

# **The Bahá'í Faith**



**Photocopiable worksheets**

**for teachers of R.E.**

**Key Stage 2 (7 -11 yrs)**

Produced by Ann and Paddy Vickers for the Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop

Illustrations by Elena Appleton



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# Information for Teachers

The Bahá'í Faith is the world's seventh largest religion. The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi (the "Lotus Temple") is currently the world's most visited building and the striking Bahá'í gardens on the slopes of Mount Carmel are becoming more well-known. These worksheets give basic information about the history, beliefs and practices of the Bahá'í Faith. The Bahá'í emphasis on the oneness of humanity and its acceptance of the divine origin of the world's major religious systems, may make it a useful topic for pupils to study as part of their Religious Education programme.

This series of photocopiable masters sets out to provide teachers of primary schools with accessible materials which can readily be adapted and built upon. The simple publication format allows the teacher to store his or her additional material alongside these printed pages.

These worksheets are mainly intended for Key Stage 2. A similar set is available for Key Stage 3.

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General information about the Bahá'í Faith can be viewed at [www.bahai.org.uk](http://www.bahai.org.uk).

Books about the Bahá'í Faith can be ordered from:  
[www.bahaibooks.org.uk](http://www.bahaibooks.org.uk).

See Appendix 1 for a list of websites which provide further information on the Bahá'í Faith.

See Appendix 2 for details of leaflets available.

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# The Báb

The Báb was born in Iran in 1819, and in 1844 He declared that He was a Messenger of God. The title “Báb” means “Gate” and He said He was the gateway to the next religion, which would unite the world. This is the courtyard of the house where the Báb lived and where He made this announcement. He brought new teachings and had many followers. But the authorities did not like this and He spent several years in prison.



This is one of the castles where the Báb was held prisoner. You can see it under the rock. In 1850 He was taken to the nearest town to be killed.

A regiment of 750 soldiers was lined up to shoot the Báb but they all missed and He was not harmed. Another regiment was brought in and this time they killed the Báb. But His religion did not finish then. It was just the beginning. In 1863 Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Messenger promised by the Báb. It was thanks to Bahá'u'lláh that the body of the Báb was brought to Haifa and this beautiful Shrine built over His grave.



## Activity

1. Why do you think the authorities thought it necessary to use 750 soldiers to kill the Báb?
2. How do you think the 750 soldiers all missed the Báb?

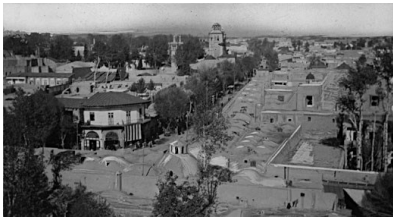


# Bahá'u'lláh - His Early Life

The story of Bahá'u'lláh: part 1 of 3.

Bahá'u'lláh was born in Tehran on the 12th November 1817, in the country of Persia, now called Iran. His parents, who were very wealthy, gave Him the name Husayn Alí. Bahá'u'lláh, which means “the Glory of God”, was a title He took later in life.

Bahá'u'lláh was a very unusual child. His mother was amazed by His good behaviour. He never cried as a baby and was a well-mannered child. He had a deep knowledge and understanding of religion and of the Holy Books. People were amazed by His intelligence and kindness, and they loved talking to Him. He had a strong sense of justice even as a young boy.



Part of the city of Tehran



Bahá'u'lláh's summer home

When He grew up, Bahá'u'lláh married a beautiful young lady called Asíyih Khánum. She was also well known for her kindness to the poor, and her generous nature. The two of them were very rich, and it took 40 mules to carry Asíyih Khánum's belongings to her new home. Even the buttons on her dresses were made of gold inset with precious stones. But the couple were always generous with their money, and looked after the poor and the sick around them. Bahá'u'lláh became known as “The Father of the Poor” and Asíyih Khánum was known as “The Mother of Consolation”.

When Bahá'u'lláh was twenty-two years old, His father, who had held a position in government, died. Bahá'u'lláh was expected to take the position to replace His father, but He was not interested in worldly things such as money, power and influence. Instead He devoted Himself to helping the poor people of Tehran, the city where He lived.

## Activity

1. Why was Bahá'u'lláh an unusual child? List the things which were unusual.
2. Why were Bahá'u'lláh and His wife loved by the poor?
3. EITHER draw a picture of the mules carrying Asíyih Khánum's belongings OR draw a picture of one of Asíyih Khánum's dresses.



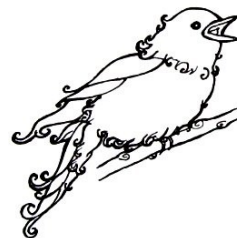
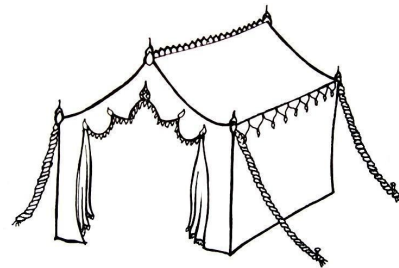
# Bahá'u'lláh's Announcement

The story of Bahá'u'lláh: part 2 of 3.

When Bahá'u'lláh heard about the Báb He became a follower. Then Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and beaten on the soles of His feet and made to walk barefoot to a dungeon called the Black Pit. He had a very heavy chain put around His neck which weighed 50 kilos. He was affected by this for the rest of His life. It was while He was in this awful prison that Bahá'u'lláh realised that He was the Messenger promised by the Báb. Although He was in a terrible prison, He was filled with happiness.

After a few months Bahá'u'lláh was released and sent with His family into exile in Iraq, in the Turkish Empire. The journey to Baghdad was very hard, and took three months. Bahá'u'lláh and His family travelled mainly on foot and they suffered terribly. Many followers of the Báb also went to Baghdad. Many other people flocked to meet Him and hear His words.

Later the authorities decided to send Bahá'u'lláh away to the city of Constantinople (now called Istanbul), which was the capital of the Turkish Empire. For the 12 days before He left, Bahá'u'lláh went to stay in the Garden of Ridván. Every day many people came to say goodbye. On the ninth day the rest of his family came to join Him. There were several tents in the garden to shelter everyone. It was so windy that people used to sit on the ropes of Bahá'u'lláh's tent to stop it from blowing away!



