The Station of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation

INTRODUCTION: Approaching the threshold...

An adequate introduction to the station of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation is simply impossible, given the overwhelming magnitude of His claim and the stupendous extent of His Revelation. However, something must be said to at least initiate an exploration of this unfathomable topic.

Everything in the Bahá'í Faith finds its basis, its essence, and its purpose, solely in the belief that Bahá'u'lláh represents on earth the Presence of the Creator, and that He speaks as the voice of God Himself. Everything He did, and everything He said or wrote, as He attests in the upcoming statement, is inspired of God. That He is neither merely a guru, nor just a holy man, neither simply an inspired soul nor an ancient master, neither just a prophet nor a mystic seer, teacher nor mentor, wise-man nor genius, sage nor saint, but rather, the Supreme Manifestation of God on earth, is our unalterable conviction as Bahá'ís. He is the Divine Presence, manifest in the form of a human being, as has been the Way of God through successive Revelations of the past. "The essence of belief in Divine unity," Bahá'u'lláh wrote, "consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God¹ and Him *Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence* [God] as one and the same. By this is meant that whatever pertaineth to the former, all His acts and doings, what-ever



A Tablet of Bahá'u'lláh in His own handwriting

He ordaineth or forbiddeth, should be considered, in all their aspects, and under all circumstances, and without any reservation, as identical with the Will of God Himself. This is the loftiest station to which a true believer in the unity of God can ever hope to attain. Blessed is the man that reacheth this station, and is of them that are steadfast in their belief."²

This study is only a beginning, or perhaps another small phase, in the ongoing effort the believer will make to fathom this most mystical and unapproachably glorious station of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation. May your heart be showered abundantly from the fountain of certainty.

OBJECTIVES: A look to the horizon...

Facilitator

Review the following objectives with the participants:

- 1. An objective of this study is to understand the fundamental verities or basic truths regarding the station of Bahá'u'lláh, the Magnitude of His Revelation, how He and His Revelation are the fulfillment of all the religions of the past, and His twin nature as a Manifestation of God.
- 2. An objective of this study is to acquire a deeper love for our Creator and His Manifestation.

¹ Manifestation of God: Great Prophet Who reveals the Words, and exhibits the signs and qualities of God

² Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 167

THE STUDY PROCESS: Attaining the water of life...

Facilitator

Review the following study process with the participants. Then study the numbered quotations that follow, one at a time as described below.

- READING: A drink from the cup of guidance...
 A. Read the quotation out loud in its entirety.
- 2. CONFIRMING MEANING: A spray from the fountain of light...

To better understand certain words used in the quotation, take turns with the following:

- A. Each participant **choose a word** from the quotation and **state it** for the whole group to hear. (Like a fun game pick a word!) Then...
- **B**. Read out loud the sentence that contains the **word** you selected, **while substituting for that word**, its given phrase, definition, or synonym from the boxes below the quotation.
- C. Repeat A and B above until everyone is satisfied with their understanding of the words.
- 3. **FINDING VALUE:** *Mining the gems of truth...*
 - A. Read the quotation out loud again in its entirety.
 - **B**. Take turns **stating each basic fact or truth** you can find in the quotation about **the station of Bahá'u'lláh or His Revelation.**

QUOTATIONS: Within the meadows of Thy nearness...

1. He [Bahá'u'lláh] Who in such dramatic circumstances was made to sustain the overpowering weight of so glorious a Mission was none other than the One Whom posterity will acclaim, and Whom innumerable followers already recognize, as the Judge, the Lawgiver and Redeemer of all mankind, as the Organizer of the entire planet, as the Unifier of the children of men, as the Inaugurator of the long-awaited millennium, as the Originator of a new "Universal Cycle," as the Establisher of the Most Great Peace, as the Fountain of the Most Great Justice, as the Proclaimer of the coming of age of the entire human race, as the Creator of a new World Order, and as the Inspirer and Founder of a world civilization.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, pp. 93-94)

acclaim: recognize with enthusiasm and praise	and must eventually, rest," (Shoghi Effendi, The
circumstances: accompanying events and	Promised Day is Come, p. 5)
conditions	Most Great Peace: condition in the world of
dramatic: moving and sensational	permanent peace and unity based on the principle
Establisher: One who causes the permanent	of the oneness of humanity
founding	Order: system for organizing and uniting the
Founder: the One who brings into being and is the	people
organizer	Organizer : arranger in an orderly way
Fountain: sustaining source	Originator: One who brings into being or is the
Inaugurator : One who brings about the beginning	creator
Inspirer : One who motivates effort or action by	posterity : all future generations
divine influence	Proclaimer: One who formally declares publicly
Judge: One who sits in judgment	Redeemer: One who frees others from harm,
Lawgiver: One who gives codes of law	distress, or captivity by payment of a ransom
millennium: thousand-year period of happiness	sustain: undergo and endure
and peace	Unifier: One who brings together or makes one
Mission: task assigned by God	Universal Cycle: A very long period of time
Most Great Justice: "the Justice [rendering of	which begins with a Supreme Manifestation of
what is morally right and true] upon which the	God. (Some Answered Questions, 2014 ed., p.
structure of the Most Great Peace can alone, \triangleleft	183 ¶4-5)

