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*The Central Figures*

# Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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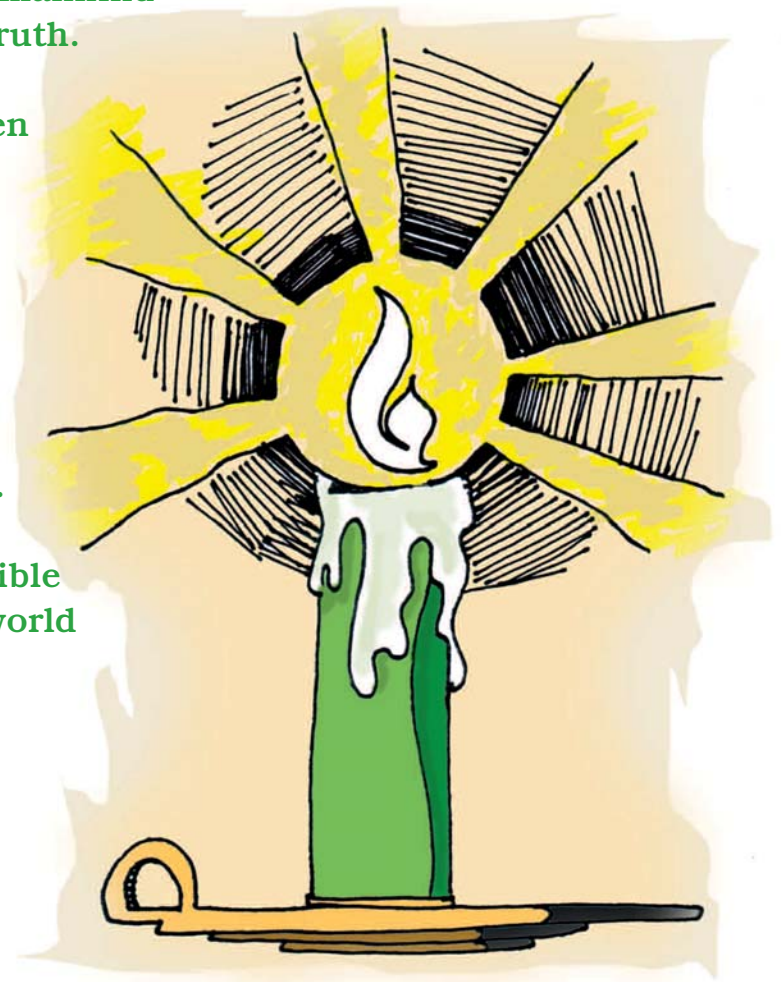
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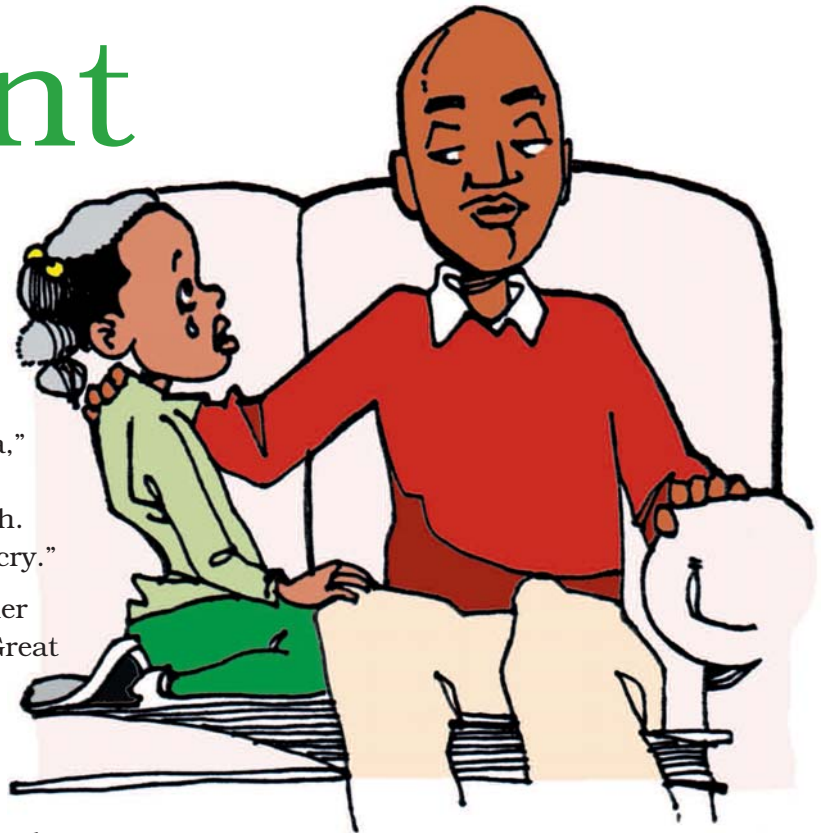
The Prophets and Messengers of God have been sent down for the sole purpose of guiding mankind to the straight Path of Truth. The purpose underlying their revelation hath been to educate all men, that they may, at the hour of death, ascend, in the utmost purity and sanctity and with absolute detachment, to the throne of the Most High. The light which these souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its peoples.

— Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 156–157



# To Be a Brilliant Star

*Written by Duane L. Herrmann  
Illustrated by Cam Herth*



“Daddy, I miss Old Granma,” Corinne said to her father as she sat down next to him on the couch. “I miss her so much sometimes I cry.”

“I know sweetheart,” said her father as he hugged her. “I miss Great Grandma too.”

“What’s it like, Dad?”

“What’s what like?”

“Being dead. What’s it like to be dead?”

“Well, you know,” her father began slowly. “I’m not exactly sure. I’ve not been dead yet.” He grinned.

“I know that, silly!” Corinne giggled. “But you know what Bahá’u’lláh says about being dead. Tell me so I can remember what it’s like for Granma.”

“Oh!” Her father leaned back as if he were surprised.

“Bahá’u’lláh does tell us a lot about our life after we die, more than any other Messenger. That’s one of the reasons I’m glad I’m Bahá’í.”

Corinne knew that her father liked to talk about the Bahá’í Faith; now she wanted to listen.



“Well, first of all,” he began, “we’ll recognize the people we loved in this life and we’ll continue to love them. And we won’t have a physical body. Can you imagine how great it will be to not have a body to get in the way or stumble or fall? We will be able to soar in the sky and jump higher than the moon. It will be the most fantastic fun you can ever imagine.”

“Oh!” Corinne hadn’t thought of that.

“And Old Granma will be right there with you. She’ll be so happy to see you. And you know something else?” He gave Corinne a squeeze. Then he whispered in a secret voice, “She won’t be old any more!”

“What?” Corinne gasped at this startling idea.

“That’s right. People who die aren’t old anymore, because it’s only our bodies that get old. We won’t have our bodies anymore, so no one will be old. Bahá’u’lláh says that after we leave this world, we will be given a new form that will best suit our immortality.”

“If we don’t have our bodies,” Corinne asked, “how will we know each other?”

“The same way we do now. When you think of Old Granma, do you think mostly of her face with its lines and wrinkles, and hands that were bony and twisted?” Corinne shook her head, ‘no.’ “Or do you think of the love she had for you and how good it felt to be around her?” Corinne nodded in agreement.

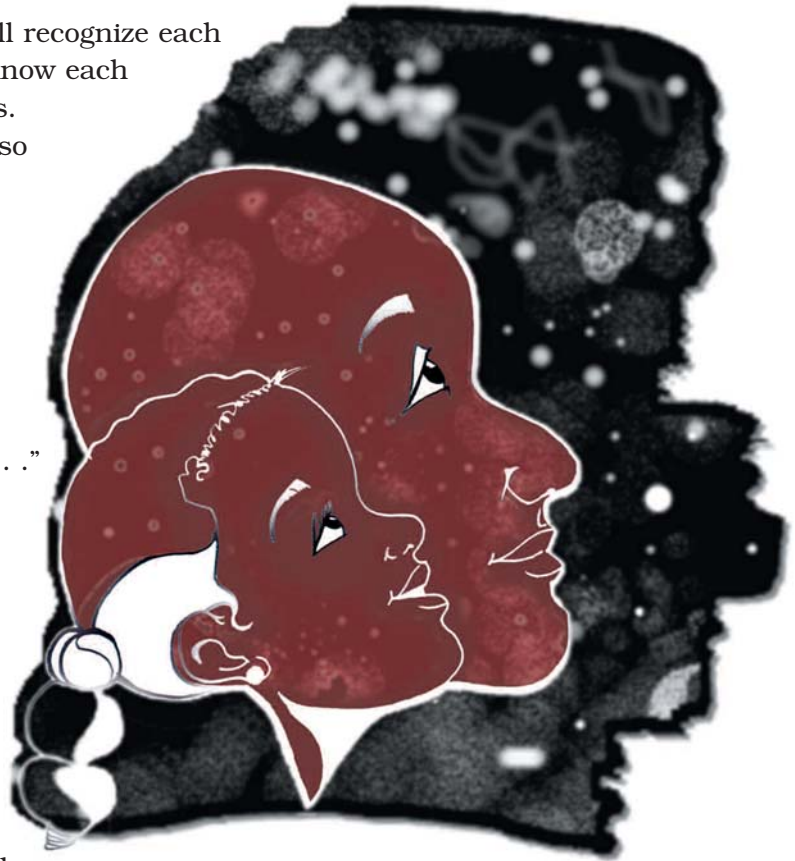
“That’s the same way we will recognize each other after we have died. We will know each other by our love and other virtues. That’s one of the reasons why it’s so important to develop our virtues and spiritual qualities. The souls who develop their spiritual qualities in this world will be more advanced souls in the next world.

