

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

# *Bahá'u'lláh*

*Volume Three*



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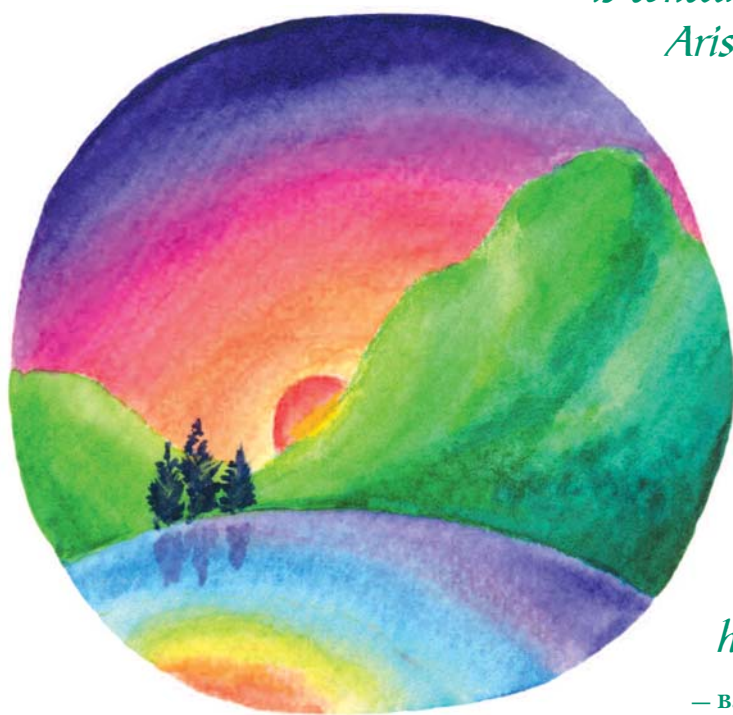
  
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*Be not dismayed, O peoples of the world,  
when the day-star of My beauty is set,  
and the heaven of My tabernacle  
is concealed from your eyes.*

*Arise to further My Cause, and  
to exalt My Word amongst men.  
We are with you at all times,  
and shall strengthen you  
through the power of truth.  
We are truly almighty.  
Whoso hath recognized Me  
will arise and serve Me  
with such determination that  
the powers of earth and heaven  
shall be unable to defeat  
his purpose.*

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, pp. 32–33

*Illustrated by Carl Cordini*





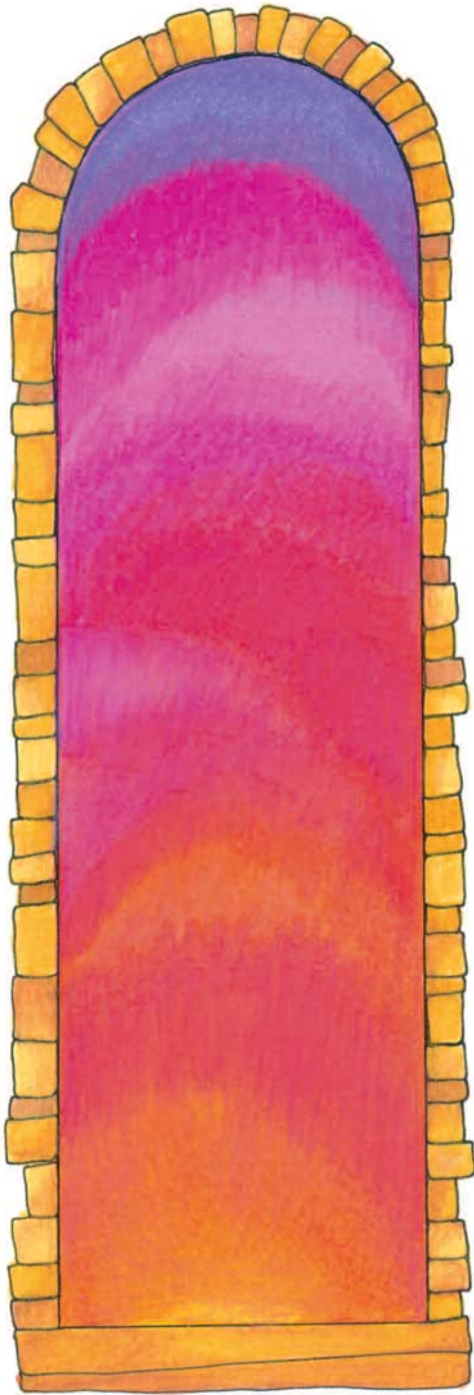
# *The Passing of Bahá'u'lláh*

On November 12, 1891, Bahá'u'lláh began the 75th year of His earthly life. Beaten, tortured, exiled, poisoned, imprisoned, His human temple had long begun to fail the Holy Spirit that burned within Him. Moreover, His lovely wife, Navváb, had slipped from the earth five years earlier, and Mírzá Músá, His true and faithful brother, had followed her to the next world a year later.