2. To Him [Bahá'u'lláh] Jesus Christ had referred as the "Prince of this world," as the "Comforter" Who will "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment," as the "Spirit of Truth" Who "will guide you into all truth," Who "shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak," as the "Lord of the Vineyard," and as the "Son of Man" Who "shall come in the glory of His Father" "in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," with "all the holy angels" about Him, and "all nations" gathered before His throne.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 95)

clouds: "By the term 'clouds' is meant those	the scriptures have promised is now come"
things that are contrary to the ways and desires	(Bahá'u'lláh, cited in The World Order of
of men." (Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 71);	<i>Bahá 'u 'lláh</i> , p. 104)
"It is evident that the changes brought about in	glory: distinguishing honor and admiration;
every Dispensation constitute the dark clouds	splendor; radiant beauty
that intervene between the eye of man's	heaven: "By 'heaven' is meant the heaven of
understanding and the Divine Luminary which	divine Revelation " (Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-
shineth forth from the day spring of the Divine	<i>Íqán</i> , p. 44)
Essence." (Bahá'u'lláh, Gleanings from the	Prince: highest ranking One
Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 26)	referred: made clear and specific mention of
Comforter : "The Comforter Whose advent all \triangleright	reprove: express blame or disapproval [with]

3. To Israel He was neither more nor less than the incarnation of the "*Everlasting Father*," the "*Lord of Hosts*" come down "*with ten thousands of saints*"; to Christendom Christ returned "*in the glory of the Father*," to <u>Sh</u>í'ah Islám the return of the Imám Husayn; to Sunní Islám the descent of the "*Spirit of God*" (Jesus Christ); to the Zoroastrians the promised <u>Sh</u>áh-Bahrám; to the Hindus the reincarnation of Krishna; to the Buddhists the fifth Buddha.

(Shoghi Effendi, God Passes By, p. 94)

Christendom : the Christians or followers of the	Muhammad, whose followers are Muslims
Manifestation of God Jesus Christ	reincarnation: new appearance in human form
Buddhist : followers of the Manifestation of God	Sháh-Bahrám: The Prophet Zoroaster prophesied
Buddha	of Sháh-Bahrám, literally the World-Savior, Who
descent: coming down from heaven	would usher in an era of blessedness and peace
glory: distinguishing honor and admiration;	after three thousand years of conflict and
splendor; radiant beauty	contention.
Imám Husayn: According to Shí 'ah Islám, he was	Shí 'ah Islám: One of two major sects of Islám,
the third appointed successor (Imám) to the	considered by the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh as the
Prophet Muhammad and the most eminent of all	true sect of Islám, which had an appointed
the Imáms. Shí 'ah Muslims await the return of	succession of authority through the Imáms.
one with his outstanding spiritual attributes.	Sunni Islám: The majority sect of Islám, which
Israel: Judaism; Religion of the Manifestation of	accepts the caliphs as the deputies of Muhammad
God Moses, whose followers are Jews	and heads of Islám, denying the authority to
Hindus: followers of the Manifestation of God	succession claimed by the hereditary Imáms of
Krishna	<u>Sh</u> í'ah Islám.
incarnation: appearance in human form	Zoroastrians: followers of the Manifestation of
Islám: Religion of the Manifestation of God ス	God Zoroaster, living 660 BC to 583 BC

4. That which hath been made manifest in this preeminent, this most exalted Revelation, stands unparalleled in the annals of the past, nor will future ages witness its like. (Bahá'u'lláh, cited in *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 103-104)

annals: historical records
 exalted: highly praised, raised to an elevated state, and glorified
 manifest: known or evident
 preeminent: outstanding or highly important

Revelation: Communication of God and His Will to man [by Bahá'u'lláh] unparalleled: without equal or match witness: see or know by personal presence **5**. The Tongue of Grandeur saith: By Myself that speaketh the truth! In this most mighty Revelation all the Dispensations of the past have attained their highest and final consummation. (Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 244)

consummation: ultimate perfection or goal	
Dispensations : religious Systems that regulate	
human affairs under divine authority	

