

THE

Good Message

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CHAPTER I

THE GOOD MESSAGE

'Abdu'l-Bahá, Son of Bahá'u'lláh, said:

"The Great One Who all men in all places are waiting for has come — all men are looking for a truth from on high and Bahá'u'lláh is the Great Truth-Bringer, the Great Teacher."

Let us look back over the past of our people. We have had great men and great chiefs. When a great man lives he is good for his people. He makes them better. He sees further than they can see. He is like a man who goes up on the highest hill and then sees further than the others lower down. Where would we be if we had no such men to tell us new things? It is men like these who make us all greater and better men. One great man is worth ten thousand men, nay ten times ten thousand for he leads other men to be better and have more wisdom.

A great doctor helps his people fight off disease; a great chief leads his people to victory; a great talker says words of wisdom that generations remember. But the best man is the Great Man who is the Prophet of God and tells men of the life after death so they may no more be afraid. He is the man whose eyes see all, what is plain and what is hidden.

Amongst our people long ago, our fathers tell us, there were such Men and in other lands and across the sea where other people live they have also had these All-Seeing Men. One of the greatest of these Men was Jesus Christ Who leads all the Christians. Another is called Muhammad Who leads all the

followers of Islam and far away in the lands where the sun rises are people who follow an All-Seeing Man Who was called Buddha. There have been many others. God has given men in every land a guide like these who stood on the high place inside their own spirit and looked further and saw more than other men, even more than the ordinary leaders of religion, even more than the chiefs. For these Greatest-of-All-Men talk with God Himself and then tell other men about Him and they tell other men with a true voice what is God's Will for them. Such Men who told other men of the Will of God have lived in different lands at different times and changed the hearts and the ways of their people.

Let us say the people of the world are like a tree. When the tree is young it has few fruits and little shade. As the tree gets older it gives more fruit and more shade. When the tree reaches full maturity it gives a great lot of fruit and covers a village with its shade. The fruit of the tree of men are the Prophets or Messengers of God. These men are not like the rest of the tree as the fruit is not like any other part of a tree. It grows on the tree but it is different. So are these Greatest-of-All-Men different as Jesus Christ was different. All these Great Men wherever They lived have spoken words alike and have said, "What We tell you is not from Us but from God." They have also each one promised His people that a day would come when a Man of Their kind would come and not only speak to one people or to one nation but to all people and to all nations. This Man would lead them to peace and all should be as brothers with one father, the oldest and the youngest, the worst and the best together.

This is the day this book tells of for it speaks of the Words of Bahá'u'lláh Who is the Messenger of God in this day.

Today is a day of great change. Already in our grandfathers' and great-grandfathers' days the ways of the world began to

change. Travellers from far lands came to us with strange ways and ideas unlike ours, often unkind ways and ideas. But we came to see the world was much bigger than we knew, many people, many nations, many languages, many beliefs. This made our lives change also and the old ways, both good and bad, began to die and be forgotten. If our people have seen in four or five generations so much change, the foreign people have seen even more because their lands are larger than ours and their people more numerous. As we do not know their lands and their ways we cannot judge of how great their change has been but it has been greater than ours. Their wise men say all the bad things in their ways have risen up and try to destroy the good things and this is worse than ever before. Men's hearts are black and their minds clouded. They fight each other with more terrible weapons than ever before. Their youth are wild and unhappy, their mothers and fathers bitter and confused. They are afraid and they do wrong to try to forget they are afraid. But those who have found Bahá'u'lláh say, "Do you not see? The darkest time of the night is before the sun rises?" So the great darkness in the world these last four or five generations was the end of the night before the new day came. Now it has dawned and it is the day Bahá'u'lláh has brought because He is the Messenger of God for this day.

What is a Prophet? He is like the sun that brings light to the world only He lights up men's spirits and minds. The sun warms the earth and makes things grow. The words of these Greatest-of-All-Men are like sunlight and warm men's hearts and minds teaching them to be wiser and better. The coming of such a Man is like the coming of springtime. It wakes men up and makes them grow inside.

In the past it was as if there were many streams each flowing its own way, but now these small streams must unite and flow

together to make one great river. In the past it was as if there were many winds each blowing a different way, but now they must all unite and blow like one great trade-wind. This would give great power. So, says Bahá'u'lláh, must be the thoughts of men in this new day. They must unite and become like a great river, a great wind. In the past each people lived by itself believing in its Prophet and being afraid of other people and often hurting them and capturing them and killing them. Now, says Bahá'u'lláh, the world is grown small like one country, therefore let all men live in it as brothers and make war taboo. Let men ask to hear the truth. Let men of different beliefs listen to each other. Let the heart and the head go together. Let each one forget his hatred of other people because they have a different skin or speak a different language or go to a different church. Let there be the same justice for all men until in the end there is one great court to which peoples and nations can go for justice when they dispute among themselves. Let the women be treated fairly as men are treated. Let it be a law that every child learns and does not remain ignorant. Let all men learn one language so they can speak to each other freely and know each other's minds and hearts.

'Abdu'l-Bahá, son of Bahá'u'lláh, said, "When Jesus Christ came into the world twenty centuries ago the Jewish people were weeping and praying that their Messiah, their Promised One, should come to them. Yet when Jesus Christ came and said, 'I am your Messiah' they refused Him and hated Him and killed Him and even called Him the evil one. All this is written in the Gospel. The reason the Jews did this is because in their Book, the Torah, it was written that the Messiah would show certain signs and any man who does not show these signs but claims to be the Messiah is a liar. And they said, 'One of the signs is that He will come from an unknown place, yet we all know this man's house is in Nazareth, and can any good come

from Nazareth?' The second sign is that He shall rule with a rod of iron, which means He must act with the sword, but this Messiah has not even a wooden staff. Another of the signs is that He will sit on the throne of David and make David's name great, but this man sits on no throne and has not even a mat to sit on. And another condition is that He shall make the laws of the Torah widespread but this man has changed the laws and broken the day of rest and so according to our laws he should be put to death. And another of the signs is that in the reign of the Messiah justice and good will be over all men, even the animals. The snake and the mouse will share one hole, the eagle and the small bird one nest, lion and the gazelle live in one place, the wolf and the kid drink together. Another of the signs is that in the days of the Messiah the Jewish people shall be victorious and rule the world but instead we are lowly and ruled over by our masters the Romans.'

"With such words the Jewish people objected to Jesus Christ even though He was the One promised them in their Torah. As they could not understand the true meaning of the signs the Messiah was to show, they killed Him. Those who believe Bahá'u'lláh is the Great Man for this day say that the signs promised were shown by Jesus Christ but that the Jewish people were blind and foolish. They expected to see all things with the eyes of their body but the signs were ones to be seen with the eyes of their spirit. The Jewish people said Jesus Christ did not reign as their chief, but those who believe in Bahá'u'lláh say Jesus Christ has ruled over the hearts and lives of men for almost two thousand years and His greatness is everlasting. But until now the Jewish people have closed their eyes and refused to accept Jesus Christ as their Messiah."

Now let us not be blind as the Jewish people were. Let us not be blind and close our eyes to Bahá'u'lláh and say He is not the

Great Teacher for this day. Bahá'u'lláh has opened the hidden sayings in the old books of all religions and made clear their meaning. But this is not why we must say He is the Great Man for this day. The sun does not need words to make it shine. It shines by itself. So a Great Man does not need words from old sayings to prove He is great. Bahá'u'lláh said let every man be unafraid and ask for himself, "Is this the truth?" Let him open his eyes and ears and think for himself. It is not good to believe something because other men say this is true. Each man must believe because he has seen and heard for himself. "Let men see My acts and My words and the good that comes from Me", said Bahá'u'lláh, "and themselves judge of the truth."

Moses said that when a man who claims to be a Prophet says something shall come to pass and it does not, then has he spoken from himself only and you shall not fear him. And Jesus Christ told us to beware of false prophets. A tree is known by its fruits, He said. Can a man get bananas off a thorn bush? A good tree has good fruit and by his acts and words shall a man be known.

In this book we will ask if Bahá'u'lláh is a true Great Leader, a Messenger of God. We will ask if the things He foretold have come true and if what He said has made men better and is changing the world or not.

The people among whom Bahá'u'lláh lived were as divided in their opinion of Him as the people were among whom Jesus Christ lived. Most of the Jewish people hated Jesus Christ and said He broke the law and should be killed. But some loved Him and believed Him and these became the faithful friends and the band of Christians. They saw the light in Jesus Christ. The same thing happened to Bahá'u'lláh in His country among His people. He was denied by most, but others saw He was the Messenger of God. They believed in Him and they were called after His

Name, Bahá'ís, just as the Christians were called after Christ's name, Christians.

A hungry man seeks food. If your spirit is hungry for an answer to many questions and if you seek a better way for the world, then weigh carefully the words of this book.

In this book we will tell you the full story of Bahá'u'lláh, about His life and His words, so you can judge for yourself if He is not a Messenger of God and a Man whose words are medicine for the sick world today.

Good is not like a stone to be laid aside, a stone which never grows. Good is like a seed which must be planted and will then grow into a great tree. The good words and knowledge in this book must be planted in your heart and then you must see if at the end you do not say, "This is true; I need this; it will make the world better."

CHAPTER II

THE ONE WHO CAME FIRST

In an ancient country which once gave the world great kings and poets and was very powerful many centuries ago, Bahá'u'lláh was born. The name of this land is Iran. But countries grow old even as men grow old and even as some men become feeble and mean with age, so it is with nations. So, it was with Iran more than a hundred years ago. She had become poor, her people were ignorant, her kings greedy and cruel. Her religious leaders were often ignorant, selfish and evil. Long before Jesus Christ was born among the Jewish people Iran had a Prophet. His name was Zoroaster and He brought inner light to His people. After many centuries the people of Iran were conquered by another people who were followers of the Prophet Muhammad, and most of them became His followers. But the good these Great Men taught had become weak with age and when Bahá'u'lláh was born Iran was the darkest land in the world. There was much hatred among the people and each one said that only the Prophet he followed had spoken truly. The light in their minds had gone out and the men who followed Muhammad said every other man, be he a follower of Jesus Christ or of Zoroaster or of one of the Jewish Prophets, was dirty. If the dress of a follower of Muhammad touched one of these men, he was made dirty and went home and put on a clean dress. If he took money from one of these men, he washed the money for it was dirty money. So dark, so full of hatred were the people of that land. Many times they killed the men who followed Jesus Christ or other Prophets. We see how black the hearts of the people of this country had become. When men's hearts are black there is nothing but injustice and hatred, ignorance, stealing, lying and fear.

But not all the people in Iran were like this. Some were good men and these believed that when the night is darkest, the day is soon to come. Their eyes and ears were open. Most of these men formed themselves into a group and they read the book of Muhammad called the Qur'án and said that in this book and from the words of Muhammad Himself it is clear that the time is near for a Great Man to come to us and they waited and watched. This was the condition in the country of Iran over one hundred and thirty years ago.

