

The Station of the Báb

INTRODUCTION: *Approaching the threshold...*

At the time of one's declaration of faith in Bahá'u'lláh, every believer additionally acknowledges recognition of the Báb as the Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh. Here, one will have the opportunity to become more fully aware of the Báb's profound station, of His great significance to the Bahá'í Faith, and of His considerable importance in religious history.

The prophetic Scriptures of past religions allude to a time at the end of a cycle in human history when two Manifestations of God would appear in proximity to each other. The Báb, whose name literally means "the gate" or "the door," is the first of those twin Messengers. His ministry figuratively "opened the door," which prepared the way for the appearance of the second Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh.

At the youthful age of twenty-four, the Báb was recognized as that first promised Messenger of God by eighteen souls, each independently and all prior to His public declaration of Prophethood. After declaring Himself to be God's Promised Messenger, He was scorned, imprisoned, and at the age of thirty, shot to death by a regiment of 750 soldiers. His life and ministry were short, dramatic, and of tremendous spiritual significance to the peoples of the world. During the brief twenty-year span of His Dispensation, some twenty thousand of His followers (called Bábís) were put to death by hateful mobs, government officials, and religious leaders. The study you are about to embark upon attempts to convey the most basic truths pertaining to the wondrous and astounding station of the Báb.



Room in the house of the Báb where He first declared His Station to Mullá Husayn

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 the Báb as a Manifestation of God, as the Herald and Forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, and as an Inaugurator of the new Universal Cycle.
2. An objective of this study is to acquire a deeper love for our Creator and His Manifestation.

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.

1. **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 the Báb**.

QUOTATIONS: *Within the meadows of Thy nearness...*

1. ...the Báb, the inaugurator of the Bábí Dispensation, is fully entitled to rank as one of the self-sufficient Manifestations of God, that He has been invested with sovereign power and authority, and exercises all the rights and prerogatives of independent Prophethood, is yet another fundamental verity which the Message of Bahá'u'lláh insistently proclaims and which its followers must uncompromisingly uphold. —Shoghi Effendi

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974), p. 123.

authority: the right to influence or command thought, opinion, and behavior
Dispensation: religious System that administers human affairs under divine authority for a particular period of time
entitled: qualified to be given a right or title
exercises: carries out and performs
fundamental verity: basic and essential truth, fact, and reality
inaugurator: one who brings about the beginning
independent: one free from the control and influence of others; self-reliant
insistently: with persistence and firmness
invested: furnished or endowed by right
Manifestations: great Prophets Who reveal the Words and exhibit the signs and qualities

power: right, ability, and authority to direct people spiritually
prerogatives: exclusive and special privileges
proclaims: formally and publicly declares
Prophethood: status of revealing divinely inspired revelations of God
rank: hold the position among others
reveal: make known by divine means
self-sufficient: able to be maintained without the aid of others; independent
sovereign: an all-encompassing, all-pervading, and spiritually supreme
uncompromisingly: while making no concessions; inflexibly
uphold: agree with and give support to

2. Behold ... how great and lofty is His [the Báb's] station! His rank excelleth that of all the [former] Prophets, and His Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones. A Revelation, of which the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or which, in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed.... —Bahá'u'lláh
The Kitáb-i-Iqán: The Book of Certitude, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1950, 1970 printing), p. 244.

chosen ones: the followers of a Manifestation during the time of His Dispensation; those who are near to God
comprehension: intellectual or mental grasp
Decree: official order or decision
disclosed: made it publicly known
excelleth: is above or superior to; surpasses;
“Regarding their statement that ‘our faith and religion is superior to every other’, by this is meant such Prophets as have appeared before them.”
 —Bahá'u'lláh, *The Tabernacle of Unity*, (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 2006), par. 2.45, p. 45.

informed: given the information
inscrutable: not easily understood; unfathomable
lofty: impressively high in status
Prophets: Manifestations or chosen Messengers
pursuance: the carrying out
rank: degree or position of dignity, eminence, or excellence
Revelation: specific Communication of God's Will to humanity
station: assigned rank or position
transcendeth: extends far above and beyond

3. ...the Blessed Báb, Prophet and Herald of the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, Founder of the Dispensation marking the culmination of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle, Inaugurator of the five thousand century Bahá'í Cycle. —Shoghi Effendi
Citadel of Faith, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1950, 1970 printing), p. 80.

