



Another Benefit to Pioneering & Year of Service...Oh the unseen wisdom!



TWO NEW MEMBERS JOIN UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

HAIFA, Israel, 21 March 2005 (BWNS)— The Universal House of Justice has announced the election of two new members, Payman Mohajer and Paul Lample.

The Universal House of Justice, the international governing council of the Baha'i Faith, conveyed to National Spiritual Assemblies the results of a by-election to fill two vacancies on Naw-Ruz, the Baha'i new year. The holy day is celebrated from sunset on March 20 to sunset on the 21st.

Dr. Mohajer and Mr. Lample fill the vacancies left by Mr. Ian Semple and Mr. Douglas Martin, who have retired at Naw-Ruz owing to age and the related needs of the Faith.

Dr. Mohajer was born in Tehran, Iran, where he received his elementary school education. He then went with his family to India where he received a degree in homoeopathic medicine in 1984. After several years work in his medical clinic, Dr. Mohajer completed a master's degree in psychology.

In 1966, his interest in the field of education led him to establish a Baha'i-inspired institution, the Foundation for the Advancement of Science.

He was appointed as an Auxiliary Board member in 1986, serving until

he was appointed to the Continental Board of Counsellors in Asia in 1991. He was called to serve as a member of the International Teaching Centre in 1998 and was reappointed in 2003. He and his wife, Svetlana, have three children.

Mr. Lample, an author, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States of America. He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in

biology from Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and a Master of Science from the National University in San Diego, California. In the early 1990s he served on the National Teaching Committee of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the United States.

In 1994 he moved to the Baha'i World Centre to serve as coordinator of the Office of Social and Economic Development. He was appointed to the International Teaching Centre in 2003. Mr. Lample and his wife, Marcia, have three children.

The other members of the Universal House of Justice are Farzam Arbab, Kiser Barnes, Hooper Dunbar, Hartmut Grossmann, Firaydoun Javaheri, Peter Khan, and Glenford Mitchell.

The Faith, which has no clergy, administers its affairs through democratically elected councils at the international, national, and local levels.

Baha'i elections take place without campaigning or nominations, the results being determined by plurality vote. Members of the Universal House of Justice are elected by members of all National Spiritual Assemblies throughout the world.

Electors are guided by the Faith's teachings, which advise each person to vote, independently and in the privacy of his or her own conscience, for "the names of those who can best combine the necessary qualities of unquestioned loyalty, of selfless devotion, of a well-trained mind, of recognized ability, and mature experience."

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The following came to the editor from a fellow who writes inspirational emails for artists. It seemed to have value for Baha'is too.

The quiet town of Jokkmokk (pop. 8000) in Swedish Lapland has been the subject of considerable study. It seems that most of the schoolgirls there are smart, and most of the schoolboys are not. Experts have taken a look at the gene pool, relative brain capacities, corpus callosum (the connections between right and left hemispheres) deviations, family dynamics, even teaching methods in the schools. Things seem about the same as most other Swedish towns. But for several generations now the girls get the marks and the boys drop out.

What's going on? Hunting, fishing and forestry are Jokkmokk's main industries. Young men have traditionally made their living in the bush or on the water. Young women, perhaps responding to some faintly understood genetic need, or just realizing that they need to get out of the place, use good grades to gain their exit. The girls work harder. The boys goof off.

It's called "The Jokkmokk Effect" when one group or another moves away to the big city, travels abroad and "makes something of themselves." Jokkmokk girls have rocked the world by becoming scientists, financiers and artists. Albert Einstein said: "One of the strongest motives that lead to art and science is escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness." It's all about desire. "Desire," said Benedict Spinoza, "is the very essence of man." Desire and the intention to do something are more important than brains, wisdom, or even talent. In IQ tests, Jokkmokk boys are just as smart as Jokkmokk girls. Georges Braque said: "The only thing that counts is intention. What counts is what one wants to do."

In many cultures The Jokkmokk Effect applies more to men than to women. Men move away to seek their fortune, find work, and find their way in the world. Women, on the other hand, by biology or by choice, keep the home fires and raise the kids. Through all of this there's the precarious balance of self-realization and social obligation.