In the nineteenth year of the last century, October 20, 1819 A.D. a child was born to a merchant in a city called Shiraz. He was named Ali Muhammad. Soon after He was born His father died and the brother of His mother watched over Him like a second father. This boy child Ali Muhammad was from His childhood beautiful and good and very wise. His family were followers of Muhammad and descendants of Muhammad. The child prayed and was taught to read the Qur'án but His teacher was surprised to see that this Boy had wisdom inside Him and he loved and honored his pupil. When the boy was fifteen He went to work with His uncles in their business. When He was twenty-two He married. He had one son who died a baby. When He became twenty five the flower of His spirit opened. All who had known Him had said, "This is a very unusual bud, when it opens it will be very beautiful and the fruit it gives will be very rare."

One night after sunset on the 22nd of May, 1844 A.D. Ali Muhammad had a stranger as His guest. This young man was one of the members of that group who were waiting and watching. To him Ali Muhammad said, "I am the One you have been looking for." He then wrote in the presence of this young man the first part of a most wonderful book. The young man was very impressed and he listened all night to these wonderful

words, and he said, "I accept you, I will follow you." Ali Muhammad told him that although His words were great and although He was the Messenger of God, His work was only a beginning. He said: am the door leading to a Man much greater than I am. I go before Him and call men to be ready when He comes to receive Him for He is the One God will send to lead men into all truth for this new day." In the language of the people of Iran, 'door' is called báb and from then on Ali Muhammad was called the Báb and those who followed Him were called Bábís.

At first the Báb said no one must speak of Him. Only those whose inner eyes were bright enough to see the truth in Him would He accept until a certain number was made full. This number became eighteen, seventeen men and one woman, the Báb Himself was the nineteenth. The first was the young man who believed in Him first. No one told these eighteen people who the Báb was. In dreams, through prayer, through seeing Him walk by them, they all recognized Him and believed in Him and said He was the Promised One.

For six years the Báb taught and His eighteen chosen ones travelled and also taught in Iran and in nearby lands. A fire in dry grass burns stronger and stronger. So the words of the Báb spread all over the country and many whose hearts were pure and who had their eyes and ears open and wanted to see the evil ways of men changed to good ways, believed in Him and followed Him and were called Bábís. The great men and the little men alike; women and children followed Him. But many more whose hearts were black and who were afraid to change the old ways for better ways, hated Him and they banded together against Him until all Iran was like a pot boiling on a great fire. And the people argued between themselves, some saying He was right but most saying He was wrong, and it was

like the days when Jesus Christ taught among the Jewish people, only it was worse. And like the Jewish people two thousand years ago they laughed at Him and their hatred grew. They took Him prisoner and cried out for His blood and beat His followers and broke into their houses and stole all they had, even their women.

Over a thousand years before the Báb was born, the Prophet Muhammad has said, "One will come who shall be perfect like Moses Who talked With the Great Spirit of God and worth His weight in valuable metal like Jesus Christ and patient like the good man Job who is mentioned in the Bible. The good men who follow Him shall be cast on the dust and their heads cut off and given as presents and they shall be killed and burned and they shall be afraid. The earth shall become red with their blood and their women shall weep and cry out loudly but these men will be my holy ones for all to see." And the prophecy of Muhammad came true.

The Báb was sent from one prison to another, each one worse than the other. He was separated from His wife and His mother and His uncle who was as a father to Him. He was separated from His followers. Month after month news came to Him of the massacre of those good men who had risen up all over His native land and followed Him. They were killed by the thousands and thousands and often their wives and children were killed too. But before their enemies killed them they tortured them, they burned holes in them, they cut off their ears, put out their eyes, mutilated them. All this they endured because they believed the Báb had spoken true words and they would not deny Him even though it meant their death.

The king of Iran, his councillors, his army and the religious leaders, all arose against the Báb and His followers. They said if they killed the Báb and the Bábís all this fire will be put out.

They were blind and could not see that this fire was a light for their country. They forgot that a good thing cannot be killed and that the more you hurt what a man loves the more his heart will cling to it.

The Báb was now thirty-one years old. His death was ordered by the king on July 9, 1850. In the middle of the day He was hung from a wall by ropes in one of the squares in a city called Tabríz. A youth of twenty one who was so devoted to his Master that he insisted on dying with Him, was also hung from the wall in such a way that his head rested on the Báb's breast. 750 soldiers were ordered to shoot their rifles at them. They shot and a great smoke arose. When the smoke blew away the many hundreds of people were watching saw there were no dead bodies. The Báb had disappeared and His companion was standing alone and unhurt before the wall. Great surprise took all the people and they asked how could this be? The soldiers were very surprised too and their commander searched and found the Báb quietly talking to one of His followers in a room nearby. Then this commander said, "I will never shoot at the Báb again. He is a Man from God." He went from the square and took his soldiers with him. The evil enemies of the Báb then brought other soldiers and again hung the Báb and the youth from the wall as before and the soldiers prepared to shoot them. The Báb raised His voice and said to all the people watching, "If you knew Who I am each one of you would choose to die with Me as this youth has chosen. But you do not understand. You are blind. A day will come when you will understand, but on that day I will no longer be among you!" Then another group of soldiers who had been brought fired their rifles. The Báb and the youth were killed at once and their flesh knit together by the bullets. Only the Báb's face was not disfigured.

Great was the rejoicing of the enemy that the Báb was dead. Great was the sorrow of His followers that their Master was taken away from them. We know from history that all those who were responsible for killing the Báb the king and his councillors, the army commander and the religious leaders were punished and an evil fate overtook them. The king himself was murdered later on and his dynasty disappeared. The men who led in the bloodshed of the Bábís were put to shame, were killed, were overtaken by terrible diseases and misfortune. Just like the story of Jesus Christ and His sufferings, was the story of the Báb; and just as the heroic death of Jesus Christ made men love Him more, so was it with the Báb. After the Jewish people put Jesus Christ to death His faithful followers knew His greatness better than before and they went all over the world and carried His Truth to other nations. The same thing has happened since the death of the Báb. This book in your hands is proof of this.

After the Báb was killed His enemies threw His body and that of the youth who died with Him outside the city wall to dishonor them but some of His faithful followers took them secretly away in the night and hid them in a box. For over fifty years they were hidden until at last and with great secrecy they were carried a journey of more than a month to the Holy Land, the land where Jesus Christ taught and died. Now the Báb has a mighty and wonderful tomb built for His body on the side of a mountain overlooking the sea in the City of Haifa. Thousands of people visit this tomb every year and it is built on the spot Bahá'u'lláh Himself chose for it.

What did the Báb do? From His childhood He was good and noble, quite and gentle, wise and kind. As soon as He became a man His mind and heart flowered into a wonderful blossom. It was in a dream that He first talked with the Great Spirit of God. He dreamed that He saw the severed head of one of the

grandsons of Muhammad who also was one of Muhammad's successors. From this head precious drops of blood fell and the Báb drank them. After this dream He was no more the same. He knew God had called Him to serve Him and to warn and lead men into a better way. From that day on, He thought only of the work He must do. He gathered the first eighteen to believe in Him. He taught them and sent them all over the land to teach others. For this He was imprisoned and killed after six years.

What did the Báb teach? He taught that men were now standing at the door of a new life. The old ways were no longer good enough for the future. There must be changes and reforms and men must go forward in better ways of brotherhood and friendship. But the heart of His teaching was this that He was only a door and a Man far greater than He would soon come after Him. He called this Man "the One God will send" and told all His followers to watch out for Him and to accept Him when He came. He said, "I am a drop but He will be the ocean, I am a word but He will be the whole book." The Báb wrote many books but His greatest book was called the Bayán as in it He gave instructions to His followers. He said, "My book, the Bayán, is like a ring upon My finger and I Myself am like a ring upon the finger of 'the One God will send'." So great was the One He was the door for, that He compared Himself to a ring on His finger.

The Báb explained many of the words in the Bible, the book of the followers of Jesus Christ, and in the Qur'án, the book of the followers of Muhammad. He explained the Resurrection, Day Of Judgement, Heaven and Hell. He said the true meaning of Resurrection is the coming of a new Messenger of God. When a man sees the truth in Him and accepts His words, this is Resurrection because before his heart is as dead but after his heart is alive. The dead are those whose hearts are buried in the

grave of ignorance, of thoughtlessness and lust. The Day of Judgement is the day when the new Messenger of God comes. This is the day when the men whose hearts are good turn towards the Great Man and love Him and follow Him, and those whose hearts are evil stop up their ears and shut their eyes and turn from Him and so each man's nature is made clear. Heaven is not a place but in the heart, for heaven is to know God and to turn to the One Who talks with Him and to listen to His good words. Hell is not a place but is in each man's own heart. When he turns his back on good and on the Prophet of God his heart is dark and evil and he has hell inside him. The Báb taught that the spirit of man lives after death and can go on growing in goodness and beauty but that the body of man does not rise up after death or go to a place called heaven or a place called hell. He said this is all imagination.

The Báb told His followers they must be as brothers loving one another. They must be courteous to all. They must do some useful work. Even as a tree brings forth fruit, men must work and not be idle. All must be taught in schools. Women must have greater freedom. The poor must be helped from what belongs to all the people together, in other words by the community, but no man must live by begging and no man must drink what intoxicates him. Men must love the God Who created all men, for love lifts up men's hearts and makes them better. And all the Báb's followers must watch for the Messenger to come for His Message will be a good Message and change the world.

The Báb, the Great Man Who taught such wisdom, was imprisoned and killed. But He was happy to give His life for the truth He believed in. He suffered greatly for He loved all men greatly. His spirit did not die but changed the hearts of thousands and thousands of people in His country and made

them better men. Everything He promised has come to be and the One He said would come soon has come and brought the New Day to this world.

Chapter III

Bahá'u'lláh said, "O men who are waiting, wait no more for He is come. See His house and His Glory is therein. The Glory is the same Glory as of old, but the house is new."

Every man has two parts, an inner and an outer being. He has a body and a spirit which lives after his body dies. But the Prophets of God have three parts a body, a spirit that survives after death and a Spirit which comes from the Great Spirit of God and is always alive from the beginning that has no beginning to the end that has no end. An ordinary man is like a lamp which his father and mother light when he is conceived. When his body dies, the lamp is broken but the light, although our eyes no longer see it, goes on shining after death. But the Spirits of the Prophets of God are like the sun. It shines today, it will shine tomorrow, it has always shone. This is why these Prophets can talk with the Great Spirit of God. They are different from us. They have always existed.

