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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
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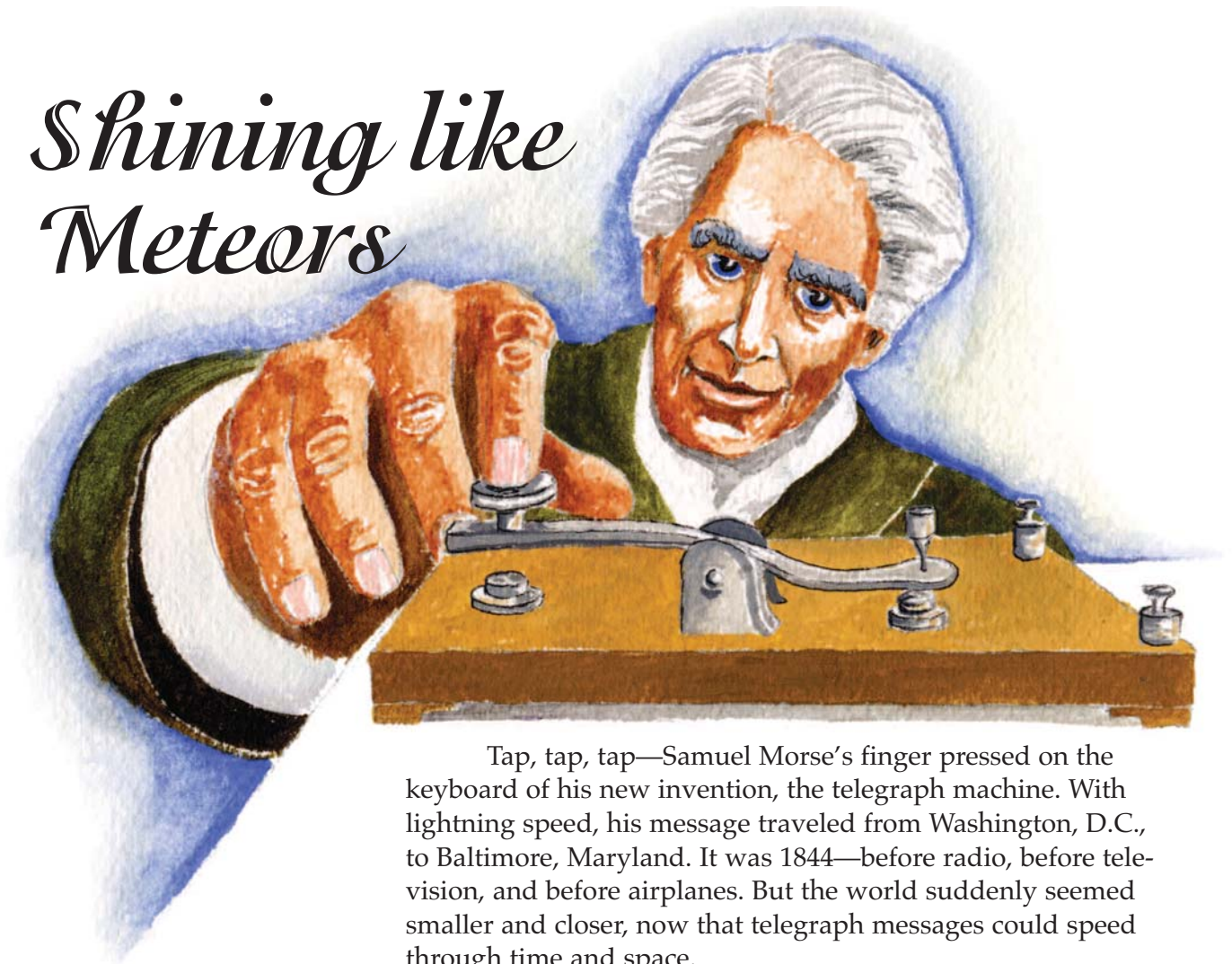
Printed in the United States of America

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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

Shining like Meteors



Tap, tap, tap—Samuel Morse’s finger pressed on the keyboard of his new invention, the telegraph machine. With lightning speed, his message traveled from Washington, D.C., to Baltimore, Maryland. It was 1844—before radio, before television, and before airplanes. But the world suddenly seemed smaller and closer, now that telegraph messages could speed through time and space.