Tongue of Grandeur: Word of God	
Revelation: communication of God and His Will	
to man [by Bahá'u'lláh]	

6. ...He [God] hath ordained that in every age and dispensation a pure and stainless Soul be made manifest in the kingdoms of earth and heaven. Unto this subtle, this mysterious and ethereal Being He hath assigned a twofold nature; the physical, pertaining to the world of matter, and the spiritual, which is born of the substance of God Himself. He hath, moreover, conferred upon Him a double station. The first station, which is related to His innermost reality, representeth Him as One Whose voice is the voice of God Himself. ... The second station is the human station, exemplified by the following verses: "I am but a man like you."

(Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 66-67)

assigned: given by appointment	exemplified : shown or illustrated as an example
Being: Manifestation of God	kingdoms: realms or dominions belonging to God
conferred : given from a position of authority	manifest: known or evident
dispensations: religious Systems that regulate	mysterious: that excites wonder and curiosity
human affairs under divine authority	while baffling efforts to comprehend
earth: "by the term 'earth' is meant the earth of	nature : type of essence
understanding and knowledge " (Bahá'u'lláh,	ordained: predestined by appointment
The Kitáb-i-Íqán, p. 48); the physical sphere and	pure: free and clean from fault, blame, or sin
dwelling place of mortals	representeth: presents in place of someone else
ethereal: not earthly but heavenly	Soul: Manifestation of God
heaven : "By 'heaven' is meant the heaven of	stainless: free of and resistant to moral blemish or
divine Revelation " (Bahá'u'lláh, The Kitáb-i-	flaw [type of]
<i>Íqán</i> , p. 44); the spiritual sphere and dwelling	station: rank or position
place of God, his angels, and the blessed souls	substance: real content or essential nature
who have passed on	subtle: insightful and perceptive

7. The Tongue of Wisdom proclaimeth: He that hath Me not is bereft of all things. Turn ye away from all that is on earth and seek none else but Me. I am the Sun of Wisdom and the Ocean of Knowledge. I cheer the faint and revive the dead. I am the guiding Light that illumineth the way. I am the royal Falcon on the arm of the Almighty. I unfold the drooping wings of every broken bird and start it on its flight.

(Bahá'u'lláh, The Tabernacle of Unity, ¶1.14)

Almighty: One having absolute power over all; God bereft: deprived bird: chosen believer broken: weakened or crushed in spirit cheer: instill hope, courage, and happiness to	Ocean: figuratively — greatest source proclaimeth: formally and publicly declares revive: return to spiritual life and activity royal Falcon: Mythically, the royal falcon is a king's beloved, trained, hunting hawk, which is pure, loyal, and without equal. The Persian poet Dumi often was the imagene of the king to
cheer : instill hope, courage, and happiness to the dead : those " <i>devoid of the spirit of faith</i> "	Rumi often uses the imagery of the king to
('Abdu'l-Bahá, <i>Bahá'í World Faith</i> , pp. 370-71) faint : weak, dispirited, and dejected	symbolize God and the falcon to symbolize the pure and stainless soul.
flight: figuratively — ascent above earthly things illumineth: gives intellectual and spiritual	Sun : figuratively — most brilliant or radiant source
knowledge, insight, and enlightenment to	Tongue of Wisdom : Word of God way : rightful and true course of action
Light : figuratively — source of emanating spiritual knowledge and goodness	way: rightun and true course of action wings: appendages used for flight

8. "God testifieth that there is none other God but Him and that He [Bahá'u'lláh] Who hath appeared is the Hidden Mystery, the Treasured Symbol, the Most Great Book for all peoples, and the Heaven of bounty for the whole world. He is the Most Mighty Sign amongst men and the Dayspring of the most august attributes in the realm of creation. Through Him hath appeared that which had been hidden from time immemorial and been veiled from the eyes of men. He is the One Whose Manifestation was announced by the heavenly Scriptures, in former times and more recently. Whoso acknowledgeth belief in Him and in His signs and testimonies hath in truth acknowledged that which the Tongue of Grandeur uttered ere the creation of earth and heaven and the revelation of the Kingdom of Names. Through Him the ocean of knowledge hath surged amidst mankind and the river of divine wisdom hath gushed out at the behest of God, the Lord of Days."