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Promises of Major Religion's Founders

by John Walker

PART 3

CONTINUED FROM LAST ISSUE

The 'Abomination of Desolation' prophecy found in Daniel is one of the most important keys that allows us to unlock the mystery of the time when the Divine 'Presence of God' will once again appear on earth in human form.

The general theme of the Old Testament book of Daniel revolves around the abominable actions of the Jewish people which led to the conquest of Israel by a succession of foreign, non-Jewish empires. And then, even more specifically, Daniel's 'Abomination of Desolation' prophecy pinpoints the time when this centuries long era of the subjugation of Israel will end when the Divine 'Presence of God' will once again appear on earth... or in other words, Daniel's prophecy pinpoints the time when God will again speak to humanity through His chosen Prophet.

To understand these prophecies, we need to go back to the beginning. The nation of Israel was brought into existence by the great Hebrew Prophet Moses. Moses gave his followers a code of laws and a code of ethics which became the unifying force and the generating impulse which culminated in the birth of the nation of Israel.

In the Old Testament book of Leviticus we find the story of how Moses gave this law to his people. Then, in Leviticus chapter 26, Moses warns that if the Jews fall away from God's laws they will be conquered and scattered among the nations. Moses warned if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments... I will chastise you seven times for your sins... I will make your cities waste... I will scatter you among the heathen. Moses' 'seven times' prophecy took effect for the first time about 676 BC when the evil Hebrew king Manasseh tried to lead the Jewish people away from the religion of Moses by endorsing local pagan cults. Manasseh allowed these pagan cults to erect altars inside the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem where idols

were worshipped, sacrifices were offered to pagan gods and, among other abominations, Manasseh was also said to have allowed ritual prostitution to be practiced inside the Holy Temple.

It wasn't long before Moses' prophecy took effect. The Assyrian Empire swept down from the north, conquered Jerusalem, the Jewish people were scattered among the nations and King Manasseh himself was carried off in chains to Babylon. This was the beginning of the seven times era of subjugation foretold by Moses.

After the Assyrians, Israel was next conquered successively by the Babylonian Empire, the Persian Empire and the Greek

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Bahá'í Connection

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Submissions

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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 illustrations.

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Empire. In his book the prophet Daniel refers to these foreign empires as beasts.

The Apostle John, in the New Testament era, also refers to these same beasts. In chapter 17 of the Book of Revelation John speaks of the beast who 'was', 'is' and the beast who was still 'yet to arise'. The beast who 'was' were the Empires who had conquered Jerusalem before the time that John was writing. The beast who 'is' was the Roman Empire that had arisen after the first four beasts to also conquer Jerusalem. Continuing on, still in this same passage, John next refers to yet another beast who, in John's day, was still 'yet to arise'. Who was this last beast? Ask yourself, who was the only empire to arise after the Romans to conquer and control Jerusalem? There was only one . . . the Islamic Empire which was led for most of its existence by the Umayyad family and later by the Abbasid family.

The conquest of Jerusalem by these foreign, non-Jewish empires which lasted for more than 2500 years was the 'Abomination of Desolation'... the desolating abomination which was referred to by both Daniel and Jesus.

The key to understanding what these prophecies were foretelling lies in their numbers. For example, in Daniel 8:13 it asks how long will this 'abomination of desolation' process last. Daniel answered that it would last for 2300 days.

Before this '2300 day' prophecy can be understood we first must consider an important principle. In Bible prophecy days can

equal years. We find this principle stated in Ezekiel 4 and Numbers 14 where it says I have appointed you each day for a year.

One example of how this 'day for a year' principle works can be found in Daniel 9:24 where Daniel says that 70 weeks are appointed from the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem then shall Messiah be cut off.

To understand what this prophecy is saying we first need to calculate how many 'days' there are in '70 weeks'. Do the math. . . 70 weeks times seven days in a week equals 490 days. Considering the statements from Ezekiel and Numbers that days can equal years in prophecy this means that 490 days can actually equal 490 years.

Next, let's check the history. Daniel says that 70 weeks are appointed from the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem then shall Messiah be cut off. What was the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem?

The decree to rebuild Jerusalem was given by a Persian king named Artaxerxes in 457 BC. So, what was Daniel saying in his '70 week' prophecy? There are 490 days in 70 weeks. If the 490 days of this prophecy actually are 490 years... and if you add 490 years to 457 BC, you get the cutting off of the Messiah somewhere around 33 or 34 AD. This means that Daniel's '70 week' prophecy foretold the death of Jesus the Messiah several hundred years before it actually happened.

