



The Baha'i Faith



How did this new faith begin?

- Grew out of Shi'ite Islam in 19th century Persia (Iran)
- 1844: declaration of The Bab (“gate”) as a prophet, proclaiming the coming of a new messenger of God (b. 1819, d. 1850)
- 1863: declaration of Baha’u’llah (the “Glory of God”) as the fulfillment of this prophecy (b. 1817, d. 1892)

Progressive Revelation

Revelation from God is on-going:

- God has communicated with each culture throughout the ages through prophets
- Nine “manifestations” of God:
Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, The Bab, Baha’u’llah
and more to come as humanity continues to mature
- Each religion is unique for each time and place, yet they are all one - each a continuation and advancement on the one before

Progressive Revelation



"There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and exigencies of the age in which they were revealed. All of them... were ordained of God, and are a reflection of His Will and Purpose." —Bahá'u'lláh

Krishna Detachment		Hindu India 2000 B.C.*	
Moses Justice		Judaism Egypt 1330 B.C.*	
Zoroaster Purity		Zoroastrian Persia 1000 B.C.*	
Buddha Peace and Meditation		Buddhist India 560 B.C.	
Jesus Christ Love		Christian Palestine 1 A.D.	
Muhammad Submission to the Will of God		Islam Arabia 622 A.D.	
The Báb Universality		Bábí Persia 1844 A.D.	
Bahá'u'lláh The Oneness of God The Oneness of Religion The Oneness of Mankind		Bahá'í Persia 1863 A.D.	

* Dates approximate

Mankind

"The purpose of the one true God in manifesting Himself is to summon all mankind to truthfulness and sincerity, to piety and trustworthiness, to resignation and submissiveness to the Will of God, to forbearance and kindness, to uprightness and wisdom. His object is to array every man with the mantle of a saintly character, and to adorn him with the ornament of holy and goodly deeds." —Bahá'u'lláh

The Golden Rule

as it appears in various religious texts.

Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. *Buddhism*

What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man. That is the entire law;
all the rest is commentary. *Judaism*

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. *Christianity*

No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he
desires for himself. *Islam*

Wish not for others what ye wish not for yourselves; fear God, and be
not of the prideful. *Bahá'í Faith*



What did Baha'u'llah teach?

- A new revelation for the new global society of all humanity under one God:
“The earth is one country and mankind its citizens”
- Spiritual teachings of all religions are universal and eternal
- Social teachings must be updated as humanity matures...

Principle teachings of the Bahá'í Faith

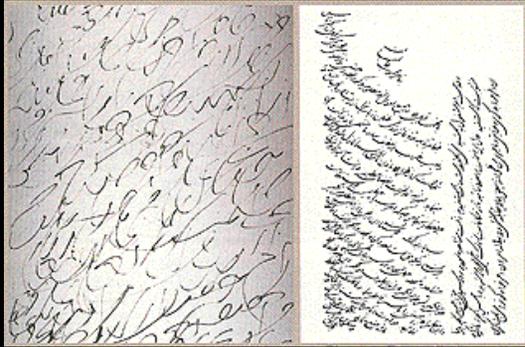
The prescription that Bahá'u'lláh is offering the world.

- Religion must be the cause of unity
- Independent investigation of truth
- Full equality of opportunity between women and men
- The abolition of all forms of prejudice
- Universal peace upheld by an international tribunal
- Universal education
- A universal auxiliary language
- Religion must be harmonious with science
- Spiritual solutions for economic problems



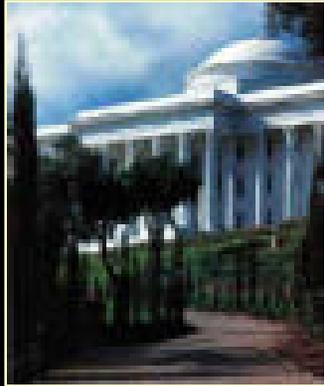
Early Leadership

- **Baha'u'llah** – taught from life-long house arrest in Acre, Palestine (now near Haifa, in Israel)
- His son, **Abdu'l - Baha** (b. 1844, d. 1921) – spread the new faith, through writings and travel, throughout the world to Europe, the Americas, India, Africa...
- Abdu'l - Baha's grandson, **Shoghi Effendi** (1897 – 1957) wrote many basic books on the Baha'i Faith and restructured its organization to what it is today



Sacred Writings

- The only religion whose sacred texts were written by the hand of its prophet during his lifetime
- Many books and letters revealed through and written by Baha'u'llah. Among the more important:
 - **Kitab-i-aqdas** (“The Most Holy Book” – basic rules and ordinances of the faith)
 - **Kitáb-i-Iqán** (“The Book of Certitude”)
 - **Hidden Words** (a collection of prayers)
 - **Gleanings** (from the writings of Baha'u'llah)
 - **Seven Valleys** (a mystical, metaphorical text)
- Other important writings by Abdu'l – Baha and Shoghi Effendi



Organizational Structure

- 1963: The Universal House of Justice – headquarters in Haifa, Israel, headed by nine officials elected every five years by and from among Baha’is world-wide
- National and local “spiritual assemblies,” each comprised of nine elected leaders
- “Local Baha’i communities” of at least nine adult Baha’is within a given geographic locale, gather regularly for study, discussion, and spiritual renewal



