

# **Homosexuality & the Bahá'í Faith**

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# Baha'i Faith



# Scholar's Pen-Portrait

- Edward Granville Browne
- Cambridge scholar
- One of only a few Europeans to meet Bahá'u'lláh (1890)



# Browne's Pen-Portrait

● *The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!*



# What Bahá'u'llah Said

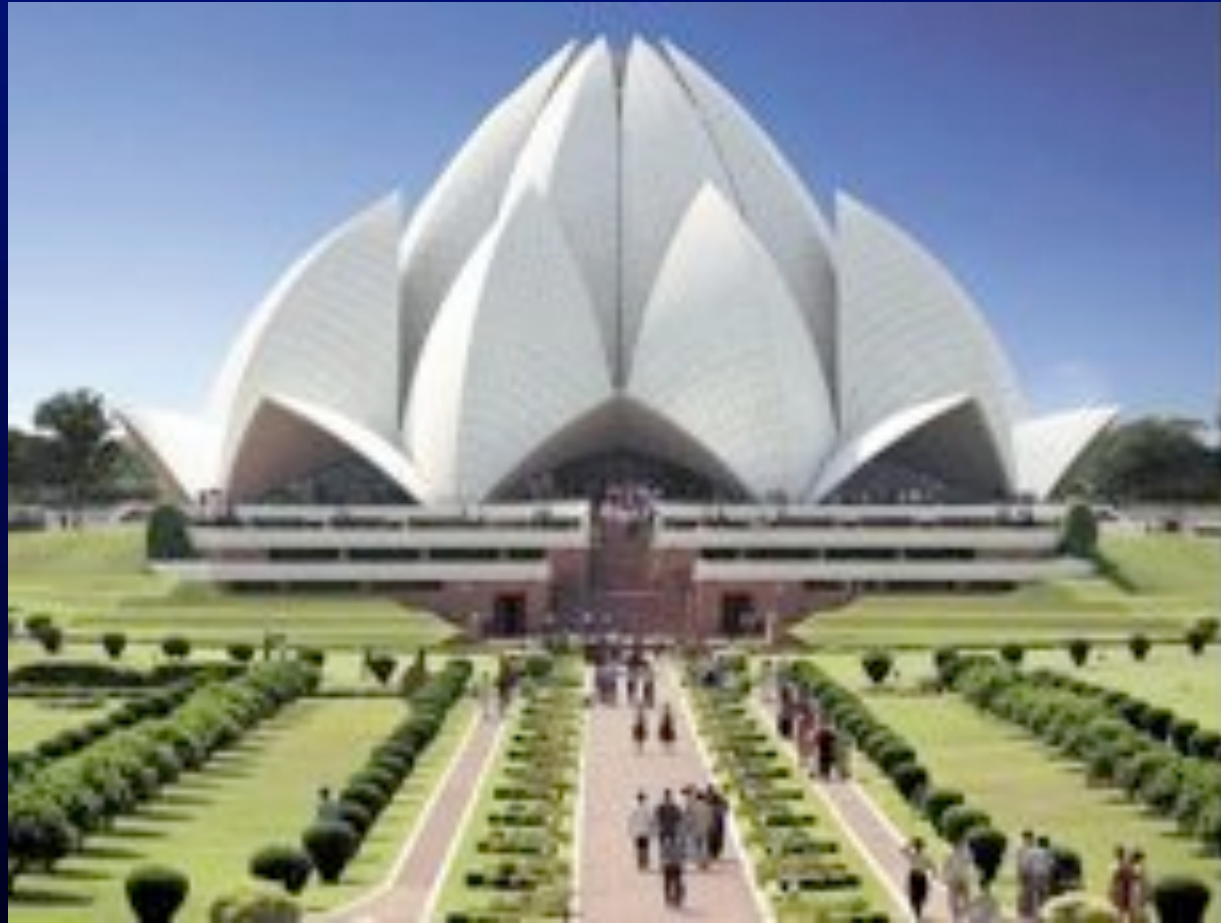
*We desire but the good of the world and happiness of the nations.... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" shall come.... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family.... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind....*

# Epistle to Pope Pius IX

- O CONCOURSE of monks! Seclude not yourselves in churches and cloisters. Come forth by My leave, and occupy yourselves with that which will profit your souls and the souls of men. Thus biddeth you the King of the Day of Reckoning. Seclude yourselves in the stronghold of My love. This, verily, is a befitting seclusion, were ye of them that perceive it.
- Enter ye into wedlock, that after you someone may fill your place. We have forbidden you perfidious acts, and not that which will demonstrate fidelity.