Whilst in this beautiful garden, surrounded by roses and nightingales, Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Promised One of all religions and had come to unite the whole world. His followers became known as Bahá'ís. Today the 12-day Festival of Ridván is the greatest Bahá'í festival because it is when Bahá'u'lláh announced His mission.

## Activity

1. How heavy was the chain around Bahá'u'lláh's neck?
2. How long was Bahá'u'lláh in the prison?
3. How long did Bahá'u'lláh stay in the Garden of Ridván?
4. Which is the greatest Bahá'í festival?
5. Bahá'ís do not make pictures of Bahá'u'lláh or any of the other Messengers. Why do you think this is?



# Bahá'u'lláh in the Holy Land

The story of Bahá'u'lláh: part 3 of 3.

Bahá'u'lláh, His family and about 70 followers arrived in Constantinople in 1863. After only four months, they were sent away again to the town of Adrianople (now called Edirne), also in Turkey. The journey to Adrianople took twelve days, through snow and ice, without suitable clothing, and in open wagons. Some of the animals used to carry the luggage died, and the travellers had to burn fires to melt ice before they could have anything to drink.



Edirne

During this time in Adrianople, Bahá'u'lláh wrote important letters to the kings and rulers of the world, including Queen Victoria. Bahá'u'lláh announced His message of unity, and told them how they could bring about world peace. He said they should hold a peace conference and agree the boundaries between countries, they should reduce their weapons and share out the wealth more fairly among their subjects.



Queen Victoria

After 5 years the government decided to get rid of Bahá'u'lláh once and for all. This time, He was sent to the remote prison city of `Akká, in Palestine (now Israel). `Akká was a horrible, unhealthy place and the authorities expected that He would die there.



For the first two years, the Bahá'ís were locked into cells inside the fortress in that city. During this time, Bahá'u'lláh lost his 22 year old son who died in an accident. After this they were held under house arrest for another 7 years.

The local people came to love Bahá'u'lláh and realised He was not a threat, and He was allowed to move to the countryside outside Akká, where He lived for the rest of His life. He passed away on 29th May, 1892 and was buried nearby. Thousands of people came to grieve – Christians, Muslims, people of other faiths, the Governor and other officials. Five hundred people camped in the gardens for 9 days.

## Activity

Why would Bahá'u'lláh choose a life of suffering and exile when he could have had a very comfortable life at home with His family?



# `Abdu'l-Bahá

`Abdu'l-Bahá was Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, and from the age of 8 he shared his Father's sufferings and was with Him during His exiles. He always tried to help his Father and to look after the other Bahá'ís. When Bahá'u'lláh died, He appointed `Abdu'l-Bahá to guide the Bahá'ís after Him.



`Abdu'l-Bahá as a young man



`Abdu'l-Bahá being knighted

`Abdu'l-Bahá was 64 years old when He was eventually a free man. After He was released from prison, He spent His time helping people in need. He organised food supplies for the poor during World War I, and even fed the British army when it arrived in the Haifa and Akká area. For these services He was knighted by the British government in 1920.

In His later life He was free to travel, and came to visit Britain and America. The Bahá'ís bought Him a ticket for the Titanic, but He was not interested in luxury, and went to America by a cheaper boat instead. He encouraged inter-racial marriage and treated people from all backgrounds as if they mattered. He died, worn out from sheer hard work, at the age of 77. He is buried in a room in the Shrine of the Báb. `Abdu'l-Bahá was the example of a perfect Bahá'í which all Bahá'ís should try to follow.

`Abdu'l-Bahá appointed His grandson to be the Guardian of the Faith until the Universal House of Justice could be elected. In this way the Bahá'í Faith remained united.

## Activity

Do you think that `Abdu'l-Bahá was a good example to follow?  
Why do you think this?





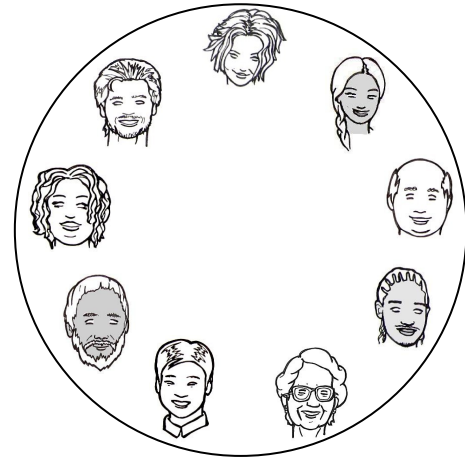
# The Bahá'í Faith - an Introduction

The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest in the family of world religions. It began in 1844 in Iran when a young man known as the Báb said that a new Messenger was to come to unite the whole world. In 1863 Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was that Messenger. A Bahá'í is a follower of Bahá'u'lláh. The Bahá'í Faith is followed by several million people, spread all over the world, and it is now the seventh biggest religion.

One God

One Religion

One Human Race



The Bahá'í Faith teaches that there is only one God, that all the main religions come from God and they have the same spiritual aims. It also teaches peace and the oneness of humanity. A Bahá'í believes that it is time for the world to be united so the most important belief is in "Unity". Bahá'ís believe that all human beings should be like one family. This means that loyalty to humanity is more important than the loyalty to tribes and nations which causes so much trouble in the world. Bahá'ís therefore think that it is important for everyone to be united. We must lose all our prejudices of race and religion, and treat everyone with love and kindness. We must never say bad things about anyone. Bahá'u'lláh said:-

"This handful of dust, this earth, let it be in unity."

## Activity

1. What would the world be like if no-one ever said anything bad about anyone?
2. Imagine you are a reporter for a magazine. Draw up a list of questions you would like to ask a Bahá'í about their religion.



