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(Letter by Universal House of Justice, in
response to individual)*

23 October 1994

Dear Bahá'í Friend,

The Universal House of Justice has received your letters dated 9 and 15 March 1994 and was saddened to learn of the severe traumas you have experienced and from which you are still recovering.

....Regarding your question about methods of healing which involve temporarily re-experiencing or remembering events, these are complex medical matters and as stipulated in the Teachings, believers should seek the best medical advice which is available and follow it. Experience seems to suggest that the healing process can often be a lengthy and stressful, one requiring the close guidance and help of trained professionals. Advice given by well-meaning believers to the effect that you should seek to transcend psychological problems does not qualify as competent advice on what is essentially a medical issue. For your information and possible study, we are enclosing a copy of a compilation prepared at the Bahá'í World Centre entitled "Psychology and Knowledge of Self".

Concerning the attitude of some Bahá'ís, who seem at times to be insensitive and unsupportive, all we can do is to try to follow the patient example of the Master, bearing in mind that each believer is but one of the servants of the Almighty who must strive to learn and grow. The absence of spiritual qualities, like darkness, has no existence in itself. As the light of spirituality penetrates deep into the hearts, this darkness gradually dissipates and is replaced by virtue. Understanding this, and that the believers are encouraged to be loving and patient with one another, it will be clear that you too are called upon to exercise patience with the friends who demonstrate immaturity, and to have faith that the power of the Word of God will gradually effect a transformation in individual believers and in the Bahá'í community as a whole.

You have asked what to do since psychological problems sometimes make it difficult for you to participate in community events and Assembly meetings. In striving to follow the Teachings and the best medical advice you can obtain, you will want to remember that the healing you do now is an investment that will enable you to better serve in the future. Ideally, you would

APRIL 2004

Transcript of talk by Dr P.J. Khan, member of the Universal House of Justice

Sydney, Australia 30 November 2003

This afternoon I want to speak on what I see to be some present-day needs of the Bahá'í community. I do this because my experience and observation over many decades is that it is very important for Bahá'ís to keep up with developments and needs in the Faith. The Faith is expanding, developing one of the functions of the Universal House of Justice is to create new institutions as the need arises. It has done and will continue to do that. Circumstances in the world prompt new needs; the House of Justice has the function of adapting the operation of the Cause consonant with those needs.

What one finds is that from time to time one meets Bahá'ís who have not kept up. I remember when I went to the United States to live in 1963, in the few years after that I met some Baha'ís who were still back in 1921. They remembered the visit of 'Abdu'l-Bahá to north America in 1912; they remembered how the Faith was in those days; they were loyal to the changes that had been brought into being with the Guardian in 1921-22 and there onwards but they had not kept up; their concept of the Cause was still of the Cause as it was during the latter years of the Apostolic Age. There were Bahá'ís in America and in Australia who did not keep up with the formation of the National Spiritual Assemblies in the 1930s. I remember when I was a Counsellor here in Australia in the 1970s we still had a few Bahá'ís who had a sense of misgiving about the fact that the National Spiritual Assembly had been formed in the 1930s here in Australia and that things had changed and had become more organised and somewhat impersonal, as they felt it. So it is at each stage in the unfoldment of the Cause.

There were still Baha'ís around a few years ago who remembered how it was in the days of Shoghi Effendi when everything was personalised in the Guardian and it all seemed very different after that. They had not kept up. The changes created by the



Bani Dugal with her award.

Women's Award to Baha'i Representative

NEW YORK, United States, 7 March 2004 (BWNS) -- The Principal Representative of the Baha'i International Community to the United Nations, Bani Dugal, has received a "Women Helping Women" award from Soroptimist International.

The award came in the weeks leading up to International Women's Day on March 8, an occasion which is widely observed by Baha'i communities throughout the world.

"Women Helping Women" is one of three awards offered under an umbrella program, "Making a Difference for Women," established in 1986 by the Soroptimists to acknowledge those who work to improve the status of women in society. Soroptimist International is a 70-year-old volunteer service organization for women.

"Her sensitivity and success at gender and intercultural relations are at the center of her ability not only as a woman helping women, but also helping women, collaboratively, to help other women," said Linda Stillman, chairperson of the awards ceremony.