Morse’s words, “What hath God wrought?” came from the Bible. Others besides Morse were wondering the same thing—what had God stirred up? All over the world, people of every religion were waiting for a new Messenger from God, the Promised One. But few agreed on how they would know Him. What would His race be? Would He be Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim, or Zoroastrian? How would He come? Who would see Him?

*Written by Gail Radley
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*

Everyone had different ideas, but a number of Bible scholars agreed on one thing—the Promised One would come around 1844. The Bible gave them reasons to think so. There would be a great earthquake, the Bible said. The sun would darken, and the moon would look like blood. The stars would fall from the heavens.

These things have happened, scholars exclaimed. First came the Lisbon Earthquake of 1755. The earth shook across four million square miles. In six minutes, the great city of Lisbon, Portugal, was destroyed. Other earthquakes followed all over Europe.

Next, there was the Dark Day of 1780 when the sun suddenly turned dark all across New England in the United States. The moon looked as if it were filled with blood. Everyone wondered what caused it. The Bible scholars weren't sure, but they thought they knew what it meant!

Then, in 1833, meteors—often called falling stars—fell all over North America. One mathematician believed that more than 34,640 meteors appeared per hour. “They fell like flakes of snow,” said a college president. Not many people realized then that the beautiful star shower happened on Bahá'u'lláh's birthday, November 12.

With these signs and others pointing to the coming of the Promised One, excitement grew. Some people made robes so that they could return to heaven with their savior. One English noblewoman moved to Lebanon, keeping one white horse for herself to ride and one for the Promised One. A priest kept shoes ready for the Promised One to wear in Jerusalem.