# New Delhi, India



# Apia, Samoa





# Kampala, Uganda



# Frankfurt, Germany



# Sidney, Australia

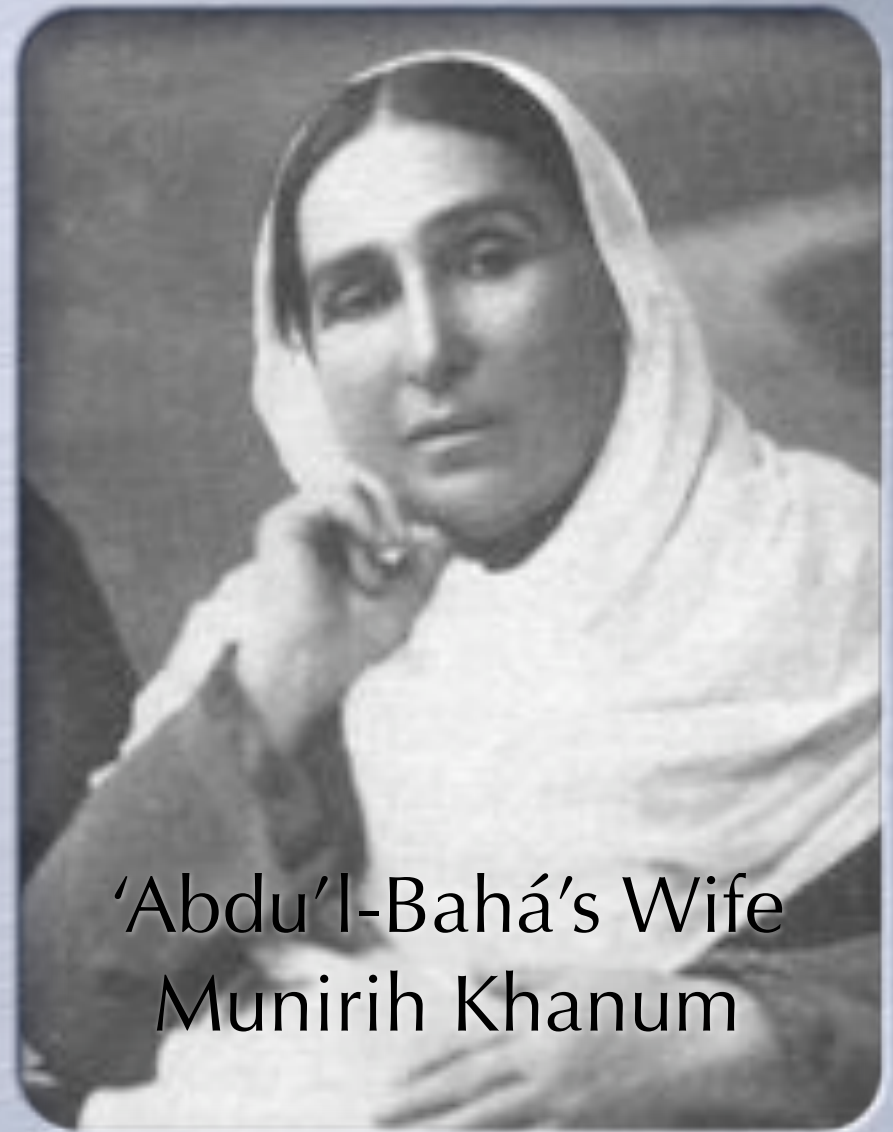


# Chicago



# Bahá'u'lláh on Marriage

● And when He desired to manifest grace and beneficence to men, and to set the world in order, He revealed observances and created laws; among them He established the law of marriage, made it as a fortress for well-being and salvation, and enjoined it upon us in that which was sent down out of the heaven of sanctity in His Most Holy Book. He saith, great is His glory: "Marry, O people, that from you may appear he who will remember Me amongst My servants; this is one of My commandments unto you; obey it as an assistance to yourselves."