# Oneness of Religion

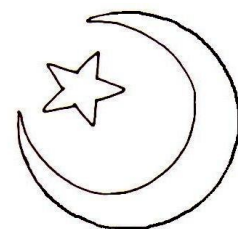
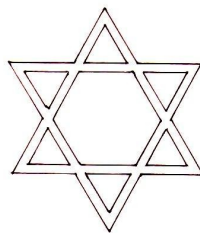
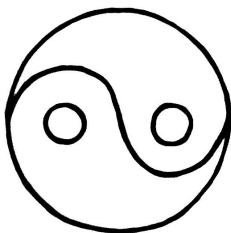
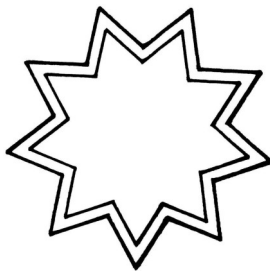
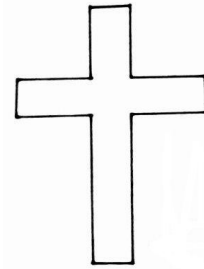
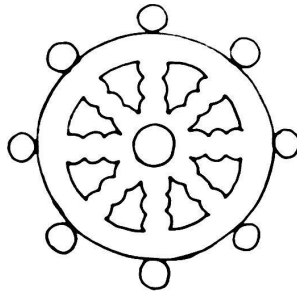
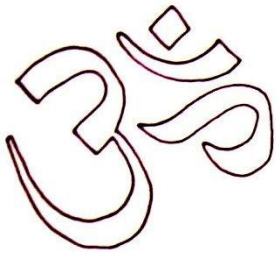
Bahá'ís believe that the universe was created by just one God, and that all the religions have been sent by this same God. We should stop arguing about different names for God, and about which religion is best.

## Activity

Find out which religion each symbol represents, and whether each religion has special colours. Write the name of the religion under its symbol and colour the symbol in the right colour. If the religion does not have a special colour, you can use any colour you wish.

Buddhism  
Judaism  
Taoism  
Islam

Christianity  
Bahá'í Faith  
Sikhism  
Hinduism





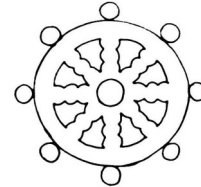
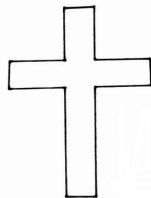
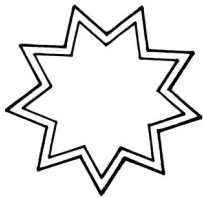
# Religion Through Time

Bahá'ís believe that at different times and in different parts of the world God has sent religions to guide mankind's behaviour. Each religion builds on the one before it, and the Messenger teaches the people as much as they are ready for. Bahá'u'lláh is simply the latest Messenger, but He promises that He is not the last.

It is like the classes in a school—as each class of children goes up the school, each new teacher tells them something new which is based on what they already know. For example, in the first class the children might learn the sounds of the letters and in the next class they might learn how to read, using those letters. As they go up the school, they will learn to read harder and harder words. In the same way, we learn how to behave better and better by following each new Messenger. In the early days we may have been told how to keep peace within our families, but now we need to keep peace with everyone in the world.

## Activity

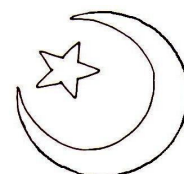
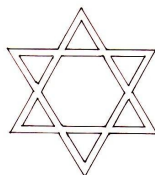
- Using a long strip of paper, make a timeline from 2000BC to 2000AD. Mark on the approximate dates of the six Messengers listed here, using their names and the symbols of their religions.



Jesus  
 Muhammad  
 Moses  
 Buddha  
 Krishna  
 Bahá'u'lláh

Palestine  
 Arabia  
 Egypt  
 Nepal/India  
 India  
 Iran

30 AD  
 622 AD  
 1300 BC  
 500 BC  
 900BC  
 1863AD





# World Unity

Bahá'ís believe that all human beings are one family and that the world should be run as if it were one country. Bahá'u'lláh said:

“The earth is but one country and mankind its citizens.”

Bahá'ís believe that we need a world government which would make sure that everyone is treated fairly.

Bahá'u'lláh said that we also need the following:

- ◆ A world language so that we can understand one another—every child would only need to learn one language at school
- ◆ A world police force instead of every country having big armies
- ◆ A world currency so we could buy and sell things easily
- ◆ A worldwide system of weights and measures to make things simpler
- ◆ A world system of law and justice so criminals cannot escape
- ◆ Religion and science should work together—for example, science should be guided by religious values so that money goes into research into health instead of making weapons

Bahá'u'lláh said that people should be treated equally and fairly. Here are some of the things that He said should happen:

- ◆ Women and men should both be valued equally
- ◆ We should not have prejudice of any sort
- ◆ Every person should search for truth for themselves
- ◆ Every child should be able to go to school
- ◆ There should be a minimum and maximum wage so that no-one is starving and no-one is burdened by too much money

If all of these things are done we should have a lasting peace in the world.

## Activity

1. Which of these teachings do you think is most important? Why?
2. Are there any you disagree with?
3. Can you think of anything else the world needs to make it a better place?



# Holy Books

Only books which were written by The Báb, Bahá'u'lláh or Abdu'l-Baha count as Bahá'í Scripture. Bahá'u'lláh wrote a huge number of books and letters, and some of the most important are mentioned below:

## **The Kitáb-i-Aqdas**

This translates as “The Most Holy Book”, and includes laws about prayer, fasting, marriage, burial and many other aspects of human life.

“Marriage is dependent on the consent of both parties.”

*(from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas)*

## **The Kitáb-i-Íqán**

This translates as “The Book of Certitude”, and is an explanation of the symbolism in all religious books. It explains how the religions are connected.

“All the Prophets of God have invariably foretold the coming of yet another Prophet after them.”

*(from the Kitáb-i-Íqán)*

## **The Hidden Words**

This book contains ideas about how human beings should behave, and their relationship with God.

“How couldst thou forget thine own faults and busy thyself with the faults of others?”

*(from the Hidden Words)*

## **Summons of the Lord of Hosts**

This book contains the letters which Bahá'u'lláh wrote to the kings and rulers of the world, including Queen Victoria, explaining how wars should be stopped by everyone working together.

“Should anyone amongst you take up arms against another, rise ye all against him.”

*(from Summons of the Lord of Hosts)*

### Activity

- What reasons can you think of to explain why Bahá'u'lláh wrote several books and not just one?



