



O people of the world!
The religion of God is to create
love and unity;
do not make it the cause of
enmity and discord.

—Bahá'u'lláh

BAHÁ'Í DHARMA

"We spend our lives trying to unlock the mystery of the Universe, but there was a Turkish Prisoner, Bahá'u'lláh . . . who had the key."

Leo Tolstoy

"The Bahá'í Movement is a sign of the times. There is an increasing eagerness on the part of thoughtful men and women in religions to find out the religion behind all religions, which requires us to believe in the unseen and work for human fellowship. . . ."

S. Radhakrishnan

Bahá'u'lláh is the Founder of Bahá'í Dharma. He was born in Iran in 1817. His name means the Glory of God.

Bahá'u'lláh was opposed by the fanatical religious leaders of Iran because of what He taught over a century ago. He was banished from His native land and imprisoned in the Turkish fortress-city of Acre. Thousands of His followers were tortured to death, but no amount of opposition could stop His beautiful teachings from spreading to every corner of the earth.

The followers of Bahá'u'lláh, who are called Bahá'ís, are men and women from all the different castes, creeds and nationalities of the world. These people, through their love for Bahá'u'lláh, and in obedience to His Words, have forsaken every kind of prejudice which kept them apart, and have formed an international Brotherhood based on the love of God and service to their fellowmen.

The following is a brief summary of a few of the principles Bahá'ís believe in:

- * God, the Supreme Spirit and Eternal Essence, is One. He is the source of goodness, love, mercy and justice. All creation has come into being through His divine Will. We can find peace and happiness only

if we live in obedience to His commands.

* God has given His guidance to people all over the world through His Manifestations on earth—the divine Avatars. No section of the human race has been deprived of God's guidance. The names of the ancient Avatars are now lost in the midst of many myths and legends. The Avatars Who are historical figures are: Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Moses, Christ, Muhammad, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh.

* The spiritual truths given by these Manifestations of God are essentially one and the same. Their social laws differ because each gave what was needed for the age in which He came.

* The divine Avatars of the past have all foretold a time when Their followers would forget Their teachings and become attached to the material world; the love for the things of this earth would replace the love of God in their hearts, and they would become selfish and greedy, each person striving after his own comfort, unconcerned about the happiness of his fellowmen. In all the Sacred Scriptures of the past it has been promised that at such a time a divine Avatar will come to establish the foundations of Dharma once again, and to gather all the peoples of the earth in one, Universal Brotherhood. Bahá'u'lláh is that Promised Avatar.

* God has given us infallible guidance once more through Bahá'u'lláh. His teachings are based on the eternal spiritual laws which are the foundation of every religion, but they are suited to the needs of this age. Bahá'u'lláh's special mission is to establish the unity of mankind. Despite the many obstacles in the way, this unity will become a reality because it is the Will of God.

* People belonging to different castes and countries must now accept each other as members of one family. They should

forsake their differences and learn to worship God together in perfect love and unity.

* A world commonwealth should be established in which all nations can meet as equals and work together for the welfare of the entire human race.

* The riches and resources of the earth must be pooled and distributed justly for the benefit of all mankind. No one should hoard wealth he does not need. No one should be left without the necessities of life.

* Education, both academic and spiritual, must be introduced in every part of the world. Boys and girls should both be given every opportunity to develop their God-given talents.

* A world language should be chosen and taught, along with the mother-tongue, in schools everywhere. This will bring about understanding and friendship between the peoples of the world.

* Science and religion are both necessary for our progress. Science without religion provides dangerous weapons in the hands of selfish people. Religion without science breeds ignorant fanaticism and superstition. True religion is not opposed to science and reason.

* Man is in need of God at all times and under all conditions. Every one of us should learn to communicate with God through prayer and meditation. We should not worship our Creator through fear or because we want something from Him. We must learn to love God and pray to Him as a lover who longs to speak to his beloved. The nearer we draw to God, the closer we shall be to our fellowmen.

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**A Few Selections
from the
Words of Bahá'u'lláh**

The purpose of God in creating man hath been, and will ever be, to enable him to know his Creator and to attain His Presence.

There can be no doubt whatever that the peoples of the world, of whatever race or religion, derive their inspiration from one heavenly Source, and are the subjects of one God.

The purpose underlying the revelation of every heavenly Book . . . is to endue all men with righteousness and understanding, so that peace and tranquillity may be firmly established amongst them.

O contending peoples and kindreds of the earth! Set your faces towards unity, and let the radiance of its light shine upon you.

With the utmost friendliness and in a spirit of perfect fellowship take ye counsel together, and dedicate the precious days of your lives to the betterment of the world. . .

Do not busy yourselves with your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men.

Consort with the followers of all religions in a spirit of friendliness and fellowship.

Bend your minds and wills to the education of the peoples and kindreds of the earth, that haply the dissensions that divide it may . . . be blotted out from its face. . .

Now is the time to cheer and refresh the down-cast through the invigorating breeze of love and fellowship, and the living waters of friendliness and charity.

He who is your Lord, the All-Merciful, cherisheth in His heart the desire of beholding the entire human race as one soul and one body.

Every age hath its own problem . . . The remedy the world needeth in its present-day afflictions can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in. . .

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

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 endeavour, and grant them strength to serve Thee. O God, leave them not to themselves, but guide their steps by the light of Thy knowledge and cheer their hearts by Thy love. Verily, Thou art their Helper and their Lord.

There are now over 70,000 Bahá'í Centres in more than 330 countries and territories of the world. Bahá'í literature has been translated into over 570 languages and dialects.