

A. A. Furútan

Bahá'í Education for Children

Book 5

"...for when the bough is green and tender
it will grow in whatever way ye train it."

A Teacher's Guide
For Children 10 Years Old



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**For children
10 years old**

A Teacher's Guide

by A. A. Furútan

**Bahá'í Publishing Trust
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. . . know ye that in God's sight,
the best of all ways to worship Him
is to educate the children and
train them in all the perfections of
humankind; and no nobler deed
than this can be imagined.¹

'Abdu'l-Bahá

Foreword

Bahá'í education for children is one of the most important lines of action for the consolidation of the Bahá'í communities. Through children's education, the whole community can gradually be transformed. Observing the great need for a systematic approach to this task, some fifty years ago Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Akbar Furútan developed a set of 13 books for the Bahá'í education of children. The books were written in the Persian language for use in the Bahá'í communities in Írán (Persia) and were known as the *Kitáb-i-Dars-i-Akhlagh* (*Books for Moral Education*). The set included 12 books for children aged 5 to 16–18 and a *Teacher's Manual* on the principles of Bahá'í education.

An administrative system was put in place by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Írán to assist generations of Bahá'í children to attend these classes, first as students, and later on in their youth and adulthood, as teachers. Availability of these materials and the efforts of various institutions of the Faith and parents to systematically follow up the progress and assist Bahá'í communities to hold children's classes made children's education a vital activity in almost every Bahá'í community in Írán.

Inspired by the spirit of the Four-Year Plan and the need for the systematization of human resource development, a group of Bahá'í friends in Zambia decided to translate these books into English for possible use by interested national communities. It was obvious from the outset that the books needed not only to be translated but adapted in many instances. With the full permission of Mr. Furútan, the adaptation and changes made in the books include information on the update of the progress of the Faith, modifications based on cultural considerations and the addition of new topics. We are very grateful to Mr. Furútan for his kind permission to make these changes.

We are also thankful to the friends who translated the books for their interest and hard work. May their meritorious service be crowned with the bounty of the acceptance of the Blessed Beauty.

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Zambia

Lusaka, June 1998

Note on South African Edition

In preparing this edition, an attempt has been made to carry on the work of improving these books, by making corrections to the text, and reviewing some of the stories in the light of versions already published in the West.

Some of the laws mentioned in the lessons are not yet applicable to all Bahá'ís. There is no harm in teaching these to children, who can be told they will apply at a time in the future when the Universal House of Justice notifies the Friends. Such laws are indicated as 'not yet universally binding' in the lessons.

Unlike Books 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6, the previous edition of Book 5 contained no review lessons. The teacher may wish to introduce review lessons, and one possible arrangement would be as follows:

After Lesson 10:

Review of Lessons 1, 2, 3, 4

Review of Lessons 5, 6, 8

Review of Lessons 8, 9, 10

After Lesson 18:

Review of Lessons 12, 13, 14

Review of Lessons 16, 17, 18

After Lesson 24:

Review of Lessons 21, 22, 23

Editor

Introduction

Book 5 is for children aged ten, and its contents, to the extent possible, have been kept simple.

Teachers are requested to consider the following points during their classes:

1 The foundation of education and training is to instil the love and fear of God into the hearts of the children. Bahá'u'lláh says:

Schools must first train the children in the principles of religion, so that the Promise and the Threat recorded in the Books of God may prevent them from the things forbidden and adorn them with the mantle of the commandments . . .²

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, in one of His Tablets where He addresses the education of children, tells us:

Instruction in the schools must begin with instruction in religion. Following religious training, and the binding of the child’s heart to the love of God, proceed with his education in the other branches of knowledge.³

2 When explaining the subjects, the intellectual capacity of the children, their interest and level of understanding should be considered.

3 If the teacher plans to read about a topic to the children, he should first explain the subject in simple language. It is also usually inadvisable to provide additional explanations that are beyond the scope of the lesson.

4 The teacher should explain difficult quotations, passages or words, bearing in mind the following:

- The explanation provided should be brief and to the point so that excessive discussion does not lead the students away from the main topic. There is a story concerning a young girl reading a book while her mother kept interrupting and providing her with additional information. Finally the girl told her

mother that she would probably understand the book better if her mother stopped giving additional information.

- The teacher should ensure that difficult words are clarified and put into the right context. One example is the word “right” which sometimes refers to a direction and at other times means the correct thing to do.
- Once all difficult words and phrases have been clarified, the teacher should read the quotation or part of the lesson from the book, following these guidelines:
- Words should be clearly pronounced.
- Proper emphasis should be put on certain words to avoid monotony.
- The passage should be read with conviction.

5 If a student develops a dislike for the teacher, there is a strong possibility that he will dislike the course as well. Teachers should therefore try to build loving relationships with students and to increase the students’ interest in the class. Teachers should always remember the following words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

It is not, however, permissible to strike a child, or vilify him, for the child’s character will be totally perverted if he be subjected to blows or verbal abuse.⁴

6 “Questions and Assignments” given at the end of each lesson are intended to broaden the thinking of the students and make the lesson more interesting.

7 There is no time limit set for each lesson. Teachers should consider the capacity of students and divide the lessons if necessary, judging by the response of the students.

8 The activities during “Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness” are the same as in previous years.

Format of a Typical Lesson

Each children's lesson will follow basically the same format. It is helpful for children to be in a structured and familiar environment. They will soon learn the format of the class and will look forward to each part of it. The class will begin with prayers. Then the teacher and children will review what was learned in the previous class. There is a brief break after the review, which includes songs, games, and an opportunity for the teacher to register the students. Following the break, the new lesson will be presented, usually with a brief explanation, a story, and sometimes a quotation or prayer to learn. If the teacher has materials for the children to use, they may then draw and colour pictures related to the lesson. The class will close with a prayer, and then a final suggestion from the teacher, asking the children to do something specific at home. Below is a more detailed description of each part of the class.

1 Opening prayer – Each lesson should begin with an opening prayer. One of the students or the teacher may say a prayer to start the lesson. If more than one student would like to say a prayer, this would also be acceptable, as it is good to encourage the children to do this. If they all know the same prayer, however, this is not the time for each of them to recite it. That can be done later as a class activity.

2 Review of previous lesson – Except for the first two lessons, each lesson will begin by reviewing what was learned in the previous class. The teacher can ask questions to give the children a chance to recall what they have learned.

3 Break: songs, games, stories, student registration and children's cleanliness – After the review, the children will enjoy singing and learning new songs and playing games.

Songs – Children should be encouraged to learn Bahá'í songs. If the teacher knows how to play a guitar or a local musical instrument, this will add to the joyful atmosphere

of the class. Members of the community who play musical instruments may also be invited to play for the children.

Games – If the location and the environment are suitable for simple games, the teacher may play with the children; this will help them not to become bored. Games are already included with each lesson in these materials. Of course, if there is another game that the children enjoy, you should feel free to use it. Choose games that are suitable to the children's age and the environment. Games should be played under the teacher's supervision. If the environment is not suitable for this purpose, the children can be asked to have a break and rest, with the teacher lovingly, patiently and firmly ensuring that they maintain acceptable behaviour.