'Abdu'l-Bahá's Wife  
Munirih Khanum

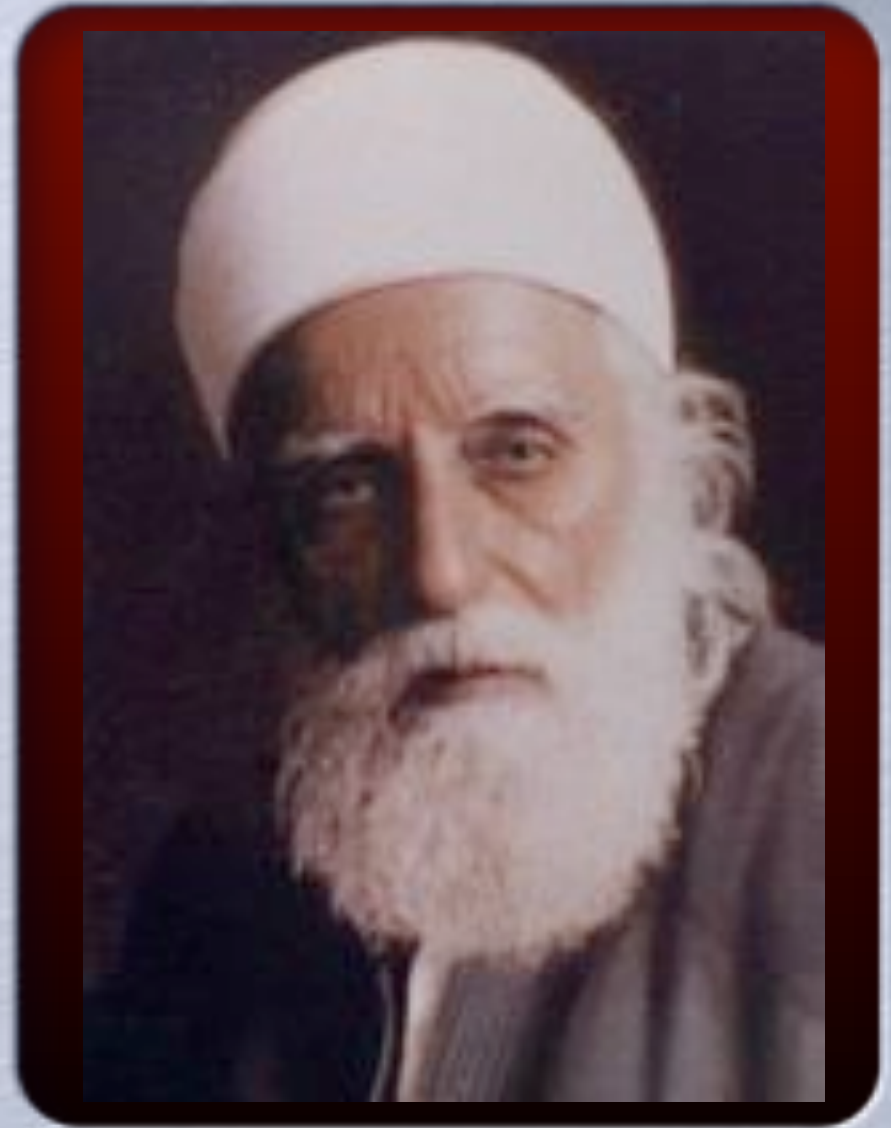
# 'Abdu'l-Bahá on Marriage

- No mortal can conceive the union and harmony which God has designed for man and wife. Nourish continually the tree of your union with love and affection, so that it will remain ever green and verdant throughout all seasons and bring forth luscious fruits for the healing of the nations.
- And, when God gives you sweet and lovely children, consecrate yourselves to their instruction and guidance, so that they may become imperishable flowers of the divine rose-garden, nightingales of the ideal paradise, servants of the world of humanity, and the fruit of the tree of your life.