Bahá'u'lláh was the son of one of the Ministers of the king of Iran. His father was wealthy and wise and honored. He was born on the 12th of November, 1817 A.D. in the capital of Iran in a city called Teheran. He was given the name Husayn 'Alí. It was not until many years later that He took the name Bahá'u'lláh which means the Light of God. Like the Báb, from His earliest childhood everyone spoke of His beauty and wisdom. He never went to school but learned in His home. His son 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "My Father from childhood was very kind and generous. He had a great love to be outside and would go into the fields away from the city. He drew all people to Him, high and low, even the children would gather about Him. When He was only

thirteen or fourteen He was famous for His wisdom. He would talk to men on any matter and answer any question they asked Him. He discussed with the religious leaders in large gatherings and explained religious questions to them that were very hard to understand. They listened to His words and wondered at His knowledge. When My Father was twenty two years old His father died and the ministers wished Him to take His father's place as was the custom but He refused. Then the Prime Minister said, 'Leave Him alone, such a position is unworthy of Him; He has some greater work He is thinking of; I do not understand Him but I know destiny has a great thing in store for Him; His 'thoughts are not like ours, leave Him alone'."

Already when He was only twelve years old something happened to Bahá'u'lláh that changed Him. His older brother was married and great feasts were held. They brought a man who had a play to amuse the guests. Before them he made little dolls walk and act like the King and his court. When a man looked at this he saw all the glory and wealth of the King before him and the man spoke words for them and it was like real people, only very small. Bahá'u'lláh enjoyed this very much. When it was over and everyone was going home He saw a man leaving with a box on his back. He said to His father, "Who is that man and what is he carrying?" And His father said, "That is the man who made the dolls move and speak and in his box he has the King and his court." Bahá'u'lláh wondered at this very much and He said that from that day He understood that all the glory of the King and his wealth and his court was not important and it became for Him as little and worthless as the eye of a dead ant. So even as a boy Bahá'u'lláh realized the world is small and all its great things soon pass and are as nothing.

In 1844 when the Báb first spoke to the young stranger and told him Who He was, Bahá'u'lláh was 27 years old. He was

married and His oldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born on the same night that the Báb first spoke of His great Message. One of the first things the Báb did when the number of eighteen to believe in Him became complete, was to send the first one who had believed in Him to Teheran because He said in that city is a great treasure and He gave him a letter to deliver. He did not say, "In Teheran is a man called Husayn 'Alí, find Him." He said, "Go to Teheran and there you have a work to perform which you will do." Heart guided heart and so this messenger one day went to Teheran and sent Bahá'u'lláh the letter he had from the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh said at once, "I believe in the Báb." From that time He devoted all His time to serving the Báb and telling the people of Him. He was so wise, so strong in faith, that all the Bábís leaned on Him and loved Him greatly. He went from town to town teaching the people and helping the Bábís. His friends laughed at Him and were astonished that He who had wealth and fame should work for the Báb. When the Báb was made prisoner and could no longer travel, it was Bahá'u'lláh Who gave courage to the Bábís and kept the flame of faith burning in their hearts. For this He was punished by the evil enemies of the light. In Iran they had a cruel punishment. They tied a man and beat him with sticks upon the soles of his feet. This causes great pain. Both the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh were punished in this way three times most cruelty. When the Báb was put to death it was Bahá'u'lláh Who became the real leader. Just as lightning strikes the highest tree so the hatred of the evil people turned to Bahá'u'lláh after the Báb was dead.

Thousands of Bábís had been slaughtered in these few years. One young Bábí suffered so much to see all these innocent good people killed for nothing that his mind became unbalanced. He thought that if he killed the king of Iran he would avenge all this bloodshed. He took a gun and when the king and his men came by, he shot at him. But so foolish and disturbed was his mind

that he put small shot in his gun which would not kill a man but only a bird and all he did was to wound the king a very little. But this was a terrible thing. He was killed at once by the king's men and in their fear and anger they turned on Bahá'u'lláh Who was in a village some distance away and knew nothing of this young Bábí's folly. They took Him prisoner at once accusing Him of being behind this attack on the king. Bahá'u'lláh was innocent, all the Bábís were innocent except this mad youth and a few of his friends, but they took Bahá'u'lláh prisoner and led Him barefoot and with His head bare to the sun, a great insult in that country, to Teheran. All the people threw stones at Him and cursed Him and spat at Him. In Teheran He was put in an underground prison so deep that three flights or steps led down to it. Thieves and murderers were kept here. An iron collar was fastened to His neck and great chains put on His feet. There was no light and very little air and almost no food and one hundred and fifty men were in that small black place and the smell was terrible. For four months Bahá'u'lláh with other Bábís was in this prison, the worst prison in the whole country. Each day some were taken out and killed and each day the wife of Bahá'u'lláh and His three small children were afraid that day would be Bahá'u'lláh's turn and He would be killed too. All over Iran the men of the king with fire and sword slaughtered the Bábís.

Just as the Báb had a dream and knew He was called by God in that dream, so Bahá'u'lláh in this black prison was called by God in a dream and He heard these wonderful words, "I will give You victory through Yourself and through the words Your pen will write. Do not grieve over this that has come upon You and do not be afraid for You are safe. Soon God will raise up the treasures of the earth which are men who will assist You in Your Name and through Yourself, for with Your Name God has given life to the hearts of all those good men who believe in Him."

The family and friends of Bahá'u'lláh were all the time working to save His life. It was proved that He had nothing to do with the attack on the king. His family, being much honored and well known, succeeded in getting an order from the king to set Him free. He was so weak and ill they thought he would die. When He was in prison, His wife and His eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá who was eight years old and His little daughter and baby son suffered much from hunger. All His wealth had been taken by His enemies and no one would go to His family to help them because of the anger of the king. Now that He was out of prison they were afraid He would die because He was so ill. At last the king said he would not kill Bahá'u'lláh but He must leave Iran at once and forever. Bahá'u'lláh decided to go to Iraq, a country many days journey away to the west. It was winter and very cold and He and His family with one of His brothers by the same mother and a few other Bábís all went away together, They suffered much on this long journey to a far city called Baghdad.

In the Bible there is a story that sons of Adam and Eve were called Cain and Abel, that Cain was jealous of Abel and killed him. Brothers have been enemies many, many times and so it was with Bahá'u'lláh. He had a younger half-brother called Yahya whom He loved very much and whom the Báb, at the wish of Bahá'u'lláh, had made the head of the Bábís until the time when "He Whom God would send" should come to the Bábís. When Bahá'u'lláh was in prison this Yahya ran to the mountains for safety. But after Bahá'u'lláh was sent from Iran he went to Baghdad too. Now Bahá'u'lláh was like a light shining and more and more Bábís gathered about Him and listened to His good words. This made Yahya angry and he began to make trouble. When Bahá'u'lláh saw His brother hated Him and all the time was making trouble, He was very sad because He had been like a father to this younger brother who was from another mother. He thought, "If I go away maybe his jealousy and hatred

will become less and he will stop his trouble which is an evil thing for the Bábís." So He took a cloak and a bowl and went away on foot to the distant mountains and He told no one, not even His family, where He went. For two years He lived there and Bahá'u'lláh Himself said of these years, "In the first when I came to this land of Iraq I saw the shadow of coming events so I decided to go away. I went to the wilderness and there I stayed alone for two years. Tears of great sorrow poured from My eyes and in My heart the blood boiled with pain. Many nights I had nothing to eat and many days I had no rest. I swear by God that although I was in such distress My spirit was full of joy. In My solitude no news of the good or the harm, the health or the illness of any man came to Me. I spoke with My own spirit and forgot the world and all that is in it. I did not know that the net of destiny is bigger than what men plan and the spear of the Will of God goes farther than what men's minds think of. The Will of God is above a man's will. From the snares God sets, no man can escape and no spirit can find peace except in accepting God's will. I swear by the goodness of God that when I went away I thought I would never return. My purpose in going away was that I should not be a cause of strife among the Bábís and disturb the peace of My friends and that through Me the hearts of My companions should be hurt and disturbed. But this did not help and each man had his own plan and followed his own desire. At last I heard from the Spirit of God His command to go back. I gave up My own will and obeyed His Will. What man can say that I saw when I returned. Two years had passed and My enemies had worked all the time to destroy Me, and all men know this is the truth."

Conditions became so bad in Baghdad that Bahá'u'lláh's family sent a man to look for Him in the mountains and beg Him to come back. With a heavy heart Bahá'u'lláh consented and set out for Baghdad chanting over and over a very sad

prayer. He had gone away for the good of the Bábís hoping His absence would make peace. He found upon His return everything in a very bad condition. His brother Yahya had behaved worse than before. The Bábís were divided and quarrelling with each other. The light the Báb had lighted had almost gone out. With His good words, His kindness, His acts, Bahá'u'lláh gave new life to all. Soon in Baghdad all praised Him and wise men and chiefs sat at His feet and listened to Him. Many Bábís came from Iran on foot to see Him and went back with Bahá'u'lláh name on their lips and said He was like the Báb. This did not please His enemies or His brother or the religious leaders. All the time they made trouble. In the end they sent word to the king of Iran that if Bahá'u'lláh remained in Baghdad He would win all hearts and He should be sent away.

One day the religious leaders sent one of their wise men to Him and he talked with Bahá'u'lláh and found His words good. He said to Him, "Do some wonder (miracle) for us that I may go and tell the other leaders, 'See what Bahá'u'lláh had done, He is a man who is truly from God'." Bahá'u'lláh said, "Go to them and let them choose a wonder (miracle) and whatever they choose I will do it, and when I have done it, let them swear they will believe I am God's Messenger." The man took this message to the other religious leaders but they were very afraid. They said, "If He does it we must accept Him and we will lose our power." So they refused and sent no word to Him and they went on making trouble.

Black clouds were gathering over Bahá'u'lláh's head but He was not afraid. In these years He wrote many good books and words of great wisdom. There was a big river flowing by Baghdad and Bahá'u'lláh many times walked beside it and when He came home He was happy and wrote good words that lifted up the hearts of men.

Bahá'u'lláh and His family were now very poor. The king of Iran had taken all He had. He was so poor He had only one shirt and this would be washed while He waited and then He would put it on again when it was dry. Although He was free to come and go in Baghdad, He was under the hand of the king of Turkey and because of the mischief His enemies the king of Iran sent word to this king of Turkey that he had heard Bahá'u'lláh was making trouble. He asked his brother king to take Bahá'u'lláh away from Baghdad to a far place where men did not know Him and He would stop talking about the Báb. The king of Turkey accepted and commanded his chiefs in Baghdad to send Bahá'u'lláh and His family to a far city many months journey away. When the command of the king was known, all the friends of Bahá'u'lláh were in great sorrow and the people of Baghdad who loved Him were very sad. Hundreds of people came to His house and there was no place for them so Bahá'u'lláh went to a big garden and lived twelve days in a tent and all came to see Him and wept and lamented because He was going away. Even the chief men of the city came and said their hearts were sad because He was leaving. This garden had many sweet smelling flowers and Bahá'u'lláh gave these flowers each day to His friends and showed them much love. It was in this garden that Bahá'u'lláh at last told His friends He was the One the Báb had said they must watch and wait for. The first to fall at His feet and accept Him was His eldest son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was nineteen years old. Bahá'u'lláh Himself was then forty-six years old, a man in the full of life, beautiful to look upon. Bahá'u'lláh gave that garden the name of Ridván which means Paradise and all over the world every year the followers of Bahá'u'lláh hold a great feast called the Feast of Ridván in memory of that blessed day when Bahá'u'lláh told His friends He was the One God had sent as the Báb promised.