(Bahá'u'lláh, Fountain of Wisdom, pp. 39-40)

acknowledgeth: personally discloses or claims	Most Great Book: supreme Representation or
attributes: inherent features and qualities	Revelation of God
august: venerably majestic and grand	Most Mighty Sign: greatest indication of the
behest: authoritative command or order	presence and existence of God
Dayspring: origin of spiritual light	ocean : immensity; "the oceans of inner meaning
ere: before	and explanation " (Bahá'u'lláh, ESW, p. 147)
gushed out: flowed suddenly and forcefully	revelation: communicated disclosure
Heaven of bounty: sublime or exalted provision of	realm: place or sphere
generous giving	surged: risen suddenly and exceptionally
Mystery: unknown truth of our origin and purpose	testifieth: serves as evidence or proof
in our relationship with God and His Manifestations	testimonies: divine decrees attested in the sacred
His signs: the indications of His presence or	Writings [of Bahá'u'lláh]
existence	Tongue of Grandeur: Word of God
immemorial: ancient beyond measure	Treasured Symbol: most loved and valued
Kingdom of Names: spiritual world(s) of God's	representation of God as His Manifestation
attributes	uttered: spoke or expressed
Manifestation: Prophethood; Messengership	veiled: undisclosed or hidden

9. "O Living Temple! We have made Thee the Dayspring of each one of Our most excellent titles, the Dawning-Place of each one of Our most august attributes, and the Fountainhead of each one of Our manifold virtues unto the denizens of earth and heaven. Thereafter have We raised Thee up in Our own image betwixt the heavens and the earth, and ordained Thee to be the sign of Our glory unto all who are in the realms of revelation and creation, that My servants may follow in Thy footsteps, and be of them who are guided aright. We have appointed Thee the Tree of grace and bounty unto the dwellers of both the heavens and the earth. Well is it with them who seek the shelter of Thy shade and who draw nigh unto Thy Self, the omnipotent Protector of the worlds."

attributes: inherent spiritual qualities	ordained: established by command or order
august: noble, majestic, and awe-inspiring	Our: used by one in authority to denote himself
bounty : generous gifts and favors	[God]
Dawning-Place: One where first appears the light	raised: brought higher in rank or dignity
Dayspring: origin of spiritual light	realms: places or spheres of reality
denizens: inhabitants or residents	revelation: the spiritual worlds
dwellers: residents or inhabitants	servants: believers; followers
Fountainhead: origin and source	shade: protective influence
glory: radiant magnificence, majesty, and beauty	sign: indication of the existence and presence
grace: gifted divine influence that makes people	Temple: a reference to Bahá'u'lláh
morally pure and strong	titles: distinguishing and descriptive names by
heaven(s) : the spiritual world(s) of God	which one is designated
image: spiritual likeness or representation	Tree : source of spiritual fruits
manifold: numerous and varied	virtues: spiritual qualities and traits
nigh: near	We: this is the voice of God addressing
omnipotent: infinitely powerful and influential	Bahá'u'lláh and written down by Bahá'u'lláh

SHARING EXERCISE: A breath from the spirit of inspiration...

Facilitator

Ask the participants to complete the statements below. When everyone has finished, have each person share, in a round, one thing that was outstanding or inspiring and what spiritual feelings it enkindled. Please remind everyone not to remark on the comments of others.

One thing from the quotations that was outstanding or inspiring to me was

It made me feel

Explain

SOME QUESTIONS: A cup from the showers of confirmation...

Facilitator

Ask the participants to answer the following questions. They can usually find answers in the quotations just studied or in the introduction. When everyone has finished, review the questions, then share and discuss the answers.

1. There are numerous titles attributed to the station of Bahá'u'lláh by His followers that future generations will also recognize. Name any three of these titles:

2. Bahá'u'lláh is the "Redeemer of all mankind" because He

- **3**. Bahá'u'lláh formally started . . .
 - \Box a. the Prophetic Cycle.
 - \Box b. the long-awaited millennium.
- \Box c. a thousand-year period of happiness and peace.
- 4. _____ referred to Bahá'u'lláh as the "*Comforter*" and the "*Spirit of Truth*."
- 5. Jesus Christ was talking about when He spoke of the "Son of Man" Who "shall come in the glory of His Father."
- 6. ______ in past history or in the future can equal or match the greatness of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation
- 7. All the ______ of the past attain their highest and final perfection in Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. □ c. expectations of the Prophets
 □ d fairy tology
 - \Box a. dispensations
 - \Box b. religious systems

- 8. Does Bahá'u'lláh speak on behalf of God?
- 9. If someone said that Bahá'u'lláh was a man like others, would that be true?

Continued on the next page...

- **10**. Did all of the Manifestations of God have this same relationship with God?
- 11. Bahá'u'lláh fulfills all expectations the world's great Religions have of a promised Great Messenger of God. He is to the...

a. the "Everlasting Father," and the "Lord of Hosts."

