

*May fanaticism and religious bigotry be unknown,
all humanity enter the bond of brotherhood,
souls consort in perfect agreement,
the nations of earth at last hoist the banner of truth
and the religions of the world enter the divine temple of oneness, for
the foundations of the heavenly religions are one reality.*

-‘Abdu’l-Bahá

An Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith



Interreligious Pilgrimage, Dialogue, Fellowship, & Reflection

Department of Peace Studies (DPS) and Religion, Culture, and Peace Laboratory (RCP Lab)

in Cooperation with Life-Long Learning (LLL)

Payap University, Chiang Mai, Thailand

26 October 2022

ကြိုဆိုပါတယ်။

Bienvenu!

ようこそ

Maligayang Pagdating!

Chào mừng

ยินดีต้อนรับ

Welcome!

willkommen

欢迎！

Benvenuto!

Program

- Introduction to the Bahá'í Faith
- Worship and Service: Baha'i Houses of Worship
- How is the Baha'i Faith organized?
- Baha'i Way of Life & Community Building Activities

BREAK (30 minutes)

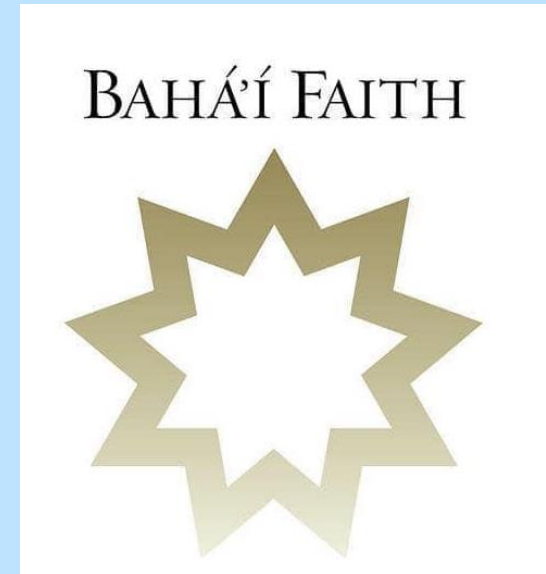
- Discussion: Questions and Answers

What is the Bahá'í Faith?

A brief introduction

A Few Facts about the Bahá'í Faith:

- Founder is **Bahá'u'lláh** “The Glory of God”
- **Bahá'ís** are followers of Bahá'u'lláh.
- The Baha'i Faith was founded **179 years ago** in 1844
- The Bahá'í Faith has approximately **7 million members**.
- Is the second most widely distributed religion after Christianity (*Encyclopedia Britannica*).



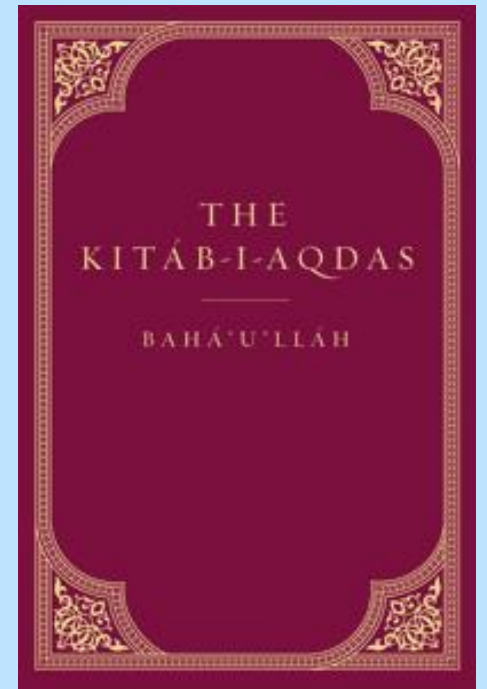
Writings of Bahá'u'lláh

The Writings of Bahá'u'lláh fill approximately 100 volumes and are in Persian and Arabic.

His Writings have been translated into 800+ languages.

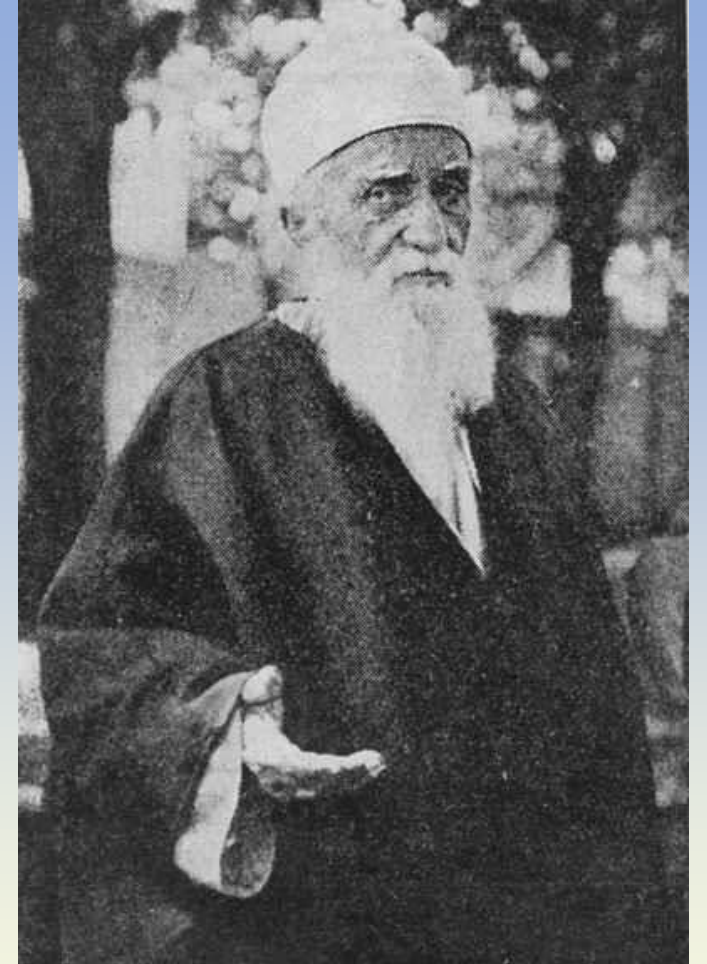
“The Most Holy Book” (The Kitáb-i-Aqdas)