Noting that Ms. Dugal was recently selected to chair the NGO Committee on the Status of Women at the United Nations,

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Saturday, April 10, 7:15 PM
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Topic: Divine Springtime

RIDVÁN:

- Election Tues., April 20, 7:15 PM
- 1st Day Wed., April 21, 3:00 PM
- 9th Day Wed., April 28, 7:15 PM
- 12th Day Sun., May 2
10:00 AM special Ridván program
11:30 AM - Festive meal provided

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Women's Award from page 1

Ms. Stillman called her "a testament to
diplomatic decorum steeped in her spiritual
soul."

Ms. Stillman is the representative of
Soroptimist International to the United
Nations. She nominated Ms. Dugal for the
award, which honors "women who consis-
tently and effectively use their resources,
talents and influence to help other women
achieve their potential."

Ms. Dugal accepted the award "in the name
of all the women in the world that are working
to assist one another to advance and enjoy an
equal status with men."

She spoke about the importance of using
international mechanisms of human rights to
assist women in their advancement.

"Many women are unaware of their human

Peter Khan from page 1

House of Justice from 1963 - although they
retained their loyalty to the Cause, they did
not keep up with all of those changes.

So for this reason I see a particular
importance in our giving attention to what
are the present-day needs and how the Cause
is developing. Obviously what I say is no
more than my own personal impression; I
certainly do not speak for the House of
Justice, I speak simply as an individual who
happens to be serving in the Holy Land and
has access to a vast amount of information
that comes into the Holy Land every day and
therefore forms certain impressions.

One of our greatest needs all over the
world at the moment is to acquire a deeper
understanding of what we are doing in
building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. We
need to get a deeper understanding of the
House of Justice and the World Order of
Bahá'u'lláh in relation to resolving the
world's problems. We know that there are
very pressing problems [microphone being
adjusted] - we know, of course, that there are
a great many problems in the world
problems of minorities, problems of warfare,
problems of child abuse, the spread of AIDS
and all kinds of things. And the challenge
before us is to see how building the World
Order of Bahá'u'lláh relates to the solution of
those problems. People who look
superficially at the Bahá'i Faith are likely to
become very condemnatory about what we
are doing. If I were not a Bahá'i, with a very
superficial understanding of the Bahá'i Faith,
I would come to the Bahá'is and I would say:
"Look What are you people doing? Look
what is happening out there. Do you know
how many people are being killed in Liberia

Continued on page 3

rights, and others see them as abstract and
unattainable," said Ms. Dugal. "Thus, while
activism in past years has drawn attention to
women's rights, the challenge is now to make
them more accessible by implementing agreed
strategies and commitments made by govern-
ments."

The key to improving the rights of women,
said Ms. Dugal, lies with an educational
process that also promotes a "conscious
awareness that the interests of men and boys
are linked with those of women."

"I quote from the Baha'i writings: 'As long
as women are prevented from attaining their
highest possibility, so long will men be unable
to achieve the greatness which might be
theirs.'"

"Our task is clear and, together, helping one
another, we can realize our dreams for a better
tomorrow for women and men," said Ms.
Dugal.

and Sierra Leone and Burundi, and Rwanda
and all the other trouble spots in the world?
Do you know what is happening with crime
in the big cities of the world? And what are
you doing? You Bahá'is say: 'Well, we are
solving the world's problems'. Great. What
are you doing? What you're doing is
praying about it, and trying to enrol more
Bahá'is. And you come to me, as a non-
Bahá'i, and say you are solving the world's
problems. Nonsense. You are just another
religion concerned with its own narrow
interests, trying to grow in size, trying to
take advantage of the worry and concern in
the world to attract more followers. What
are you really doing for these hard-core,
pressing issues which are destroying the
fabric of civilised life in every part of the

Bahá'i Connection

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Submissions

If you wish to have the Bahá'i Connection
run an article or advertise for your event
please submit as soon as possible. The
Bahá'i Connection is finished on the 21st of
each month that means that regular type is
received up to the 20th. If you want a
special design connected with an event
please send it so that it is received by the
14th.

Articles are edited for size, clarity and
relative value to the readers. Photographs
and artwork are encouraged, however it is
best to avoid having us return the illustra-
tions.

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world. Don't tell me that you are simply enrolling new Bahá'is, because that doesn't seem to me to have anything to do with the problems."