Bahá'u'lláh with twelve members of His family and seventy-two Bábís who went with Him at last arrived in the city called Istanbul where the king of Turkey lived. This king was a very cruel man and because of the evil words of the king of Iran he had become the enemy of Bahá'u'lláh. He gave Him a house very poor and too small to live in and after four months he commanded Him and all His family and followers to go away to another far city called Adrianople. It was winter time and in that country the rain that falls in winter becomes ice and snow and the people die because of the cold if they are outside too long. They were poor and their clothes were not warm but the heart of the king was like stone and he sent them all away. They suffered greatly on this journey.

Bahá'u'lláh lived in this city of Adrianople for four years. Now all the Bábís everywhere had heard He was the One the Báb had promised them would come and they accepted Him with great joy and from then on to the present day they and all the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are called Bahá'ís which means followers of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh like the Báb wrote many books and He wrote letters to all the great kings in the world and He called the kings and high chiefs to listen to His voice. At this time word came that the king of Iran had once again stirred up the king of Turkey and Bahá'u'lláh and His family were to be sent away a fourth time to a distant prison city called 'Akká. He then wrote to His great enemy, the king of Iran, and said, "O king, be just to your people and cease to persecute the Bábís. Bring Me face with the men who accuse Me of evil and let Me answer them openly." And He said, "We are now going to the city of 'Akká and according to what men say it is the worst city in the world. It has the worst weather and the worst water and the worst air. In it they intend to imprison Me and shut in our faces the door of life and take away from us all the good things in this world until the end of our days. I swear by God! Though

fatigue should weaken Me and hunger destroy Me and though My bed be a rock and My companions animals, I will not be afraid. I will be strong and patient. God will give Me strength and at all times will praise God and thank Him. God answers all men who pray to Him and is near all men who call out to Him. Through suffering is the light of God made to shine and praise called forth from men's hearts. This has been the way of God in all times." But the wicked king of Iran tortured to death the youth who brought this letter to him and was more evil in his ways than ever before.

Bahá'u'lláh and over seventy of His family and followers went by boat to 'Akká. This city was only for prisoners and its evil name was known everywhere. The people were like serpents with black hearts and disease lived among them. When Bahá'u'lláh came ashore the crowd laughed at Him and said, "Here comes the one the people of Iran worship. Look at him." He and His followers were taken not to a house but to the old stone fortress and cast into a bare room with iron bars in the windows. His young daughter fainted but no water could be found except a dirty pool on the floor and when they gave her this, she vomited. Disease broke out among them and at one time 'Abdu'l-Bahá alone was nursing seventy of His companions. For two years they lived in this terrible prison and here the younger son of Bahá'u'lláh, 'Abdu'l-Bahá's brother by the first wife of Bahá'u'lláh, fell through a hole in the roof and was killed. They washed his body for burial before the face of Bahá'u'lláh Who sat and watched and cried out, "O God! I have given My son as a sacrifice that all men may become as brothers and live in peace."

Of all the sufferings of Bahá'u'lláh His suffering in 'Akká was the greatest, even greater than when He was chained in the dark prison of Teheran. He therefore called 'Akká the Most Great

Prison. He wrote to one of His friends, "If you could see Me now you would not know Me so changed I have become." He said, "The marks of the spear are on this tree for all men to see." He meant was like a tree that had been attacked with the spears of enemies.

After Bahá'u'lláh and His family and followers had spent two years in the stone fortress of 'Akká this place was needed for soldiers so the chief men of 'Akká sent Him to a house in the city and the other companions to a big house. For over nine years Bahá'u'lláh saw no green. The city was very crowded, the streets small, and nothing grew in it. Bahá'u'lláh stayed in His house for He was a prisoner. The Bahá'ís came from Iran and Turkey and other countries to see Him. Often they travelled four months on foot to get to 'Akká and when they arrived in 'Akká they were not allowed to enter. They stood outside the city wall and looked at the window of His room and sometimes, if they were fortunate, they would see His face at the window and He would wave His hand at them. This filled their hearts with joy and they would go home and tell others He was alive. And because of their love for Him the light the Báb had lighted did not go out but went on growing brighter.

A good man is known to all and as the years went by all the good words and acts of Bahá'u'lláh made the people love Him. The chief men of the city, even the men who represented the cruel king who held Bahá'u'lláh a prisoner, came to admire Him and love Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá suffered very much to see His Father always shut up in this terrible prison city. He remembered had said one day, "It is nine years I have not seen anything green. The country is the world of the spirit, the city is the world of bodies." This made 'Abdu'l-Bahá very sad and so He went outside the wall and found a house for Bahá'u'lláh in the green countryside. Because all the men loved Bahá'u'lláh no

one said this was forbidden. So 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to His Father and said, "All is ready for You, I have prepared a house in the country." Bahá'u'lláh replied, "I am a prisoner, I cannot go." Three times 'Abdu'l-Bahá went to a wise man who was a great friend of Bahá'u'lláh and said, "You go and ask My Father to leave this city and do not leave Him until He consents." This wise man went and sat at Bahá'u'lláh feet and kissed His hands and said, "Why do You not leave the city?" Bahá'u'lláh said, "I am a prisoner." The wise man said, "You are not a prisoner. Who can make You a prisoner? You have kept Yourself in this prison and now I beg of You to come out." Every time the man said this, Bahá'u'lláh answered, "I am a prisoner", and the wise man took His hands and kissed them. For an hour he remained this way begging Bahá'u'lláh to come out. At last Bahá'u'lláh consented. With great joy, the wise man went to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and said Bahá'u'lláh has consented. The next day 'Abdu'l-Bahá took His Father to this house about an hour's journey outside the city walls. The chief men of the prison city said nothing for they all respected Bahá'u'lláh Who in their eyes was like a king. A few years later 'Abdu'l-Bahá found a bigger house for His Father nearer the city and He went to live there and in the end He died there and His body was buried in that beautiful spot in the country.

Bahá'u'lláh was a prisoner of the wicked king until He died. But so great was His spirit, so great His gentleness, wisdom and love that in whatever place His enemies put Him; the hearts of all the people would in the end turn to Him with love. Throughout this land where the city of 'Akká is and which is called the Holy Land and is the same land where Jesus Christ lived and died, the fame of Bahá'u'lláh grew. As the years went by conditions became better and the Bahá'ís who came from so far away were allowed to visit Him and speak with Him. Although two very powerful and evil kings were His enemies

they could not put out His light and His Name was on all men's lips.

Bahá'u'lláh spent much of His time during these years of the end of His life in prayer and in writing books and letters to the Bahá'ís and in speaking good words to the Bahá'ís who came to see Him. He had suffered too much in His long life and too many blows had been struck at Him and at those who followed Him and the Báb. Sometimes He was very sad for His brother Yahya was always working against Him with great hatred. So terrible was this hatred that once he put poison in the drink of Bahá'u'lláh when they were living in the city of Adrianople and Bahá'u'lláh almost died. When Bahá'u'lláh was sent to 'Akká His brother Yahya was sent away to another city. But always his hatred was busy and he wrote many letters to Iran and tried to turn the hearts of those who were once Bábís and now called themselves Bahá'ís against Bahá'u'lláh. And now Bahá'u'lláh saw more trouble ahead of Him for He had another son from an other wife and this younger son was very jealous of 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was like Bahá'u'lláh, good and wise and strong, but this son was evil and plotted against his brother. All this Bahá'u'lláh saw like a dark shadow which He knew would grow after His death and cause great sorrow to His beloved son, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, who was to be His successor. He knew that wherever there is a great man, little men will try to destroy him out of envy and His heart was sad for the future.

During the last years of Bahá'u'lláh life a famous Englishman asked to see Him and he wrote down what he heard and saw. He said, "I was taken into a room and my heart leaped with wonder and awe when I saw this room was not empty but in a corner sat a wonderful and dignified old Man. On His head was a tall hat and wound about it a white scarf. I cannot put into words the face of this Man although I can never forget His face. His eyes

seemed to look into my heart. Great power and great authority were on His forehead. Although His face was lined with age His long hair and His long beard which came almost to His waist were full and black as night and were like a young man's. I did not need to ask in whose presence I was as I bowed low before this Man Who is so much loved that kings can envy His greatness and sigh because they have no such power as He has. A gentle and fine voice asked me to sit down and then He said, 'You have come to see a Prisoner, a Man exiled from His country. I want nothing but good for the world and happiness for the nations and yet men say of Me I make trouble and I am against the government and therefore I deserve to be a prisoner and exiled from My home. I desire only that all nations should become one in belief and all men like brothers and that love and peace between the sons of men should become strong and that the difference between what one religion and another religion believes should be taken away and the hatred of men of one color for men of another color or tribe should stop. Is there any evil in this? So it shall be. The terrible wars among men and the waste these wars cause shall cease. Is this not what the people in your land need? Is this not what Jesus Christ promised would come about? Yet we see the kings and chiefs everywhere spending their money for weapons to destroy all men and not on things that will make men happy. These wars, this bloodshed and dispute must stop and all men live as brothers, as one family. In this day no man must say, 'I am proud this is my land and I love only my land.' He must say 'I love all men!'"

Bahá'u'lláh was 75 years of age when He died. He was ill for a little while and then one day He called His family to Him and said goodbye and told them not to grieve for Him. The glorious sun set but only His body passed from the eyes of men into the ground. His spirit goes on shining and is the light of this new day. He wrote for all the Bahá'ís to read His last wishes and He

made His beloved eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá His successor. He said all things that are not clear you must ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá for He will answer you with the truth. Many hundreds of people came to His house when they heard He had died and they camped in the country about and mourned with His family and with the Bahá'ís because a great Man of God had now left them and gone to the world of spirits.