# The Master on Marriage

- It is highly important for man to raise a family. So long as he is young, because of youthful self-complacency, he does not realize its significance, but this will be a source of regret when he grows old.... In this glorious Cause the life of a married couple should resemble the life of the angels in heaven--a life full of joy and spiritual delight, a life of unity and concord, a friendship both mental and physical.
- Even as two birds they should warble melodies upon the branches of the tree of fellowship and harmony. They should always be elated with joy and gladness and be a source of happiness to the



# Shoghi Effendi on Marriage

● Baha'u'llah has urged marriage upon all people as the natural and rightful way of life. He has also, however, placed strong emphasis on its spiritual nature, which, while in no way precluding a normal physical life, is the most essential aspect of marriage. That two people should live their lives in love and harmony is of far greater importance than that they should be consumed with passion for each other. The one is a great rock of strength on which to lean in time of need; the other a purely temporary thing which may at any time die out.





# Focus on the Family

- Baha'i teachings on sexual morality centre on marriage and the family as the bedrock of the whole structure of human society and are designed to protect and strengthen that divine institution. This Baha'i Law restricts permissible sexual intercourse to that between a man and the woman to whom he is married. (March 14, 1973)



# Morals for Marriage

- No matter how devoted and fine the love may be between people of the same sex, to let it find expression in sexual acts is wrong. To say that it is ideal is no excuse. Immorality of every sort is really forbidden by Baha'u'llah, and homosexual relationships He looks upon as such, besides being against nature. (March 26, 1950)
- Homosexuality is forbidden in the Baha'i Faith by Baha'u'llah; so, for that matter, are immorality and adultery. (August 20, 1955)



# Guardian on Homosexuality

- Amongst the many other evils afflicting society in this spiritual low water mark in history is the question of immorality, and over-emphasis of sex. Homosexuality, according to the Writings of Baha'u'llah, is spiritually condemned. This does not mean that people so afflicted must not be helped and advised and sympathized with. It does mean that we do not believe that it is a permissible way of life; which, alas, is all too often the accepted attitude nowadays. (May 21, 1954)



# Universal House of Justice



# Nature or Nurture?

- Our appetites and inclinations are strongly influenced by the condition of our physical makeup, and our bodies are in varying degrees of health, depending on factors such as heredity, environment, nourishment and our own treatment of them. Genetic variations occur, producing conditions which can create problems for the individual. Some conditions are of an emotional or psychological nature, producing such imbalances as quickness to anger, recklessness, timorousness, and so forth; others involve purely physical characteristics, resulting not only in unusual capacities but also in handicaps or diseases of various kinds.
- Whether deficiencies are inborn or are acquired, our purpose in this life is to overcome them and to train ourselves in accordance with the pattern that is revealed to us in the divine Teachings. (From a letter written on behalf of the Universal House of Justice to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States, Sept. 11, 1995)

# Divine Origin of Sex

- While recognizing the Divine Origin and force of the sex impulse in man, religion teaches that it must be controlled, and Baha'u'llah's Law confines its expression to the marriage relationship. The unmarried homosexual is therefore in the same position as anyone else who does not marry. The Law of God requires them to practise chastity. (January 9, 1977)
- A number of sexual problems, such as homosexuality and transsexuality can well have medical aspects, and in such cases recourse should certainly be had to the best medical assistance. But it is clear from the teaching of Baha'u'llah that homosexuality is not a condition to which a person should be reconciled, but is a distortion of his or her nature which should be controlled or overcome. This may require a hard struggle, but so also can be the struggle of a heterosexual person to control his or her desires. The exercise of self-control in this, as in so very many other aspects of life, has a beneficial effect on the progress of the soul. (January 12, 1973)

# UHJ on Homosexuals

- To regard homosexuals with prejudice and disdain would be entirely against the spirit of Baha'i Teachings. The doors are open for all of humanity to enter the Cause of God, irrespective of their present circumstances; this invitation applies to homosexuals as well as to any others who are engaged in practices contrary to the Baha'i Teachings. (Nov. 23, 1995)
- The condition of being sexually attracted to some object other than a mature member of the opposite sex, a condition of which homosexuality is but one manifestation, is regarded by the Faith as a distortion of true human nature, as a problem to be overcome, no matter what specific physical or psychological condition may be the immediate cause. (Nov. 23, 1995)

# Bahá'í Ideals

- Family is the fundamental unit of society.
- Marriage is the ideal.
- Chastity strengthens future marriage.
- Reorientation is possible & desirable.





# Conclusion

- Marriage the ideal expression of sexual desire.
- Marriage & children is still the most natural. It is also the most spiritual.
- Equal rights of gays & lesbians defended.