# Bahá'í Holy Days

The Bahá'í calendar has 19 months of 19 days each. That makes 361 days. There are also 4 extra days (or 5 in a leap year) which come before the last month in the year. These are for parties and for giving presents. There are 9 Holy Days when Bahá'í children often stay off school:

New Year's Day (Naw Ruz)	March 21 <sup>st</sup>
The First Day of Ridván	April 21 <sup>st</sup>
The Ninth Day of Ridván	April 29 <sup>th</sup>
The Twelfth Day of Ridván	May 2 <sup>nd</sup>
The Declaration of the Báb	May 23 <sup>rd</sup>
The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	May 29 <sup>th</sup>
The Martyrdom of the Báb	July 9 <sup>th</sup>
The Birth of the Báb	October 20 <sup>th</sup>
The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	November 12 <sup>th</sup>

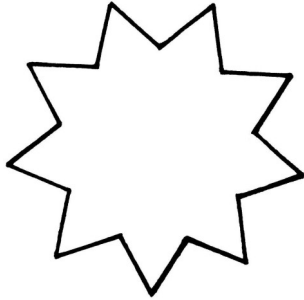
Activity

Using the information above, fill in the dates in the table below.

Description	Date
This is when the Báb was born	
The day when the Báb declared His mission, and the start of a new age	
The day when the Báb was executed	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh was born and is often celebrated with a party	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Promised One, in the Garden of Ridván, where His tent was pitched	
This is the day when His family was able to join Him in the Garden of Ridván	
The day when Bahá'u'lláh and His family left the garden and started the journey to Turkey	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh died, at 3a.m.	
This is the New Year, and the Spring Equinox.	



# Symbols

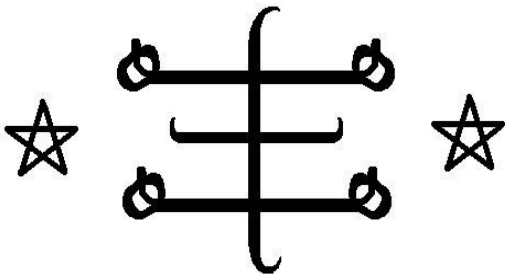


## A Nine Pointed Star

Bahá'ís often use a nine-pointed star as a symbol of their religion. Nine is the biggest single digit, and some people refer to it as the number of unity. Sometimes people design their own flower with nine petals, or make a nine-sided geometric design. At the top of this page you will see a version of the nine-pointed star with the earth in the centre and a circle outside.

## The "Greatest Name"

This is an artistic arrangement of Arabic letters, using the art form known as calligraphy. This symbol is often seen in a Bahá'í home, and is addressing God as "The Glory of the Most Glorious". It will be high up on a wall.



## The "Ringstone Symbol"

This is most often found on Bahá'í rings. The top line represents God, the bottom line is mankind and the line in the middle is the Messengers of God. The same line goes down through all of them to show

that The Messengers join God and man together. The straight lines are the Arabic letter 'B' and the loops at the end are the letter 'H'. These are the main letters in Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

### Activity

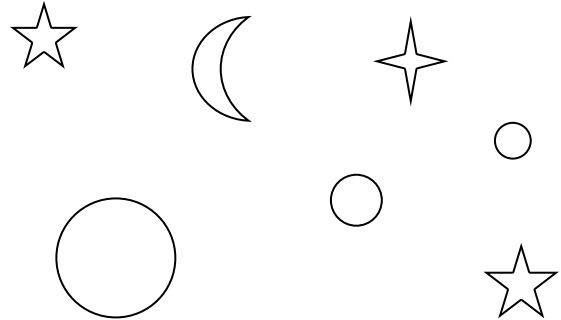
- Using the English letters, make a design with 2 'B's and 2 'H's and 2 stars. You can use up to 3 'A's as well if you wish.



# What is God Like?

We all know that we cannot see God. Bahá'u'lláh explains that God is not a person, God is something quite beyond the physical world.

If God created everything in the universe, all the billions of galaxies, He must be a far greater being than us. It is impossible to picture what God looks like because He must be a being outside our understanding. If we try, all we end up with is a picture from our own imagination.



In the past, people used to picture God as a wise old man sitting on a cloud, because this was the highest thing they knew. Now we know about space and the other galaxies so we need a better understanding. God is a spiritual being not one with a body. God is the force behind the universe.

So if God is not a person, why do we refer to “Him” and “He”? The answer is in the English language, which does not like to call any intelligent being “It”. If we see a person in the distance, do we call them “It”? Likewise, we show the Creator respect by not using “It”.

So what is God like? God has absolute power but He also has absolute goodness. Every good quality we can think of, God has that quality to perfection: perfect love, perfect kindness, perfect generosity, etc. We can see these qualities reflected in the Messengers which God has sent to us and this is one way we can learn about what God is like.

Bahá'ís believe that each person has a soul, and it is this spiritual part of us that is attracted to this goodness and recognises that the universe has a spiritual dimension:

“Know... that the soul is a sign of God... the first among all created things... to recognise His glory.”

And that is what life is for. This physical world is a matrix, and we have to use this matrix to learn the good qualities we need: to be kind, loving, honest, etc. When the soul leaves the matrix, it finds freedom and fulfilment in the spiritual world. Perhaps then we will understand more about God.

## Activity

1. Draw a picture to represent some of the galaxies in the universe. Then think hard about whether it makes sense to put God into your picture.
2. Write down five reasons why God cannot be a man sitting on a cloud.





# The Purpose of Life

Bahá'ís believe that each of us is in the world for a reason. A human being is a body with a soul. When the body dies, the soul, because it is not physical, does not die with the body. In this life, the soul needs to gain good qualities. As it deals with the difficulties of life, it learns honesty, trustworthiness, love for others, patience, compassion and other good qualities. After death, the soul needs these qualities, or “virtues”, for the next life.

Bahá'ís do not believe that we can properly understand what the next life is like. Can a baby, while in its mother's womb, guess what this world is like? The baby is wrapped up in its own world and does not even realise that there is another world outside that.



In the same way, when we are in this world we can't understand the spiritual world which encircles us.

When our body dies, our soul goes on to a completely different plane of existence. We still have our memories of this life, and we will be able to recognise people we knew.

Bahá'ís do not believe that heaven and hell are actual, physical places. Heaven is the feeling of being closer to God and getting closer to perfection. Hell is realising how far away we are from God and from perfection. The next world is not static – we do not just stay there and do nothing. According to what we have learned in this life, we progress at different rates, but always growing towards God.