Adamic Cycle: period of time beginning with the Revelation of Adam and ending with the Declaration of the Báb
Blessed: holy, adored, and revered
culmination: attainment of the highest point and fulfillment
Cycle: era; age
Dispensation: religious System that administers human affairs under divine authority for a ↻

particular period of time
Founder: One who brought into being and is the organizer
Herald: Official who proclaims and foretells glad tidings
Inaugurator: One who brings about the beginning
Prophet: One who reveals divinely inspired revelations of God

4. This is the foundation of the belief of the people of Bahá (may my life be offered up for them): “His Holiness, the Exalted One (the Báb), is the Manifestation of the Unity and Oneness of God and the Forerunner of the Ancient Beauty.” —`Abdu'l-Bahá
Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944, 1971 printing), p. 19.

Ancient Beauty: Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh [one of His titles]
Exalted: highly praised, raised to an elevated state, and glorified
Forerunner: messenger sent before to give notice of the approach
foundation: basis or essential principle
Manifestation: great Prophet Who reveals the Words and exhibits the signs and qualities
Oneness: of the quality, state, or fact of being ↻

inseparable
people of Bahá: Bahá'ís
Unity: being as one and the same; *“The essence of belief in Divine unity consisteth in regarding Him Who is the Manifestation of God and Him Who is the invisible, the inaccessible, the unknowable Essence as one and the same.”*
 —Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1952, 1971 printing), LXXXIV, p. 167.

5. *And when Thou didst purpose to make Thyself known unto men, Thou didst successively reveal the Manifestations of Thy Cause, and ordained each to be a sign of Thy Revelation among Thy people, and the Day-Spring of Thine invisible Self amidst Thy creatures, until the time when, as decreed by Thee, all Thy previous Revelations culminated in Him [the Báb] Whom Thou hast appointed as the Lord of all who are in the heaven of revelation and the kingdom of creation, Him Whom Thou hast established as the Sovereign Lord of all who are in the heavens and all who are on the earth. He it was Whom Thou hast determined to be the Herald of Thy Most Great Revelation and the Announcer of Thy Most Ancient Splendor.*

—Bahá'u'lláh

Prayers and Meditations, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1938, 1971 printing), LXXVIII, pp. 128-29.

Announcer: One who makes information publicly known
appointed: officially decreed and named
Cause: eternal religious Faith
creation: this material world
culminated: attained the highest point and fulfillment
Day-Spring: Manifestation
decreed: officially ordered as foreordained
earth: physical sphere and dwelling place of mortals
established: permanently confirmed
heaven of revelation: the spiritual sphere and dwelling place of God, his angels, and the blessed souls who have passed on
Herald: Official who conveys the news and proclaims the glad tidings
kingdom: realm or dominion belonging to God

Lord: One with independent and supreme power
Manifestations: great Prophets Who reveal the Words and exhibit the signs and qualities
men: the people
Most Ancient Splendor: Manifestation of God, Bahá'u'lláh [one of His titles]
Most Great Revelation: Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh
ordained: set apart and appointed
purpose: intend or determine
reveal: make known by divine means
Revelation: revealed Word and Presence
Revelation(s): Communication(s) of God and His Will to humanity by a Manifestation or Prophet
sign: expression of the existence
Sovereign: supreme and independent
successively: following one after the other
Thou: God

6. Shoghi Effendi feels that the Unity of the Bahá'í revelation as one complete whole embracing the Faith of the Báb should be emphasized... The Faith of the Báb should not be divorced from that of Bahá'u'lláh. ...due to the fact that the Báb considered Himself as the forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh we should regard His dispensation together with that of Bahá'u'lláh as forming one entity, the former being an introductory to the advent of the latter.

—written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi

The Unfolding Destiny of the British Bahá'í Community, (London: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1981), pp. 426-27.

advent: coming into being or arrival
dispensation: religious system that administers human affairs under divine authority for a particular period of time
divorced: a relationship separated or disunited
embracing: readily and gladly including
emphasized: given special attention and importance
entity: single existence in reality
forerunner: one that precedes and indicates the approach
former: Báb's dispensation

introductory: setting up or leading in
latter: dispensation of Bahá'u'lláh
regard: look upon or consider
revelation: Communication of God and His Will to humanity
Shoghi Effendi: The one appointed by `Abdu'l-Bahá in His Will and Testament to carry on into the future the function of authoritative interpretation of the Sacred Writings and the care and protection of the Bahá'í Faith.
Unity: combination of ordered parts constituting the whole