We must now ask Who was Bahá'u'lláh? We can answer this by a picture. Let us say a Great Chief exists in a far place in a land of spirits and this Great Chief is God Himself Who made all things. This Great Chief has many Sons. His sons are the Great Men who are born into this world like other men but who talk with the Great Spirit of God as other men do not. Each one of these Sons is sent by His Father to a different people at a different time according to the need and darkness and suffering of the people. Each Son has a name, one is called Moses, one is called Buddha, one is called Jesus Christ, one is called Muhammad, one is called the Báb, one is called Bahá'u'lláh. There were many others. Each Son says, "I have come from My Father to speak His words to you and to help you and to tell you what is good and what is bad and what you must do now to be better and to be happy that when you die your spirit may be at peace and while you live you and your children may prosper." The words of these Sons are not Their words but messages from the Father of Them all. They are like pure water or pure metal. Nothing of Themselves is in Them but only the will of Their Father. If the Son says, "Do what I tell you to do, because it is the truth, because I am the Messenger of My Father", He speaks truly. And if the Son says I am My Father and the words I speak are the words of My Father, this is the truth too because Father and Son are one flesh and one will. Jesus Christ often spoke this way. Once He said, "My Father tells Me to tell you", and once He said, "He who has seen Me has seen My Father, for I and My

Father are one." This is all the truth. Bahá'u'lláh spoke in this same way, sometimes as the Son who brings the Father's message and sometimes as the voice of the Father in the mouth of His Son. If we say the Father and His Sons are one flesh and one blood, it is true and if we say the Father is in His Sons but each Son is different from the other Sons, this is also true. Thus all the Sons and Their Father are the same in one way but in another way each Son is different from the Others. The great Messengers of God are like the picture of this Father and His Sons.

Suppose a chief has many sons and he sends his sons on different days at different times out to different villages to carry his words. One son arrives at night time when all is dark and he says to the people of a village, "Light your lamps." Another son arrives at daytime and he says, "Do not light your lamps." Another son goes to a third village and he sees it is raining and he says, "Come into your homes and stay away from the rain." And a fourth son goes out to another village another day, and he sees the weather is fine and he says, "All men must go hunting." Now let us say the men of these four villages meet and discuss among themselves the words of their chief which his sons brought them. Some claim you must all light your lamps for the message from the chief said so. Others claim this is untrue for the chief's son said we must put out our lamps. The others say neither is true for the message came to us we must go and hunt, and still others cry no, we must stay in our houses. Have the sons of the chief lied? Has not each one faithfully carried his father's message which was a wise counsel for the village on that day? We can see the truth of this. But what we must see now is that the same thing has happened in the world. Each time One of the Prophets Of God came to a people He carried His Father's message truthfully to them. But according to the need of each people the message was different. Now the Jewish people

and the followers of Jesus Christ and of Muhammad and of Buddha and many others of these Messengers, fight among themselves and say, "You lie. This was not the message from God. The message was different." Bahá'u'lláh says this is foolishness and ignorance. All the Sons of the Father have told the truth and always the intention of the Father was the same, to take care of the people and guide them and make them happy. Each Son according to the need and the time gave the message of the Father. Why are men fighting over this? Bahá'u'lláh says, "Let them cease fighting now and listen to My words for My words are today the words of God."

Bahá'u'lláh and the other Prophets of God who are the beloved Sons of God sent by Him to lead and teach men, suffered very much. They were beaten, laughed at, stoned, spat upon, imprisoned, tortured and killed. If They were not God's Messengers, how could They endure this? If They who were so wise were not sure God was with Them, why should They accept this treatment? If a man looks carefully at the lives and the acts of these great Holy Men, he will see They were indeed all the same and like true brothers. For the sake of Their Father who sent Them They accepted all the hard things men did to Them and in return They served men with love and devotion and delivered Their Father's messages.

Bahá'u'lláh wrote to the cruel king of Iran who imprisoned Him and said, "This Message is not from Me but from My Father, God, Who knows all. He told me to speak His words to all men and because I obeyed things have happened to Me which have made all good men weep. I have not gone to school. I have not studied. I am like a leaf which the wind moves and the wind is the will of God Who is the King Of all men. When the wind blows, can the leaf be still? No, the wind moves it as it blows for the leaf is as nothing in the presence of the wind. Can

any man of his own will speak words for which all men will persecute him? I swear by God this cannot be."

Bahá'u'lláh like Jesus Christ served all men. Many times He slept on the bare floor. Many times He ate what He called the food from heaven which is hunger. It was not His wish to suffer so much in life but like Jesus Christ He accepted the will of God which blew upon Him like a mighty wind. He said, "Whatever God sends to Me is the desire of My heart. If he sends Me poison I will say it is like honey and every bitter suffering I will drink as if it were clear water." Because the Spirit of God spoke through the mouth of Bahá'u'lláh, He said, "Nothing can you see in Me but is from Him. His beauty is My beauty. He is Me and I am Him. In My spirit is the truth and in Me you can see nothing but God."

What was the work of Bahá'u'lláh? He said He came to this world to make all the people live as brothers in peace. He said, "You are all the fruit on the same tree and the leaves on the same branch. No man must say, it is best to love his own country or his own people. He must say, the best thing of all is to love all men as brothers."

All the Messengers of God have foretold a day when there should be peace everywhere. But each One of Them said it would come in the future when the Father Who is God Himself would come to earth and judge the good and the evil men in the world, rewarding the good men and punishing the evil men. Zoroaster who lived three thousand years ago said, "For all this time there would be conflict in the world until the Man God Promised would be born to save men from evil and give them peace." Moses said His people, the Jewish people, would be persecuted and scattered far and wide and ruled over by others until the time when the Man God Promised would be born and then they would be gathered together again in their own country

and the Spirit of God would rule on earth. Jesus Christ said, "Do not think I am come to you to bring peace on earth. I bring not peace, but a spear." And He said, "There will be wars and talk of wars and great suffering until the Father Himself is born in the world." Muhammad said, "Because of the evil ways of men there will be evil in the world and God will punish men by putting hatred in their hearts and the Jewish people and the Christians will fight each other until the day of Resurrection when God will be born in the world and judge all men." Bahá'u'lláh says He is the Promised Messenger, the Spirit of God, the Father Who is now born in the world and He is the One all Prophets promised would come and bring peace to all men. Bahá'u'lláh not only said this but He told men how to make peace and how to live as brothers.

Jesus Christ told the men who followed Him a story. He said there was a good man who gave a good piece of land to his people to cultivate for him until he came home again. But when he returned he found they had not taken care of his land and it was spoiled. Then he was very angry and sent all away. Jesus Christ meant this world was the land and that His followers would not obey Him and do as He said but in the end the Spirit of God would come and punish the evil men. Today is the day that Jesus Christ spoke of. All men are suffering and being punished because they did not do as He told them and this punishment is not yet finished. But Bahá'u'lláh said that now the end is near and the wars will stop and all men will live in peace.

If you light a lamp and put it on the ground, around the bottom of the lamp will be a very black shadow. All lights in this world have shadows, only the light of the sun in the sky has no shadow. So all life on this earth has its dark side. The great Prophets are the brightest lights in this world and Their lives have the darkest shadows around them, suffering, imprisonment,

death, the hatred of Their enemies, the plots of Their envious relatives. Bahá'u'lláh light was clear for all men to see. But many men are like bats who hate the light. He did all the Báb promised He would do. He fulfilled the sayings of all the Great Men who came before Him. His nature, His words, His books, all showed He came from God. He spoke to men of all things and told men how they must live in their lives together and each man in his own heart. He made clear the sayings in the Bible and the books of other religions. He told men what would happen in the future and already after only one hundred years have passed, many of His words have come true. He knew all things, although He never went to school. Wise men said, "Where does He get this knowledge that no man taught Him?" But the very wise men said, "He gets His knowledge from God."

CHAPTER IV

Bahá'u'lláh wrote that after He died His followers must turn their faces to the One Who had grown out of His roots. By this He meant His eldest son 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Many times He made it clear that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was to be His successor. 'Abdu'l-Bahá was born in Teheran on May 23, 1844 A.D. on the same night when in a distant city called Shiraz the Báb was telling that young stranger that He was the one he and his group have been waiting and watching for. He was given the name of Abbas but later in life He took the name of 'Abdu'l-Bahá which means Servant of Bahá or Servant of the light.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was a very intelligent child and old for His years. He had no time to be a child because when He was only eight His Father was imprisoned in the terrible prison of Teheran called the black hole. His house was attacked by an angry group of men who robbed Him and His mother of everything they had. Although He was only a little boy He became the head of His family. At this time He had a sister six years old and a baby brother. While His Father was in chains in prison He went every day to the prison to see if His Father was still alive. Sometimes He saw His Father brought out into the courtyard of the prison to get some air. He saw He was so ill He could hardly stand. His neck was swollen and wounded from the iron collar He was forced to wear. This was a terrible sight for a young boy who loved His Father and He never forgot those days of suffering. When He returned to His home the boys in the street would throw stones at Him and curse Him.

In Baghdad when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was only nine years old He understood that His Father was the One the Báb had promised

God would send. He kept this secret in His heart because Bahá'u'lláh had not yet said, "I am the One the Báb promised." 'Abdu'l-Bahá loved His Father more than ever because He knew He was one of the great Messengers of God. When Bahá'u'lláh went away for two years 'Abdu'l-Bahá again became the head of His family and had to take His Father's place even though He was not yet a man. He spent much time in prayer and thought and He memorized many of the things the Báb had written. When Bahá'u'lláh returned from the wilderness to Baghdad 'Abdu'l-Bahá spent all His time serving and watching over His beloved Father. As the years passed, He became His Father's shield and staff and did much work for Him. He received those who came to see Bahá'u'lláh and if they were seeking the truth He took them to Him but if their desire was unimportant He did not let them trouble His Father. 'Abdu'l-Bahá's wisdom was so great that when He was only fifteen or sixteen years of age His Father one day turned to Him and told Him to answer the question of a famous man who was visiting Him. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote the answer and the man was astonished that a boy could be so wise and know so much. Many people heard of this and the writing of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was given into many hands. He would discuss many things with the religious leaders and wise men and all men marvelled at this Boy who had never gone to any school but received His wisdom from His Father alone.

When Bahá'u'lláh was ordered by the evil king to leave Baghdad 'Abdu'l-Bahá was nineteen years old. He was the first one to publicly fall at His Father's feet and say He accepted Him as the One the Báb had promised God would send to the world although already ten years earlier He had recognized His Father as That One. From this time until the end of Bahá'u'lláh life 'Abdu'l-Bahá took from His Father's shoulders all the work that He could. It was 'Abdu'l-Bahá who did everything for the family and for the household and who saw the chief men and made all

the plans so that Bahá'u'lláh could be free for His great work of telling all men what the Spirit of God said to Him and how they must live and act to be better and happier men.

'Abdu'l-Bahá was often called the "Master" by Bahá'u'lláh and by everyone. He was very beautiful. His hair was long and black and curly and He had blue eyes. He was so kind to the poor and the sick that in 'Akká they called Him "the Father of the poor". When all were ill it was 'Abdu'l-Bahá who nursed them and was their doctor. His fame spread among the people and He was loved by all.

In 'Akká 'Abdu'l-Bahá married a girl who had come from Iran with her brother to see Bahá'u'lláh. She was of an old family of Bábís and many of her relatives had been put to death because they followed the Báb. Of this marriage of 'Abdu'l-Bahá four daughters survived.