This also proves that days indeed can equal years in prophecy.

How does this relate to Daniel's 2300 days 'Abomination of Desolation' prophecy? If we consider that the '70 week' prophecy and the '2300 day' prophecy are both found in the same context... we can see that they are just two different stages of the same prophecy. So, if we use the same starting point of 457 BC that we used in the '70 week' prophecy and, if this time we count forward 2300 years. . . we get both

the year of the end of the 'Abomination of Desolation' and we get the year of Christ's PAROUSIA the return of his presence. Once again, do the math. 457 BC plus 2300 years equals 1844 AD.

The 2300 day/year prophecy indicates the year 1844 AD!

Keeping this in mind, let's take another look at Moses' prophecy found in Leviticus 26. Here Moses warned if you will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments... I will chastise you seven times for your sins... I will make your cities waste... I will scatter you among the heathen. According to Moses, this 'Abomination' and 'scattering among the Gentiles' time period would last for 'seven times'. Seven times or seven years of 360 days per year equals 2520 days or 2500 years.

Moses' 'seven times' prophecy first took effect in 676 BC when the Assyrians conquered Jerusalem and King Manasseh was taken in chains to Babylon. If we start at 676 BC and count forward 2520 years we get the exact same year foretold in Daniel's 2300 day/year prophecy. Moses' seven times prophecy also indicates the year 1844 AD.

Returning to the Book of Revelation again. . . in the 11th, 12th and 13th chapters, we are told seven separate times that the last beast referred to by John will control Jerusalem for 1260 years.

This prophecy is stated as 1260 days. As 3 1/2 years or 3 1/2 times both of which equal 1260 days. And its stated as 42 months which also equals 1260 days. There are 1260 days in 42 months and there are 42 - months in 3 1/2 years.

In his book, the Jewish Prophet Daniel also refers to the 3 1/2 'times of the beast'. (in Daniel 12:7 & 7:25)

How do we know that when the prophecies refer to 'times' they truly do mean years? In Revelation 12: 6 Jesus clearly shows us that 1260 days actually does equal 3 1/2 times. First he says that the beast will tread Jerusalem underfoot for 1260 days. Then, just a couple of verses later, Jesus says that the beast will tread Jerusalem underfoot for 3 1/2 times. Clearly, according to Jesus, 1260 days equals 3 1/2 times... and 3 1/2 times equals 1260 days.

The number 1260 is also repeatedly referred to in the Islamic religion as the time when the Messiah will appear.

Muhammad's 'grandson', the Imam Sadiq, when asked when the Messiah will appear, replied verily in the year '60 (1260) His cause shall be revealed and his name shall be noised abroad.

Another collection of Islamic prophecies states that: 'in Ghars the tree of divine guidance shall be planted. And again in the year Ghars the earth shall be illumined by

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His light'.

As you may know, in the Arabic language, words and letters all have corresponding numerical values. The word Ghars is an Arabic word meaning the planting and it has a numeric value of 1260. And these are just a few examples of Islamic prophecies. There are even more Islamic prophecies that refer to the year 1260 as the time when the Islamic Messiah will appear.

The year 1260 AH of the Islamic calendar is the exact same year 1844 AD of the Christian calendar.

In other words, these Islamic prophecies agree with the prophecies found in Daniel and in the Book of Revelation. They all foretold the appearance of the Messiah in the exact same year.

In the Zoroastrian religion we also can find a prophecy which also says that the Messiah will appear in the twelfth century after the beginning of the religion of Islam. (the Magi who came to see the infant Jesus were Zoroastrian priests)

In his book, the Dinkird, Zoroaster states when a thousand two hundred and some years have passed from the inception of the religion of the Arabian (Muhammad was the Arabian)... a descendant of the Persian kings will be raised up as a Prophet...

Zoroaster, who lived approximately 1000 years before Jesus' time, also agrees that the 1260 year prophecy should begin with the inception of the religion of Muhammad.

To summarise, that's thirteen separate 1260 year prophecies from four separate middle eastern religions, encompassing four countries and given over a period of almost four thousand years.