All this means, as every religion has told us, that we should make an effort to be kind, honest and helpful – we are developing our souls ready for the next world.

## Activity

1. Do you think it is a surprise for a baby when it is born and finds itself in this world?
2. Do you think the baby could have imagined what it was like?
3. Do you think we can possibly imagine what the next world is like?
4. Do you think we will be surprised when we see it? Why?



# Prayer

Bahá'ís see prayer as conversation with God. If a person loves someone, he or she will want to be with that person and talk to them as much as possible. And the more you get to know a person, the more you love them. It is the same if someone loves God. He or she will want to talk to God as much as possible.

The body needs food every day for it to grow. In the same way, the soul needs spiritual food every day so it will grow. This spiritual food is prayer.

There are many Bahá'í prayers for particular situations. This prayer is for when we have problems. Many Bahá'ís learn it by heart:

“Is there any Remover of difficulties save God?  
Say: Praised be God! He is God! All are His  
servants and all abide by His bidding!”

Prayers do not have to be said in a special building although Bahá'ís do have some Houses of Worship. Bahá'u'lláh said:

“Blessed is the spot, and the house, and the place,  
and the city, and the heart, and the mountain,  
and the refuge, and the cave, and the valley, and  
the land, and the sea, and the island, and the  
meadow where mention of God hath been made,  
and His praise glorified.”

## Activity

1. What happens to the body if it doesn't get enough food?
2. What will happen to the soul if it doesn't get enough spiritual food?
3. Draw a picture to illustrate the quotation above, which begins “Blessed is the spot...”.



# Daily Devotions

Daily prayer is so important that every day, Bahá'ís between the ages of 15 and 70 must choose one of three Daily Obligatory Prayers to say. These are known as the Short, Medium and Long Obligatory prayers. Obligatory means it must be done. Here is the Short Obligatory Prayer, which is said while standing to face the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh. It is said at noon or soon afterwards:

"I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting."

## Activity

"Bear witness" and "testify" both mean the same thing: to swear that something is true. What does a Bahá'í swear is true when he or she says this prayer?

Bahá'u'lláh also said that it is important to read a short piece from the Scriptures each morning and each night and to think about what it means.

Bahá'ís should also meditate every day, by sitting down and repeating the phrase "Alláh-u-Abhá!" 95 times. This means "God is the All-Glorious". This same phrase is also used as a greeting amongst Bahá'ís.

Nobody else has the right to check up on whether a Bahá'í is remembering to do any of these things, they are strictly between the individual and God.

## Activity

1. Does a small child have to say an Obligatory Prayer every day?
2. How many daily Obligatory prayers are there?
3. What should a Bahá'í do each morning and evening?
4. How many times must a Bahá'í repeat "Alláh-u-Abhá!" ?
5. Does anyone check up to see if a Bahá'í is saying his or her prayers?



# The Bahá'í Fast

During the Bahá'í month of Ala (March 2<sup>nd</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>), there is a fast from sunrise to sunset. Bahá'ís aged between 15 and 70 do not eat or drink between these times. This should be a time for remembering that the soul is more important than the body, and for prayer.

You should not fast if you are ill and need not fast if you are doing heavy manual labour or making a journey of more than 9 hours. Women need not fast when they are pregnant or breastfeeding.

The Fast takes place during the last month of the Bahá'í year. It ends with the New Year festival which is a Holy Day.

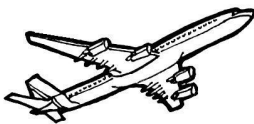
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Activity

Mark whether each person should fast.

.....

Person	Yes or No
A mother with a newborn baby	
A 12-year old girl at school	
An 80-year old lady with breathing problems	
A builder who is fit and healthy	
A man flying to Australia	
A lady expecting twins	
A man mowing his lawn	
A 16-year old boy who is at home with flu	
An R.E. teacher aged 43	
A computer programmer	





# Funerals

When a Bahá'í dies, they should be buried somewhere nearby – within an hour's travel at most. In some countries, people carry their dead relatives for long distances to bury them at holy shrines or sacred places. The Bahá'í law prevents this. A special burial ring goes on one of the fingers of the dead person, and the body is wrapped in cloth and placed in a coffin for burial. On the ring are written the words:

“I came forth from God, and return unto Him, detached from all save Him, holding fast to His Name, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

There is a special prayer which should be said at the funeral. One person reads the prayer while everyone else listens. There are no priests in the Bahá'í Faith so the family choose the person they want to read the prayer. Bahá'u'lláh explained that we should actually be happy for the dead person, as they are going to the next world:

“I have made death a messenger of joy to thee, wherefore dost thou grieve?”

If the person has lived a good, unselfish life, they will be very happy in the next world. The soul leaves the body behind, like taking off a coat, and will continue to grow towards God. We can help people in the next world to make more progress by praying for them. They can also pray for us. This is a prayer we can say for them:

“O my God! ... Verily, I beseech Thee to forgive the sins of such as have abandoned the physical garment and have ascended to the spiritual world. O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendours on the loftiest mount.”

Activity

Imagine someone in the next world is praying for you. Make a list of the things you would like them to ask for.



# Children

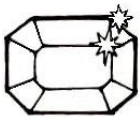
There are no special rituals or ceremonies for Bahá'í children. When a child is born to Bahá'í parents, they may wish to have a "naming day" when they will invite friends and relatives for prayers and a celebration.

In the same way, if an adult decides to become a Bahá'í, they only have to say so, there is no special ceremony when they join the Bahá'í community.

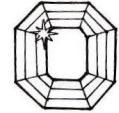
The age of maturity for Bahá'ís is 15. At that age a young person takes on the responsibilities of prayer and of fasting. If a person under the age of 15 wishes to be a Bahá'í, they need the permission of their parents.

## Education

One of the Bahá'í principles is education for all and the Bahá'ís consider this very important, especially for girls. In fact, if parents have a boy and a girl and cannot afford to send both of them to school, they should send the girl. This is because girls grow up to become mothers, and mothers are the first teachers of their children.



Bahá'ís see education as "mining for jewels". This means that everyone has talents or "jewels" within them which need to be found and polished so they shine brightly. The Bahá'í Writings say:



"Every child is potentially the light of the world."