Long before Bahá'u'lláh died all the Bahá'ís knew that 'Abdu'l-Bahá was like His Father. Bahá'u'lláh often mentioned Him as the Centre of His Covenant, the Mystery of God, the Most Great Branch, the Branch that had grown from His root. He called Him the Master and insisted everyone show Him great respect and when He died and His last wishes were read, in them He said all must turn to 'Abdu'l-Bahá.

'Abdu'l-Bahá had three positions. He was the chief of all the Bahá'ís everywhere. He alone had the right to interpret the words of His Father and say what the true meaning was and He was the perfect example in His character for all men to imitate. The work of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not easy. For all His life He had been close to His wonderful Father. Now His Father had gone to the world of spirits and left Him alone to carry on His work. As Bahá'u'lláh had been persecuted by the hatred and envy of His half brother so was 'Abdu'l-Bahá now persecuted by the hatred and envy of His own younger half brother who was called

Muhammad Ali. Year after year He worked against 'Abdu'l-Bahá, blackening His name and even trying to kill Him in his terrible jealousy.

This evil brother made every good act of 'Abdu'l-Bahá look like a bad act to the chief men. After the Báb was killed and His body was secretly saved by the Bábís at the instruction of Bahá'u'lláh. It was kept in secret hiding places known to Bahá'u'lláh and only a few trusted men for over fifty years. All the time they worried over this precious body, afraid the enemies would find it and destroy it. In the years when Bahá'u'lláh was able to leave the prison city of 'Akká and go into the country. He visited more than once the town of Haifa which is about four hours distance by walking from 'Akká. There He showed to 'Abdu'l-Bahá a place half-way up the side of the mountain overlooking the water of the sea between Haifa and 'Akká and said, "Buy this spot and bring from Iran the body of the Báb and bury Him here in a tomb." 'Abdu'l-Bahá after His Father died thought only of obeying His wish. He bought the land with great difficulty and in secret the body of the Báb was brought from Iran to 'Akká. Then 'Abdu'l-Bahá began to build a house with thick stone walls to bury the body in. But His evil half brother went to the chief men and said, "See, 'Abdu'l-Bahá is building a fortress and He will bring guns there and defy the chief men and stir up the people against the king." The chief men believed this foolish talk and they commanded 'Abdu'l-Bahá to stay inside the walls of 'Akká and not go about the country. They made Him a prisoner again although for over twenty years He had been permitted to move about freely. For seven years He was again a prisoner with His family in 'Akká.

So great was the fame of 'Abdu'l-Bahá that even though He was imprisoned in 'Akká, people from all over the world came to see Him. Now they came from the west, from England and

America and other lands because they had heard that in 'Akká was a wonderful Prisoner Who spoke good words of truth. 'Abdu'l-Bahá also wrote many letters to people all over the world and told them of Bahá'u'lláh and His words and encouraged them to be good and to work that all men may become as loving brothers and live in peace.

The life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá was spent in serving others. For Himself He wanted nothing. His clothes and His food were simple and He gave generously to the poor. Every Friday a crowd of poor and sick people would gather and He would share with them the little that He had and give them wise counsel for their sickness. Often He went to the homes of those who were very ill and nursed them Himself. Even those who hated Him He served with love and gentleness. He wrote to His friends and said, "Do not be sad because I suffer and I am in prison. This prison is for Me a paradise and I am like a man seated on a throne amongst other men. My sufferings are My crown and I am proud of these sufferings. Any man can be happy when he is comfortable and well and has pleasures to amuse him, but if a man is happy and contented when he is suffering and ill and all things go against him then is he a truly good and noble man."

During these seven years when 'Abdu'l-Bahá was again a prisoner in 'Akká, the wicked king who held Him prisoner had heard the whisperings of his half brother and he was stirred up in anger. He sent some chief men to 'Akká to find out what 'Abdu'l-Bahá was doing. The first thing these men did was to go and live in the house of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemies. How can you find out the truth about a man if you go and sit with his enemies? 'Abdu'l-Bahá now was in great danger because these chiefs would return to their king and tell all the lies they had heard and cause 'Abdu'l-Bahá to be sent away to a worse prison many months journey away or even cause Him to be killed. But

'Abdu'l-Bahá was not afraid. His friends said, "Free! We will take You away secretly in a boat and You will be safe". But He refused. He said, "Bahá'u'lláh did not run away and the Báb did not run away. No matter what they do to Me I will not run away." He sent away from 'Akká most of the Bahá'ís for He was afraid for their safety, but He and His family remained.

Many times different groups of chief men came and went and each time they were filled with the words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's enemies. In the end the last group went home to tell the king that they believed 'Abdu'l-Bahá should either be sent away once again to a far off prison or be put to death. All the friends and family of 'Abdu'l-Bahá were very sad. They thought any minute the order from the king would come and either He would be killed or they would never see Him again. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá was quiet and went His way the same as every day. He knew His life was in the hands of God and not of the wicked king who held Him prisoner. And God protected Him because as soon as the chief men got home to the city of the king they found the people there had risen against the king and they themselves had to flee to save their own lives. The king had no time now to think about 'Abdu'l-Bahá. He had to think about himself. Within one year he was made a prisoner by his own people who had suffered much from his cruelty. The new chiefs said, "Our king was very evil and for no reason he put in prison many good men who had done no wrong. No we will free all these men." They did this and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was set free. For fifty-six years since He was eight years old He had continually been in exile or in prison. Now He was free for the first time but He had become an old man with a white beard and white hair.

After He was set free 'Abdu'l-Bahá and His family went to live in Haifa. Many Bahá'ís from many countries came to visit Him and the good words of Bahá'u'lláh spread farther and

farther in the world. 'Abdu'l-Bahá decided to go and visit the lands to the west and in 1911 He set out on a long journey. For two years and four months He was away from His home and His family. In each city He went to, He told the people the Message of Bahá'u'lláh and called upon all men to listen to these good words and to make peace among themselves. He said if you do not make peace now a worse war will come upon you. He spoke to the chiefs and to the ordinary people. He spoke in the churches and in great meeting places. Everyone said this is a wise and good Man from the East and His words are good words. But people are lazy. It is very easy to say, "Yes, you are right, I agree with you, we should do that." But to change from evil and selfish ways to good ways requires work and effort. The people did not want to struggle with themselves and to work against the old ways. So they admired and loved 'Abdu'l-Bahá but did nothing. Only those who became Bahá'ís changed their ways but these were few at first and not enough to prevent the people from making war. On year after He returned to His home almost all these nations in the world went to war. This was the first great war from 1914 to 1918.

When the war came 'Abdu'l-Bahá was seventy years old. He was very tired and ill after His long journey. Every day He had seen many, many people. He had spoken in many meetings, always giving to others the good things in His great mind and His loving heart. Now He was exhausted. He wrote a very sad letter to His friends in the West. He said, "Friends, the time is coming when I shall be no longer with you. I have done all that could be done. I have served Bahá'u'lláh all I could. I have worked night and day all the years of My life. O! How I long to see the Bahá'ís do this work for God. Now is the time to tell all men the Kingdom of God is ready. Now is the time for union and peace. I turn My ears towards the east and the west, towards the north and the south, hoping to hear the song of love and

brotherhood coming from the Bahá'ís. My days are numbered and only hearing this song can give Me joy."

When the many enemies of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, His half brother, the jealous leaders among the Christian and Muhammadan priests, the chiefs of the government who before had held Him a prisoner, saw He was so weak after His long journey to the West they were very happy for they thought now He will die. But this was not to be. 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote to His friends, "No doubt My body would not have been able to endure so much effort and would have been worn out if the help of God had not come to Me and I was not protected. Some men say 'Abdu'l-Bahá has come to the evening of His life and He will now say goodbye to this world because He is weak and ill and this will kill Him. This is not true. In the eyes of My enemies I am weak because I have suffered so much in serving Bahá'u'lláh. But Bahá'u'lláh has given My spirit new strength and youth and through His mercy to Me now even My body is stronger and I am well and happy."

During the long years of the war 'Abdu'l-Bahá was always busy. When He saw that war was coming He made plans to protect the Bahá'ís and the poor from hunger. He had grain planted and when the hard years came and the people were starving, He saved many men's lives because He had food to give them. No one could travel to the Holy Land to see 'Abdu'l-Bahá during these years for all the nations were fighting. The evil chiefs who had always hated Him and who were angry when He was set free now turned their eyes to Him again. One of the leaders of the fighting men said, "When I capture Haifa I will take 'Abdu'l-Bahá and kill Him in the same way that Jesus Christ was killed." But 'Abdu'l-Bahá was not afraid and went peacefully about His good work. He knew His Father Bahá'u'lláh would protect Him. Two months before the war

ended the English soldiers captured Haifa. Their commander had heard of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and had been instructed to protect Him. So once again those who hated Him were defeated and His life was protected.

So great was the love and admiration of this commander for 'Abdu'l-Bahá that he asked his king to confer on Him a special honor and 'Abdu'l-Bahá was given the title of "Sir". He did not want this but when He saw the English commander would be very sad if He refused, He accepted.

Now the war was ended the Bahá'ís could again visit 'Abdu'l-Bahá and they came from all over from East and West. Among them was a good doctor who wrote a book like this one. He saw with his own eyes the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and stayed with Him over seventy days. He said 'Abdu'l-Bahá worked all day long and much of the night even though He was an old man. He would pray and meditate in the quiet night hours. He wrote many letters, saw many visitors, went among the poor and sick and helped them as He had always done all His life. He was so patient and so kind and good. He never made any man suffer but was like a light. Wherever He went He brought happiness to men. His words were not only wise but good to hear and He often made men laugh. He was like a loving father to all the Bahá'ís not only in Haifa but everywhere in the world.

On November 28, 1921 'Abdu'l-Bahá died. He was seventy-seven years old. A few weeks before He died He had a dream. He was in a room in a little house that was near His home. Bahá'u'lláh came to Him and said: "Destroy this house." 'Abdu'l-Bahá knew that these words did not mean He should tear down the house but that the time had come for His spirit to leave the house of His body. He told this dream to His family and they were surprised for they could not understand why Bahá'u'lláh commanded Him to destroy the house. They did not see the true

meaning of this dream until after He died. No one believed He was going to die. For a few days He had fever and remained in His room but He saw His friends and visitors and His words and acts were the same as always. His fever grew worse one night and one of His daughters stayed with Him. She brought Him a drink and He looked at her and said, "You wish Me to drink and I am leaving." Then He closed His eyes and she thought her Father was sleeping but then she saw He was dead.

When 'Abdu'l-Bahá was buried, many, many thousands of men came to His funeral until the streets and the side of the Mountain were black with people. No man could remember seeing a funeral like this. All the chief men came and the poor came and wept and said we have lost our father. The chief men spoke of Him with great admiration. They were chiefs of the English and the Christians and the Muhammadans and the Jewish people. All praised 'Abdu'l-Bahá as a great man in whose life only goodness could be seen.