These prophecies all state that this beast will control Jerusalem for 1260 years. Who is this beast? It is the only empire which arose after the Romans to conquer and control Jerusalem . . . the pseudo-Islamic Empire under the Umayyads and later under the Abbasids.

What is truly amazing about these prophecies is that four separate and distinct middle eastern religions, spanning thousands of years, each speaking different languages, each with their own different Founder, each with their own Holy Books containing their own separate prophecies all foretold the exact same event in the exact same year.

The year 1260 AH of the Islamic calendar just happens to also be the exact same year 1844 AD of the Christian calendar. Can you see what this means? The '7-times' prophecy of Moses, the '2300 day/year' 'Abomination of Desolation' prophecy of Daniel (referred to by Jesus) and the thirteen '1260 day/year' prophecies

all indicate the exact same year . . . the year 1844 AD. That's fifteen separate prophecies which pinpoint the exact same year.

The 'Abomination of Desolation' ended in 1844 when the Edict of Toleration was signed by the Caliph of Islam allowing the Jews to return to Israel ending the 'times of the gentiles.' And even more importantly . . . this was the exact year when the Baha'i Faith began. On May 23rd, 1844 the young 'Bab' (the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh) announced to his first disciple that he was the Promised One whose coming had been foretold in the prophecies. The Christ presence had returned as a thief in the night with a 'new name' just as foretold in the New Testament writings.

History tells us that from age to age God sends Prophets to the world. From age to age the presence of God returns and is manifested to a chosen One. Jesus identified himself with the Prophets who had appeared before his time. So did all the other Prophets. Each and every one of these Prophets were motivated by the same Spirit of the same One true God. Jesus clearly identified himself as part of this process and he repeatedly announced that there was still more to come.

In Matthew 24 the Apostles asked Jesus how to recognise the time of the return of the 'presence'. Jesus warned that his will be a time when false teachers will have led people away from the true path. And he warned that when the presence again appears in human form... when God again sends another Prophet, people will oppose him.

Once again, as it has so many times in the past, this cycle of 'return' has repeated itself. It happened again in Israel, in the mid 1800s... right at the exact time pinpointed in the number prophecies of the Bible.

This Promised One appeared just as promised by Jesus. He came both as a thief in the night and as a bridegroom who came at an unexpected time and in an unexpected way and found his bride misdirected, asleep and unprepared. As Jesus promised, the Christ presence has once again returned with a new name. His new name is Bahá'u'lláh.

Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Baha'i Faith wrote:

The Revelation which, from time immemorial, hath been acclaimed as the Purpose and Promise of all the Prophets of God, and the most cherished Desire of His Messengers, hath now, by virtue of the pervasive Will of the Almighty and at His irresistible bidding, been revealed unto men. The advent of such a Revelation hath been heralded in all the sacred Scriptures. Behold how, notwithstanding such an announce-

ment, mankind hath strayed from its path and shut out itself from its glory. Say: O ye lovers of the One true God! Strive, that ye may truly recognise and know Him, and observe befittingly His precepts. This is a Revelation, under which, if a man shed for its sake one drop of blood, myriads of oceans will be his recompense. Take heed, O friends, that ye forfeit not so inestimable a benefit, or disregard its transcendent station. Consider the multitude of lives that have been, and are still being, sacrificed in a world deluded by a mere phantom which the vain imaginations of its peoples have conceived. Render thanks unto God, inasmuch as ye have attained unto your heart's Desire, and been united to Him Who is the Promise of all nations. Guard ye, with the aid of the one true God - exalted be His glory - the integrity of the station which ye have attained, and cleave to that which shall promote His Cause. He, verily, enjoineeth on you what is right and conducive to the exaltation of man's station. Glorified be the All-Merciful, the Revealer of this wondrous Tablet. - Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pages 5-6

Baha'i Commentary on the Oneness of the Prophets

The holy Manifestations Who have been the Sources or Founders of the various religious systems were united and agreed in purpose and teaching. Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus, Muhammad, the Bab and Bahá'u'lláh are one in spirit and reality. Moreover, each Prophet fulfilled the promise of the One Who came before Him and, likewise, Each announced the One Who would follow.