Bahá'í children are fully involved in the life of the Bahá'í community. At the regular meetings of the Bahá'ís, the Nineteen Day Feasts, they can say prayers and join in the discussions. They may also give money to the Bahá'í Fund (this is something which only Bahá'ís can do).

Another Bahá'í principle is looking at things with an open mind and deciding for yourself what you think is true. Bahá'í children are taught about all the world religions. At the age of 15 they should decide for themselves if they believe in Bahá'u'lláh and therefore wish to continue as part of the Bahá'í community.

### Activity

1. What changes take place for a young Bahá'í when they become 15?
2. What might a child feel if he or she were told they were "potentially the light of the world"?
3. What talents or good qualities ("jewels") do you have?
4. Think of some of your friends. What talents or good qualities do they have?



# Marriage

For Bahá'ís, it is important to understand the basic belief that men and women are equal. This means that the husband and wife must be seen as a partnership or as a team.

For a Bahá'í wedding to take place, the bride and groom must have freely chosen one another, without any interference from others. When they decide that they would like to be married, they then ask for approval from their parents. The parents cannot disapprove because of any kind of prejudice – class, colour, background, religion, etc., but they can point out if they think that the personalities of the couple are not really suited to one another, and that they should not rush into it.



Once everyone is happy about it, the wedding takes place, and should be the uniting of two families. In front of witnesses, the bride and groom each say:

“Verily, we all abide by the will of God” .

It is up to the couple which local wedding customs they want to put in their ceremony, and what prayers or songs to include.

## Divorce

Bahá'ís should avoid divorce if at all possible. Their families and the Local Assembly will try to help them if they are having problems. However, if the couple come to really dislike one another, they must live apart for one year. If they still want to separate, the divorce is then granted.

### Activity

1. Are Bahá'í parents allowed to choose their children's husband or wife for them?
2. Apart from the couple, who else has to agree to the wedding?
3. Can a Bahá'í marry someone who isn't a Bahá'í?
4. What must the couple say for the marriage ceremony?
5. What is the only reason for divorce?
6. How long must the couple live apart before the divorce is granted?
7. Do you think it is a good idea that the parents have to approve



# How to Behave

Bahá'ís believe that we should treat other people well. We should be kind to everybody, respectful, honest and fair to them. Bahá'u'lláh said:

“Be fair to yourselves and to others.”

To be fair to others, we should not talk about them behind their backs. When we say unkind things about other people, even if we think that what we say is the truth, it is called “backbiting”. It is backbiting that causes enormous trouble between people, and especially at school! It says in the Bahá'í Writings that we should concentrate on the good things about people:

“If a man has ten good qualities and one bad one, look at the ten and forget the one; and if a man has ten bad qualities and one good one, to look at the one and forget the ten.”

Bahá'ís should always be truthful and honest:

“Truthfulness is the foundation of all human virtues. Without truthfulness, progress and success... are impossible for any soul.”

Kindness and charity mean seeing other people as more important than ourselves:

“Blessed is he who prefers his brother before himself.”

## Activity

1. List five kind deeds which you could do today.
2. List three things which Bahá'ís think are examples of bad behaviour.
3. Make up a story in which someone is very unkind, but then changes their mind about how they should behave. Give it a happy ending.
4. Has doing this worksheet changed how you will behave in the future? And if so, how will you change?





# The Nineteen Day Feast

On the first day of every Bahá'í month, in other words once every nineteen days, the Bahá'ís in each area come together in a meeting called the "Nineteen Day Feast".

This consists of three parts – the spiritual, business and social parts, and they are all equally important.

The spiritual part consists of prayers and readings, maybe in several languages, read by various members of the community.



The business part is where the Bahá'ís share news, discuss the Fund, and make plans. Every Bahá'í has the right to speak, including children and visitors.

The social part is where everyone talks together, shares food and often entertainment. Everyone should enjoy one another's company.



## Activity

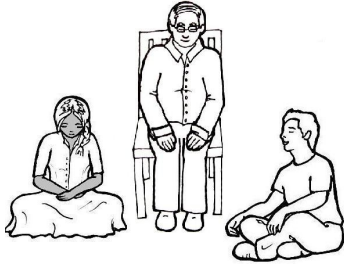
In which part of the Feast should the following happen:

Activity	Which part of the Feast?
Chat	
Singing	
Planning	
Prayers	
Eating	
Sorting out money matters	
Reading the Bahá'í Writings	



# Community Life

Apart from the Nineteen Day Feast which is the main meeting of the Bahá'í community, there are other regular meetings which cater for everyone.



Bahá'ís hold regular devotional meetings, at which prayers are said. These meetings help to bring a more loving and spiritual community life. Everyone is welcome, whether or not they are Bahá'ís.

Bahá'ís also invite other people to their study circles, where a group of people discuss writings on the meaning of life, using a workbook. They also study some of the Bahá'í teachings.



There are special activities for younger people. Bahá'ís set up classes for children, in which the children are taught how to tell right from wrong.

Bahá'ís consider that the 11-15 age group are at a very special stage in their development, in which most of them have a very strong sense of justice. Therefore, all over the world, the Bahá'ís are setting up junior youth groups, aimed at directing all this energy into making the world a better place.



## Activity

1. Why do you think that young people are particularly interested in justice (fairness)?
2. Justice is very important to Bahá'ís. Why do you think this is?



# Bahá'í Holy Days

The Bahá'í calendar has 19 months of 19 days each. That makes 361 days. There are also 4 extra days (or 5 in a leap year) which come before the last month in the year. These are for parties and for giving presents. There are 9 Holy Days when Bahá'í children often stay off school:

New Year's Day (Naw Ruz)	March 21 <sup>st</sup>
The First Day of Ridván	April 21 <sup>st</sup>
The Ninth Day of Ridván	April 29 <sup>th</sup>
The Twelfth Day of Ridván	May 2 <sup>nd</sup>
The Declaration of the Báb	May 23 <sup>rd</sup>
The Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh	May 29 <sup>th</sup>
The Martyrdom of the Báb	July 9 <sup>th</sup>
The Birth of the Báb	October 20 <sup>th</sup>
The Birth of Bahá'u'lláh	November 12 <sup>th</sup>

### Activity

Using the information above, fill in the dates in the table below.