'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote many letters and books and the words He spoke to the great gatherings of people in the West were written down. We know what He was like and what He said and words of His enemies cannot change the truth for it is preserved for all men to read. Before He died in the last years of His life He wrote some very wise letters to the Bahá'ís in America. He said to them, "You are a free people and God has been very good to you and your hearts are good. Therefore you must go out all over the world and tell the people of all nations about Bahá'u'lláh and teach them His words. In this way peace will come to the world and men will stop hating each other and live as brothers." It is because of these letters 'Abdu'l-Bahá wrote that this book has been brought to you in your own language so you can learn about Bahá'u'lláh Who is God's Messenger for this day.

Who was 'Abdu'l-Bahá? He was not the same as the great Prophets. But He was also not like other men. Bahá'u'lláh said, "all Bahá'ís must turn their faces to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and obey Him." He said 'Abdu'l-Bahá would be the One to tell all men what His words meant. He said if two Bahá'ís do not agree about the meaning of My words they must ask 'Abdu'l-Bahá and He will tell them the truth. He promised that His spirit would be near 'Abdu'l-Bahá and guide Him always in the way of truth. We must try to be like 'Abdu'l-Bahá. We must look at His life and His words and acts and say, "This was a Perfect Man, I will try to do as He did, I will try to be like Him and walk in His steps."

CHAPTER V

Bahá'u'lláh said, "A tree that gives no fruit is fit for the fire."

If a man wished to get food from the soil he must plant in good earth and not among stones. So Bahá'u'lláh said we cannot make a good way of life for men if each man in himself is like a stone. Out of stone nothing grows. The stones must be changed. Each man's heart must be changed first before the Kingdom can be established in this world. The beginning of change must be inside each man.

What is Bahá'í? 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "A Bahá'í is a man who loves all men and who tries to serve all men, a man who works to make peace and to help all men to live as brothers. If a man calls himself a Baha'i for fifty years and does not show every day in his life with other men that he is truly a Bahá'í in the acts, it is useless; he is not a Bahá'í."

'Abdu'l-Bahá explained that each year the fruit tree needs the light of the sun in order to produce fruit. It is no use to say to the tree, "When my father was a young man the sun shone and now you must grow fruit with that light." The light of past years is useless to the tree. It must have new light each year. So it is with men. Fruit that grew out of the lives of men in past centuries who received light from Jesus Christ or from Muhammad or other Messengers was good fruit. But now for this day we need new light in order to grow new fruit in men's lives. This new light comes from Bahá'u'lláh and His words. He is like the sun shining today and His good words will make men's hearts ripen like fruit and give a rich harvest. The Bahá'ís do not say because Bahá'u'lláh was good and noble and suffered greatly, we worship Him. They say we worship Bahá'u'lláh because the light that

comes from God shone in Him in this day. A Bahá'í worships Jesus Christ and Muhammad and all the Prophets because they are all the Sons sent out by the One Great Father to teach the people. A Bahá'í says all these Great Ones spoke the truth but the words of Bahá'u'lláh are for our time and will help us to ripen a new harvest.

Jesus Christ said unless a man be born again he cannot enter heaven. He meant that each man must choose for himself the road leading to heaven, and then he must put his feet on that road and walk for himself. It is not an easy road and when a new road is pointed out to men by one of God's Messengers they must have clear eyes to see it and great courage to leave the old well-worn path and take the new one. This is what the disciples of Jesus Christ did. They left the path the Jewish people were walking in and followed on the path where Jesus Christ led them. Now Bahá'u'lláh has done the same thing. He is leading men on a new road which will take them to a new and better life. Each man must look at this road carefully and see if it is the right road to walk upon.

All these Great Men have said, "Open your eyes and see for yourself if what I tell you is true. If you believe it is true, follow Me and do not turn back because of the blindness of other men." Only through seeing clearly can each man see through the clouds of false ideas and old customs that surround him and step out of the old path which is no more useful and put his feet in the new path that leads to a better life in this new day.

A Bahá'í must be a man who is not afraid to look for the truth. He must think with his own mind and feel with his own heart. Bahá'u'lláh said a man must know his own heart and see for himself what is good and what is evil, what leads to honor and what leads to shame.

Wisdom comes from God but no man can know Him as he knows another man for He is far away and above all things and man is living on the earth. Therefore he can only know God through those Great Men who talk with Him and are not like other men. In the beginning before creation God was alone but He was full of love. He was like a father who has no children but longs to have children so that he can love them and they can love him. God created man so that he could show His love and be loved by His children. A father can love his children greatly but if they do not love their father they do not feel his love for them. They are like plants in the shadow. The sun is shining but its light does not warm them. The first thing a man must do is to love God so that he can stand in the light of His love and receive it. How can a man love God? He never sees Him, he never hears Him, He does not know where He is. The only way he can know Him and love Him is through His Messenger. Because as we said before, this Great Man is different. He lives in this world with us in a body like other men but His Spirit is a different Spirit and He hears God's Words and sees His Light. He is a perfect mirror in which other men can see the sun reflected.

A man may have two sons who are very unlike each other and do not understand each other. But if they both love their father very much and respect his will, they will love each other because they will say, "My father loves my brother very much and to make my father happy I will also love my brother and when he sees I love my brother he will be pleased with me and love me more." 'Abdu'l-Bahá says this is the way men must love each other. Even though they are different and do not like each other, they must love each other because God loves all men and He is the father of all men and therefore all men are brothers.

If you are thirsty and a man brings you water to drink, you will not refuse the water because you do not like the man. If the

water is pure you will accept it. 'Abdu'l-Bahá said we must accept the truth no matter who brings it to us. He said men are ignorant and full of dislike of each other and because of this the different peoples have fought amongst themselves. Each one has said that only the words of Jesus Christ are true or only the words of Muhammad are true or only my church is right, your church is wrong. He said if men will look carefully they will see the same truth was spoken by all the Prophets. All of Them brought pure water for men to drink and quench their thirst, but as Each One gave the water in a different cup the followers of these Great Men fought over the difference in cups and forgot the pure water.

If a man loves his father he will follow him even if it means death for him. So a good Bahá'í follows the words of Bahá'u'lláh and obeys Him even if he suffers because of this, even if he is killed because of this. Bahá'u'lláh said everything in the world God has given men to have for themselves. Only evil deeds has He forbidden them and that which will hurt them or make them ill. There is only one thing God has asked men to give Him and this is their hearts. He said the heart of a man is the house of God in which His love must live. When a man's heart has this love he will be safe on the journey of life. If he is a poor man or a rich man, a well man or a sick man, if he suffers or he is happy, he will be protected in this life and his spirit will be protected after he dies if he keeps in his heart the love for God.

A boy does not argue with his father's or his chief's instructions. He obeys because he says this is a wise man who knows more than I do. Man must obey the commands of the Prophets in this same way and if they do not understand they must say, "He is wise, He is right and I will do as He says for this is good for me." If children refuse to obey their father, the

family is weakened. If the people of a village refuse to obey their chief, the village is weakened. Today all the people in the world are enemies of each other because there is no one whose voice they will listen to and obey. Now Bahá'u'lláh has come to men and speaks with the voice of God. If men obey Him, their wars will end and they will be able to live peacefully like the people in a village who listen to and obey the words of a good chief.

Bahá'u'lláh said, "If you wish God to have mercy on you, do not try to do that which is only good for yourself but do that which is good for all men. If you wish God to treat you with justice, choose for others the same things you choose for yourself." Jesus Christ said, "What you do for the least important of my people is the same as if you had done it for Me." With a kind heart and with a desire to be of help to all other men each man must do his work. However unimportant his work is, if he does it well and with a good will it is the same as if he prayed to God. To be of help to other men is praising God and worshipping Him.

Bahá'u'lláh said, "Those who follow Me must serve God with wisdom. Through their good acts they must teach others. The effect of good acts is stronger than the effect of good words. Those who teach others must have clean hearts and must not try to place themselves above other men. Some men are content with words alone but the test of whether their words are true or not is their acts and how they live. Acts show what a man is. The truth of a man's words is shown in his acts."

A Bahá'í must not force his beliefs on other men. He must speak to them kindly and lead them to the new path of Bahá'u'lláh. He must not force people into His path. Bahá'u'lláh said a wise man does not speak unless he finds an ear which wishes to listen. A man carrying a cup of pure water does not

give it to a man who does not want to drink. A lover does not open his heart until he sees before him his loved one. Therefore I say to you plant the seeds of love for the Great Spirit and the seeds of wisdom in the soil of good hearts and not in stone and sand. In this way the fruit will be harvested. Bahá'u'lláh said, "You have been favoured by God, do not soil your mouths with curses or unworthy words spoken to others. Do not be shameless in your glances at others. Show others this truth which you have found. If they accept it you have fulfilled your good work. If they do not accept it then it is a waste of time to reproach them or to interfere with them. Leave them alone. You yourself walk in the path of God. Do not cause sorrow to others. Do not cause strife and never cause an uprising. I hope you may do what God wishes you to do. All men are the leaves on one tree and the drops of water in one sea."

Bahá'u'lláh said, "O you men who love God! I call upon you to be courteous. Blessed is the man who is courteous and trustworthy." And He said, "Beware, beware that you do not offend or hurt any man." And 'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Beware, beware that you do not cause hopelessness to any heart. If a man causes sorrow to the heart of another man and deprives him of hope, it were better for him to hide himself in the earth rather than walk upon it."

In every man's heart is some good thing and we must look for that good thing and help it to grow. Bahá'u'lláh has commanded His followers to be forgiving towards other men and even to their enemies. We must not pretend to forgive them for this is like having two faces, a real face which shows we do not forgive and a smiling mask we hold up to others to make them think we are forgiving and loving. Our love and kindness must be true otherwise we cannot find the good in the hearts of our enemies and help it to grow.

Bahá'u'lláh has forbidden men to speak evil to others. He said, "The tongue is like a slow-burning fire and too many words are like deadly poison. Real fire destroys for a few years but the fire of an evil tongue destroys a man's name for generations." 'Abdu'l-Bahá said: a man has ten bad things in him and only one good thing, speak of the one and keep silent about the ten; and if he has ten good things in him and only one evil thing, speak of the ten and keep silent about the one." Jesus Christ said this same thing two thousand years ago when He saw the men stoning the woman who had done wrong and He said, "Let he who is without sin throw the first stone." Bahá'u'lláh said, "As long as you are a sinner do not even whisper the sins of other men. If you do this, I bear witness you will be accursed." And He said, Do not say of any man he has done thus and so, unless you wish the same things to be said of you. Do not say you will do a certain thing unless you intend to do it. These are My commands to you. Obey them."

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "The worst thing in the nature of men and the greatest evil is the way they speak wrong of other men behind their backs. This is even more true when those who speak evil are Bahá'ís. If some way could be found of stopping the gossip of men forever, especially those who are Bahá'ís so that no more evil whisperings would come from them and they would only speak in praise or others, then the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh would spread all over the world and all men would be happy and their hearts raised up."