Stories – The children should also be told stories. The teacher should try to tell the children, whenever appropriate, interesting stories with positive and spiritual morals. Other members of the community can also be invited to the class for the same purpose. Tapes of interesting stories can be played at times.

Student registration – The teacher should take advantage of the break time to register the students in a notebook specially prepared and maintained for this purpose. The teacher can ask the children to listen for their names. When the teacher calls a child's name, the child can stand up to show that he or she is present. When the teacher notices one of the students has been absent for more than one or two sessions, he or she may enquire from the others and from the student's parents, and may help, if possible, to encourage the student to attend regularly.

Children's cleanliness – Another objective of the break time is for the teacher to see if all the students have paid sufficient attention to being clean. Undoubtedly, this must be done with utmost love, kindness and patience, and without any student feeling, in the slightest way, that he or she is being inspected for cleanliness. The teacher, lovingly and kindly,

tries to look closely at the children to see if any one of them has neglected this important matter. Should it be necessary, the teacher may, without addressing any one given child, initiate a discussion in which the importance of cleanliness and the disadvantages of uncleanness are explained to them.

4 New lesson, story or memorization – This is the new material presented during the lesson. It may be a story that the teacher tells to the children, or a prayer for the children to memorize. Remember that stories should be told in ways that make them interesting to the children. The teacher should learn the story before telling it.

5 Drawing and colouring pictures (if material is available) – Children enjoy drawing and colouring and this should be encouraged whenever possible. A picture can be included with each lesson of the course. If the teacher has paper and colouring materials, he or she may trace the pictures for the children to colour. The parents and the Bahá'í community may be able to contribute such items or help raise funds to buy them.

6 Closing prayer – Each class will end with a closing prayer. It is good to encourage the children to say a prayer. However, if none of them knows one, the teacher may say one. Also, the teacher should lovingly remind the children how to behave when prayers are being said. They should be still and listen quietly and attentively.

7 Teacher's suggestion for the week – Before the children leave, the teacher will remind them of what they have learned and will ask them to do something at home. The teacher may ask them simply to think about what they have learned, or to tell the story they have heard in class to their family, or to practise the prayer they are memorizing, or practise being clean, and so on.

1 The Declaration of the Báb

1.1 Opening Prayer

O Lord, help Thou Thy loved ones to acquire knowledge and the sciences and arts, and to unravel the secrets that are treasured up in the inmost reality of all created beings. Make them to hear the hidden truths that are written and embedded in the heart of all that is. Make them to be ensigns of guidance amongst all creatures, and piercing rays of the mind shedding forth their light in this, the “first life”. Make them to be leaders unto Thee, guides unto Thy path, runners urging men on to Thy Kingdom.

Thou verily art the Powerful, the Protector, the Potent, the Defender, the Mighty, the Most Generous.⁵

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

1.2 Lesson and Discussion

The city of Shíráz, in the southern part of Persia (Írán), has long been home to many poets and people of great thought. It was well known in the region as a city of beauty and charm. The grace of God has once again shone upon this city because the Báb declared His Mission there.

The Báb declared His Mission at the age of twenty-four, on 23 May 1844. His title, “the Báb”, which means “the Gate”, means that He is the Way to Bahá’u’lláh. The Báb always referred to the “One Whom God shall make Manifest”. He even said that His dearest wish was to give His life in the path of the One Whom God shall make Manifest.

Now what He intended by the term Báb [Gate] was this, that He was the channel of grace from some great Person still behind the veil of glory, Who was the possessor of countless and boundless perfections, by Whose will He moved, and to the bond of Whose love He clung.⁶

Also:

O Thou Remnant of God! I have sacrificed myself wholly for Thee; I have accepted curses for Thy sake, and have yearned for naught but martyrdom in the path of Thy love.⁷

In many passages of His Writings, the Báb explained that the One Whom God would make Manifest would soon appear before the eyes of men and anyone who followed Him would be honoured in both worlds. Anyone who did not recognize Him would be deprived of the blessings of God. In this way, the Báb prepared the people for the coming of Bahá'u'lláh.

1.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

1.4 Questions

- 1 Where is Shíráz?
- 2 When and where did the Báb declare His Mission?
- 3 What message did the Báb bring from God?
- 4 What was the dearest wish of the Báb?

1.5 Assignments

- 1 Write a paragraph about the Declaration of the Báb.
- 2 Prepare and give a brief talk about the Declaration of the Báb.

(Teacher: invite a few of the students to give a short talk about the subject and encourage them in their efforts.)

1.6 Closing Prayer

1.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please share the story of the Báb, which we learnt, with the members of your family.”

2 The Effect of the Declaration of the Báb

2.1 Opening Prayer

2.2 Lesson and Discussion

After the Báb declared His Mission, the news of His Declaration became the talk of the town. The clergy rose against Him and organized a meeting with the governor of the province. The governor was forced to summon the Báb to a public meeting where He was interrogated. The governor, in the presence of the clergy, insulted the Báb and blamed Him for spreading false claims. The Báb disagreed with the governor and maintained that He was Who He claimed to be. The governor ordered one of his men to inflict physical punishment on the Báb by slapping Him. This was done with such force that the Báb's turban fell off and the imprint of the hand appeared on the Báb's face.

On the orders of the clergy, people began to harm the followers of the Báb so that others would be frightened and would not follow Him. One example of the harm inflicted upon the followers of the Báb was the treatment given to three learned men in Shíráz who had declared their belief in Him. These three spiritual and learned men were made to walk the streets of Shíráz barefoot, and with their clothes torn by the mob, to serve as an example of what might happen to someone who believed in the Báb. Despite all this, many people did believe in the Báb and began to teach others about His Message. They suffered at the hands of the mob but, under extremely difficult conditions, continued to share the Báb's Message with others.

As the Báb's circle of influence increased, the clergy began to worry. Once again they approached the governor and insisted that the only way to stop the Báb and His followers was to kill Him and some of His followers. The clergy's insistence finally paid off, and the governor of the province and the Sháh of Írán ordered that the Báb leave Shíráz and move to the next city. After a short stay in the next city, the Báb was moved, under guard, to Tabríz,

then to Máh-Kú and subsequently Chihríq. Following tremendous hardship, the Báb was finally brought to Tabríz in order to be executed in an attempt to stop the progress of His Faith and to destroy the hope of His followers.

2.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

2.4 Questions

- 1 What did the clergy do after the Báb declared His Mission?
- 2 How was the Báb treated in the presence of the clergy when He was interrogated?
- 3 To which city was the Báb finally taken and what was the final aim of the clergy?

2.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay in your own note book and underline the section about what happened to the Báb after declaring His Mission.
- 2 Give a talk on the same topic.

2.6 Closing Prayer

2.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please think about the life of the Báb, every day, after you say your prayers.”