The main source of Bahá'í laws and practices.



'Abdu'l-Bahá

- Appointed Center of the Faith by Bahá'u'lláh
- Authoritative interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's Writings.
- Protected the unity of the Bahá'í Faith



➔ **Our Exemplar:** Demonstrates what it looks like to follow the teachings of Baha'u'llah.

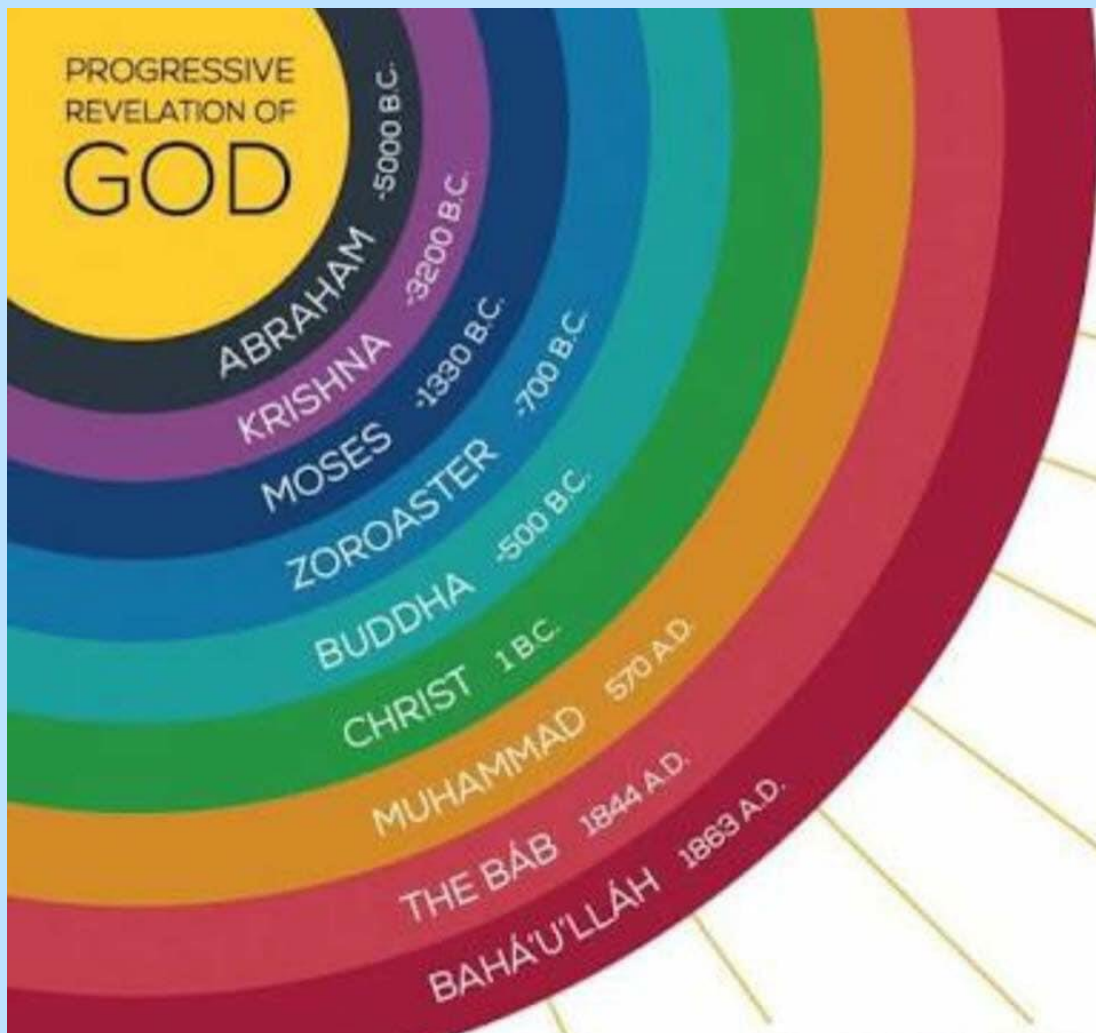
The Oneness of God
The Oneness of religion
The Oneness of humanity



Some Teachings of the Baha'i Faith:

- Independent investigation of truth
- Equality of man and women
- Harmony of religion and science
- Universal compulsory education
- Spiritual solution to economic problems
- Elimination of all forms of prejudice
- Adoption of a universal auxiliary language
- Abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty
- A world tribunal for the adjudication of disputes between nations
- Justice as the ruling principle in human affairs.