7. *The substance wherewith God hath created Me is not the clay out of which others have been formed. He hath conferred upon Me that which the worldly-wise can never comprehend, nor the faithful discover ... I am one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God. Whosoever hath recognized Me, hath known all that is true and right, and hath attained all that is good and seemly....* —The Báb
Selections from the Writings of the Báb, (Haifa: Bahá'í World Centre, 1976), p. 10.

attained: aspiring beyond the scope and powers of most men, achieved to
clay: lifeless earthen substance
conferred: graciously gifted from a position of authority
faithful: firm believers in God
Primal Word of God: the originating impetus of all creation and the enlightening, spiritually transformative spirit conveyed by the ☞

successive Revelations of God through His Manifestations
recognized: formally accepted and acknowledged
seemly: suited to their purpose
substance: real content or essential nature
sustaining pillars: main enduring and supporting entities [like the other Manifestations of God]
worldly-wise: those wise to the things and ways of this world of existence

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 _____

 I felt this way because _____

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. Bahá'u'lláh wrote: *“Know thou assuredly that the essence of all the Prophets of God is one and the same. Their unity is absolute. God, the Creator, saith: There is no distinction whatsoever among the Bearers of My Message. They all have but one purpose; their secret is the same secret. To prefer one in honor to another, to exalt certain ones above the rest, is in no wise to be permitted.”*¹ *“They only differ in the intensity of their revelation, and the comparative potency of their light.”*² Because of the “intensity” and “comparative potency” of the Báb’s Revelation, His station is said to _____ that of all former Manifestations.
 - a. excel
 - b. equal
 - c. be inferior to

Continued on next page...

¹ Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1952, 1971 printing), XXXIV, p. 78.
² Bahá'u'lláh, *Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh*, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1952, 1971 printing), XIX, p. 48.

2. Bahá'u'lláh was an independent Manifestation of God. Was the Báb?
 yes
 no
3. Why was the Revelation of the Báb not entirely foretold by the former Prophets of God?

4. Since the Báb was a Manifestation of God who started a separate religious Dispensation, what were His followers called?
 a. Bahá'ís
 b. Bábís
 c. Báb's
5. The Báb was the _____ of Bahá'u'lláh and His Revelation.
 a. Forerunner
 b. Harbinger (A person or thing that comes before to announce or give indication of what follows; herald; forerunner; precursor)
 c. Announcer
 d. Herald
6. Considering the Báb to be like the dawn and Bahá'u'lláh like the rising of the sun, both are to be considered as _____ the new "Universal Cycle."
 a. inaugurating
 b. originating
 c. initiating
 d. riding
7. The Báb's Revelation is considered to be the _____ of the six thousand year old Adamic Cycle.
 a. culmination
 b. seal
 c. Inaugurator
8. The Faith of the Báb, together with the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, should be considered as forming one Revelation.
 true
 false
9. Even though it was not covered in this lesson, try to name some other Manifestations of God.

CLOSING MEDITATION: *A heart song...*

The historical significance of the station of the Báb.