“Let’s imagine that each soul is like the flame of a candle . . .”

“. . . Or a brilliant star!” Corinne exclaimed.

“Yes, exactly,” her father agreed. “But some stars are not as bright and brilliant as others. Some are very dim. In terms of the soul, these would be souls that are less spiritually developed. They would not have been as generous, loving, and kind as they could have been while they were alive. Do you want to be a dim or bright star?”

“Big and bright!” Corinne said.



“I’m so glad,” her father said and grinned at her. “The big and bright souls are the ones who have been the most kind, the most loving, and the most generous of all. Martyrs who have given up everything, even their lives, would be the brightest of all.”

“WOW!” Corinne was amazed. “No wonder they are special.”

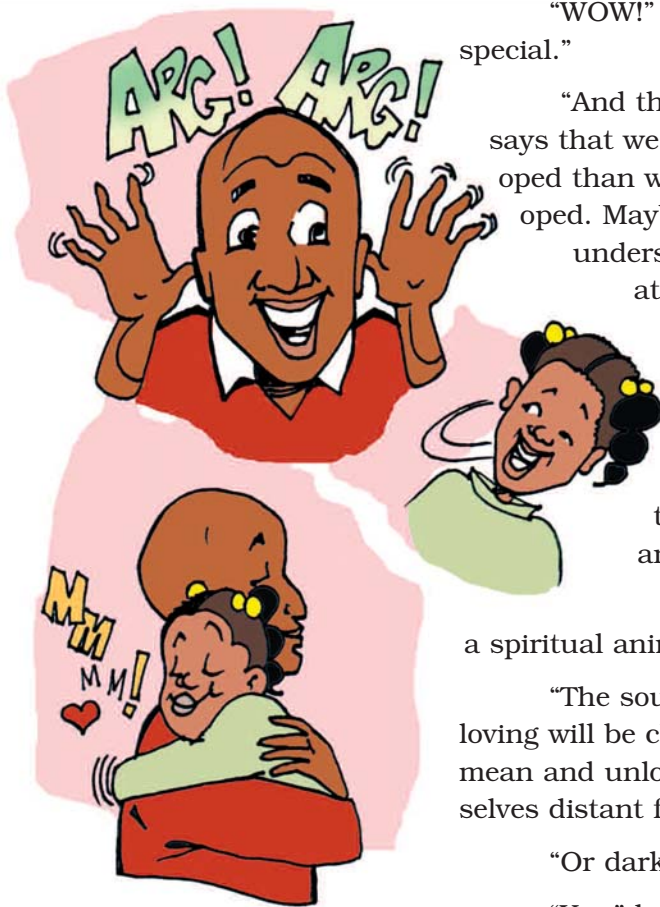
“And there are many souls in between. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says that we can understand the souls who are less developed than we are, but not the souls who are more developed. Maybe it’s like animals in this world: they can understand rocks and plants that don’t have as many attributes as animals, but animals can’t understand humans—because we have more attributes than animals. Animals can’t build things like cars or trucks, so they can’t understand how we can build things. Animals can understand if we are angry or happy with them, but they can’t always understand why we might be angry or happy. I think it might be like that.”

“Well!” exclaimed Corinne. “I don’t want to be a spiritual animal.”

“The souls that are more developed, generous, and loving will be closer to God than the souls who have been mean and unloving in this world. The people who put themselves distant from God will be tiny little dim souls.”

“Or dark, like rocks,” Corinne added.

“Yes,” he said firmly, “And I don’t want to be one of them, so I’m going to love my girl until she giggles.” Then he made a goony face at her. Corinne shrieked with surprise and began to giggle. He suddenly stopped, and then gave her a brief, tight hug.



“The way to be a brilliant star is to learn and practice all the virtues that you can. And that’s why Mom and I tell you to do such hard things as sharing with your brother, being respectful and quiet at Feast, helping clean the house, doing your chores, and spending more thought on the gifts you give than ones you may receive. When you do things for others, your spirit grows; to be selfless is the greatest virtue of all.”

“So,” said Corinne slowly. “When I fuss because I don’t get my way, it’s not very good for my soul, and it won’t grow.”

“That’s the way I would see it,” her father answered. “Thinking only about yourself is rather selfish. It’s when we do the hard things, the things we may not want to do, the things that help other people, that our souls grow. Actually it’s only hard when we’re not used to it: just like walking. Every person had to learn to walk. In the same way, being selfless is also a skill we need to learn. Bahá’u’lláh says that the souls who are selfless—He calls them ‘the symbols of detachment’—will help the whole world improve. That’s why children have parents: to help them learn the virtues.”

“Thank you, Dad. I’m glad you’re helping me. Maybe I can help Mrs. Hamilton get ready for the next Nineteen Day Feast. She does so much to help other people, someone should help her.”

“That is a wonderful plan,” replied her father, as he kissed the top of her head. ★