Consider how Abraham foretold the coming of Moses, and Moses embodied the Abrahamic statement. Moses prophesied the Messianic cycle, and Christ fulfilled the law of Moses. It is evident, therefore, that the Holy Manifestations Who founded the religious systems are united and agreed; there is no differentiation possible in Their mission and teachings; all are reflectors of reality, and all are promulgators of the religion of God. The divine religion is reality, and reality is not multiple; it is one. Therefore, the foundations of the religious systems are one because all proceed from the indivisible reality; but the followers of these systems have disagreed; discord, strife and warfare have arisen among them, for they have forsaken the foundation and held to that which is but imitation and semblance. Inasmuch as imitations differ, enmity and dissension have resulted. For example, Jesus Christ - may my spirit be a sacrifice

unto Him! - laid the foundation of eternal reality, but after His departure many sects and divisions appeared in Christianity. What was the cause of this? There is no doubt that they originated in dogmatic imitations, for the foundations of Christ were reality itself, in which no divergence exists. When imitations appeared, sects and denominations were formed.

If Christians of all denominations and divisions should investigate reality, the foundations of Christ will unite them. No enmity or hatred will remain, for they will all be under the one guidance of reality itself. Likewise, in the wider field if all the existing religious systems will turn away from ancestral imitations and investigate reality, seeking the real meanings of the Holy Books, they will unite and agree upon the same foundation, reality itself. As long as they follow counterfeit doctrines or imitations instead of reality, animosity and discord will exist and increase. Let me illustrate this. Moses and the prophets of Israel announced the advent of the Messiah but expressed it in the language of symbols. When Christ appeared, the Jews rejected Him, although they were expecting His manifestation and in their temples and synagogues were crying and lamenting, saying, O God, hasten the coming of the Messiah! Why did they deny Him when He announced Himself? Because they had followed ancestral forms and interpretations and were blind to the reality of Christ. They had not perceived the inner significances of the Holy Bible. They voiced their objections, saying, We are expecting Christ, but His coming is conditioned upon certain fulfilments and prophetic announcements. Among the signs of His appearance is one that He shall come from an unknown place, whereas now this claimant of Messiahship has come from Nazareth. We know his home, and we are acquainted with his mother.

Second, one of the signs or Messianic conditions is that His scepter would be an iron rod, and this Christ has not even a wooden staff. Third, He was to be seated upon the throne of David, whereas this Messianic king is in the utmost state of poverty and has not even a mat. Fourth, He was to conquer the East and the West. This person has not even conquered a village. How can he be the Messiah? Fifth, He was to promulgate the laws of the Bible. This one has not only failed to promulgate the laws of the Bible, but he has broken the law of the Sabbath. Sixth, the Messiah was to gather together all the Jews who were scattered in Palestine and restore them to honour and prestige, but this one has degraded the Jews instead of uplifting

them. Seventh, during His sovereignty even the animals were to enjoy blessings and comfort, for according to the prophetic texts, He should establish peace to such a universal extent that the eagle and quail would live together, the lion and deer would feed in the same meadow, the wolf and lamb would lie down in the same pasture. In the human kingdom warfare was to cease entirely; spears would be turned into pruning hooks and swords into plowshares. Now we see in the day of this would-be Messiah such injustice prevails that even he himself is sacrificed. How could he be the promised Christ? And so they spoke infamous words regarding Him.

Now inasmuch as the Jews were submerged in the sea of ancestral imitations, they could not comprehend the meaning of these prophecies. All the words of the prophets were fulfilled, but because the Jews held tenaciously to hereditary interpretations, they did not understand the inner meanings of the Holy Bible; therefore, they denied Jesus Christ, the Messiah. The purpose of the prophetic words was not the outward or literal meaning, but the inner symbolical significance. For example, it was announced that the Messiah was to come from an unknown place. This did not refer to the birthplace of the physical body of Jesus. It has reference to the reality of the Christ - that is to say, the Christ reality was to appear from the invisible realm - for the divine reality of Christ is holy and sanctified above place.

His sword was to be a sword of iron. This signified His tongue which should separate the true from the false and by which great sword of attack He would conquer the kingdoms of hearts. He did not conquer by the physical power of an iron rod; He conquered the East and the West by the sword of His utterance.

He was seated upon the throne of David, but His sovereignty was neither a Napoleonic sovereignty nor the vanishing dominion of a Pharaoh. The Christ Kingdom was everlasting, eternal in the heaven of the divine Will.