3 The Martyrdom of the Báb

3.1 Opening Prayer

3.2 Lesson and Discussion

Tabríz is one of the larger cities in Írán and is the provincial capital of Ádhirbáyján in north-western Írán. On 9 July 1850, many people in the city gathered in the main square, and some sat on the rooftops of nearby buildings. The Báb had been imprisoned in one of the rooms next to the square. People knew that, on the instructions of the Prime Minister of Írán, and through the verdict of the clergy, the Báb would be executed that very day.

An iron nail was hammered into the middle of the staircase of the very cell wherein they were imprisoned, and two ropes were hung down. By one rope the Báb was suspended and by the other rope Áqá Muḥammad-‘Alí, both being firmly bound in such wise that the head of that young man was on the Báb’s breast. The surrounding housetops billowed with teeming crowds. A regiment of soldiers ranged itself in three files. The first file fired; then the second file, and then the third file discharged volleys. From the fire of these volleys a mighty smoke was produced. When the smoke cleared away they saw that young man standing and the Báb seated by the side of His amanuensis Áqá Siyyid Ḥusayn in the very cell from the staircase of which they had suspended them. To neither one of them had the slightest injury resulted.

Sám Khán the Christian [colonel of the regiment] asked to be excused; the turn of service came to another regiment, and the chief of the farráshes withheld his hand. Áqá Ján Big of Khamsih, colonel of the bodyguard, advanced; and they again bound the Báb together with that young man to the same nail. The Báb uttered certain words which those few who knew Persian understood, while the rest heard but the sound of His voice.

The colonel of the regiment appeared in person: and it

was before noon on the twenty-eighth day of Sha‘bán in the year [AH] one thousand two hundred and sixty-six*. Suddenly he gave orders to fire. At this volley the bullets produced such an effect that the breasts [of the victims] were riddled, and their limbs were completely dissected, except their faces, which were but little marred.⁸

After enduring much hardship, the Báb attained His most cherished desire: to offer His Life for the love of Bahá’u’lláh and become a martyr in the path of God. His sacred body was finally put to rest in Haifa during the time of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. His resting-place is known as the Shrine of the Báb and is considered as one of the most sacred places in the whole world. (The teacher should show a photograph of the Shrine of the Báb to the children.)

3.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

3.4 Questions

3.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay about the martyrdom of the Báb
- 2 Give a brief talk about the martyrdom of the Báb.

3.6 Closing Prayer

3.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please think about why the Báb sacrificed His life in the path of God and what this means to us Bahá’ís.”

* 9 July 1850

4 After the Martyrdom of the Báb

4.1 Opening Prayer

4.2 Lesson and Discussion

Ṭihrán is the capital city of Írán. It is a large and beautiful city. The wide streets and fine buildings give the city a certain elegance. Bahá'ís have high regard for this city because it was the home of Bahá'u'lláh.

When the Báb declared His Mission in Shíráz, Bahá'u'lláh was living in Ṭihrán. When Bahá'u'lláh heard of the message of the Báb, He set out to teach members of His own family and relations in His village and then directed His efforts towards teaching others. Although Bahá'u'lláh was a follower of the Báb for a few years, it was quite evident to some that He was someone special and a leader of the Bábís.

The Báb constantly reminded the Bábís of the station of Bahá'u'lláh. He said:

When the Day-Star of Bahá will shine resplendent above the horizon of eternity it is incumbent upon you to present yourselves before His Throne.⁹

Also:

The *Bayán* deriveth all its glory from Him Whom God shall make manifest.¹⁰

He would remind them that the One Whom He constantly praised was Bahá'u'lláh. As a result, most Bábís began to follow Bahá'u'lláh and do whatever He commanded.

After the Martyrdom of the Báb, Bahá'u'lláh took on the responsibility of guiding the Bábís. The government began to worry about the spreading influence of Bahá'u'lláh and after a four-month period of imprisonment, they sent Bahá'u'lláh and His family into exile in Baghdád.

4.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

4.4 Questions

- 1 Where is Tīhrán and what is special about it?
- 2 Describe the events leading to Bahá’u’lláh’s exile.

4.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay about the events leading to Bahá’u’lláh’s exile.
- 2 Give a brief talk about the events leading to Bahá’u’lláh’s exile.

4.6 Closing Prayer

4.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the week

“Dear children, please think about the first action of Bahá’u’lláh when he accepted the mission of the Báb.”

5 The Exile of Bahá'u'lláh

5.1 Opening Prayer

5.2 Lesson and Discussion

Baghdád is an old city on the banks of the river Tigris. At the time of Bahá'u'lláh, Baghdád was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The people in the area were Muslims and belonged to the Sunní sect. When the Iranian Government sent Bahá'u'lláh into exile, His immediate family and some of His followers chose to accompany Him. Bahá'u'lláh sent many Tablets from Baghdád to the Bábís in Írán and did His utmost to guide them. Bahá'u'lláh resided in Baghdád for almost ten years, and during this period the fame of the Bábís reached many people in the world. The Bábís had come to be known as good people. The clergy, on the other hand, would constantly turn people against the Bábís and would cause concern in the Government of Írán about the expansion of the Bábí Faith. Finally, at the request of the Iranian Government, an order was given to move Bahá'u'lláh from Baghdád to Istanbul (also known as Constantinople) in Turkey. At that time, Constantinople was the capital city of the Ottoman Empire and one of the most beautiful cities of the region.

On 22 April 1863 Bahá'u'lláh left the city of Baghdád and stayed in a beautiful place known as the Garden of Najíb Páshá, on the outskirts of the city, awaiting the arrival of His family and the rest of His companions. Bahá'u'lláh remained in that garden for twelve days, but on the day of His arrival, He publicly declared His Mission – that He was the One Whom God would make Manifest. It is for this reason that Bahá'ís celebrate the twelve days as the Festival of Riḍván. The Festival of Riḍván is among the most important events in the Bahá'í Faith. Three days during this period are Holy Days, the First, the Ninth and the Twelfth Days of the festive period.

Bahá'ís should not work on these three days.

5.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

5.4 Questions

- 1 Where is the city of Bagħdád?
- 2 Explain the main events of the time when Bahá'u'lláh was in Bagħdád.
- 3 What is the Festival of Riḍván?

5.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay about the Festival of Riḍván.
- 2 Give a brief talk about Bahá'u'lláh's stay in Bagħdád.

5.6 Closing Prayer

5.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please make a map, showing the route of Bahá'u'lláh's exile.”

6 Exile from Constantinople to Adrianople

6.1 Opening Prayer

6.2 Lesson and Discussion

After twelve days' stay in the Garden of Riḍván, Bahá'u'lláh and His entourage left Baghdád in a blaze of glory. Respect fit for royalty was accorded to them. Upon arrival in Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh was given accommodation in the house of a government official. At first, the government treated Bahá'u'lláh with great honour. However, since He did not visit any of the high-ranking officials in the city, and because the Iranian Government constantly turned the city officials against Bahá'u'lláh and His followers, after only four months in Constantinople, He was moved to the city of Adrianople. Adrianople was further away from the borders of Írán. Bahá'u'lláh was sent there specifically in the hope that His Cause would be forgotten and that He would not gain any followers in that region.