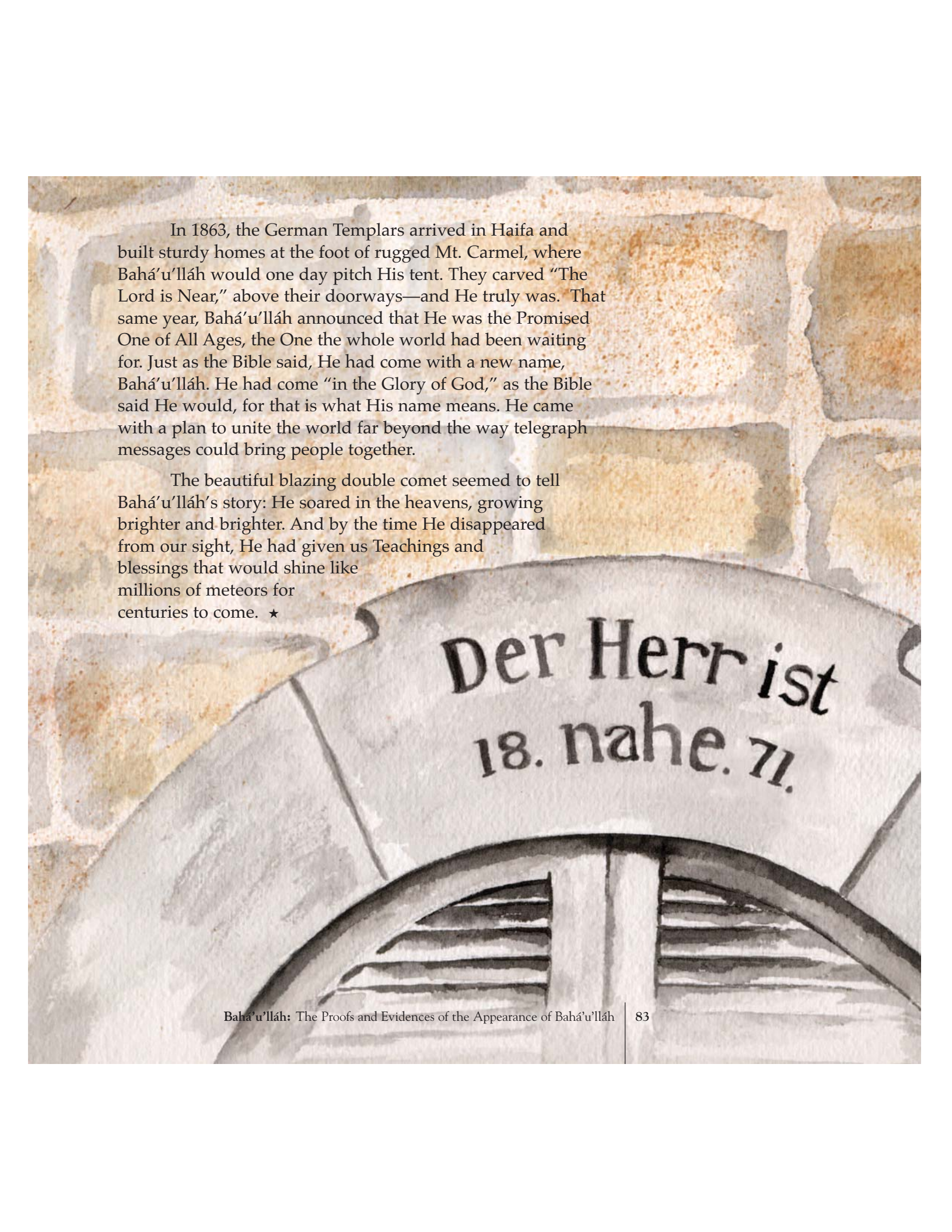


It seemed all the world was astir. In 1844 in the United States, a Patent Office official suggested that they close its doors—everything useful had been invented, he thought. But Morse’s telegraph was just one of millions of inventions to come. Soon there was rubber, the elevator, the gas burner, and the typewriter. People were bubbling with new ideas for society, too. They discussed women’s rights, education for all, and ending child labor and slavery.

Just as the star over Bethlehem guided the three Zoroastrian wise men to the baby Jesus, signs in the skies announced Bahá’u’lláh, too. One great comet with a tail 105 million miles long blazed in the noonday sky. At the same time, a halo of light encircled the sun. A year later, the Báb told His followers that He had come to prepare the world for the Promised One.

Then, in 1846, an ordinary comet split in two and disappeared. When the double comet returned in 1852, one part of the comet had faded. The other shone brightly. At this time, Bahá’u’lláh was in prison. His great Mission had begun and the Báb’s had ended. Finally, both comets disappeared altogether, leaving millions of meteors in their place.

But even with all these wonderful events, 1844 passed, and then 1845. Most people gave up waiting for the Promised One. A few kept searching and praying. Among these was a group of Christians, the German Templars. When the Promised One did not arrive as they first expected, they closed up their shops, sold their belongings, and began the long boat trip to the Holy Land. They did not believe God would abandon them.



In 1863, the German Templars arrived in Haifa and built sturdy homes at the foot of rugged Mt. Carmel, where Bahá'u'lláh would one day pitch His tent. They carved “The Lord is Near,” above their doorways—and He truly was. That same year, Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Promised One of All Ages, the One the whole world had been waiting for. Just as the Bible said, He had come with a new name, Bahá'u'lláh. He had come “in the Glory of God,” as the Bible said He would, for that is what His name means. He came with a plan to unite the world far beyond the way telegraph messages could bring people together.

The beautiful blazing double comet seemed to tell Bahá'u'lláh's story: He soared in the heavens, growing brighter and brighter. And by the time He disappeared from our sight, He had given us Teachings and blessings that would shine like millions of meteors for centuries to come. ★

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