Description	Date
This is when the Báb was born	
The day when the Báb declared His mission, and the start of a new age	
The day when the Báb was executed	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh was born and is often celebrated with a party	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh announced that He was the Promised One, in the Garden of Ridván, where His tent was pitched	
This is the day when His family was able to join Him in the Garden of Ridván	
The day when Bahá'u'lláh and His family left the garden and started the journey to Turkey	
This is the day when Bahá'u'lláh died, at 3a.m.	
This is the New Year, and the Spring Equinox.	



# Houses of Worship

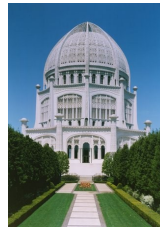
All Bahá'í Houses of Worship have nine sides, with nine doors and nine paths, because every path can lead you to God. When the one in Chile is completed, there will be one in every continent. They are large buildings, and are open to people of any religion. They all have 3 levels, although this might not be obvious. The lowest level represents the world of humanity, the middle level is the world of the Messengers of God and the top level is the world of God.

In the House of Worship there are readings from all the holy books, not just the Bahá'í books. Only the Word of God will be heard—no talks or sermons.

No musical instruments are allowed in a House of Worship— only the human voice. But the human voice can make beautiful music and each House of Worship has its own choir. Individuals will also sing prayers as part of the programme. At other times, a House of Worship is open for silent, individual prayer.



Kampala, Uganda



Wilmette, USA



Frankfurt, Germany



Sydney, Australia



Panama



Apia, Western Samoa



New Delhi, India



Chile

## Activity

1. Why do you think that no talks are allowed in the House of Worship?
2. Why do you think that no musical instruments are allowed in the House of Worship?
3. Design your own House of Worship. Remember they need to have 9 sides and 3 levels.



# Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage is a journey with the purpose of spiritual development. In most religions there are special places which believers may wish to visit.



Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh

The highlight of a Bahá'í pilgrimage is the visit to the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh, at Bahjí, in the Holy Land. This is near the town of Akká. For Bahá'ís, this Shrine is the holiest place on earth and it is where Bahá'ís turn when they say their special prayers.

Only a few miles away, in the city of Haifa, is the Shrine of the Báb. The Báb is buried below the floor of the central room.

Bahá'u'lláh's son `Abdu'l-Bahá is buried in the next room. When people go to pray in the Shrines they remove their shoes, as a sign of respect.



Shrine of the Báb

Both shrines have beautiful gardens around them. Bahá'ís can make short visits to these places at any time. However, there is a proper, organised, pilgrimage lasting 9 days, which has to be booked in advance. People on this pilgrimage are able to visit various places associated with Bahá'í history, and have special times at the shrines. There are no rituals involved in the pilgrimage but there is a special prayer to be said at the two Shrines.

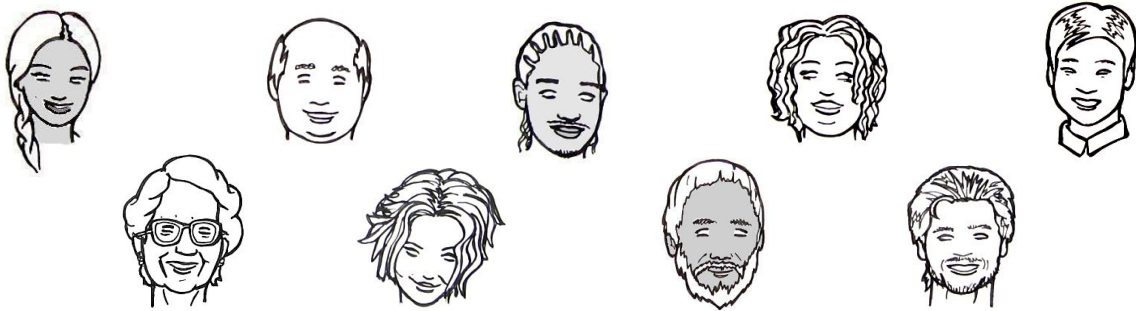
## Activity

- Make up a set of questions you could ask someone coming back from a Bahá'í pilgrimage. You might like to ask questions such as:
- Is a pilgrimage different to a holiday? If so, how?
- Do you feel closer to God now you have been on pilgrimage?



# Organisation

The Bahá'ís have no priests of any sort, but in any town where there are enough Bahá'ís, they elect nine people to be the Local Spiritual Assembly.



In each country the Bahá'ís elect a National Spiritual Assembly of nine people too. These Assemblies are there to help sort out every kind of problem.

The National Spiritual Assemblies elect the Universal House of Justice, which has offices in Haifa, in the Holy Land.

## Elections

All adult Bahá'ís can vote for their Local Assembly. The vote is secret and no-one asks people to vote for them. There are prayers before an election because it is a spiritual choice. Bahá'ís should vote for people they know who, among other things, have the best balance of the following qualities:

- Selfless devotion
- A well-trained mind
- Mature experience

## Activities

- Looking at the qualities listed above, which of the four people below do you think would be the best person to vote for?
- A) A young man who is very organised but often prefers to go out with his friends.
- B) A young woman who is very devoted and has a degree in chemistry.
- C) An elderly lady who always attends meetings but doesn't always understand what is happening.
- D) A middle-aged doctor who faithfully attends every meeting.



# The Bahá'í World Centre

Bahá'u'lláh was sent to the Holy Land by the authorities. He was in prison in the city of Akká and He also visited Haifa, across the bay. He died at Bahji, near Akká. The Bahá'í holy places are all in this area, and have been made very beautiful with large gardens.



Because Bahá'u'lláh was sent here, this is still the Bahá'í world centre. The main buildings are in a curve on the side of Mount Carmel. This building is like a museum, where Bahá'u'lláh's original writings are kept, together with some personal things.

This is the building where the Universal House of Justice meets and has its offices. It is also where it receives guests such as prime ministers and presidents. The Universal House of Justice is the Bahá'í body which looks after the Bahá'í world.



This is a view from inside one of the other buildings, which is like a library. The buildings are all based on the Ancient Greek style of architecture, which is very beautiful, but also very practical for a hot country.

Bahá'ís can visit some of these buildings when they go on pilgrimage. They are very close to the Shrine of the Báb.

Bahá'ís can also spend time as volunteers to help in the offices or in the gardens.