By His promulgating the laws of the Bible the reality of the law of Moses was meant. The Sinaitic law is the foundation of the reality of Christianity. Christ promulgated it and gave it higher, spiritual expression. He conquered and subdued the East and West. His conquest was effected through the breaths of the Holy Spirit, which eliminated all boundaries and shone from all horizons.

In His day, according to prophecy, the wolf and the lamb were to drink from the same fountain. This was realised in Christ. The fountain referred to was the Gospel,

from which the water of life gushes forth. The wolf and lamb are opposed and divergent races symbolised by these animals. Their meeting and association were impossible, but having become believers in Jesus Christ those who were formerly as wolves and lambs became united through the words of the Gospel.

The purport is that all the meanings of the prophecies were fulfilled, but because the Jews were captives of ancestral imitations and did not perceive the reality of the meanings of these words, they denied Christ; nay, they even went so far as to crucify Him. Consider how harmful is imitation. These were interpretations handed down from fathers and ancestors, and because the Jews held fast to them, they were deprived.

It is evident, then, that we must forsake all such imitations and beliefs so that we may not commit this error. We must investigate reality, lay aside selfish notions and banish hearsay from our minds. The Jews consider Christ the enemy of Moses, whereas, on the contrary, Christ promoted the Word of Moses. He spread the name of Moses throughout the Orient and Occident. He promulgated the teachings of Moses. Had it not been for Christ, you would not have heard the name of Moses; and unless the manifestation of Messiahship had appeared in Christ, we would not have received the Old Testament.

The truth is that Christ fulfilled the Mosaic law and in every way upheld Moses; but the Jews, blinded by imitations and prejudices, considered Him the enemy of Moses.

Among the great religious systems of the world is Islam. About three hundred million people acknowledge it. For more than a thousand years there has been enmity and strife between Muslims and Christians, owing to misunderstanding and spiritual blindness. If prejudices and imitations were abandoned, there would be no enmity whatever between them, and these hundreds of millions of antagonistic religionists would adorn the world of humanity by their unity.

I wish now to call your attention to a most important point. All Islam considers the Qur'an the Word of God. In this sacred Book there are explicit texts which are not traditional, stating that Christ was the Word of God, that He was the Spirit of God, that Jesus Christ came into this world through the quickening breaths of the Holy Spirit and that Mary, His mother, was holy and sanctified. In the Qur'an a whole chapter is devoted to the story of Jesus. It records that in the time of His youth He worshipped God in the temple at Jerusalem, that manna

descended from heaven for His sustenance and that He uttered words immediately after His birth. In brief, in the Qur'an there is eulogy and commendation of Christ such as you do not find in the Gospel. The Gospel does not record that the child Jesus spoke at birth or that God caused sustenance to descend from heaven for Him, but in the Qur'an it is repeatedly stated that God sent down manna day by day as food for Him. Furthermore, it is significant and convincing that when Muhammad proclaimed His work and mission, His first objection to His own followers was, Why have you not believed on Jesus Christ? Why have you not accepted the Gospel? Why have you not believed in Moses? Why have you not followed the precepts of the Old Testament? Why have you not understood the prophets of Israel? Why have you not believed in the disciples of Christ? The first duty incumbent upon ye, O Arabians, is to accept and believe in these.

You must consider Moses as a Prophet. You must accept Jesus Christ as the Word of God. You must know the Old and the New Testaments as the Word of God. You must believe in Jesus Christ as the product of the Holy Spirit. His people answered, O Muhammad! We will become believers although our fathers and ancestors were not believers, and we are proud of them. Tell us what is going to become of them? Muhammad replied, I declare unto you that they occupy the lowest stratum of hell because they did not believe in Moses and Christ and because they did not accept the Bible; and although they are my own ancestors, yet they are in despair in hell. This is an explicit text of the Qur'an; it is not a story or tradition but from the Qur'an itself, which is in the hands of the people. Therefore, it is evident that ignorance and misunderstanding have caused so much warfare and strife between Christians and Muslims. If both should investigate the underlying truth of their religious beliefs, the outcome would be unity and agreement; strife and bitterness would pass away forever and the world of humanity find peace and composure. Consider that there are two hundred and fifty million Christians and three hundred million Muslims. How much blood has flowed in their wars; how many nations have been destroyed; how many children have been made fatherless; how many fathers and mothers have mourned the loss of children and dear ones! All this has been due to prejudice, misunderstanding and imitations of ancestral beliefs without investigation of reality. If the Holy Books were rightly understood, none of this discord and

distress would have existed, but love and fellowship would have prevailed instead. This is true with all the other religions as well. The conditions I have named will apply equally to all. The essential purpose of the religion of God is to establish unity among mankind. The divine Manifestations were Founders of the means of fellowship and love. They did not come to create discord, strife and hatred in the world. The religion of God is the cause of love, but if it is made to be the source of enmity and bloodshed, surely its absence is preferable to its existence; for then it becomes satanic, detrimental and an obstacle to the human world.