Bahá'u'lláh felt the approach of His passing, and though He never spoke openly to anyone about it, He began to urgently arrange His affairs. Worse, the mighty river of His words slowed and stopped, and the hearts of the believers began to race at thoughts of an unspeakable separation.

On May 8, Bahá'u'lláh became feverish, and gradually the fever worsened. Three days later, Nabíl, the faithful recorder, was granted an audience with his Lord. “At noon He summoned me to His presence alone and spoke to me for about half an hour, sometimes seated and sometimes pacing up and down. He vouchsafed unto me His infinite bounties . . . I wish I had known that this was going to be my last audience with Him . . .”

*Written by Jean Gould  
Illustrated by Cindy Pacileo*



Perhaps all of the believers denied what their hearts were telling them, but there came a day when ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Master, His own Son, had to acknowledge that the end was near. On this day, as Bahá’u’lláh lay ill in His room, He issued a loving order to the Son who had attended Him by day and night. Gather up all the papers, He said, and put them into the cases. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá knew about the two special cases where Bahá’u’lláh always kept His papers whenever He planned to leave Bahjí. Knowing also that His Father, ill as He was, could not possibly leave the mansion, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá suddenly realized what Bahá’u’lláh was telling Him. He froze, shaken to the depths of His being. Gently, Bahá’u’lláh repeated His orders. Hands trembling, tears streaming down His strong beautiful face, the Master completed this final request for His Beloved. When all had been properly placed and the boxes locked, Bahá’u’lláh said, “These two now belong to you.”

The fever continued to grow worse. On May 23, Bahá’u’lláh issued one last command to His entire company of believers: Come to Me.

Weeping and inconsolable, they gathered around as He leaned against one of His strong sons. Two of the believers circled His bed again and again, begging Him to sacrifice their lives for His, so that He would belong to this world for awhile longer. Gently, lovingly, He calmed them. “I am well pleased with you all,” He said. “Ye have rendered many services . . . May God assist you to remain united. May He aid you to exalt the Cause of the Lord of being.”

Later that day, He called for the ladies and children of the household. He knew they would be anxious for their future once their Lord had left them. As always, He could read their hearts and knew their fears. He had left directions in His will, He said. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the Greatest Branch, the Master, would care for them, as He would care for all the friends, and the Cause of God.

