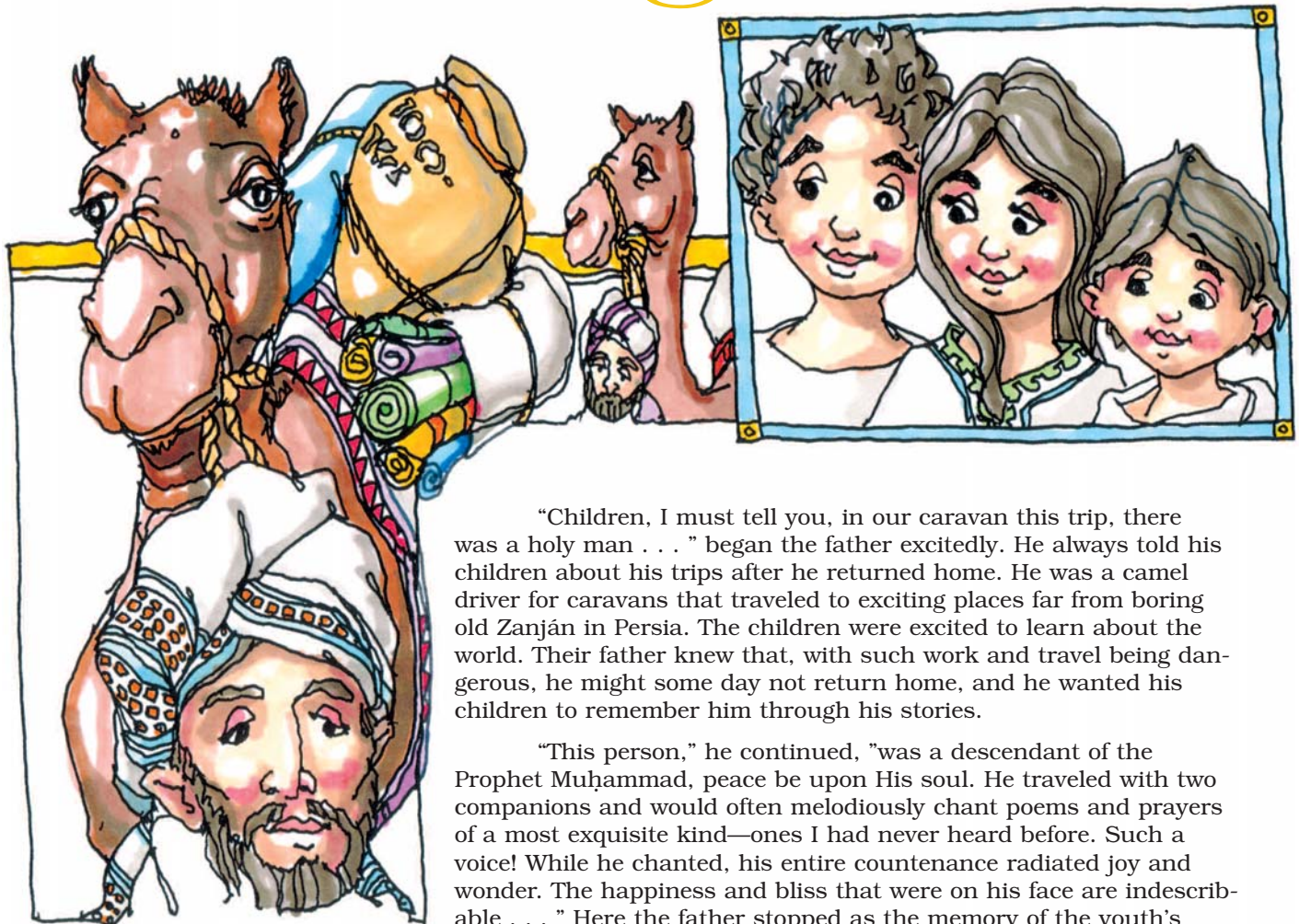
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# A Radiant Point of Light

Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
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“Children, I must tell you, in our caravan this trip, there was a holy man . . .” began the father excitedly. He always told his children about his trips after he returned home. He was a camel driver for caravans that traveled to exciting places far from boring old Zanjān in Persia. The children were excited to learn about the world. Their father knew that, with such work and travel being dangerous, he might some day not return home, and he wanted his children to remember him through his stories.

“This person,” he continued, “was a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon His soul. He traveled with two companions and would often melodiously chant poems and prayers of a most exquisite kind—ones I had never heard before. Such a voice! While he chanted, his entire countenance radiated joy and wonder. The happiness and bliss that were on his face are indescribable . . .” Here the father stopped as the memory of the youth’s chanting sounded again in his ears.