That of course is the view, the superficial view, of somebody who knows little about the Faith. But that view appears in more sophisticated ways in many different settings. Therefore I think we need to think more deeply about the relationship between building the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh and the resolution of the pressing problems of humanity. Otherwise we will be criticised as being irrelevant to those real problems. We will be regarded as being selfish, concerned with our own narrow ends.

Let me take a moment and share with you my understanding of the various problems that exist in the world today. It seems to me I seem to have already made somebody cry and I have only just got started, so it is not a very good sign when, after seven or eight minutes, somebody bursts into tears. [laughter] Let me share with you my grouping of what I see to be the various problems in the world today and I think they can be grouped under four headings.

The first heading are problems of governance around the world; in country after country one finds that the government is unresponsive to the real needs of the people, the electorate responds by becoming alienated, people give up voting in democratic countries, the percentage falls it is different in Australia where they fine you if you do not cast your ballot but in countries where you do have a choice a diminishing number of people are voting in parliamentary elections every time they are held. People are becoming alienated. [microphone being adjusted once more] So one of the problems of governance is that the governments are proving unresponsive to the real needs of people, and people are responding by giving up on it, and saying, "What's the use of voting. This bunch of rascals go out, another bunch comes in, and they are no better, and it's the same sort of thing."

The other thing is that people are taking to the streets to change the government; angry mobs are invading the presidential palace, the parliamentary buildings, the courts and the like, and literally driving the elected leader from power. This has happened, of course, in South America, in Georgia in recent days and in other countries. It is a very disturbing trend occurring in the world as part of the breakdown of governance.

In so many countries one finds the

dictatorial tyranny of the majority over minorities, defended in terms of the fact that well, this is democracy, majority rule applies, carried to the extreme where the minorities are persecuted and their rights are ignored. The two-party system in democratic countries is under strain. You get the three-party system, the four parties, the five parties, and end up with a small party which is beholden to an extremist element of society, which holds the balance of power between the two major parties, this is so in a great many countries which subscribe to a democratic system and it is part of the

breakdown of the system of governance. The corruption of officials by vested interests, money behind the scene, secret deals and the like to ensure that certain vested interests are served.

In countries where there is democratic voting the electorate has proven unable to resist the promises of short-term benefits from politicians who wish to be elected. So one finds in so many countries of the world the elected leaders resorting to short-term policies for the sake of getting re-elected the next time. Demagogues are able to influence unsophisticated masses, so one finds in a great many countries the unsophisticated masses are appealed to by a demagogue, often with bribery or offers of special benefits, and the whole system of governance is overturned. Beyond that, information is manipulated, the



electorate is uninformed; it does not know what the true issues are or what the nature of the people who are up for election is, and so the system does not work. What this means is that one of the major problems in the world is the breakdown of the system of governance, be it a democratic form or any other form. If the democratic form is the most popular one in the world today it is very difficult to find countries where it is not under serious strain.

The second group of problems is that of turmoil between countries. A resurgent nationalism, especially among newly independent nations, is leading to tension and turmoil between countries which previously lived very peacefully with their neighbours. Border disputes are proving an endless source of difficulty between countries. Those of us who do not live near those borders really do not care give it to either side, be done with it. But to the people who are involved in those countries it is literally a matter of life and death, and each side can produce documents showing this is where the border is, depending on how far you go back.

Border disputes are, in the large, endless when you try to solve them by that means. Trade tensions the manipulation of tariff and subsidies, the dumping of manufactured goods or of primary products, protectionist policies produce tensions between nations. The corrupting influence of trade in armaments is a major source of tension between countries. And of course there are secessionist movements of minorities creating tension between countries when the minorities straddle national boundaries, such as the Basques in north-western Spain and in south-western France, the Kurds in their particular part of the world and other groups in Africa which straddle national boundaries.

The third of the four groups of problems that I see in the world today are religious disputes. Some twenty years ago those who regarded themselves as enlightened and sophisticated anticipated the gradual vanishing of religion in the face of scientific advances and the spread of mass education, that religion would become a relic of man's earlier days, essentially irrelevant, adhered to only by the older generation. That has proven spectacularly not to be the case. Religion is becoming more and more one of the major sources of tension and warfare in the world today. We have the overthrow of democratic institutions by fundamentalist religions, the oppression of religious minorities in countries such that the religious minority feels it has no option but to resort to terrorism. Warfare between states for reasons that are partly religion and partly economics. The religious so-called justification for the denial of the legitimate rights of women is proving one of the sources of great problem in the world today particularly as women have access to the Internet or to television and to mass education, and can see that it is not like this elsewhere, and why should they have to put up with it here. The fanatic indoctrination of children in the name of religion is leading to innumerable problems in the world; children are growing up literally and explicitly taught to hate, and given weapons before they reach their teens, and this can only lead to great disasters for humanity.