Adrianople is another city in Turkey, which is the last East European country bordering the Middle East. The journey to Adrianople took place during the winter. It was cold and raining and the twelve-day journey was made under extremely harsh conditions. Bahá'u'lláh, Who had only known comfort in His early life, was willing to endure such hardship for the sake of guiding humanity, establishing world peace and bringing about the unity of mankind. He suffered this hardship so that the people of the world might be saved from the darkness of disunity, estrangement and misery.

6.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

6.4 Questions

- 1 What was the reason for Bahá'u'lláh's exile from Constantinople to Adrianople?

- 2 Where is Adrianople?
- 3 How was the journey from Constantinople to Adrianople?
- 4 Why did Bahá'u'lláh endure such hardship?

6.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay about Bahá'u'lláh's exile to Constantinople and Adrianople.
- 2 Prepare a talk on the same subject.

6.6 Closing Prayer

6.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please share what you have learnt today with your family and friends.”

7 The Blessed Beauty in ‘Akká

7.1 Opening Prayer

7.2 Lesson and Discussion

After almost five years’ stay in Adrianople, suddenly an order was received to exile Bahá’u’lláh to ‘Akká. This did not come as a surprise to the believers, as Bahá’u’lláh had already told them that soon they would be moved to ‘Akká.

‘Akká was an old city on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. The entire city was surrounded by a wall and was considered a fortress in the olden days. The city had a terrible climate, and at the time of Bahá’u’lláh it was a prison city to which the most unwanted criminals were sent. Bahá’u’lláh and His family arrived in ‘Akká by ship, after enduring many hardships at sea. Bahá’u’lláh, in one of His Tablets, refers to this city as the Most Great Prison. Upon their arrival, the Bahá’ís were surrounded by soldiers who led them to the barracks. On the first night no one had anything to eat or drink. When asked for water, the guards did not respond. After the first day, three loaves of bread were given to the prisoners each day, but the quality was so bad that no one could eat it. Bahá’u’lláh has said the following regarding those days.

The first night all were deprived of either food or drink. . . . They even begged for water, and were refused.¹¹

7.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

7.4 Questions

- 1 How long did Bahá’u’lláh stay in Adrianople and where was He exiled to?
- 2 What type of city was ‘Akká?
- 3 How were the Bahá’ís treated in ‘Akká by the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire?

7.5 Assignments

- 1 Write an essay about Bahá'u'lláh's exile to 'Akká.
- 2 Give a brief talk about Bahá'u'lláh's exile to 'Akká.

7.6 Closing Prayer

7.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children please think and meditate about the suffering of Bahá'u'lláh. Why did He agree to accept these sufferings? Also please complete the map showing the route of Bahá'u'lláh's exile.”

8 Review of Bahá'í Principles

8.1 Opening Prayer

8.2 Lesson and Discussion

Despite all the hardships inflicted on Bahá'u'lláh, He continued to guide humanity and showed them the true way to happiness and prosperity. Some of these guiding principles were discussed in previous years, and more will be discussed this year.

Let us first give a summary of what was learned in previous years:

- 1 A Bahá'í must possess a good character. As 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

To be a Bahá'í is to be the embodiment of all human virtues.¹²

- 2 Bahá'ís should promote unity and avoid estrangement. Bahá'u'lláh says:

O ye men of wisdom among nations! Shut your eyes to estrangement, then fix your gaze upon unity.¹³

Bahá'u'lláh also says:

Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye one with another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship.¹⁴

- 3 Observe cleanliness, including the cutting of nails and regular washing of the body. Bahá'u'lláh says:

It hath been enjoined upon you to pare your nails, to bathe yourselves each week in water that covereth your bodies . . . Immerse yourselves in clean water; it is not permissible to bathe yourselves in water that hath already been used.¹⁵

- 4 Observe cleanliness, including washing the feet regularly when washing the whole body is not possible.

Bahá'u'lláh says:

Wash your feet once every day in summer, and once every three days during winter.¹⁶

5 Always use utensils for eating food.* Bahá'u'lláh says:

Take heed lest, when partaking of food, ye plunge your hands into the contents of bowls and platters. Adopt ye such usages as are most in keeping with refinement.¹⁷

6 Observe cleanliness under all conditions. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

And although bodily cleanliness is a physical thing, it hath, nevertheless, a powerful influence on the life of the spirit.¹⁸

7 It is necessary always to tell the truth. Bahá'u'lláh says:

Let truthfulness and courtesy be your adorning.¹⁹

'Abdu'l-Bahá also talked about the importance of speaking the truth. He said:

Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues.²⁰

8 Recite prayers at dawn and read the Holy Writings every day. Bahá'u'lláh says:

Blessed is he who, at the hour of dawn, centring his thoughts on God, occupied with His remembrance, and supplicating His forgiveness . . .²¹

He also said:

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide.²²

9 Be kind to animals. 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

Unless ye must,
Bruise not the serpent in the dust,
How much less wound a man.
And if ye can,
No ant should ye alarm,
Much less a brother harm.²³

10 The importance of obedience to parents. Bahá'u'lláh says the best fruit of human life

*Not yet universally binding.

. . . after recognition of the unity of God, praised and glorified be He, is regard for the rights that are due to one's parents. This teaching hath been mentioned in all the Books of God, and reaffirmed by the Most Exalted Pen. Consider that which the Merciful Lord hath revealed in the Qur'án, exalted are His words: "Worship ye God, join with Him no peer or likeness; and show forth kindness and charity towards your parents . . ." Observe how loving-kindness to one's parents hath been linked to recognition of the one true God!²⁴

11 Bahá'u'lláh warns us against fighting:

. . . and beware lest your hands or tongues cause harm unto anyone among mankind.²⁵

Bahá'u'lláh also says:

Strife and conflict befit the beasts of the wild.²⁶

12 Bahá'ís should by all means avoid the use of foul language, as Bahá'u'lláh tells us:

Verily I say, the tongue is for mentioning what is good, defile it not with unseemly talk.²⁷

13 Bahá'ís are not to enter another person's home or use another person's belongings, except with permission of the owner. Bahá'u'lláh tells us:

. . . no man should enter the house of his friend save at his friend's pleasure, nor lay hands upon his treasures . . .²⁸

14 Observe politeness and good manners, as Bahá'u'lláh says:

O people of God! I admonish you to observe courtesy, for above all else it is the prince of virtues.²⁹

15 Consult trained and experienced doctors when one is ill. Bahá'u'lláh says:

Resort ye, in times of sickness, to competent physicians; We have not set aside the use of material means, rather have We confirmed it through this Pen . . .³⁰

8.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

8.4 Questions

- 1 Review the laws and ordinances of Bahá'u'lláh mentioned in this lesson.

8.5 Assignment

- 1 Write down all the Holy Writings in this lesson in beautiful handwriting and decorate them.
- 2 Decorate your classroom with them or keep them for the time of your class exhibition.

8.6 Closing Prayer

8.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children please memorize the Holy Writings, which you have not yet memorized from this lesson.”