Religion is Progressive

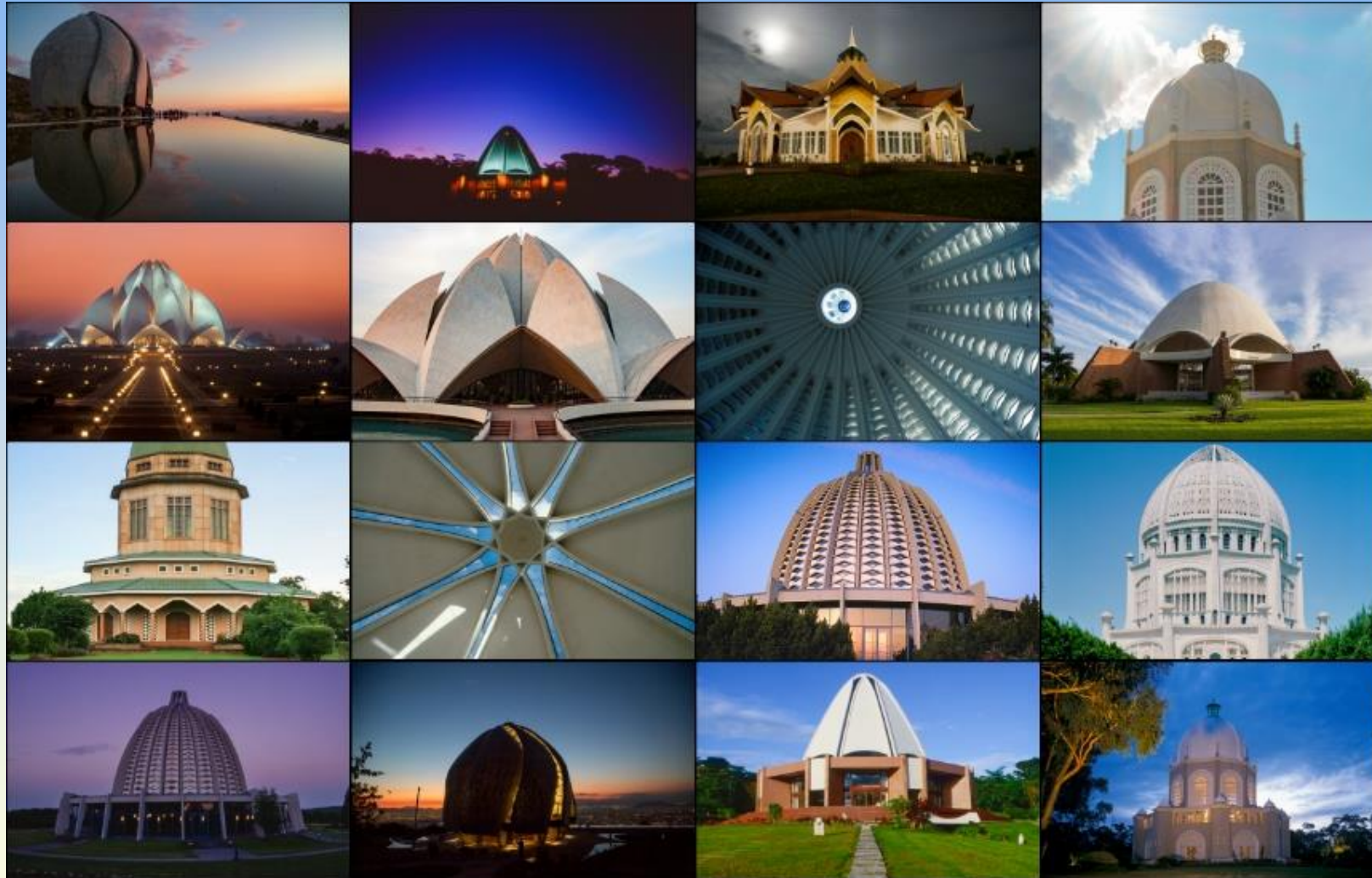
- Spiritual Teachings:
common to all religions
- Social Teachings:
change according to age and the needs of humanity

Each religion has served as spiritual stimulation expanding the level of human cooperation:

Family → Tribe → City-state → Nation → **World**

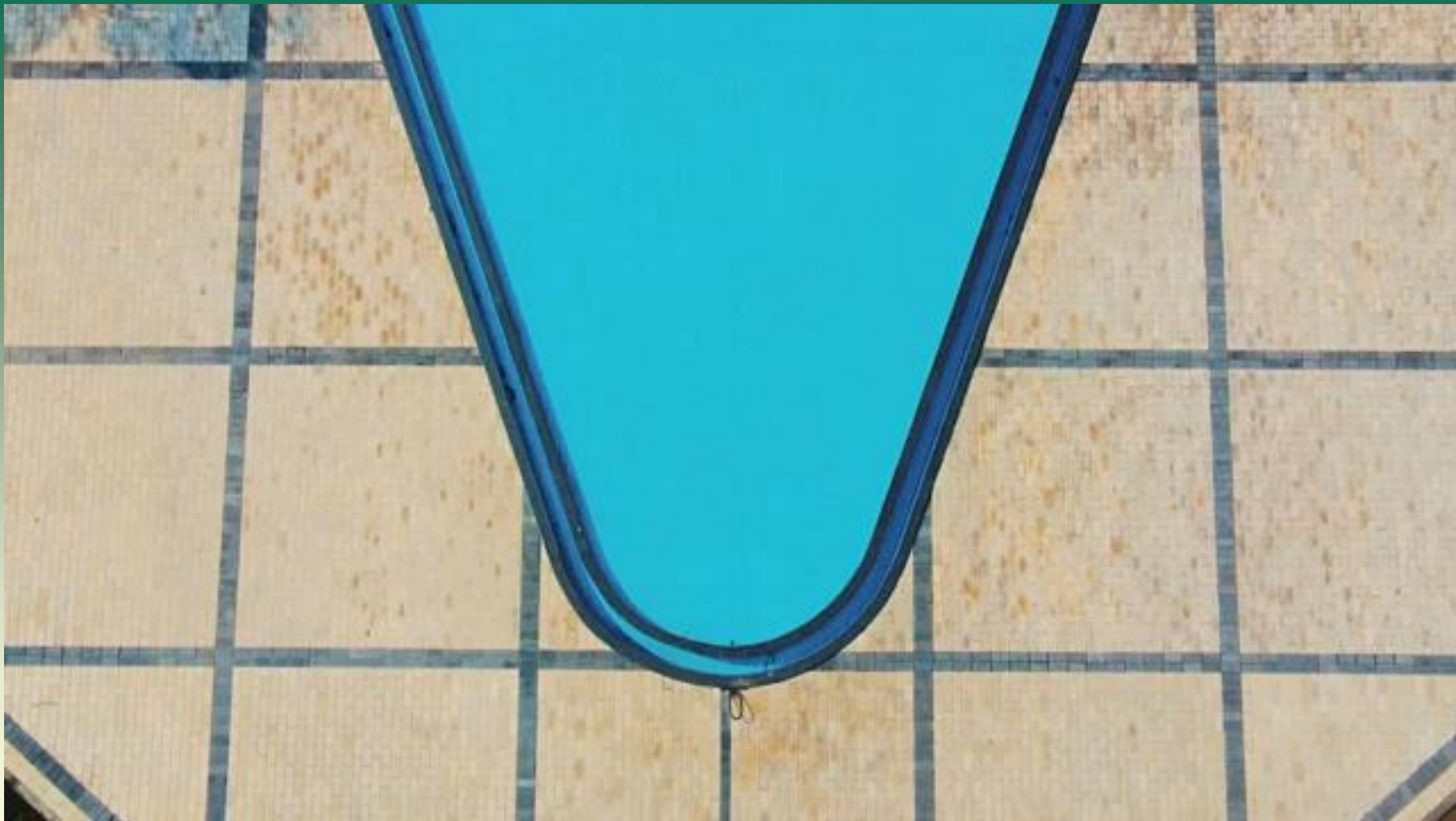


Bahá'í Houses of Worship





Continental Houses of Worship



How is the Bahá'í Faith organized?

Baha'i Administration

A New System of Global Governance

- A unique feature in religion and in Baha'u'llah's revelation.
- Administration established by the Manifestation Himself.
- Unity is protected.



No individual leaders or clergy

Leadership is given to groups of 9 people

- **Universal House of Justice**



- **National Spiritual Assembly**



- **Local Spiritual Assembly**



- **Nineteen Day Feast (the community)**

➔ There is no individual leader, even within the group...



Myanmar



Thailand

Spiritual & Administrative Center Haifa, Israel - Mount Carmel:



Administrative Buildings:
Seat of the
Universal House of Justice
Established by Bahá'u'lláh

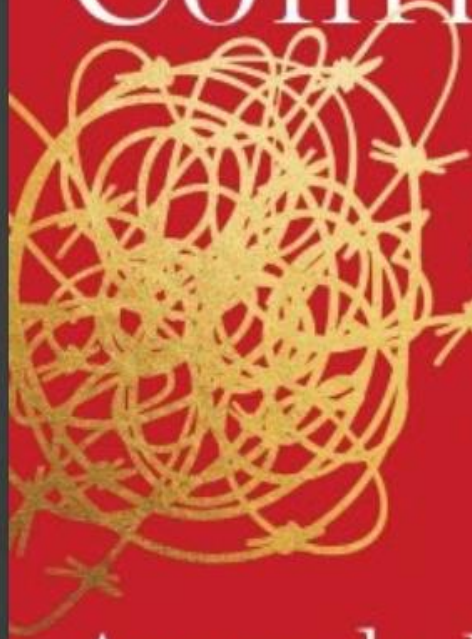


Shrine of Baha'u'llah



Shrine of the Bab

High Conflict



WHY WE
GET TRAPPED

and HOW
WE GET OUT

Amanda Ripley

Author of the *New York Times* Bestselling
THE SMARTEST KIDS IN THE WORLD

Research Question by an Author:

“Are there any organizations that manage avoiding conflict effectively?”

THE ALMA & JOSEPH
**GILDENHORN
BOOK SERIES**

4/14/21

 aspen institute



Amanda Ripley

Investigative Journalist and Author

Garrett Graff

Journalist, Author, and Director,
Cyber Initiatives, Aspen Digital

Garrett Graff is an author and the Aspen Institute's
Director of Cyber Initiatives & Aspen Digital.