The final of the four categories are the social problems within any society the increase in crime and violence in daily life, the corruption of the media by pornography and by violence. The spread of AIDS is an enormous problem; we find that the Bahá'í communities in Africa, in their social and economic development, have to deal with villages that are largely depopulated of the adult generation, groups of orphans who live together in an informal tribal setting, grandparents who are in their declining

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years exhausted at having to look after a large number of grand-children because the normal adult generation has been killed off with AIDS.

The spread of narcotics, the alliance of the proceeds of the narcotics trade with radical and terrorist movements providing the funding for terrorism in many countries; corruption and greed affecting business; the ethics of business corrupted by unbridled greed, the corruption of the police force and the judiciary through the spread of bribery all of these are the problems that we face today and our non-Bahá'i friends say: "What are you doing about that? You're trying to spread your religion and get more people to become Baha'is, and to pray about it. What are you doing about these real problems?"

Our answer is this, that these problems are being analysed in the world today at a materialistic level. Our non-Bahá'i friend says, "Well, so what! They are material things." We say, "No. The materialistic level is only a partial understanding of what is going on. There are great spiritual forces at work in the world, and in order to properly understand what is happening in the world today you need to take account of these spiritual forces" - not denying the value of the material analysis but saying it is incomplete. *[possible gap in tape on change-over]*

So apart from the overwhelming mass of society, because the overwhelming mass is focused on material causes and effects, and our understanding is that these material causes are an outcome of deep spiritual forces moving throughout humanity. These problems are not only being analysed at a materialistic level but they are being addressed at a symptomatic level. In other words, people are dealing with the symptoms. AIDS is spreading; we try and lower the price of the retroviral vaccines which seem to at least retard the spread of AIDS or the transmutation of HIV into AIDS. There are problems of crime; we try and beef up the police force, we try and install surveillance cameras and all kinds of things. We Bahá'is are not opposed to this symptomatic treatment; we are not against it. But what we say is that it is no more than treating symptoms, that the problems are far deeper rooted in spiritual forces and it is with that we must address ourselves.

We believe - and of course this is the central message of the book *The Promised Day is Come* - we believe that these problems arise from a failure of humanity to respond to the needs of the new age and the coming of the new Message from God. That basically is why things are in such a dreadful mess and becoming worse. It does not deny the power of technology to bring

about bad as well as good; it does not deny the forces of the oppression of minorities, the effect of the post-colonial era and all kinds of things like that. But what we say is that that is only at a certain level. At the deepest level humanity has failed to recognise the coming of the Message of God and, as a result, symptoms have appeared which manifest in all these problems I have referred to.

This gives a suitable framework in which to view what we are doing in building the World Order as a mean of resolution of these problems. The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is to us a unique creation; it is not like the way Muslims or Christians or Jews or Buddhists or Hindus or Zoroastrians or anybody else organise their faith. It is not simply the way in which Baha'is organise their religion. The World Order of Bahá'ulláh is an entirely new entity the like of which humanity has never seen in its thousands of years of recorded history. It involves a fundamental change of values, allied with a new system of human relations. Our religion offers an entirely new approach to human relations, whether it is human relations one to one in marriage or one to several in the family, or one to the whole of humanity in a national or local or international setting, the whole dynamic and basis of human relations is changed by what we call the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. And we, as we build it, offer it as a model to humanity just as an architect, trying to persuade you to buy the building, will create a model and say, "Look at this model look how beautiful it is." He will make computer pictures and

everything like that and you will say, "Hey, that looks good. Okay, where do I sign? I want it". We are offering a working model to humanity of a system which has the capacity and power to resolve these problems.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has certain distinctive features. It creates, as I say, a social order which expresses spiritual values; it gives priority to unity based upon principle as the foundation for change. That is exactly the opposite of the way the world looks at it. The world looks at it and says, "Here is this bunch of people who are at each other's throats. Let's calm everybody down. Let's get everybody's problems solved of what's bugging them and causing all this tension and then, if we get all that solved, wonderful, they'll like each other, they'll be unified." The Bahá'i approach is the exact opposite. It says let us form a fundamental unity based on principle and that will be the basis for resolving the multitude of problems. Our non-Bahá'i friend says, "That doesn't make sense. How



Accolades to Kacey Stamats

Kacey won the District Championship in International Extemporaneous division of the National Forensic League. She will now compete in the State Competitions in metropolitan Denver.