9 Using Clean Water

9.1 Opening Prayer

9.2 Lesson and Discussion (theme continued from previous lesson)

Another command of Bahá'u'lláh is to use clean water. In the Most Holy Book, the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, He says:

Immerse yourselves in clean water; it is not permissible to bathe yourselves in water that hath already been used.³¹

Bahá'u'lláh again says:*

See that ye approach not the public pools of Persian baths; whoso maketh his way toward such baths will smell their fetid odour ere he entereth therein . . . Avoid ye likewise the malodorous pools in the courtyards of Persian homes, and be ye of the pure and sanctified.³²

Use of water from a pool where the water is stagnant should also be avoided. Stagnant water changes colour and smell and is not suitable for use by a human being. This is important for us to know, if we want to follow the commandment of Bahá'u'lláh when He says:

Wash ye every soiled thing with water that hath undergone no alteration in any one of the three respects†; take heed not to use water that hath been altered through exposure to the air or to some other agent.³³

And 'Abdu'l-Bahá tells us:

Once the individual is, in every respect, cleansed and purified, then will he become a focal centre reflecting the Manifest Light.³⁴

'Abdu'l-Bahá further says:

* Not yet universally binding.

† Changes in the colour, taste or smell of the water (*Kitáb-i-Aqdas* note 105)

Even in the physical realm, cleanliness will conduce to spirituality, as the Holy Writings clearly state.³⁵

Bahá'ís must therefore regard cleanliness as one of their distinguishing characteristics. The following are simplified statements of some of the other commandments of Bahá'u'lláh from the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*:

- 1 Keep your clothes clean at all times.
- 2 Cleanliness helps us to be more spiritual and when we are clean our prayers are more effective.
- 3 Use perfume
- 4 Be the essence of cleanliness

9.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

9.4 Questions

- 1 Why has Bahá'u'lláh emphasized the use of clean water?
- 2 What are the advantages of using clean water?

9.5 Assignment

- 1 Copy two passages from the Writings of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in beautiful handwriting. Decorate them nicely and hang them in your classroom or keep them for the class exhibition.

9.6 Closing Prayer

9.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear Children, please discuss the matter of using clean water with the members of your family and share with them what you have learnt.”

10 Reading the Holy Writings Every Morning and Evening

10.1 Opening Prayer

10.2 Lesson and Discussion

Another command of Bahá'u'lláh is to study the Holy Writings every morning and evening. In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* Bahá'u'lláh reveals:

Recite ye the verses of God every morn and eventide.
Whoso faileth to recite them hath not been faithful to the
Covenant of God and His Testament . . .³⁶

Bahá'u'lláh commands us to study the Holy Writings so as to understand the purpose of God for today. He says:

Immerse yourselves in the ocean of My words, that ye may
unravel its secrets, and discover all the pearls of wisdom
that lie hid in its depths.³⁷

If we do not study the Holy Writings in the mornings and evenings, we may gradually begin to forget God.

In the *Hidden Words*, Bahá'u'lláh has revealed:

The healer of all thine ills is remembrance of Me, forget it
not.³⁸

The best time to commune with God is at dawn, as God has set dawn as the time of worship and commands us to wake up early in the morning for this purpose. In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* Bahá'u'lláh says:

Blessed is he who, at the hour of dawn, centring his
thoughts on God, occupied with His remembrance, and
supplicating His forgiveness, directeth his steps to the
Mashriqu'l-Adhkár and, entering therein, seateth himself
in silence to listen to the verses of God, the Sovereign, the
Mighty, the All-Praised.³⁹

The children should memorize the following passage from the *Hidden Words*:

Many a dawn hath the breeze of My loving-kindness wafted over thee and found thee upon the bed of heedlessness fast asleep. Bewailing then thy plight it returned whence it came.⁴⁰

We must therefore heed the command of Bahá'u'lláh and study the Holy Writings in the morning and evening and remember that the best time of our lives is when we are in communion with God. Studying the Holy Writings is like food for our soul. As our physical body needs food every day, our soul needs spiritual food, in the morning and in the evening.

10.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

10.4 Questions

- 1 Why is it important that we study the Writings every morning and evening?
- 2 What will happen if we do not study the Writings every morning and evening?

10.5 Assignment

- 1 Copy a passage from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh in beautiful handwriting and decorate it. Hang it in your classroom or keep it for the class exhibition.
- 2 Give a brief talk as a summary of this lesson.

10.6 Closing Prayer

10.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, consult with your parents on the best way to make sure that there will be enough time for you to read the Holy Writings every day, early in the morning and in the evening.”

[The teacher may refer here to note on page vi. (Editor)]

11 Not Shaving One's Head

11.1 Opening prayer

11.2 Lesson and Discussion

Bahá'u'lláh commands us not to shave our heads* and men are forbidden to allow their hair to grow longer than the lobe of their ears.* In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* it is written:

Shave not your heads; God hath adorned them with hair

...⁴¹

Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí, in his book called *Stories from the Delight of Hearts* narrates a story summarized here:

*Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí had been suffering from weak eyes for several years, to such an extent that he was not able to read or write. One day ‘Abdu’l-Bahá asked him about his eyes, and he replied that his eyes were not well. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá told him that in the Kitáb-i-Aqdas it was written that shaving the head was not allowed, so he should refrain from shaving his head and begin to write a few words every day. Mírzá Ḥaydar-‘Alí followed ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s advice, and his eyesight improved.*⁴²

While, on the one hand, shaving one’s head is not allowed, on the other hand, for men to grow their hair long is not acceptable either. We must follow the Laws of Bahá'u'lláh even if we do not understand their wisdom.

11.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

11.4 Questions

- 1 What is Bahá'u'lláh’s commandment regarding shaving one’s head?
- 2 Are men allowed to let their hair grow longer than the lobes of their ears?

* Not yet universally binding

11.5 Assignment

1 Write out a passage from the Holy Writings, decorate it, and hang it in the classroom or keep it for the class exhibition.

11.6 Closing prayer

11.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please try to remember this command of Bahá’-u’lláh.”

12 Avoiding Association with the Ungodly

12.1 Opening Prayer

12.2 Lesson and Discussion

Bahá'u'lláh has commanded the Bahá'ís not to befriend, or associate with the ungodly, but to treasure association with the righteous. He refers to this subject in many of His Tablets. The children should memorize the following two passages from Bahá'u'lláh which are found in the *Hidden Words*:

O Son of Dust! Beware! Walk not with the ungodly and seek not fellowship with him, for such companionship turneth the radiance of the heart into infernal fire.⁴³

He further says:

O My Son! The company of the ungodly increaseth sorrow, whilst fellowship with the righteous cleanseth the rust from off the heart.⁴⁴

To associate with a bad person is like befriending a snake! As much as one avoids encounters with a snake, one should avoid ungodly people.

Children should always avoid ungodly people because such individuals will, in the end, have a bad influence on the people they come into contact with. In the *Hidden Words* Bahá'u'lláh says:

O Son of Dust! Beware! Walk not with the ungodly and seek not fellowship with him, for such companionship turneth the radiance of the heart into infernal fire.⁴⁵

12.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

12.4 Questions

- 1 Who are the ungodly people?
- 2 Why are we supposed to avoid association with the ungodly?