C-SPAN2
BOOKTV

Baha'i Way of Life



Status of the Bahá'í Faith in Thailand

- Bahá'í Faith is well known by the Government of Thailand.
- A presentation on the Baha'i Faith was made to King Rama IX in 1964.
- HRH Princess Soamsawali Kitiyakara officially opened the National Baha'i Center in Bangkok.
- “Baha'i Faith” is a religion option for National ID



Religion →



Bahá'í Way of Life:

Two areas of personal attention

- Develop ourselves (our virtues & qualities)
- Contribute to development of society – *“an ever advancing civilization”*



➔ seek to bring about spiritual, social, and material progress simultaneously.

Community Building Activities and Service



Core Activities:

1. Children's Classes
 2. Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program
 3. Study Circles
 4. Devotional Gatherings
- Social Action Projects
 - Social Dialogue on concerns of society.
 - Inter-Faith Activities



Hang Dong, Chiang Mai

1. Children's Classes (ages 6-11)

Help children develop a strong **moral framework** and to achieve excellence in material, intellectual, and spiritual aspects of life.



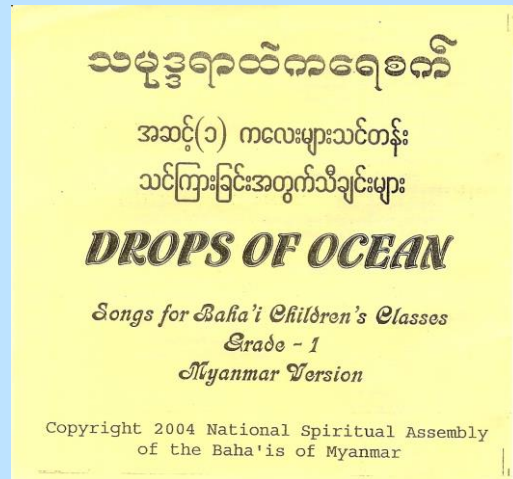
Yasothon, Thailand



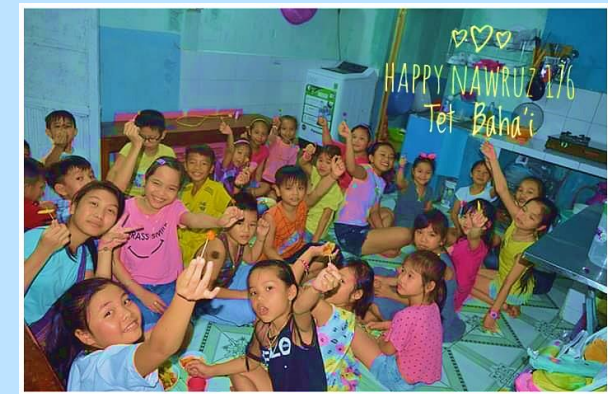
Thailand



Chiang Mai



Myanmar



Vietnam

2. Junior Youth Spiritual Empowerment Program (ages 12 to 15)

Program to empower participants through the development of:

- spiritual perception
- making positive life choices
- the enhancement of their power of expression
- the building of a sound moral structure



Omkoi, Thailand



Ireland

3. Study Circles (over 15 years old)



Thailand, **CMU Students !!!**



Cambodia

A sequence of Study Courses with Discussion on topics such as:

- the power of prayer,
- the nature of the soul,
- life after death,
- education of children and youth
- social action and community service
- family life



Philippines

4. Devotional Gatherings

People of all faiths and backgrounds come together to share prayers in a dynamic and sacred atmosphere and discuss development of the community.



