

BAHÁ'Í

"Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same..." -- Bahá'u'lláh

"The Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion. With more than five million adherents residing in over 124,000 localities, the Bahá'í Faith is established in 235 countries across the planet. The spiritual principles of the Bahá'í Faith affirm its overall purpose--to bring about the oneness of humanity. In cooperation with these same principles, Bahá'ís also believe that there is only one Creator and that the spiritual truth of all religions is the same. From a Bahá'í perspective, The Bahá'í Faith is the most recent of the world's great religions. It forms the next link in a chain of important, divine teachings, a progressive revelation that places Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, as the Messenger of God for this age."¹

The **Universal House of Justice** in Haifa, Israel, is the global governing body; its functions were set out by Baha'u'llah. It is an all-male body. Bahá'ís have no clergy, sacraments or rituals.²

"Mírzá 'Alí Muhammad, known as the **Báb** (Gate), who in May 1844 (25 years old) advanced the claim of being the Herald Who according to the sacred Scriptures of previous Dispensations, must needs announce and prepare the way for the advent of One greater than Himself, Whose mission would be, according to those same Scriptures, to inaugurate an era of righteousness and peace, an era that would be hailed as the consummation of all previous Dispensations, and initiate a new cycle in the religious history of mankind. He was persecuted, arrested, and exiled to the mountains of **Ádhirbáyján**, Executed, in July 1850.

Mírzá Husayn-'Alí, surnamed **Bahá'u'lláh** (the Glory of God), a native of Mazindarán, Whose advent the Báb [Herald and Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh] had foretold, was imprisoned in Tíhrán, was banished, in 1852, from His native land to Baghdád, and thence to Constantinople and Adrianople, and finally to the prison city of Akká, where In the course of His banishment, He formulated the laws and ordinances of His Dispensation, expounded, in over a hundred volumes, the principles of His Faith, proclaimed His Message to the kings and rulers of both the East and the West, both Christian and Muslim, addressed the Pope, the Caliph of Islam, the Chief Magistrates of the Republics of the American continent, the entire Christian sacerdotal order, the leaders of Shí'ih and Sunní Islam, and the high priests of the Zoroastrian religion. In these writings He proclaimed His Revelation, summoned those whom He addressed to heed His call and espouse His Faith, warned them of the consequences of their refusal, and denounced, in some cases, their arrogance and tyranny."^[1]

"There is only one God, the Creator of the Universe. Throughout history, God has revealed Himself to humanity through a series of divine Messengers--each of whom has founded a great religion. The Messengers have included Abraham, Krishna, Zoroaster, Moses, Buddha, Jesus and Muhammad. This succession of divine Teachers reflects a single historic "plan of God" for educating humanity about the Creator and for cultivating the spiritual, intellectual and moral capacities of the race. The goal has been to prepare the way for a single, global and ever-advancing civilization. Knowledge of God's will for humanity in the modern age was revealed just over 100 years ago by Bahá'u'lláh, who is the latest of these divine Messengers."

God is transcendent and unknowable. However, He has sent, and will continue to send, great prophets to humanity, through which the Holy Spirit has revealed the "Word of God."^[2]

Bahá'í Principles: The oneness of God, mankind and religion; The independent investigation of truth; The equality of women and men; Harmony of science and religion; Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty; Universal peace; A world common-wealth of nations; A universal auxiliary language; Spiritual solutions to economic problems; Universal education. ^[1]

Members: pray each day; observe the 9 holy days (**April 21, 29 & May 2:** Baha'u'llah's public declaration of his mission; **May 23:** Bab's declaration of his mission; **May 29:** Passing of Baha'u'llah; **July 9:** Martyrdom of the Bab; **October 20:** Birth of Bab; **November 12:** Birth of Baha'u'llah); fast 19 days a year; work to abolish prejudice; regard work as a form of worship; make at least one pilgrimage, if they are able, to the Shrine of the Bab and the houses in which Baha'u'llah lived, which are situated near the Bahá'í world headquarters; Reflecting their origins in Shiite Islam, Bahá'ís do not consume alcohol. ^[2]

Bahai holy books: *The Most Holy Book*, *The Book of Certitude*, *Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah*, *The Hidden Words* and *The Seven Valleys*.

Bahá'u'lláh stressed the importance of: Unity, Honesty, Chastity, Generosity, Trustworthiness, Purity of motive, Service to others, Deeds over words, Work as a form of worship. ^[1]

Bahá'u'lláh forbids: Lying, Killing, Stealing, Gambling, Drug abuse, Consumption of alcohol, Gossip and backbiting, Adultery and promiscuity.

Galatians 5 ¹⁹*Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*

"For Bahá'ís of Christian background, Bahá'u'lláh fulfils the paradoxical promises of Christ's return "in the Glory of the Father" and as a "thief in the night." That the Faith was founded in 1844 relates to numerous Christian prophecies. Bahá'ís note, for example, that central Africa was finally opened to Christianity in the 1840s, and that event was widely seen as fulfilling the promise that Christ would return after "the Gospel had been preached " to all nations." In Bahá'u'lláh's teachings Bahá'ís see fulfillment of Christ's promise to bring all people together so that " there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." ^[1]

1 John 4 ²*By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. ⁴You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

Matthew 7 ¹³ *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.*

Matthew 10 ³³*But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

³⁴*"Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to "set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.*



Bahá'í House of Worship (1 of 7 worldwide). Wilmette, Illinois. Home of the US National Spiritual Assembly (NSA) that supervises affairs in the US.

¹ www.bahai.com

² www.religioustolerance.org