The Báb, acclaimed by Bahá'u'lláh as the “Essence of Essences,” the “Sea of Seas,” the “Point round Whom the realities of the Prophets and Messengers revolve,” “from Whom God hath caused to proceed the knowledge of all that was and shall be,” Whose “rank excelleth that of all the Prophets,” and Whose “Revelation transcendeth the comprehension and understanding of all their chosen ones,” had delivered His Message and discharged His mission. He Who was, in the words of `Abdu'l-Bahá, the “Morn of Truth” and “Harbinger of the Most Great Light,” Whose advent at once signaled the termination of the “Prophetic Cycle” and the inception of the “Cycle of Fulfillment,” had simultaneously through His Revelation banished the shades of night that had descended upon His country, and proclaimed the impending rise of that Incomparable Orb [Bahá'u'lláh] Whose radiance was to envelop the whole of mankind. He, as affirmed by Himself, “the Primal Point from which have been generated all created things,” “one of the sustaining pillars of the Primal Word of God,” the “Mystic Fane,” the “Great Announcement,” the “Flame of that supernal Light that glowed upon Sinai,” the “Remembrance of God” concerning Whom “a separate Covenant hath been established with each and every Prophet” had, through His advent, at once fulfilled the promise of all ages and ushered in the consummation of all Revelations. He the “Qá'im” (He Who ariseth) promised to the Shí'ahs, the “Mihdi” (One Who is guided) awaited by the Sunnis, the “Return of John the Baptist” expected by the Christians, the “Ushidar-Mah” referred to in the Zoroastrian scriptures, the “Return of Elijah” anticipated by the Jews, Whose Revelation was to show forth “the signs and tokens of all the Prophets”, Who was to “manifest the perfection of Moses, the radiance of Jesus and the patience of Job” had appeared, proclaimed His Cause, been mercilessly persecuted and died gloriously. The “Second Woe,” spoken of in the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine, had, at long last, appeared, and the first of the two “Messengers,” Whose appearance had been prophesied in the Qur'án, had been sent down. The first “Trumpet-Blast”, destined to smite the earth with extermination, announced in the latter Book, had finally been sounded. “The Inevitable,” “The Catastrophe,” “The Resurrection,” “The Earthquake of the Last Hour,” foretold by that same Book, had all come to pass. The “clear tokens” had been “sent down,” and the “Spirit” had “breathed,” and the “souls” had “waked up,” and the “heaven” had been “cleft,” and the “angels” had “ranged in order,” and the “stars” had been “blotted out,” and the “earth” had “cast forth her burden,” and “Paradise” had been “brought near,” and “hell” had been “made to blaze,” and the “Book” had been “set,” and the “Bridge” had been “laid out,” and the “Balance” had been “set up,” and the “mountains scattered in dust.” The “cleansing of the Sanctuary,” prophesied by Daniel and confirmed by Jesus Christ in His reference to “the abomination of desolation,” had been accomplished. The “day whose length shall be a thousand years,” foretold by the Apostle of God in His Book, had terminated. The “forty and two months,” during which the “Holy City,” as predicted [in the Book of Revelation] by St. John the Divine, would be trodden under foot, had elapsed. The “time of the end” had been ushered in, and the first of the “two Witnesses” into Whom, “after three days and a half the Spirit of Life from God” would enter, had arisen and had “ascended up to heaven in a cloud.” The “remaining twenty and five letters to be made manifest,” according to Islamic tradition, out of the “twenty and seven letters” of which Knowledge has been declared to consist, had been revealed. The “Man Child,” mentioned in the Book of Revelation, destined to “rule all nations with a rod of iron,” had released, through His [the Báb's] coming, the creative energies which, reinforced by the effusions of a swiftly succeeding and infinitely mightier Revelation, were to instill into the entire human race the capacity to achieve its organic unification, attain maturity and thereby reach the final stage in its age-long evolution.

—Shoghi Effendi

God Passes By, (Wilmette: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1944, 1970 printing), pp. 57-59.

A testament to the station of the Báb, by Bahá'u'lláh.

Let thou, along with whosoever abideth in heaven and on earth, know one and all that We testify with certitude, We acknowledge openly, We give utterance, We unloose Our tongue, We speak forth, We shout, We cry out and call aloud at the top of Our voice, proclaiming that He [the Báb] is indeed the Exalted Lord, the Sadrah beyond which there is no passing, and the Tree at the furthest extremity; that He Himself is the Kingdom of exaltation, the Dominion of celestial sublimity, and the divine Realm of preexistence; that He is none other than the Spirit of Bahá, the most mighty Mystery, the consummate Word, the Manifestation of the Everlasting Reality, the supremely noble Temple, the adorned Symbol, the Lord of mankind, the turbulent Ocean of might, the most exalted Word, the primal Pearl, the hidden Scroll, the treasured Book, the Beauty of the One True God, the Revealer of His Essence, and the Dayspring of His perpetual Being. But for Him, existence itself would have never come into being; but for Him, the Object of all desire would have never been known; but for Him, the Beauty of the Adored One would have never been revealed. I swear by God that, through His Name, heaven and whatsoever lieth therein were created, and the earth and all who dwell thereon were fashioned. Through Him, every ocean hath surged forth, every river hath flowed, every tree hath given fruit, every divine religion hath been proven true, and the Beauty of the All-Merciful hath been made manifest. By the righteousness of God! Were I to describe Him till the end that hath no end, My heart would find no peace from the burning thirst of My loving desire to recount His names and attributes, how much more My love for His Most Holy, His Most Mighty, His Most Beauteous Self!

—Bahá'u'lláh

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ANSWERS: Affirming treasures...

1. a
2. yes
3. "...the Prophets of God, His saints and chosen ones, have either not been informed, or in pursuance of God's inscrutable Decree, they have not disclosed."
4. b
5. a, b, c, and d
6. a, b, and c; they all imply the same thing
7. a
8. true
9. Some other Manifestations of God include: Adam, Moses, Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh, and Zoroaster.

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