Laos



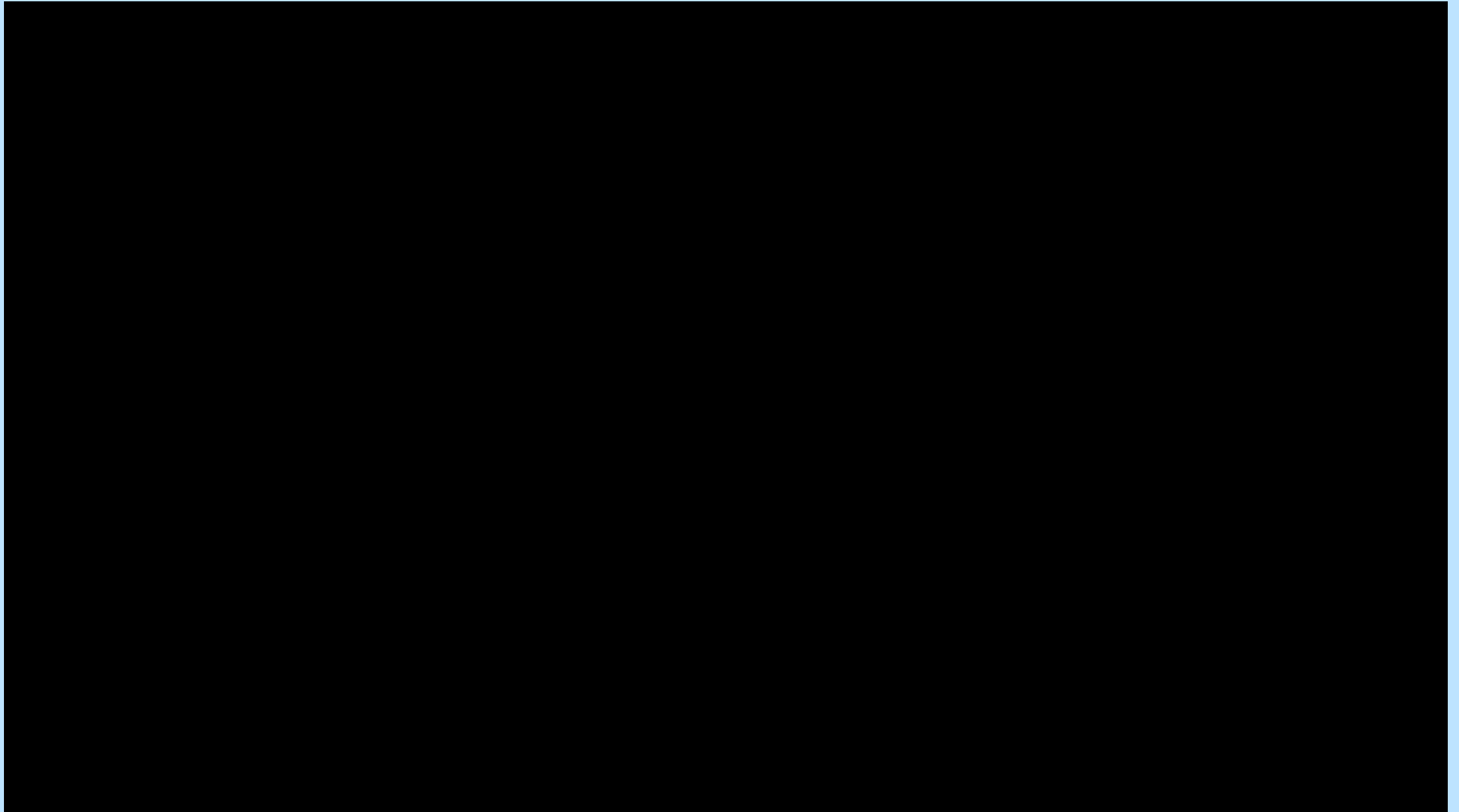
Thailand



Participation in Inter-Faith Dialogue



Video: UAE InterFaith



Refreshment Break !



Questions/ Answer Period



Videos – Search on YouTube

Light to the World

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4oHgOLZA-o&t=911s>

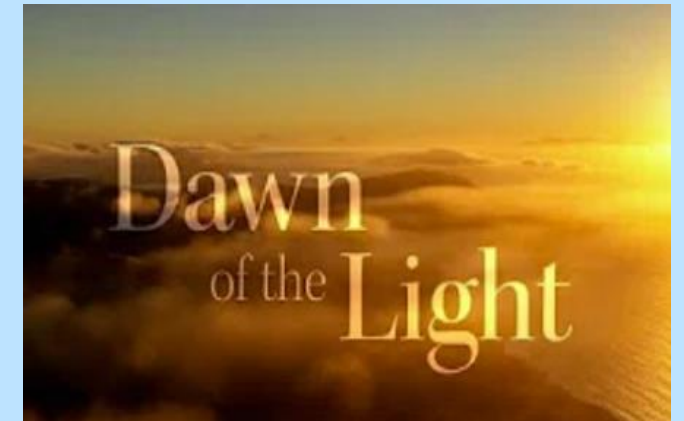
Bahá'u'lláh brought teachings for this age that represent an end to division and otherness, through which—at long last—the oneness of humankind can be realized. Discover more through accounts of people from diverse nations whose lives have been transformed by the light that Bahá'u'lláh brought to the world.



Dawn of the Light

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h9hLL3JFnI&t=60s>

Around the world, people are searching for answers to life's most pressing questions. The video traces community issues in 9 countries: Tajikistan, Nepal, Chile, USA, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Austria, and Zambia. It shows how individual spiritual journeys can connect to community-building.



Exemplar

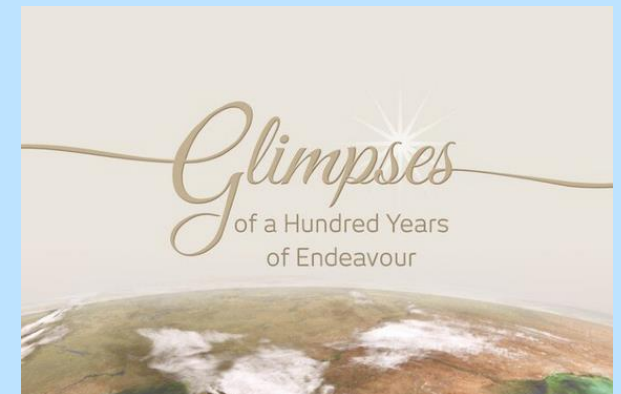
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PRE8vDU_ufs

Exemplar follows the life of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the profound effect He had on people both past and present. A sense of 'Abdu'l-Bahá's unique function as a shelter, a shield, a stronghold for all humanity is captured in vignettes of some of the souls whose lives were transformed for the betterment of society through their association with Him.

Glimpses of a Hundred Years of Endeavour

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MsMfnkd6_I

This film provides glimpses into a hundred years of endeavour and learning, carried out by a burgeoning Bahá'í community, and outlines the journey that has led to the community's current efforts to contribute to the emergence of a world based on the principle of the oneness of humanity.