Each speaker is given three questions on International topics to choose from and then 30 minutes to prepare a seven minute talk that includes sources and a convincing argument. The students may consult published books, magazines, newspapers and journals or articles. No electronic retrieval is permitted.

can you have unity when the problems still exist?" We say, "If we agree on values and principles, that can be the foundation of our unity and we can apply this commonly-agreed set of values and principles to the resolution of our problems". And the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh has a structure a structure which among its other functions provides for the enduring effect of the changes it brings about. And this of course is essential; it is little use doing wonderful things if, given a hundred years' time, it will all vanish and be lost and be divided and corrupted. The enduring effect is perhaps the most crucial element of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh.

...continued next issue

It should be noted that members of the Universal House of Justice when speaking individually have no greater authority than any other Baha'i.

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combine concentrating on healing with avenues of service which do not interfere with it.

...The House of Justice advises you to exercise discretion and wisdom in each of these matters, and to consult in a thoughtful and thorough manner with your Assembly and/or with wise and well-informed individuals in whose judgement you have confidence. The House of Justice hopes that your decisions will create for you opportunities to render great services with a joyful and radiant heart. At this time, you may wish to contact your National Assembly with an offer to act as a resource person for individuals recovering from traumatic experiences similar to your own.

You have asked about the need "to make amends for transgressions of a personal nature." As you know, each individual must resolve his own tests according to the promptings of his conscience. However, it sometimes happens that negative feelings about oneself become an obstacle to successfully passing one's spiritual tests by making it difficult to believe in one's own nobility. To this effect, Bahá'u'lláh assures us:

"Veiled in My immemorial being and in the ancient eternity of My essence, I knew My love for thee; therefore I created thee, have engraved on thee Mine image and revealed to thee My beauty."

You are encouraged to continue to keep in mind the spiritual dimension of your struggles. We are assured by 'Abdu'l-Bahá in the following words:

"The more difficulties one sees in the world the more perfect one becomes. The more you plough and dig the ground the more fertile it becomes. The more you cut the branches of a tree the higher and stronger it grows. The more you put the gold in the fire, the purer it becomes. The more you sharpen the steel by grinding the better it cuts. Therefore, the more sorrows one sees the more perfect one becomes. That is why, in all times, the Prophets of God have had tribulations and difficulties to withstand. The more often the captain of a ship is in the tempest and difficult sailing the more greater his knowledge becomes. Therefore I am happy that you have had great tribulations and difficulties . . . Strange it is that I love you and still I am happy that you have sorrows."

(*'Abdu'l-Bahá, Star of the West, vol. XIV, no. 2, p. 41*)

"Tests are benefits from God, for which we should thank Him. Grief and sorrow do not come to us by chance, they are sent to us by the Divine Mercy for our own perfecting."

(*Paris Talks: Addresses given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá*

Does God Exist? Yes, Mathematician Says

By Kathy Gilsinan
Spectator Staff Writer

Aristotle and Descartes would be pleased to hear Dr. William Hatcher proclaim that even God Himself cannot defy logic.

Hatcher, who is a self-proclaimed Platonist philosopher with a Ph.D. in mathematics, delivered a logical proof for the existence of God.

"We just felt like there wasn't enough discussion on campus" about these matters, said Natasha Bruss, BC '05, President of the Baha'i club at Columbia.

Hatcher, a Baha'i adherent himself, is similarly uninterested in dogma. His discussion explored the existence of God and carefully shied away from any of its implications. Rather, he stated, "we have to transform the religious discourse from a discourse about belief to a discourse about truth."

To that end, Hatcher began his discussion with an introduction to Aristotlean, or attributional, logic and its shortcomings.

Aristotle purported to have proven the existence of God, but he did so based on a kind of logic that deals with properties of objects, an approach, he argued, that's less than satisfying considering that God's attributes cannot be perceived. Aristotle insisted that there must be a first cause, namely God, in order to avoid the logical inconsistencies of an infinite regress of causes for the universe.