12.5 Assignment

- 1 Copy the Holy Writings in this lesson in beautiful handwriting, decorate them, and hang them in your classroom or keep them for the class exhibition.
- 2 Give a talk about the benefits of associating with righteous people.

12.6 Closing Prayer

12.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, try to remember this important law of Bahá'u'lláh and talk about this with your family.”

13 Kindness to Animals

13.1 Opening Prayer

13.2 Lesson and Discussion

One of the commands of Bahá'u'lláh to the Bahá'ís is not to harm animals nor to overwork those animals used for farming or overload those used for carrying goods.

In the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* Bahá'u'lláh reveals:

Burden not an animal with more than it can bear. We, truly, have prohibited such treatment through a most binding interdiction in the Book.⁴⁶

‘Abdu’l-Bahá says:

Most human beings are sinners, but the beasts are innocent. Surely those without sin should receive the most kindness and love – all except animals which are harmful, such as bloodthirsty wolves, such as poisonous snakes, and similar pernicious creatures, the reason being that kindness to these is an injustice to human beings and to other animals as well. If, for example, ye be tender-hearted toward a wolf, this is but tyranny to a sheep, for a wolf will destroy a whole flock of sheep. A rabid dog, if given the chance, can kill a thousand animals and men. Therefore, compassion shown to wild and ravening beasts is cruelty to the peaceful ones – and so the harmful must be dealt with. But to blessed animals the utmost kindness must be shown, the more the better. Tenderness and loving-kindness are basic principles of God’s heavenly Kingdom. Ye should most carefully bear this matter in mind.⁴⁷

After the study of the above Holy Writings, we, as Bahá'ís, should know how to treat animals and act according to the command of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

13.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

13.4 Questions

- 1 What has Bahá'u'lláh said about caring for animals?
- 2 What has 'Abdu'l-Bahá said about this subject?

13.5 Assignments

- 1 Give a talk about the above subject.
- 2 Copy one of the passages from the Holy Writings in beautiful handwriting and decorate it. Hang it in your classroom or keep it for the class exhibition.

13.6 Closing Prayer

13.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think carefully about what we have discussed today and discuss it with your family.”

14 Learning a New Prayer

14.1 Opening Prayer

14.2 Lesson and Discussion

Today we are going to learn a new prayer by Bahá'u'lláh:

I have wakened in Thy shelter, O my God, and it becometh him that seeketh that shelter to abide within the Sanctuary of Thy protection and the Stronghold of Thy defence. Illuminate my inner being, O my Lord, with the splendours of the Day-Spring of Thy Revelation, even as Thou didst illuminate my outer being with the morning light of Thy favour.⁴⁸

Bahá'u'lláh

14.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

14.4 Closing Prayer

14.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, try to memorize this prayer for next class.”

15 Bahá'u'lláh at Bahjí

15.1 Opening Prayer

15.2 Lesson and Discussion

After Bahá'u'lláh was exiled to 'Akká on the orders of the Ottoman Government, He was not allowed to leave the prison walls for two years. A few people were allowed to leave the prison under guard every day to purchase food for the others. Bahá'ís outside the prison were not allowed to visit Bahá'u'lláh during these two years. Despite such difficult conditions, Bahá'u'lláh constantly encouraged the Bahá'ís not to lose hope. He said that soon the doors of the prison city would be opened to the Bahá'ís and that they would be able to come on pilgrimage.

Despite strict orders from the government, after a few years, the doors were opened, and once again the power of Bahá'u'lláh became evident.

'Abdu'l-Bahá gave an account of this event, which is summarized here:

One day He passed the remark: "I have not gazed on verdure for nine years." . . . I realized that He was longing for the country, and I was sure that whatever I could do towards the carrying out of His wish would be successful. There was in 'Akká at that time a man called Muḥammad Páshá Şafwat, who was very much opposed to us. He had a palace called Mazra'ih, about four miles north of the city, a lovely place, surrounded by gardens and with a stream of running water. I went and called on this Páshá at his home. I said: "Páshá, you have left the palace empty, and are living in 'Akká." He replied: "I am an invalid and cannot leave the city. If I go there it is lonely and I am cut off from my friends." I said: "While you are not living there and the place is empty, let it to us." He was amazed at the proposal but soon consented. I got the house at a very low rent. . . . I sent labourers to repair the place . . . I also had a carriage prepared for the use of the Blessed

Beauty. One day I determined to go and see the place for myself. . . . I walked out through the city gate. Gendarmes were on guard, but they made no objection . . .

One day I went to the Holy Presence of the Blessed Beauty and said: “The palace at Mazra‘ih is ready . . .” He refused to go . . . At last Bahá’u’lláh said, “Khaylí khub (very good)” . . . I took the carriage the next day and drove with Him to the palace. No one made any objection . . .

. . . Then it was decided to remove to another place, at Bahjí . . . We took the house at a very low rent, and there the doors of majesty and true sovereignty were flung wide open. . . .⁴⁹

Bahá’u’lláh, after almost forty years’ imprisonment and having endured much hardship and suffering in His life, passed away at the age of seventy-four, at the Mansion of Bahjí. Bahá’u’lláh was buried next to the Mansion, and His tomb is regarded by the Bahá’ís as the most sacred place on earth and the point of adoration of Bahá’ís all over the world.

15.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

15.4 Questions

- 1 How did Bahá’u’lláh finally leave the prison city of ‘Akká?
- 2 Where did Bahá’u’lláh first go after leaving the prison city?
- 3 In which place did Bahá’u’lláh pass away and how old was He?

15.5 Assignment

- 1 Write a brief essay about the life of Bahá’u’lláh at Bahjí.

15.6 Closing Prayer

15.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think about how the enemies of Bahá’u’lláh were helpless to stop Him from doing what He wanted to.”

16 The Passing of Bahá'u'lláh

16.1 Opening Prayer

16.2 Lesson and Discussion

Before Bahá'u'lláh passed away from this earth, He wrote a book in His own handwriting, sealed it, and gave it to His eldest Son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

Nine days after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh, nine witnesses were called together. 'Abdu'l-Bahá informed them that when Bahá'u'lláh was ill, He had given 'Abdu'l-Bahá a sealed document and told him to open it after His passing and announce publicly its contents. As the document was sealed, 'Abdu'l-Bahá had no knowledge of its contents. 'Abdu'l-Bahá then proceeded to break the seal and open the document and He asked one of those present to read the contents aloud. This is known as the *Book of My Covenant* and a small portion is quoted here:

The Will of the divine Testator is this: It is incumbent upon the Aghşan, the Afnán* and My Kindred to turn, one and all, their faces towards the Most Mighty Branch.⁵⁰

The Most Mighty Branch refers to 'Abdu'l-Bahá. This means that Bahá'u'lláh asked all the Bahá'ís, after He Himself had passed away, to follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá is the Centre of the Covenant.

On the afternoon of the same day, the document was read to a large gathering at the Tomb of Bahá'u'lláh.

16.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

16.4 Questions

I Who is the Centre of the Covenant after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh?