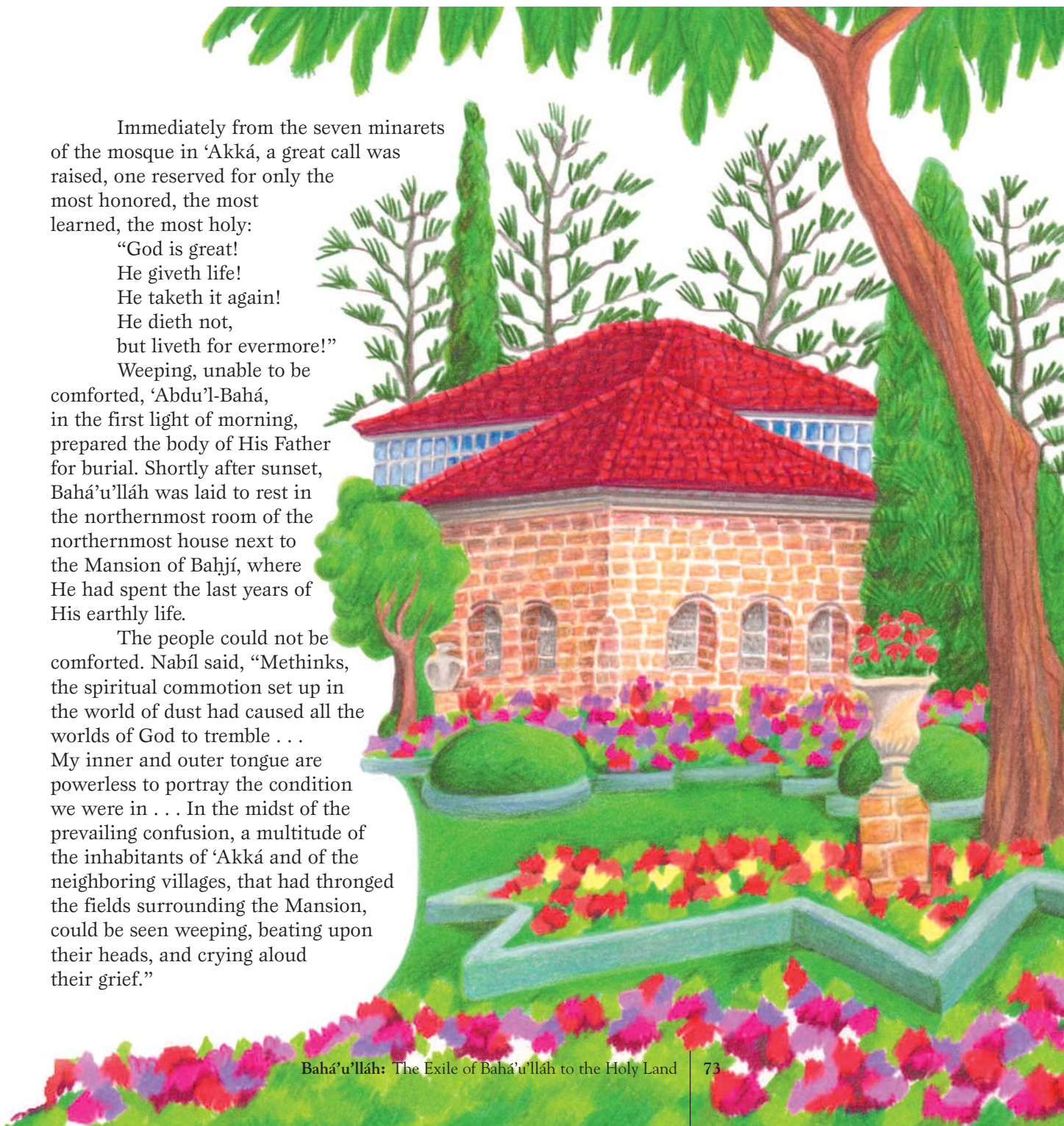
On May 29, 1892, Bahá’u’lláh slipped quietly from His earthly temple at dawn. Knowing that the people of the entire region were waiting anxiously for news, the Master issued a cable to Sulṭán ‘Abdu’l-Ḥamíd: “The Sun of Bahá has set.”