Avicenna, an ancient Muslim philosopher, employed a different form of logic in his proof. He examined the relations between objects rather than their attributes, and in doing so accomplished what Hatcher called "really amazing stuff." He claimed to have proved the existence of God without recourse to Aristotle's infinite regression principle.

Hatcher said that though many subsequent philosophers like Thomas Aquinas and Moses Maimonides built on Avicenna's proof, they continued to fall back on the infinite regression principle. Hatcher argued that this principle is not sufficient to prove the necessity of God's existence. Modern mathematics demonstrates the logical possibility of infinite regression; negative integers, for instance, do not have a minimal element or something that can be labeled a "first cause."

Thus, Hatcher has attempted to wed modern mathematics and ancient philosophy in a proof of God's existence, drawing on Avicenna's concept of relational logic. "In relational logic, we want to know how the object relates to other objects. It turns out that the relational approach often yields more useful information [than Aristotlean

attributional logic]."

The proof itself rests on four principles, the first of which is the assertion that something exists. Even if the world is an illusion, he pointed out, an illusory self, contemplating an illusory universe, is still something that exists.

Further, he said, everything that exists does so because of some cause, and the "principle of sufficient reason" states that every phenomenon is either caused by something external or caused by itself, but never both. "Everything that exists has to have a reason for existing," he said.

Working from these principles, Hatcher first defined what he called "the minimum criteria for Godhood," and then set about trying to prove the existence of a phenomenon to fit those criteria. God, he said, must exist and be unique, and must be self-caused as well as being the cause of everything else. "Every existing phenomenon is the end effect of a causal chain of possibly infinite length, starting with God," he said.

He then delved into Avicenna's discussion of the part-whole relationship. "All known physical phenomena are composites, except possibly the elementary particles of quantum mechanics," he stated. Thus, if A is a component of B, then B is composite, and furthermore a composite cannot be a cause of one of its components, because it could not exist without all its components in place.

From these definitions, he said, one can infer that the universe is a composite of all phenomena. He inferred that the universe itself, then, cannot bring any of its own components into being, as it could not have existed before the existence of the components.

Then, the universe could similarly not be self-caused, since it is caused by the aggregation of its components, and so there must be some object, G, that causes the universe but is not the universe itself. G must then be universal because it is a cause, directly or indirectly, of every component in the universe.

He concluded that G is the unique uncaused phenomenon, because, as the cause of everything, it can't be caused by something else.

Hatcher said that the strength of the proof is that each assumption it rests on is empirically grounded and is "far more reasonable than its negation."

David Kline, CC '07, said he was impressed, even though he felt that the logical proof of God, far from justifying faith, only requires a different kind of faith. But, with that faith in reason so characteristic of Columbia students, he said he appreciated that the talk was "a purely logical representation of the existence of God and not the meaning of God."

HAPPY NAU-RUZ



The significance of Ridván

Ridván is the anniversary of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration of His prophetic mission to His followers. The details of this declaration remain mysterious. Shoghi Effendi comments that 'The words Bahá'u'lláh actually uttered on that occasion, the manner of His Declaration, the reaction it produced, its impact on Mirza Yahya, the identity of those who were privileged to hear Him, are shrouded in an obscurity which future historians will find it difficult to penetrate.'³ It is clear, however, that the symbolic significance of Ridván is richer than the simple fact of Bahá'u'lláh's open

announcement of His prophetic claim.

The announcement

While the exact nature and details of Bahá'u'lláh's declaration are unknown, Abdu'l-Baha states that on the afternoon He arrived at the garden Bahá'u'lláh disclosed His claim to be Him Whom God shall make manifest. Bahá'u'lláh's daughter Bahiyyih Khanum is also reported to have said that on that day Bahá'u'lláh privately stated His claim to prophethood to 'Abdu'l-Bahá and four other followers. According to this account 'he enjoined upon them secrecy as to this communication, as the time had not come for a public declaration;

but that there were reasons which caused him to deem it necessary to make it at that time to a few whom he could trust'.

Bahá'u'lláh clearly did not make a general public announcement of His prophetic claim at the Najibiyyih Garden: that did not happen until after His arrival in Edirne.

Most Babís even those in exile with Him seem to have been unaware of Bahá'u'lláh's claim until a year or two later although, of course, His Baghdad writings are full of hints about it.