Additional Information (see Handout)

English:

www.bahai.com

<https://bahaiteachings.org/>

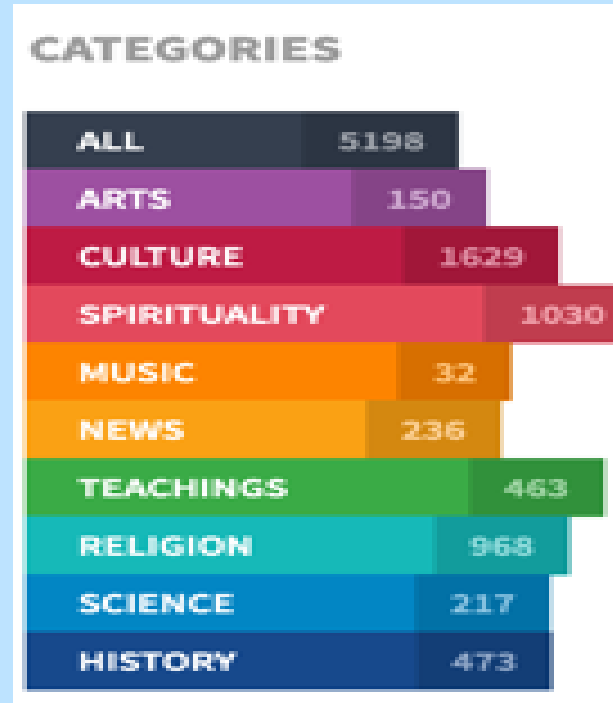
<https://www.bahaiblog.net/>

Thai - ศาสนาบาไฮ

<http://thai-bahais.org/>

<http://www.bahai.or.th/>

<https://th.wikipedia.org/wiki/ศาสนาบาไฮ>





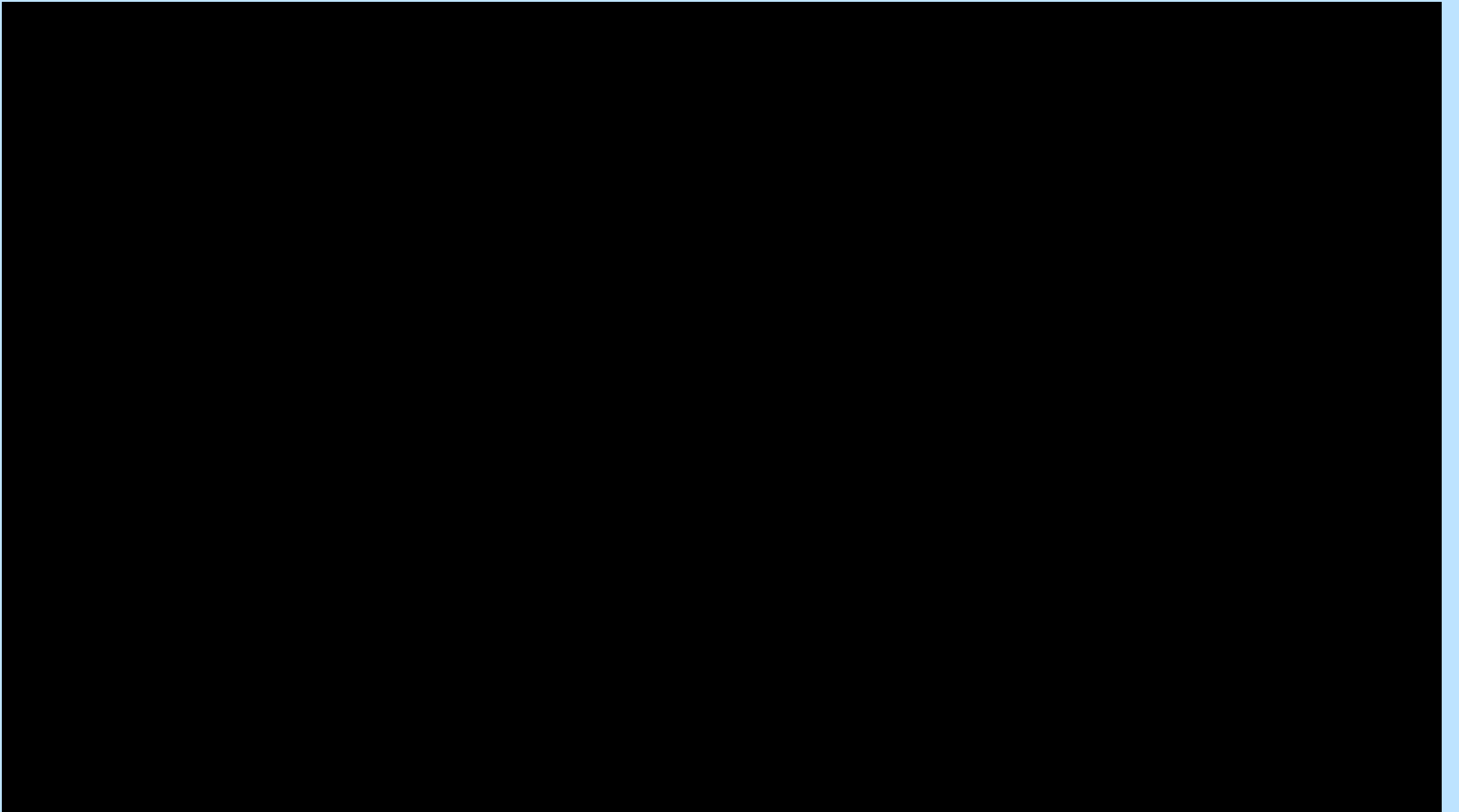
Thank you all for coming!

"Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side.

Love ye all religions and all races with a love that is true and sincere, and show that love through deeds."

