



Overview

BASIC BAHÁ'Í PRINCIPLES AND TEACHINGS

- One loving creator
- All world religions share a common source and aim
- The oneness of all humankind
- The equality of women and men
 - Harmony between science and religion
- The personal and independent investigation of religious truth
 - A spiritual approach to economic problems
 - The eradication of all forms of prejudice
 - Universal education
- The assurance of world peace

THE BAHÁ'Í PRINCIPLE OF PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

- Divine revelation is a continuous and progressive process.
 - All the great religions of the world are divine in origin.
 - The basic principles of these religions are in complete harmony.
 - The missions of these religions represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of humanity.

*For U.S. Bahá'í information, visit
www.bahai.us.*

*For international Bahá'í
information,
visit www.bahai.org.*



BAHÁ'Í FAITH

The Bahá'í Faith is the youngest of the world's independent monotheistic religions. Founded in Persia in 1844, it has more than five million adherents in 236 countries and territories. Bahá'ís come from nearly every national, ethnic and religious background, and Bahá'í literature has been translated into 802 languages. The international headquarters of the faith is in Haifa, Israel, near the graves and shrines of the founders, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. These shrines were designated World Heritage sites of cultural significance by UNESCO in July 2008.

In the contiguous United States, there are 170,000 Bahá'ís and 1,100 elected local spiritual assemblies. The Bahá'í Faith is one of America's fastest-growing religions. The architecturally stunning Bahá'í House of Worship in suburban Chicago (Wilmette, Illinois) is one of seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship in the world. The domed temple is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its nine sides reflect the Bahá'í belief in the unity of world religions.

Bahá'ís view the world's major religions as part of a single, progressive process through which God reveals His will to humanity. Bahá'u'lláh (1817-1892), the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, is recognized as the most recent in a line of divine messengers that stretches back beyond recorded time and includes Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus and Muhammad. Together, the world's great religions are expressions of a single, unfolding divine plan. Bahá'ís recognize Bahá'u'lláh as the most recent of these divine messengers and the one who brought the word of God for today.

The Bahá'í Faith is not a sect or denomination of another religion, nor a cult or a social movement. Rather, it is a globally recognized independent world religion founded on books of scripture revealed by Bahá'u'lláh. It has its own sacred scriptures, laws, calendar and holy days.

U.S. BAHÁ'Í SPECIFICS

There are 170,000 Bahá'ís in America, with numbers doubling every 20 years. Bahá'ís live in more than 10,000 American towns and cities, with the largest concentrations in California, Georgia, Illinois, South Carolina and Texas. There are Bahá'í Centers in more than 170 cities.

MAJOR BAHÁ'Í HOLY DAYS

March 2 – 20 Bahá'í month of fasting. Bahá'ís between ages 15 and 70 do not eat or drink from sunrise to sunset for 19 days, setting aside time for prayer and meditation.

March 21 Naw-Ruz. The Bahá'í New Year's Day is celebrated on the spring equinox.

April 21-May 2 Festival of Ridvan. Commemorates the 12 days (April 21-May 2, 1863) when Bahá'u'lláh, the Founder of the Bahá'í Faith, proclaimed His mission as God's messenger for this



BAHÁ'Í COMMUNITIES

There is no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith. Rather, its affairs are administered by a network of democratically elected councils at the international, national and local levels.

Bahá'ís gather together to establish loving, supportive and vibrant communities. Their events, celebrations and projects are open to all who wish to participate.

Major activities include:

- Adult study circles to explore the scriptures and engage in practical acts of service
- Devotional gatherings where people pray together in a loving atmosphere
- Children's classes to provide moral and spiritual education
- Youth programs to empower teens through study, service, friendship and the arts

age. The first (April 21), ninth (April 29) and twelfth (May 2) days are celebrated as holy days when work is suspended.

May 23 Declaration of the Báb. Commemorates the day, May 23, 1844, when the Báb, the prophet-herald of the Bahá'í Faith, announced in Shiraz, Persia, that he was the herald of a new messenger of God.

KEY BAHÁ'Í DATES, FIGURES AND HISTORY

1844 Siyyid Ali-Muhammad, a merchant from Shiraz, Persia, announces that he has been sent by God to prepare humanity for a new age and the imminent appearance of another messenger even greater than himself. He takes the title of The Báb (“gate” in Arabic) and attracts tens of thousands of followers.

1844-50 The Faith grows widely and is viewed as heretical by the Persian clergy and government. The Báb and many of his followers suffer repression and violent massacres; the Báb is publicly executed in 1850.

1817 Mirza Husayn Ali is born into a noble family that traces its lineage to imperial Persia's Sassanian dynasty. In his mid-20s, he declines a life of wealth and privilege to pursue humanitarian goals. He embraces the Báb and his religion, becomes one of its leading disciples and later takes the title Bahá'u'lláh (“glory of God” in Arabic).

1852 Baha'u'llah is arrested, beaten and thrown into an underground dungeon known as the Black Pit, where he receives the revelation that he is the messenger foretold by the Báb. Bahá'u'lláh is released and exiled to Baghdad.

1863 Bahá'u'lláh in a garden in Baghdad, announces He is the long-awaited messenger of God promised by the Báb. He establishes the Bahá'í Faith and is recognized as the most recent in a line of messengers of God that includes Abraham, Moses, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Christ, Muhammad and the Báb.

1863 - 1892 Bahá'u'lláh reveals numerous volumes of sacred scripture and establishes laws and institutions of the Faith. He spreads the Faith and informs kings and rulers worldwide. He spends decades in or near the penal colony of Akka (Haifa), dies in 1892 and is buried there.

1892 - 1921 In his will, Bahá'u'lláh names His eldest son, Abdu'l-Baha (“servant of Baha” in Arabic), as successor head of the Faith. He visits Europe and North America to foster Bahá'í communities and proclaim Bahá'í teachings to the public.

1907 The Chicago Baha'i Assembly incorporates and begins building the Bahá'í House of Worship for North America in Wilmette, Illinois, on the shores of Lake Michigan.

1953 The Bahá'í House of Worship is dedicated.