

The Bahá'í Faith is a world religion, undivided and non-partisan, whose purpose is to unify humanity in one universal Cause, one Common Faith. Bahá'ís are followers of Bahá'u'lláh, whose name means “The Glory of God”, who affirms He is the Promised One of all ages.

*“That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith.”*

— Bahá'u'lláh

God is the Creator of all things and is unknowable in His essence. He created us out of love, and His love flows to us through His Eternal Covenant.

*“I loved thy creation, hence I created thee. Wherefore, do thou love Me, that I may name thy name and fill thy soul with the spirit of life.”*

— Bahá'u'lláh

The Bahá'í Faith teaches that God's revelation is recurrent and progressive; that all Divine religions come from the same source; and that all religious truth is relative, not absolute. God provides humanity His guidance at all times and reveals it to us through His Messengers, such as Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. They are like perfect mirrors reflecting the Will of God, and there is no distinction between Them.

The basic teachings of the Bahá'í Faith revolve around the principle of unity — of God, religion, and humankind.

## Brief History of the Bahá'í Faith

In 1844, a young merchant of Shiraz (Persia), named Siyyid 'Ali Muhammad, suddenly began to teach a new Faith in that land. He assumed the title of The Báb, which translates as “The Gate”. The Báb taught that a new spiritual era was at hand. He urged the highest standard of character. He promised that within nineteen years “Him whom God shall make manifest” would begin to teach and bring to mankind the basic laws and principles for a new age. A wildfire of interest and devoted acceptance of The Báb swept the country. The astonished priests reacted with orthodox fury. In an attempt to completely exterminate the new Faith, they arrested and imprisoned The Báb and instigated systematic persecutions and massacres of His followers. On July 9, 1850, hatred found its climax when The Báb was publicly martyred in the barracks square of the city of Tabriz.

The consternation of the priesthood during these years had been deepened by the fact that many of their own outstanding members had accepted the teachings of The Báb. Mírzá Husayn 'Alí, a young man from an eminent and wealthy family, was among outstanding individuals in other walks of life who also publicly championed The Báb. Mírzá Husayn 'Alí is known to history as Bahá'u'lláh. In 1852, Bahá'u'lláh was imprisoned for four months in the Siyáh Chál, a dreadful underground prison in Tehran. While breathing the stench-filled air of that dungeon, with His feet in stocks and His neck weighed down by mighty chains, Bahá'u'lláh received the first intimations of His station as the Supreme Manifestation of God — He Whose appearance had been foretold by the Prophets of past dispensations.

Immediately after being released from prison, He was exiled to Baghdad by the Persian government in an effort to remove from the country the last effective leader of the detested new faith. Bahá'u'lláh was in exile in Iraq for about ten years. During this time He transformed the outlook and character of the followers of The Báb. His own fame spread to such an extent that scholars and men of renown visited Him in increasing numbers.

The Muslim clergy and the Turkish and Persian governments, as Islamic church-states, could not tolerate the birth of the new faith under Bahá'u'lláh. So it was decreed that Bahá'u'lláh be exiled from Baghdad to Constantinople, on the theory that distance would dissipate His influence — a theory repeatedly tried and repeatedly bringing opposite results. Prior to His departure, Bahá'u'lláh announced to His followers that He was the One Whose coming The Báb had foretold.

After four months in Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh was banished again to Adrianople. Here He publicly proclaimed His message, addressing collectively the temporal and spiritual rulers of the earth. He wrote the first of a series of letters known collectively as the “Tablets to the Kings” in which He addresses them:

*“Lay not aside the fear of God, O kings of the earth, and beware that ye transgress not the bounds which the Almighty hath fixed . . . Be vigilant, that ye may not do injustice to anyone, be it to the extent of a grain of mustard seed. Tread ye the path of justice, for this, verily, is the straight path.”*

In 1868, a fourth and final exile was ordered, this time sending Bahá'u'lláh to the prison-city of 'Akká on the Bay of Haifa in the Holy Land. Bahá'u'lláh was in exile in 'Akká and the surrounding countryside until the end of His life in 1892.

During the forty years of His ministry, Bahá'u'lláh wrote volumes of books in the Persian and Arabic languages on a countless number of spiritual and social topics. The Kitáb-i-Aqdas ("The Most Holy Book") is the mightiest and most exalted of His Writings. It is regarded as the Mother Book of this Dispensation. A book designated by Himself as the '*Source of true felicity*', the '*unerring Balance*', and the '*quickeners of mankind*'.

*"Indeed, the laws of God are like unto the ocean and children of men as fish, did they but know it..."*  
— Bahá'u'lláh

In 1892, Bahá'u'lláh appointed His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, whose name means "Servant of Bahá" as His successor and "Center of the Covenant" toward whom all Bahá'ís should turn, the only authorized interpreter of His father's writings and the perfect exemplar of Bahá'í life.

Through a series of epoch-making travels across North America and Europe, 'Abdu'l-Bahá — by word and example — proclaimed with the essential principles of the Bahá'í Faith. Affirming that "*Love is the most great law*" that is the foundation of '*true civilization*', and that the "*supreme need of humanity is cooperation and reciprocity*" among all its peoples.



## BASIC PRINCIPLES of the Bahá'í Faith

- Oneness of God
- Oneness of religion
- Oneness of mankind
- Independent investigation of truth
- Equality of men and women
- Spiritual solutions to economic problems
- Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty
- Universal peace upheld by world governance
- Harmony of science and religion
- A universal auxiliary language
- Universal compulsory education
- Non-involvement in partisan politics
- Elimination of prejudice of all kinds

To learn more about the Bahá'í Faith and devotional meetings at the Center, please visit or contact us:

[www.novabc.org](http://www.novabc.org)

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# The Bahá'í Faith

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*Welcome to the  
Northern Virginia  
Bahá'í Center*



*"The earth is but one country,  
and mankind its citizens..."*  
— Bahá'u'lláh

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