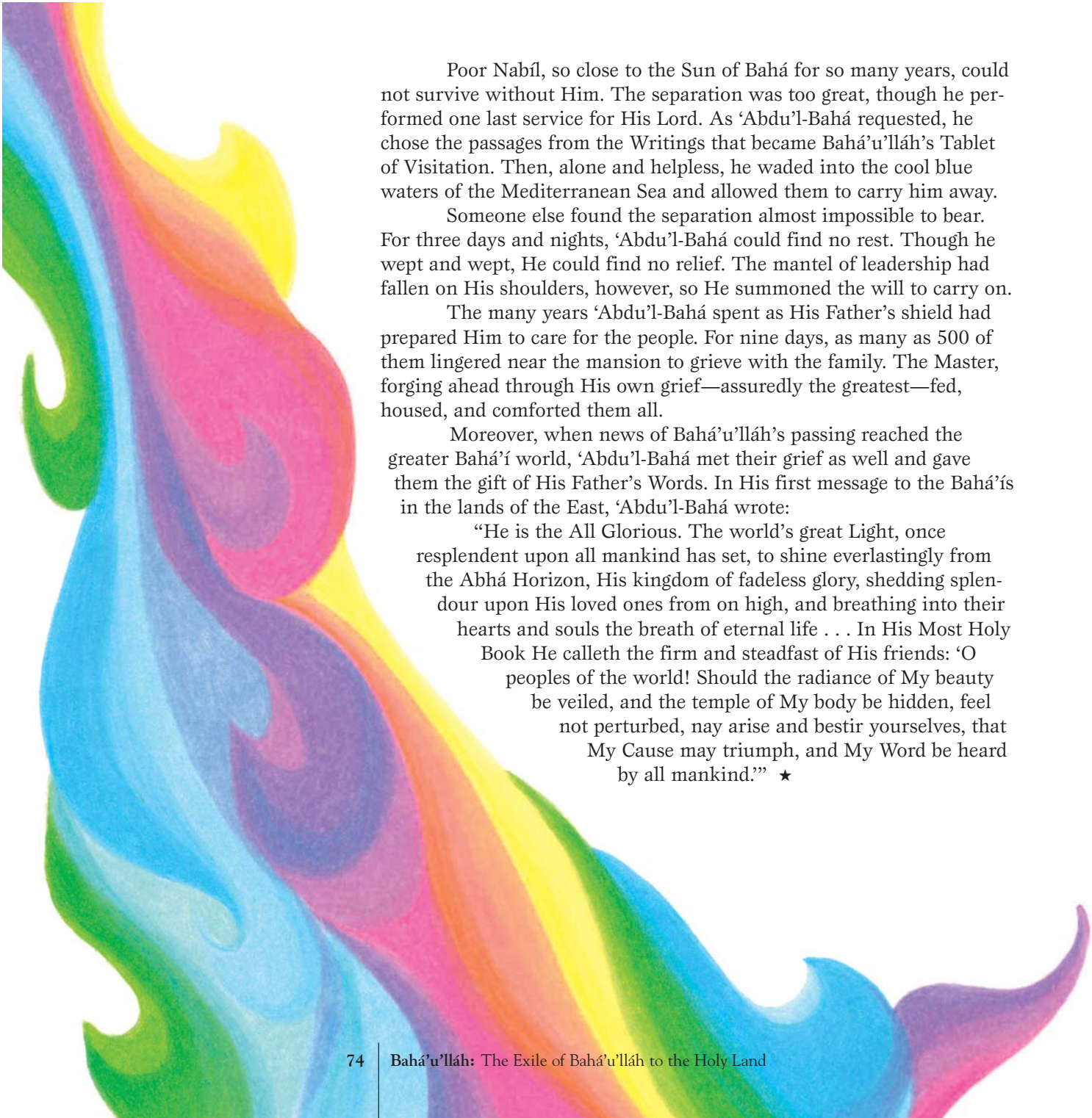
Immediately from the seven minarets of the mosque in 'Akká, a great call was raised, one reserved for only the most honored, the most learned, the most holy:

“God is great!  
He giveth life!  
He taketh it again!  
He dieth not,  
but liveth for evermore!”

Weeping, unable to be comforted, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, in the first light of morning, prepared the body of His Father for burial. Shortly after sunset, Bahá'u'lláh was laid to rest in the northernmost room of the northernmost house next to the Mansion of Bahjí, where He had spent the last years of His earthly life.

The people could not be comforted. Nabíl said, “Methinks, the spiritual commotion set up in the world of dust had caused all the worlds of God to tremble . . . My inner and outer tongue are powerless to portray the condition we were in . . . In the midst of the prevailing confusion, a multitude of the inhabitants of 'Akká and of the neighboring villages, that had thronged the fields surrounding the Mansion, could be seen weeping, beating upon their heads, and crying aloud their grief.”





Poor Nabíl, so close to the Sun of Bahá for so many years, could not survive without Him. The separation was too great, though he performed one last service for His Lord. As ‘Abdu’l-Bahá requested, he chose the passages from the Writings that became Bahá’u’lláh’s Tablet of Visitation. Then, alone and helpless, he waded into the cool blue waters of the Mediterranean Sea and allowed them to carry him away.

Someone else found the separation almost impossible to bear. For three days and nights, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could find no rest. Though he wept and wept, He could find no relief. The mantle of leadership had fallen on His shoulders, however, so He summoned the will to carry on.

The many years ‘Abdu’l-Bahá spent as His Father’s shield had prepared Him to care for the people. For nine days, as many as 500 of them lingered near the mansion to grieve with the family. The Master, forging ahead through His own grief—assuredly the greatest—fed, housed, and comforted them all.

Moreover, when news of Bahá’u’lláh’s passing reached the greater Bahá’í world, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá met their grief as well and gave them the gift of His Father’s Words. In His first message to the Bahá’ís in the lands of the East, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá wrote:

“He is the All Glorious. The world’s great Light, once resplendent upon all mankind has set, to shine everlastingly from the Abhá Horizon, His kingdom of fadeless glory, shedding splendour upon His loved ones from on high, and breathing into their hearts and souls the breath of eternal life . . . In His Most Holy Book He calleth the firm and steadfast of His friends: ‘O peoples of the world! Should the radiance of My beauty be veiled, and the temple of My body be hidden, feel not perturbed, nay arise and bestir yourselves, that My Cause may triumph, and My Word be heard by all mankind.’” ★