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in Paris in 1911-1912)

(London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1979) p. 50)

Clearly, the difficult periods in our lives are not without purpose. Among other things, they offer us a prime opportunity to express our love for Bahá'u'lláh in a meaningful way. It is relatively easy to be a believer when one is not challenged, when one is happy. However, in times of adversity, we must draw upon our inner, spiritual resources.

The Writings provide some guidance as to how we might nurture our spirits during such times:

"Remember My days during thy days, and My distress and banishment in his remote prison. . ."

(Bahá'í Prayers: A Selection of Prayers Revealed by Bahá'u'lláh, the Bab and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 211)

"In times of disappointment, stress and anxiety, which we must inevitably encounter, we should remember the sufferings of our departed Master."

(From a letter written by Shoghi Effendi to an individual believer; 9 July 1926)

In view of these passages, you may wish to focus some of your reading and meditations on the lives and sufferings of the Central Figures of the Faith. Similarly, we are assured by the Guardian that the Tablet of Ahmad, the Healing Prayer and the Fire Tablet each have a special potency, and you will doubtless wish to avail yourself of them, if you are not already doing so. It is interesting to note as well that Shoghi Effendi encouraged the believers to study the Dawn-Breakers, which he described as an "unfailing instrument to allay distress." In a letter dated 20 July 1933 written on his behalf, he outlined a method by which the individual might approach this task:

"He wishes you to read it with deepest care and to picture for yourself the wonderful scenes of heroism, of devotion and of self-sacrifice so vividly expressed by Nabil in his immortal narrative."

As well, you may wish to reflect on the

following statement from a letter written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer who was experiencing difficulties in his personal life:

"We must not only be patient with others, infinitely patient, but also with our own poor selves, remembering that even the Prophets of God sometimes got tired and cried out in despair! . . .

He urges you to persevere and add up your accomplishments, rather than to dwell on the dark side of things. Everyone's life has both a dark and bright side. The Master says: turn your back to the darkness and your face to Me."

(From a letter dated 22 October 1949 written on behalf of the Guardian to an individual believer)

Be assured that, as you have requested, the House of Justice will offer ardent prayers in the Holy Shrines for you and for your parents.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,
For Department of the Secretariat

January	February	March	April	May	June
س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29	س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	س ن ت ر ه و 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

Ridván is an Arabic word meaning 'good pleasure'. Because it is used in the Qur'an for God's satisfaction with the believers in heaven, it has come to mean 'paradise'.

Its meanings in Baha'i usage are:

- 'Paradise', as in such expressions as 'the Ridván of unfading splendour (Ridván-i-Quds-i-Munir). In this sense it is translated as 'paradise', 'heaven', 'tabernacle' and 'garden.'

The Festival of Ridván

- Garden of Ridván: the name given by Bahá'u'lláh to two gardens -- the Najibiyyih Garden in Baghdad and a garden belonging to Bahá'u'lláh outside 'Akka.
- Holy day of Ridván: the most important Baha'i festival, commemorating Bahá'u'lláh's public announcement of His prophetic mission and His departure from Baghdad.

April

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4 Devotions 10-10:30 AM Classes for all, 10:30-11:30 Potluck refreshments	5 ○	6	7	8 /	9 ○	10 <i>Public Fire</i> 7:15 PM Chris Hauke on Divine Springtime
11 Devotions 10-10:30 AM Classes for all, 10:30-11:30 Potluck refreshments	12	13	14 □	15	16	17
18 Devotions 10-10:30 AM Classes for all, 10:30-11:30 Potluck refreshments	19 ●	Election 20 7:15 PM	1st Ridván 21	22	23	24
25 Devotions 10-10:30 AM Classes for all, 10:30-11:30 Potluck refreshments	26	27 ◐	28 ○ Feast of Jamál	29 □ 9th Ridván	30	

July	August	September	October	November	December
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Naw-Rúz to Ridván

"Meditate profoundly, that
the secret of things unseen
may be revealed unto you,
that you may inhale the
sweetness of a spiritual and
imperishable fragrance, and
that you may acknowledge
the truth that from time
immemorial even unto
eternity the Almighty hath
tried, and will continue to
try, His servants, so that
light may be distinguished
from darkness, truth from
falsehood, right from
wrong, guidance from
error, happiness from
misery, and roses from
thorns."
(Bahá'u'lláh, Kitáb-i-Íqán, p8)



Photo by Marco Abrar - BahaiPictures.com