Bahá'u'lláh said, "How could you forget the evil in yourself and busy yourself speaking of the evil in other men. I curse whoever does this." And He said, "I made the tongue of man to praise God. Do not dirty it with speaking evil of others. If the evil in your own heart overcomes you, remember your own

wrongdoings and not those of other men. Every man knows his own heart better than he knows the hearts of other men."

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Follow the example of Jesus Christ. He did not ask other men to serve Him. He served all men. Bahá'u'lláh teaches that all must serve each other. All must be like brothers and sisters. As soon as one man feels he is better than another man, he is in danger. Not to be pleased with yourself is a good thing for the man who is pleased with himself is possessed of a devil and the man is not pleased with himself is near to God. If a man has a hundred good things in himself, he must not be pleased. He must look about for the bad thing in himself and try to overcome it. No matter how good a man is, it is always possible for him to be better. It is like a man going up a hill. If he looks back he is pleased but if he looks up he sees he still has a long way to go." A man who praises himself is standing still. A little more and he will be going downhill instead of uphill.

To confess the sins one has committed to another man, be he a priest or not, is forbidden by Bahá'u'lláh because to do this is humiliating. Bahá'u'lláh says God does not wish to humiliate men but to help them. A man must in his heart ask God to forgive him and help him.

Bahá'u'lláh taught that if men were trustworthy, peace and safety will exist everywhere. A man who can be trusted by other men is the greatest man of all. To be trusted a man must speak the truth. To speak only the truth is the first thing a man must have in his heart. When men lie and do not speak the truth they cannot go forward because they cannot believe in each other and cannot trust each other and therefore they cannot work together. Bahá'u'lláh said when men speak the truth then all the other virtues will grow in their hearts.

God made men to be good like a tree which can bear good fruit. Bahá'u'lláh said, "God created men of a rich substance, why do they make themselves mean and poor? God created men noble, why do they stoop to such low acts? God created wisdom in the hearts of men, why do they turn to other men for guidance? In His love for men He molded them, why do they turn away from Him? Let them look into their own hearts and there they will find the mighty power of God's Spirit waiting for them." Bahá'u'lláh is calling His followers to become noble, wise and truth-speaking men. He said, "Your spirit is like a knife of good metal. Draw it out of the cover of unworthy desires and acts so that its perfection may be seen by all men." The only way we can do this, the only way we can change our hearts and our lives is to turn to the Great Man Who is God's Messenger in this day, and that Great Man is Bahá'u'lláh.

CHAPTER VI

The Prophet Muhammad said that prayer is like a rope which every man can climb up until he reaches heaven.

'Abdu'l-Bahá said, "Prayer is talking with God". For God to direct men into the right path He must speak to them in words they understand. He does this through the mouths of the great Prophets. As long as these Great Men are alive They give us the instructions of God and after They die we have Their words and Their books to guide us. But this is not the only way God can reach us. There is a language of the spirit and heart which is neither words nor writing. This language is as different from the languages spoken by men as their languages are different from the cries of the birds and animals. This is the language of prayer, when in our thoughts we speak to God and He answers us in our hearts and gives us guidance.

Bahá'u'lláh said the spirit of man has feelings that cannot be put into words. The tongue cannot express these feelings nor the pen write them down. The heart of a man who loves God can speak with the heart of another man in this language that has no words.

'Abdu'l-Bahá told us how we can learn to speak to God. He said we must turn our thoughts away from the world and from all men and think only of God. This is not easy. Effort must be made. A man must try to reach this state. He can do this by not thinking of outside things and desiring them but by thinking of inner things and desiring to draw near to God. The eyes of a man's spirit must be open so that in all things he sees traces of the hands of God. When a man does not turn his mind and heart upwards toward God, he receives no light. On the contrary when

he turns his heart and mind downwards towards his own body he falls from his high place and in his passions and acts becomes worse than an animal.

Bahá'u'lláh said, "Free yourselves; men, from the slavery of your own passions and desires and attach your hearts to God. To pray to Him is to wash yourself of all defilement. Repeat the words I have given to you so that like a fine song they may move your heart and the hearts of other men and lift them to God. He who seeks to draw near to God should at dawn of every day pray to Him with love in his heart until his prayer lifts him up from thoughts of this world."

'Abdu'l-Bahá taught that as God is high above everything He created, no man can see Him. A cup cannot contain the waters of the sea. A man's mind cannot contain the picture Him Who created all things. Therefore to pray to God a man must turn his thoughts to the Messenger of God. God's Messenger is like the rays of the sun. The sun does not come down from sky to us. Only the rays come to us and bring us the heat and the light of the sun. We know the the sun gives heat and light because of its rays. We know the sun gives life to all things because of its rays. But the sun itself we dare not even look at directly for if a man gazes into the sun he goes blind.

When a man prays he must turn his heart to God's Messenger and address his prayer through Him. These Great Men are the Messengers between us and God.

Bahá'u'lláh commanded the Bahá'ís to pray. He said, "Recite the Words given to you from God every morning and evening. The man who neglects this is unfaithful to his pact with God and is counted among those who turn away from Him. O my people, be afraid of God. Do not let too much prayer and worship make you proud. If you recite one verse with a glad heart it is better for you than if you recite all the verses given you from God with

carelessness." Bahá'u'lláh taught that to praise God and call upon Him must refresh the heart of a man and make it like a bird that flies up towards the sky with joy. Too much prayer for too long a time may cause fatigue and make the bird of the heart heavy and unable to fly. This is not the purpose of prayer which is to strengthen man and make him happy. Every man must pray. The only excuse for his not praying is if his mind is ill or something which he cannot help prevents him.

Some men ask, "Why should we pray to God? Every thing in life is before us. We do not need to ask for anything." This is a wrong thought. A sick man asks the doctor for healing, a poor man asks the rich man for help, a weak man asks the strong man for protection. All men are poor and ill and weak before God. He is like their father. For His children to ask from Him is right. There are many prayers just as the children ask many things of their father. But 'Abdu'l-Bahá said the best prayer is the one in which the heart says to God, "I love You because You are my Creator." In this prayer we do not ask for healing or for protection or for wealth or for victory but only ask to give our hearts to God. When we learn to pray this way we know no fear of death and we find a joy that lasts forever.

As men gather together to discuss the affairs of their village, to comfort each other in times of danger, or to counsel each other on their work, so it is also good for them to gather together and pray to God for Him to help them and guide them. There is great strength in things men do together and when they pray together there is great strength given to them.

When men turn away from God they wander into evil ways and bring suffering upon themselves. When they disobey the words of God's Messenger they are punished for their wrongdoing. Therefore they must ask forgiveness of God in their prayers and ask Him to lead them into the right path. A good

man is grieved when he sees the people of his village busy in wrong-doing. He does all he can to bring them back from their evil ways and to protect them from suffering. He even places himself in danger, gives his wealth, even his life, to help and save them from the punishment of their unwise acts and evil ways. The Holy Men and the Prophets sacrifice Themselves for other men even to the point of death, as Jesus Christ died in order to save men from their evil ways. This is the highest example we know in this world, when a man to do good to other men will give his life. In the land of Iran over twenty thousand Bábis and Bahá'ís were put to death, men, women and children, because they would not deny the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, because they believed Their words were the Words of God for this day and would bring peace and happiness to all men.

But some men are full of doubts. They say the world is full of strange things, illness and floods, great storms and winds, famine, war and death. Of what use is it for a man to pray to God for help? There are two answers to this question. First, men grow strong by suffering. How is a man to be known if he cannot endure pain and trial. Which is better, a blade of grass or a mighty tree that has passed through a hundred storms and still stands and bears fruits. A man who can endure no suffering or sorrow is no man at all. Suffering and sorrow teach him and toughen him and make him a man. We see therefore that part of life is the training these sufferings give to our spirits. They are necessary for us. Secondly, there is a strength greater than we understand in prayer. Let us take an example. A man wishes to move a very heavy stone. He pushes it but alone he cannot move it. It takes ten men or more to push it from its place. But the man is alone and he wishes to move the stone. So he takes a long pole and he puts the point of it under the stone. A little away from the stone he puts a piece of stone or wood under the pole and now all alone he can move the big stone from its place. This

is like prayer. The pole helps the man move the stone. The prayer to God helps the man overcome his difficulty for the power of God comes in answer to his call.

The Báb and Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá gave us many beautiful prayers for men to say and women to say and children to say, prayers of thanksgiving to God and prayers for healing, for protection and for guidance. The Bahá'is having a great treasury of these words. Bahá'u'lláh commanded His followers to say at least one prayer a day and He wrote three prayers for them to choose from, a very long one, a medium one and a short one. These are the words of the short one:

"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."

Another prayer of Bahá'u'lláh says:

"O my God! O my God! Unite the hearts of Thy servants, and reveal to them Thy great purpose. May they follow Thy commandments and abide in Thy law. Help them, O God, in their endeavor, and grant them strength to serve Thee.

O God! Leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of knowledge, and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord."

A prayer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"O Thou kind Lord! Thou hast created all humanity from the same original parents. Thou hast intended that all belong to the same household. In Thy Holy Presence they are Thy servants and all mankind are sheltered beneath Thy Tabernacle. All have

gathered at Thy table of bounty and are radiant through the light of Thy providence.

O God! Thou art kind to all, Thou hast provided for all, Thou does shelter all, Thou dost confer life upon all. Thou hast endowed all with talents and faculties; all are submerged in the ocean of Thy mercy.

O Thou kind Lord! unite all, let the religions agree, make the nations one so that they may be as one kind and as children of the same fatherland. May they associate in unity and concord.

O God! upraise the standard of the oneness of humankind.

O God! establish the Most Great Peace.

Cement the hearts together, O God!

O Thou kind Father, God! exhilarate the hearts through the fragrance of Thy love; brighten the eyes through the light Of Thy guidance; cheer the hearing with the melodies of Thy Word and shelter us in the cave of Thy providence. Thou art the Mighty and Powerful! Thou art the Forgiving and Thou art the One Who overlookest the shortcomings of humankind."

Another prayer of 'Abdu'l-Bahá says:

"Thou Almighty! I am a sinner, but Thou art the Forgiver! I am full of shortcomings, but Thou art the Compassionate! I am in the darkness of error, but Thou art the Light Of Pardon!

O Thou benevolent God! Forgive my sins, grant me Thy gifts, overlook my faults, shelter me and immerse me in the fountain of Thy patience and heal me of all sickness and disease.

Purify and sanctify me and give me a portion from the outpouring of holiness, so that sorrow and sadness may vanish, and joy and happiness descend. Let despondence and

hopelessness be changed into cheerfulness and trust, and grant that courage may take the place of fear.

Verily, Thou art the Forgiver, the Compassionate, and Thou art the Generous and Beloved."