- ____ Hindus
- ____ Jews
 - b. the promised Sháh-Bahrám. c. the reincarnation of Krishna.
- ____ Buddhists Sunní Muslims d. Christ returned "in the glory of the Father."
- ____ Christians e. the return of the Imám Husayn.
- f. the descent of the "Spirit of God" Jesus Christ. Zoroastrians
- Shí'ah Muslims g. the fifth Buddha.
- **12**. God is all-knowing and all-wise. Is Bahá'u'lláh all-knowing and all-wise?
- **13**. If you found Bahá'u'lláh had written something difficult for you to believe, what do you think your attitude should be towards this difference?
- 14. Describe one outstanding feature of the station of Bahá'u'lláh.

CLOSING MEDITATION: A heart song...

An Account of a visit with Bahá'u'lláh.

It was to Bahjí [the last residence of Bahá'u'lláh] that Edward Granville Browne, the distinguished orientalist and Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, then at the outset of his brilliant academic career, came in April, 1890. Returned home, he committed to paper the impressions he had received: "So here at Behjé was I installed as a guest, in the very midst of all that Bábísm accounts most noble and most holy; and here did I spend five most memorable days, during which I enjoyed unparalleled and unhoped-for opportunities of holding intercourse with those who are the very fountain-heads of that mighty and wondrous spirit which works with invisible but ever-increasing force for the transformation and quickening of a people who slumber in a sleep like unto death. It was in truth a strange and moving experience, but one whereof I despair of conveying any save the feeblest impression. I might, indeed, strive to describe in greater detail the faces and forms which surrounded me, the conversations to which I was privileged to listen, the solemn melodious reading of the sacred books, the general sense of harmony and content which pervaded the place, and the fragrant shady gardens whither in the afternoon we sometimes repaired; but all this was naught in comparison with the spiritual atmosphere with which I was encompassed. ... The spirit, which pervades the Bábís [Bahá'ís], is such that it can hardly fail to affect most powerfully all subjected to its influence. It may appall or attract: it cannot be ignored or disregarded. Let those who have not seen disbelieve me if they will; but, should that spirit once reveal itself to them, they will experience an emotion which they are not likely to forget."

Edward Browne has left us a pen-portrait of Bahá'u'lláh. It is the only one of its kind in existence, and therefore of tremendous value to the student of the Bahá'í Faith. Today a visitor to Bahjí can read this document, before venturing into Bahá'u'lláh's chamber. Thus can one try to recreate in one's mind the interview granted to the English orientalist:

"...my conductor paused for a moment while I removed my shoes. Then with a quick movement of the hand, he withdrew, and, as I passed, replaced the curtain; and I found myself in a large apartment, along the upper end of which ran a low divan [couch-like piece of furniture], while on the side opposite to the door were placed two or three chairs. Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. In the corner, where the divan met the wall sat a wondrous and venerable figure, crowned with a felt head-dress of the kind called *táj* by dervishes (but of unusual height and make), round the base of which was wound a small white turban. The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul; power and authority sat on that ample brow; while the deep lines on the forehead and face implied an age which the jet-black hair and beard flowing down in indistinguishable luxuriance almost to the waist seemed to belie. No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain!

"A mild dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued: 'Praise be to God that thou hast attained! ... Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. ... We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations; yet they deem us a stirrer-up of strife and sedition worthy of bondage and banishment. ... That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religion should cease, and differences of race be annulled — what harm is there in this? ... Yet so it shall be; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away, and the "Most Great Peace" shall come. ... Do not you in Europe need this also? Is not this that which Christ foretold? ... Yet do we see your kings and rulers lavishing their treasures more freely on means for the destruction of the human race than on that which would conduce to the happiness of mankind. ... These strifes and this bloodshed and discord must cease, and all men be as one kindred and one family. ... Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind'

"Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Behá [Bahá'u'lláh]."

(H. M. Balyuzi, *Bahá'u'lláh*, pp. 61-63)

[Permission to reprint extract granted by George Ronald, Publisher]

ANSWERS: Affirming treasures...

2. something similar to: because belief in Him, and obedience to Him, sets us free from spiritual harm, distress, or captivity, by His paying the ransom of a life of suffering

- 3. b and c
- 4. Jesus Christ
- 5. Bahá'u'lláh
- 6. nothing
- 7. a, b, and c 8. ves
- 9. yes
- 10. yes
- 11. c, a, g, f, d, b and e

12. yes

- 13. strive to be obedient to Bahá'u'lláh's Message, and make conscious efforts to investigate the truth of His wisdom
- 14. All answers are valuable

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^{1.} any of the titles identified in quote #1