## Activity

1. Why is the Bahá'í World Centre in the Holy Land?
2. What jobs do you think the volunteers could do?



# Women

One of the basic principles of the Bahá'í Faith is that women and men should be valued equally. Women are better than men at some things, and men are better than women at others, but in most things they are just as good as one another. What matters is that they are treated equally.

“The rights of both sexes should be equally respected, since neither is superior to the other in the eyes of heaven.”

Bahá'ís do not believe in arranged marriage. The man and woman should be free to choose one another. A Bahá'í marriage should be a partnership, where decisions are made together. The husband normally has the main responsibility for providing for the family, and the wife has the main responsibility for bringing up the children to be happy and healthy. But these roles can be shared or changed if it suits the couple.

Boys and girls should both go to school, but if the parents can't afford to send all of their children, they should send the girls because they will become mothers and will educate their children.

Bahá'ís do not have priests, and women have an equal say in the Bahá'í community. Bahá'ís believe that when women have an equal voice in the world, they will be a great influence for peace. The world in the future will have a proper balance of masculine (male) and feminine (female) qualities which will bring great benefits to everyone:

“Humanity is like a bird with two wings... the one male, the other female. Unless both wings are strong... the bird cannot fly...”

- Activity
1. Why do you think women will be a great influence for peace?
  2. List one thing where women are usually better than men, another one where men are usually better than women, and 4 where there is no difference.
  3. Give an example of where masculine and feminine qualities could be balanced to make things better in the world.





# Caring for the Environment

Bahá'u'lláh said that:

“Nature is God’s will.”

He explained that nature is part of God’s creation. If God created nature, it is important to keep it.

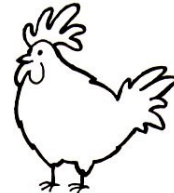
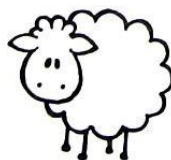
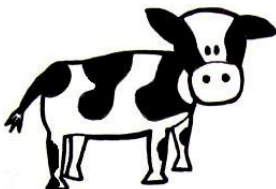
Bahá'ís believe that nature should be respected and protected. Many problems, like climate change, pollution and the destruction of forests take no notice of national borders. They have to be tackled by the whole of mankind working together.

Bahá'ís believe that the world’s wealth needs to be shared out more fairly, so that poor people do not need to destroy their environment in order to live.

## Farming

Bahá'u'lláh taught that farming is the most important industry. As farming produces the food which keeps us alive, this must obviously be true. Bahá'ís want a proper system of support for farmers to help them cope with drought, floods and other problems.

Bahá'ís believe that our natural food is what grows out of the ground, so in the future people will gradually stop eating meat. This will also help the environment, because it takes more land to raise animals to eat than to grow food to eat.



Children should be brought up to be kind to animals. Bahá'u'lláh said:

“Show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every creature.”

## Activity

1. Write down 5 things which you could do in your life to make your local environment better.
2. Do you think that there is any cruelty to animals in the world? Think of 3 examples and write about them. Do you think bringing children up to be kind would get rid of cruelty?



# Appendix 1 - Useful Websites

The following websites provide further information on the Bahá'í Faith which may be of use to teachers of R.E.:

**<http://www.bahai.org>**

The official Web site of the Bahá'í International Community, offering information about the Bahá'í Faith and its worldwide community to the general public, as well as to journalists, academics, and researchers.

**<http://www.bahauallah.com>**

This contains details on the life of Bahá'u'lláh and of His Writings.

**<http://info.bahai.org>**

*Bahá'í Topics*, an information resource including a brief introduction to the Bahá'í Faith, its teachings, history, and community activities, in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Persian, and Arabic.

**<http://reference.bahai.org>**

The Bahá'í Reference Library, containing downloadable versions of all the authoritative texts of the Bahá'í Faith in English, Persian and Arabic.

**<http://news.bahai.org>**

The Bahá'í World News Service, reporting on news, activities, and developments around the world.

**<http://media.bahai.org>**

The Bahá'í Media Bank, a collection of more than 2,500 usable, high-resolution images of historical figures, holy places and buildings, and contemporary community activities. All photographs within this publication are from this website.

**<http://library.bahai.org>**

The official Web site of the International Bahá'í Library in Haifa. The site contains information about the Library's catalogue and collections, policies and services.

**<http://statements.bahai.org>**

A collection of statements offering the Bahá'í perspective on contemporary issues and themes, submitted by the Bahá'í International Community to United Nations agencies and conferences.

**<http://www.onecountry.org>**

*One Country* is the online newsletter of the Bahá'í International Community. The site contains numerous in-depth feature stories on the United Nations, noteworthy social and economic development projects, environmental efforts, and educational programmes.

**<http://terraces.bahai.org>**

The history and purpose of, and useful visitor information about the garden terraces at the Bahá'í World Centre in Haifa.



# Appendix 2 - Leaflets

Page 1 of 2

The Warwick Bahá'í Bookshop produces a wide range of A4 3-fold leaflets, in a standardised two-colour format, many of which are suitable for classroom use. For the most part, these concentrate on one area of Bahá'í belief, ideals or practice. The price is 10p per leaflet, plus postage. The Bookshop will send out orders of any size, single or multiple copies. The list below indicates for which Key Stages each leaflet may be appropriate:

## **GENERAL (INTRODUCTORY)**

The Bahá'í Faith-What Is It?	2 3 4
The Bahá'í Faith-Being A Bahá'í	3 4
The Bahá'í Faith-How It Began	2 3 4
Cyflwyno'r Ffydd Bahá'í [ <i>Welsh</i> ]	2 3 4
The Bahá'í Faith - What's in it for me? **	3 4
The Bahá'í Faith – A New Religion for a New Age **	3 4
Bahá'u'lláh - The Promised One	4
Bahá'u'lláh - Messenger Of God	4
Bahá'u'lláh [ <i>simple text</i> ]	3 4
** full colour	

## **SPIRITUAL SUBJECTS**

The Nature of God	4
Prayer and Meditation	3 4
The Life of the Soul	4
Why Are We Here?	3 4 5
The Meaning of Suffering	4 5
Words of Inspiration [ <i>quotations</i> ]	4 5
Good and Evil	3 4 5
Fasting and the Bahá'í Fast	3 4
Health & Healing - A Bahá'í View	4 5

## **RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER RELIGIONS**

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