* "Aghşan" refers to sons and daughters of Bahá'u'lláh; "Afnán" refers to relatives of the Báb.

2 What is the Book of My Covenant?

3 Who were the Bahá'ís told to follow after the passing of Bahá'u'lláh?

16.5 Assignment

1 Copy the portion of the *Book of My Covenant* quoted in the lesson in beautiful handwriting. Decorate it, hang it in the classroom and keep it for the class exhibition.

16.6 Closing Prayer

16.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think about the importance of the instructions of Bahá'u'lláh in His *Book of the Covenant*.”

17 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

17.1 Opening Prayer

17.2 Lesson and Discussion

‘Abdu’l-Bahá was the first-born Son of Bahá’u’lláh. Until the age of eight, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá lived in Tīhrán, enjoying a comfortable life. After that, He had no comfort and shared all the hardship and sufferings that Bahá’u’lláh endured.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá shared in all the hardships when Bahá’u’lláh and His family were exiled to Baghdád, Constantinople, Adrianople and, finally, ‘Akká.

Nabil repeats the following story that he had heard from ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

I have heard the Most Great Branch, Who in those days was a child of only eight years of age, recount one of His experiences as He ventured to leave the house in which He was then residing. “We had sought shelter,” He told us, “in the house of My uncle, Mīrzá Ismá‘il. Tīhrán was in the throes of the wildest excitement. I ventured at times to sally forth from that house and to cross the street on My way to the market. I would hardly cross the threshold and step into the street, when boys of My age, who were running about, would crowd around Me crying, ‘Bábi! Bábi!’ Knowing well the state of excitement into which all the inhabitants of the capital, both young and old, had fallen, I would deliberately ignore their clamour and quietly steal away to My home. One day I happened to be walking alone through the market on My way to My uncle’s house. As I was looking behind Me, I found a band of little ruffians running fast to overtake Me. They were pelting Me with stones and shouting menacingly, ‘Bábi! Bábi!’ To intimidate them seemed to be the only way I could avert the danger with which I was threatened. I turned back and rushed towards them with such determination that they fled away in distress and vanished. I could hear their distant cry, ‘The little Bábi is fast pursuing us! He will surely overtake and slay us all!’ As I was directing My steps towards home, I heard a man shouting at the top of his voice: ‘Well done, you brave and fearless child! No one of your age would ever have been able, unaided, to withstand their

attack.’ From that day onward, I was never again molested by any of the boys of the streets, nor did I hear any offensive word fall from their lips.”⁵¹

After the passing of Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá did not rest, even for one day. He continued to lead the Bahá’ís, verbally or in writing, and continued to provide the Bahá’í world with advice. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was a father to the orphans and a haven for the poor. He took the Message of Bahá’u’lláh to the West and proclaimed it to the world. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá passed away at the age of seventy-seven and is buried on Mount Carmel within the Shrine of the Báb. His resting-place is visited by Bahá’ís and non-Bahá’ís alike.

17.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

17.4 Questions

- 1 Who is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
- 2 From what age did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá begin to share the sufferings of Bahá’u’lláh?
- 3 What did ‘Abdu’l-Bahá do after the passing of Bahá’u’lláh?

17.5 Assignment

- 1 Write a summary of the lesson learnt.

17.6 Closing Prayer

17.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please share the story of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá with your family.”

18 Learning a New Prayer

18.1 Opening prayer

18.2 Lesson and Discussion

This is one of the prayers of Bahá'u'lláh, which would be nice for you to memorize:

O Thou Whose face is the object of my adoration, Whose beauty is my sanctuary, Whose habitation is my goal, Whose praise is my hope, Whose providence is my companion, Whose love is the cause of my being, Whose mention is my solace, Whose nearness is my desire, Whose presence is my dearest wish and highest aspiration, I entreat Thee not to withhold from me the things Thou didst ordain for the chosen ones among Thy servants. Supply me, then, with the good of this world and of the next.

Thou, truly, art the King of all men. There is no God but thee, the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Generous.⁵²

Bahá'u'lláh

18.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

18.4 Closing Prayer

18.5 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please memorize this prayer.”

[The teacher may refer here to note on page vi. (Editor)]

19 A Song about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

19.1 Opening Prayer

19.2 Lesson and Discussion

The following song is about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Look at Me, Follow Me

(Lyrics derived from the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá)

Behold a candle,
How it gives its light;
It weeps its life away,
Drop by drop to give its flame.
You must die to the world,
And so be born again;
And enter to the Kingdom
of Heaven.

Chorus:

Look at Me, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

You are the angels,
If your feet be firm;
Be steadfast as a rock,
That no earthly storm can move.
And as you have faith,
So shall your powers be;
And know that in the end I’m always
with you.

Chorus:

Look at Me, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Love mankind, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

And how I long to travel the world,
In utmost poverty;
And cry out “Ya Bahá!”
God willing you will do this for me.

Chorus:

Teach mankind, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Serve the Cause, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

Look at Me, follow Me, be as I am;
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá,
‘Abdu’l-Bahá, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

19.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

19.4 Questions

- 1 Who is ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?
- 2 Why do we follow ‘Abdu’l-Bahá?

19.5 Assignment

- 1 Try to learn this song.
- 2 Write an essay about the message this song is trying to give to us about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá.

19.6 Closing Prayer

19.7 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear Children, try to see if you can memorize this song.”

20 Meeting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá

20.1 Opening Prayers

20.2 Lesson and Discussion

The following are opinions and views of some of the prominent people who had the bounty of visiting ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

Edward Granville Browne, a prominent non-Bahá’í historian from the West, who visited ‘Abdu’l-Bahá during the time of Bahá’u’lláh has written:

Seldom have I seen one whose appearance impressed me more. A tall, strongly-built man holding himself straight as an arrow, with white turban and raiment, long black locks reaching almost to the shoulder, broad powerful forehead, indicating a strong intellect combined with an unswerving will, eyes keen as a hawk’s, and strongly-marked but pleasing features – such was my first impression of ‘Abbás Effendi . . .⁵³

There have been so many articles written about ‘Abdu’l-Bahá that it would be impossible for us to include them all. Here is one written by a pilgrim:

It is the custom of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá each week, on Friday morning, to distribute alms to the poor. From his own scanty store he gives a little to each one of the needy who come to ask assistance. This morning about one hundred were ranged in line, seated and crouching upon the ground in the open street of the court where ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s house stands. And such a nondescript collection of humanity they were. All kinds of men, women and children – poor, wretched, hopeless in aspect, half-clothed, many of them crippled and blind, beggars indeed, poor beyond expression – waiting expectant – until from the doorway came ‘Abdu’l-Bahá. . . . dropping small coins into each eager outstretched palm, touching the face of a child, . . . speaking words of light to old men with sightless eyes, inquiring after those

too feeble and wretched to come for their pittance of help, and sending them their portion with a message of love and uplift.⁵⁴

It is however obvious that not only Bahá'ís have declared their total obedience to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, but prominent non-Bahá'ís became humble in His presence. What a bounty to be a Bahá'í and as such follow 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

20.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

20.4 Questions

- 1 What did 'Abdu'l-Bahá do every Friday?
- 2 Who is 'Abbás Effendi?
- 3 What does Effendi mean?