The father's face was transfixed at the memory, his body relaxed, his breathing slow and steady, and a peace settled over him such as the children had never seen before. They were amazed. They loved their father so much that they did not disturb his reverie and patiently waited for him to continue. After a few minutes, he returned to them, as if he had been far away.

"Before chanting," their father resumed, but in a calmer, sweeter voice, "this youth would take off the turban from his head and drape it over his shoulders. I'd never seen a person do such a thing. It was shocking, and yet he did it with such grace and reverence that it was obvious he was honoring his ancestry and connection to the Prophet.

"It was as if," he added with wonder in his voice, "he had a new freedom to see and do new things, in new ways. He was amazing . . .

"Many times I would walk beside him just to be near him. I could hear him better too," he added with a grin. Then with a wider grin he said, "Sometimes so many of us would walk beside him that the caravan would slow down. You know, camels will walk slower if you're not there to urge them on, and with so many of us away from our camels, not enough drivers were left to keep the caravan going. I know I shouldn't have left my camels, but he was irresistible . . ."

Here the father stopped again, lost in thought and memory. Then he said very softly, "I want to find him some day and find out why he was so joyous, so radiant." We begged him to tell us, but he would not.

"It may be possible, as he lives near the city. As we approached the city gates, he and his companions turned off a slight way and left the caravan. It was late afternoon, so they could not have been going far. They would not have camped in the open for the night, as it is too dangerous, so they must have had a destination near here. I want to find him. I want to find the secret of his joy!"



The children's love for their father was so great that, while their father was away with the next caravan, they went to the city gate to watch for travelers going in the direction their father had indicated.

"We found him! We found him!" The children announced excitedly to their father when he returned home. "His name is Siyyid Ashraf! He lives on an estate near the city. We can take you to him!" They were so proud, eager, and excited to share this information with their father. "He welcomes you to visit him. He is willing to tell you the source of his joy! And he does radiate light and joy and peace! When can you go, father? We want you to meet him!"

"Praise be to God in Heaven! Can this be true? Are you sure he is the same youth I saw?"

"Yes! Yes, father! He said he was with the caravan that returned the last time you were home. And he wears the green turban. He has to be the same one, there is no one like him!"

"Yes," the father said. "I must go meet him and learn his secret."

In a surprisingly short time, the father was in the presence of Siyyid Ashraf, and the young man was explaining, "I was as if asleep, no—not asleep, as one dead, no—more like one who had never been alive until I attained the presence of His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh. Though my mother raised me to believe in Him—my father was martyred for his belief just before I was born—I was more concerned with my own self than I was with the welfare of others or their spiritual awakening. It was the power of the words of the Blessed Beauty that woke up my soul and brought me to life.

"Twice now, God has granted me the favor of being in His presence. The second time was cut short, though.

"Our mother had prayed to Bahá'u'lláh, begging for my return because her brothers were tormenting her for her beliefs and my visit to Him—and He granted her desire. It was only later, after my return, that I heard of her prayer, and I realized that it happened just before His Holiness sent me home. She needed me to return, but I did not want to leave the paradise of His presence.

"Since then, I have endeavored to do everything I can to serve my Beloved, Bahá'u'lláh. Now I am more alive than ever. The world has become a new place, and my life has a purpose now. Part of that purpose is this room we are in.



“Because of the persecutions, it has been impossible for the believers to gather together in the city, so I have built this room for them. Out here, away from the city, we can meet in peace.

“I have been asked by His Holiness Bahá'u'lláh to meet the followers of the Báb and help them understand the station of Bahá'u'lláh as the One the Báb promised would come after Him. I see that you are a sincere seeker, and so you are welcome to attend the meeting this evening.”

The children's father did attend that meeting, and several succeeding ones. At the meetings, the believers would recite Tablets and prayers of Bahá'u'lláh: The Book of Certitude, The Hidden Words, The Seven Valleys, and many others. Hearing these words of God confirmed his belief that Bahá'u'lláh was the Promised One of the Qur'án.

Before long, all of his family also became believers. He had told them of the transformation in the young man, and his certainty that the power of God had accomplished his transformation. If this transformation could occur in the general population—the whole world would become a paradise. It would be the fulfillment of all prophecies! This was hard for his family to believe at first, but after hearing about him from others and meeting the young man for themselves, they became convinced.

The example set by the radiant Siyyid Ashraf had illumined and transformed their lives. He led many souls to recognize Bahá'u'lláh as the Promised One foretold by the Báb and the Qur'án. His life was a radiant success. ★