Sacred Places

- Shrine of the Bab in Haifa, Israel New Delhi, India
- Shrine of Baha'u'llah (his burial site) Acre, Israel
- Seven Baha'i Temples worldwide (one on each continent):



Uganda, Africa



Sydney, Australia



Frankfurt,
Germany

Western Samoa



Panama City, Panama

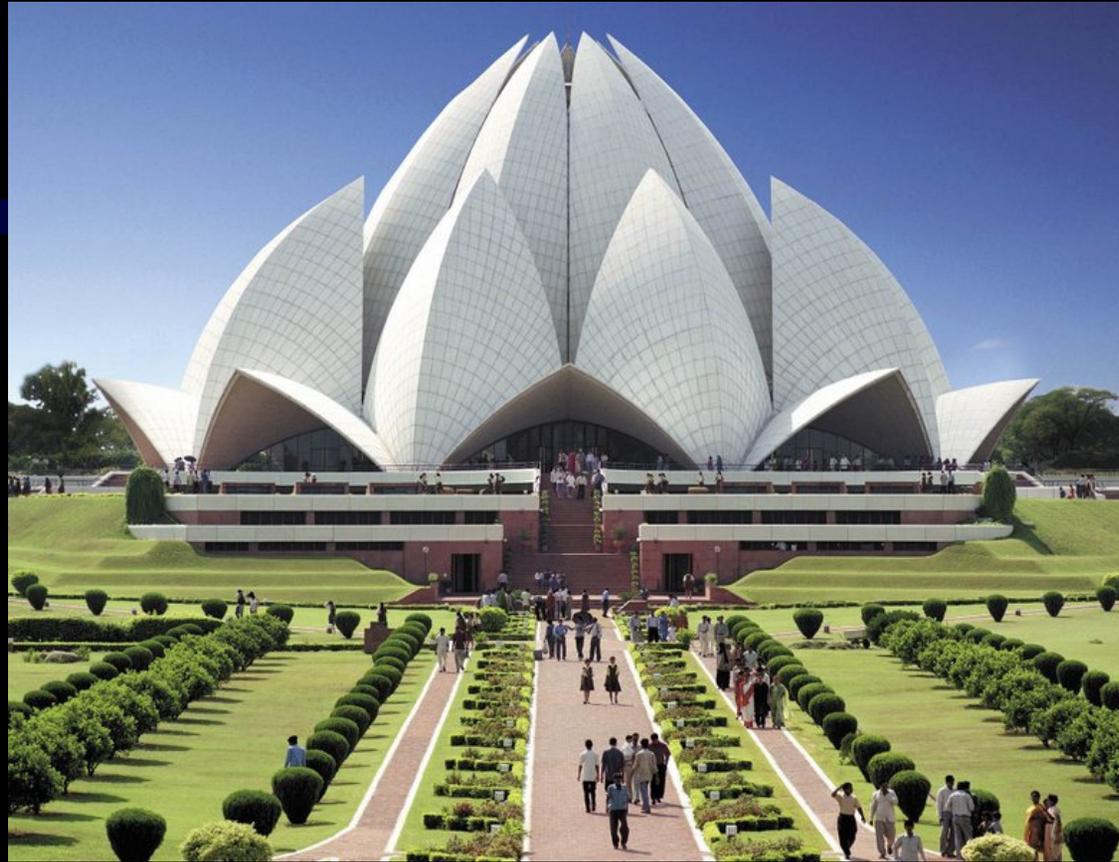
Chicago, USA



The Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel, Haifa, Israel



Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois
North of Chicago, Illinois



Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India

The "Lotus Temple" of India



The Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh
at Bahji, in Israel north of 'Akká.
This is the spot to which Bahá'ís turn
when saying the daily obligatory prayer.



The Baha'i Calendar

A new calendar for a new age:

- 19 months of 19 days each (361 days)
- Plus 4 or 5 intercalary days (Feb 26 – March 1)
- Last month, March 2 – 20, a month of fasting, sun-up to sun-down
- The new year (Naw Ruz) begins on March 21, the spring equinox

Baha'is observe nine annual holy days...



Holy Days

- New-Year – March 21
- 12 days of **Ridvan** (commemorating the declaration of Baha'u'llah) April 21 – May 2
- Declaration of the Bab – May 23
- Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh - May 29
- Martyrdom of The Báb – July 9
- Birth of The Báb - October 20
- Birth of Bahá'u'lláh – November 12
- Day of Covenant – November 26
- Ascension of Abdu'l – Baha – November 28

Work is suspended, some fast days, community gatherings for observance



NOVA Baha'i Center Sterling, Virginia





Web Resources

- The Baha'i World: "Official international site for the Baha'i Faith... a comprehensive, informative and attractive web site designed for the individual wishing to acquire a basic, introductory view of the world's newest religion" <http://www.bahai.org/>
- The Baha'i Faith: "Official US site for the Baha'i Faith" <http://www.us.bahai.org/>
- <http://www.bahai.com/welcome.htm>: maintained by an individual Baha'i, not an "official" site but rich in resources, including links to other sites. Includes the online version of the Baha'i Magazine: <http://www.bahai.com/thebahais/index.htm>