20.5 Assignment

- 1 Write a short essay about the views of others about 'Abdu'l-Bahá.
- 2 Give a talk on the opinion of others about 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

20.6 Closing Prayer

20.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think of how a man like 'Abdu'l-Bahá Who was outwardly a prisoner, could influence people from all over the world, if it were not for the Power of God.

21 ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament

21.1 Opening Prayers

21.2 Lesson and Discussion

Forty days after the passing of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, His Will and Testament was read in the presence of a number of Bahá’ís in the Holy Land. It was announced that ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s grandson, Shoghi Effendi was the Guardian of the Faith, to whom all the Bahá’ís should turn for guidance.

The following is an extract from the Will and Testament of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá:

O my loving friends! After the passing away of this wronged one, it is incumbent upon the Aghṣan (Branches), the Afnán (Twigs) of the Sacred Lote-Tree, the Hands (pillars) of the Cause of God and the loved ones of the Abhá Beauty to turn unto Shoghi Effendi – the youthful branch branched from the two hallowed and sacred Lote-Trees and the fruit grown from the union of the two offshoots of the Tree of Holiness, – as he is the sign of God, the chosen branch, the Guardian of the Cause of God, he unto whom all the Aghṣan, the Afnán, the Hands of the Cause of God and His loved ones must turn. He is the Interpreter of the Word of God . . .

. . . whoso opposeth him hath opposed God . . . the Hands of the Cause must . . . so soon as they find anyone beginning to oppose and protest against the Guardian of the Cause of God, cast him out from the congregation of the people of Bahá and in no wise accept any excuse from him.⁵⁵

Bahá’ís in the East and in the West, after studying or hearing the contents of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá’s Will and Testament, expressed their allegiance to Shoghi Effendi and with utmost humility proclaimed their fidelity to him.

21.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

21.4 Questions

- 1 What is a Will and Testament?
- 2 When was the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá read to the Bahá'ís?
- 3 What is the main instruction of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to the Bahá'ís, in his Will?

21.5 Assignment

- 1 Copy a portion of the Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá in beautiful handwriting, decorate it, hang it in your classroom or keep it for the class exhibition.
- 2 Give a talk containing a summary of the lesson learnt.

21.6 Closing Prayers

21.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, please read the passage from 'Abdu'l-Bahá's Will and Testament at home.”

22 Shoghi Effendi

22.1 Opening Prayer

22.2 Discussion and Lesson

Shoghi Effendi is the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith. He was born in 'Akká on 4 November 1897. He was the grandson of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. His mother was the daughter of 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

The Guardian spent his early days in 'Akká under the guidance of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá showed so much love and affection towards the Guardian that many people of insight recognized his greatness even in his childhood and knew that no one else but him would deserve to be the successor of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the Guardian of the Faith. The Will and Testament of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was written when the Guardian was a small child, which indicates that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was aware of the station of Shoghi Effendi from very early on. After the passing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Bahá'ís all over the world understood that to obey Shoghi Effendi was to obey God, and they stood firm in the Covenant and served Shoghi Effendi.

22.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

22.4 Questions

- 1 Who is Shoghi Effendi?
- 2 Where and when was he born?
- 3 Who appointed Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith?

22.5 Assignment

- 1 In your own words, write what 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote in His Will and Testament about Shoghi Effendi.
- 2 Give a brief talk about what 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote about Shoghi Effendi, in His Will and Testament.

22.6 Closing Prayer

22.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear Children, think how kind ‘Abdu’l-Bahá was to appoint Shoghi Effendi as the Guardian of the Bahá’í Faith, who guided the Bahá’ís to many victories.

23 Learning a New Prayer

23.1 Opening Prayer

23.2 Lesson and Discussion

We all know the importance of praying, and in our Faith there are many prayers. It is always good to learn new ones. Here is another prayer for you to memorize:

O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit. Purify my heart. Illumine my powers. I lay all my affairs in Thy hand. Thou art my Guide and my Refuge. I will no longer be sorrowful and grieved; I will be a happy and joyful being. O God! I will no longer be full of anxiety, nor will I let trouble harass me. I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.

O God! Thou art more friend to me than I am to myself. I dedicate myself to Thee, O Lord. ⁵⁶

‘Abdu’l-Bahá

23.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children’s Cleanliness

23.4 Closing Prayer

23.5 Teacher’s Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, try to memorize this prayer.”

24 The Universal House of Justice

24.1 Opening Prayer

24.2 Lesson and Discussion

We have talked a little before about the Universal House of Justice.

Can anybody share with us what he or she remembers?

The Universal House of Justice is the fulfilment of God's promise to man that He would never leave us alone. Bahá'u'lláh revealed for us how to form the Universal House of Justice so that we would always receive divine guidance.

In your area, one or more delegates are elected at a Unit Convention, and delegates from all over the country elect the National Spiritual Assembly. The National Spiritual Assemblies all over the world elect the Universal House of Justice. The Universal House of Justice is the supreme body of the Bahá'í Faith. Its Seat is on Mount Carmel in Haifa, in the Holy Land.

The Universal House of Justice attends to all the problems of the Bahá'í world. The nine members meet and discuss all important and difficult matters, and they always find an answer. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the Universal House of Justice can never make a mistake, because it is protected by Bahá'u'lláh and it receives guidance from the Holy Spirit.

Every Bahá'í obeys the Universal House of Justice just as they obeyed 'Abdu'l-Bahá and Shoghi Effendi. We are very lucky to have this blessed institution.

Here are some words from 'Abdu'l-Bahá that help us understand more about this Institution:

If that House of Justice shall decide unanimously, or by a majority, upon any question not mentioned in the Book, that decision and command will be guarded from mistake.⁵⁷

He also says:

Unto the Most Holy Book every one must turn, and all that is not expressly recorded therein must be referred to the Universal House of Justice. That which this body, whether unanimously or by a majority doth carry, that is verily the truth and the purpose of God Himself. Whoso doth deviate therefrom is verily of them that love discord, hath shown forth malice, and turned away from the Lord of the Covenant.⁵⁸

24.3 Break: Songs, Games, Student Registration and Children's Cleanliness

24.4 Questions

- 1 How is the Universal House of Justice elected?
- 2 How does the Universal House of Justice receive guidance?
- 3 Who promised us that the Universal House of Justice is free from all error?

24.5 Assignment

- 1 Write a brief essay about the Universal House of Justice.
- 2 Give a brief talk about the Universal House of Justice.

24.6 Closing Prayer

24.7 Teacher's Suggestion for the Week

“Dear children, think how happy we should be as Bahá'ís to have the Universal House of Justice, the source of divine guidance after Shoghi Effendi.

[The teacher may refer here to note on page vi. (Editor)]

25 Year-End Celebration

The celebration is organized with the full participation of the students and held in the presence of their parents and close family friends. Members or representatives of the Local Spiritual Assembly and Child Education Committee, as well as members of the Auxiliary Board and their assistants, are also invited.

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