In the Orient the various peoples and nations were in a state of antagonism and strife, manifesting the utmost enmity and hatred toward each other. Darkness encompassed the world of mankind. At such a time as this Bahá'u'lláh appeared. He removed all the imitations and prejudices which had caused separation and misunderstanding and laid the foundation of the one religion of God. When this was accomplished, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Zoroastrians, Buddhists all were united in actual fellowship and love. The souls who followed Bahá'u'lláh from every nation have become as one family living in agreement and accord, willing to sacrifice life for each other. The Muslim will give his life for the Christian, the Christian for the Jew and all of them for the Zoroastrian. They live together in love, fellowship and unity. They have attained to the condition of rebirth in the Spirit of God. They have become revived and regenerated through the breaths of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to God! This light has come forth from the East, and eventually there shall be no discord or enmity in the Orient. Through the power of Bahá'u'lláh all will be united. He upraised this standard of the oneness of humanity in prison. When subjected to banishment by two kings, while a refugee from enemies of all nations and during the days of His long imprisonment He wrote to the kings and rulers of the world in words of wonderful eloquence, arraigning them severely and summoning them to the divine standard of unity and justice. He exhorted them to peace and international agreement, making it incumbent upon them to establish a board of international arbitration - that from all nations and governments of the world there should be delegates selected for a congress of nations which should constitute a universal arbitral court of justice to settle international disputes. He wrote to Victoria, Queen of Great Britain, the Czar of Russia, the Emperor of Germany, Napoleon III of France and others, inviting them to world

unity and peace. Through a heavenly power He was enabled to promulgate these ideals in the Orient. Kings could not withstand Him. They endeavoured to extinguish His light but served only to increase its intensity and illumination. While in prison He stood against the Shah of Persia and Sultan of Turkey and promulgated His teachings until He firmly established the banner of truth and the oneness of human-kind. I was a prisoner with Him for forty years until the Young Turks of the Committee of Union and Progress overthrew the despotism of Abdu'l-Hamid, dethroned him and proclaimed liberty. This committee set me free from tyranny and oppression; otherwise, I should have been in prison until the days of my life were ended. The purport is this: that Bahá'u'lláh in prison was able to proclaim and establish the foundations of peace although two despotic kings were His enemies and oppressors. The King of Persia, Nasiri'd-Din Shah, had killed twenty thousand Baha'is, martyrs who in absolute severance and complete willingness offered their lives joyfully for their faith. These two powerful and tyrannical kings could not withstand a prisoner...

...this Prisoner upheld the standard of humanity and brought the people of the Orient into agreement and unity. Today in the East, only those who have not followed Bahá'u'lláh are in opposition and enmity. The people of the nations who have accepted Him as the standard of divine guidance enjoy a condition of actual fellowship and love. If you should attend a meeting in the East, you could not distinguish between Christian and Muslim; you would not know which was Jew, Zoroastrian or Buddhist, so completely have they become fraternised and their religious differences been leveled. They associate in the utmost love and spiritual fragrance as if they belonged to one family, as if they were one people.

From: The Promulgation of Universal Peace by Abdu'l-Baha, pages 197-203

For the source of these quotations
http://pages.prodigy.com/prophecy_fulfillment

For more information
<http://www.bcca.org/~glittle>
<http://www.bcca.org/~cvoogt>

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The word **Ridvan** means **Paradise**. For twelve days, **April 21** through **May 2**, **Bahá'ís** celebrate the period in **1863** when **Bahá'u'llah** resided in a garden in **Baghdad**, which was later called the "**Garden of Ridvan**." During this period **Bahá'u'llah** proclaimed **His Mission** as **God's Messenger** for this age.