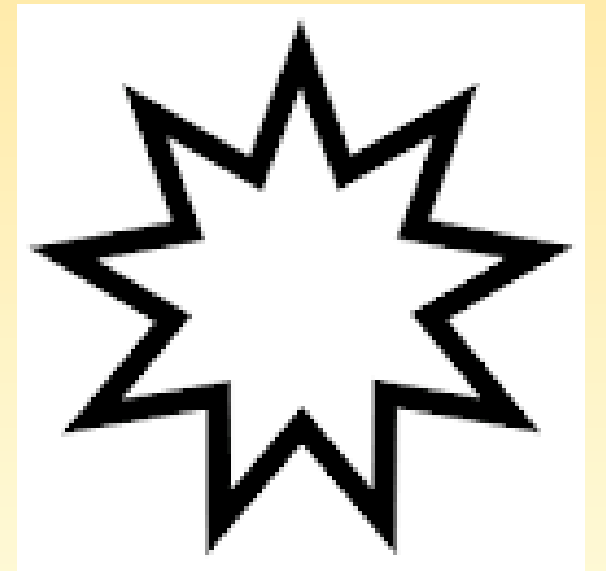
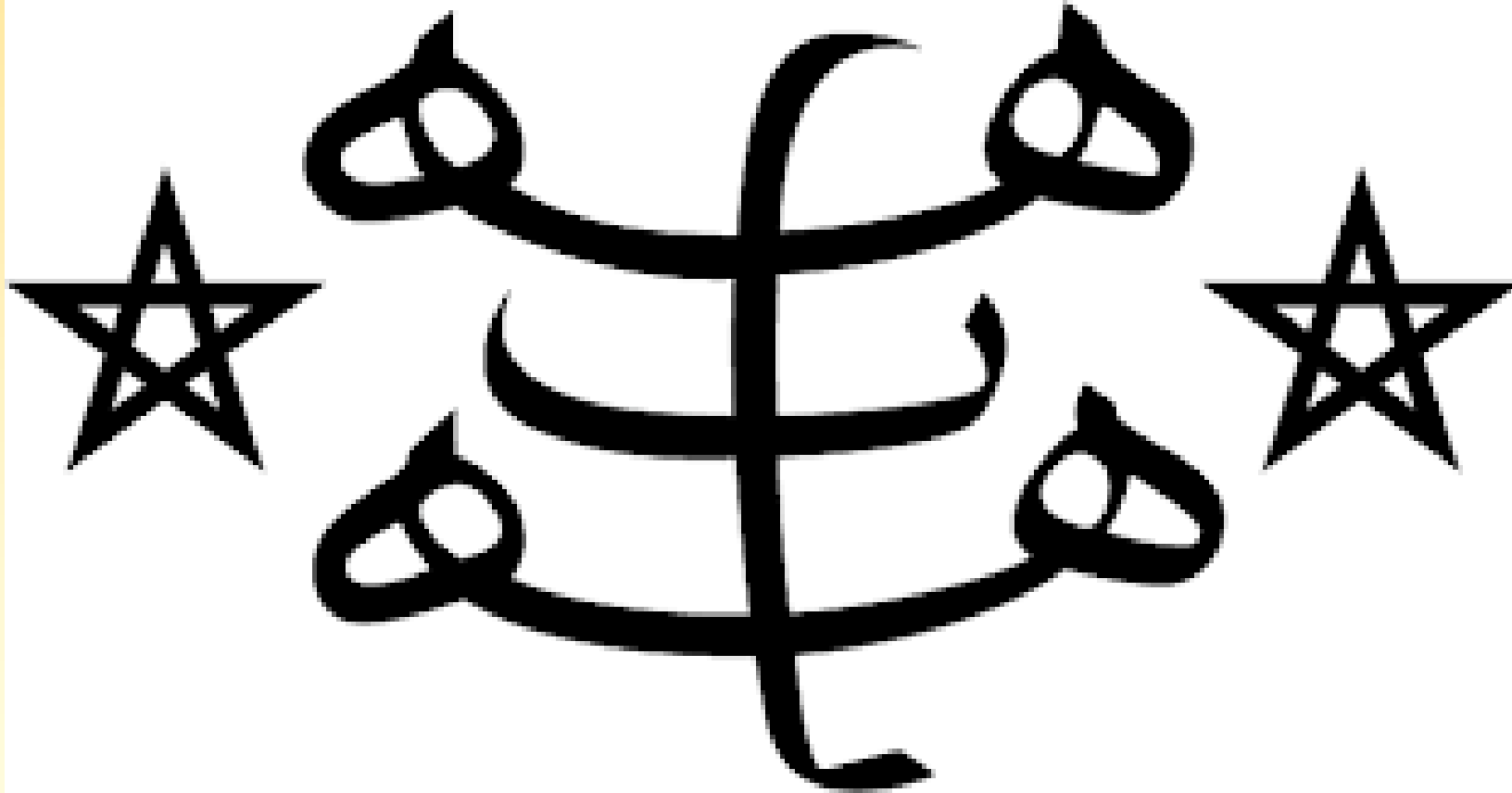
— Abdu'l-Bahá





Additional Slides

Bahá'í Symbols



Finances - Contributions to the Bahá'í Fund:

- All contributions are voluntary with no pressure
- Contributions are anonymous
- Considered a bounty to contribute and it attracts blessings
- Only Bahá'ís may contribute to the Baha'i Fund