

Central Mountains  
**Bahá'í Newsletter**  
February 2012

### CALENDAR ITEMS

**Sunday, February 5** – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting and Children's Classes at the Bahá'í Center.

**Sunday, February 12** – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting and Children's Classes at the Bahá'í Center.

**Sunday, February 19** – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting and Children's Classes at the Bahá'í Center.

**Sunday, February 26** – 11:00am – Devotional Meeting at the Bahá'í Center. Special "Homecoming" celebration of Ayyám-i-Há, a time of celebration and gift-giving for the Bahá'ís. Please join us!



### YOU ARE INVITED!

You are warmly invited to join a study circle being hosted by the Bahá'í community. A study circle consists of Bahá'ís, their friends and individuals who are seeking to enrich their spiritual life through study of Sacred Writings, prayer, the purpose of life and the journey of the soul. The participants of the study circle meet regularly at a central location or at an individual's home to study the Sacred Writings and participate in service and extracurricular activities that bind the group together in fellowship.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Only when the lamp of search, of earnest striving, of longing desire, of passionate devotion, of fervid love, of rapture, and ecstasy, is kindled within the seeker's heart, and the breeze of His loving-kindness is wafted upon his soul, will the darkness of error be dispelled, the mists of doubts and misgivings be dissipated, and the lights of knowledge and certitude envelop his being.

*– Bahá'í Writings*

### WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA BAHÁ'Í CENTER

The Western North Carolina Bahá'í Center is located at 5 Ravenscroft Drive in Asheville. To get there from downtown, turn south on Church Street off Patton Avenue. At Trinity Episcopal Church, turn right on Sawyer, then immediately veer left on Ravenscroft. The Center is on the right. You may park in the lot beside the building at night. Please call 251-1051 for more information.

### BAHÁ'Í INFO ON THE WEB

Information about the Bahá'í Faith can be found at:

[www.us.bahai.org](http://www.us.bahai.org)

[www.bcca.org/bahaivision](http://www.bcca.org/bahaivision)

[www.bahai.org](http://www.bahai.org)

<http://www.education.usbnc.org/index.htm>

<http://www.wncbahai.org>

### IF YOU WANT TO SPEAK WITH A BAHÁ'Í

If you want to speak with a Bahá'í, please feel free to call Viki at 225-1744, Elaine at 670-7000 or David at 698-4969.

# The Life of Bahá'u'lláh

(Preface)

Bahá'ís believe that no system devised by men can envisage nor implement adequately the goals, means, and methods to attain a just and peaceful civilization, but rather that such an awesome task must have as its foundation the Word of God. Bahá'ís believe that the Word of God is revealed in progressive stages as the needs of mankind become more and more complex.

In the nineteenth century, there was One Who proclaimed that He was the Messenger of God for this time, to bring an end to wars and to establish unity and peace throughout the entire planet. In fact, His teachings were so revolutionary at the time that the violent opposition of civil and priestly authority was aroused, resulting in long years of exile, imprisonment and persecution for this Messenger of God, called Bahá'u'lláh, (meaning, the Glory of God.).

This article will attempt to briefly describe the life and teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

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Born November 12, 1817, into a noble family that traced its ancestry back to the great dynasties of Persia's imperial past, Bahá'u'lláh declined the ministerial career open to Him in the court, and chose instead to devote His energies to a range of philanthropies which earned Him widespread renown as the "Father of the Poor." In 1844, He became one of the leading advocates of a movement (see previous issue's article on the Báb) that was to change the course of His country's history. The Báb announced that the Day of God was at hand in the appearance of a universal Messenger of God, "He Whom God will make manifest" awaited by the followers of all religions.

Because of His prominence in the promotion of the Báb's cause, Bahá'u'lláh was arrested and brought in chains to Tehran, and was cast into a filthy abandoned reservoir dungeon known as the Black Pit, along with thirty companions. Around His neck was placed a huge iron collar and chain, so heavy it bowed His head to His chest. When He did not quickly perish, as had been expected, an attempt was made to poison Him. The marks of the chain were to remain on His body for the rest of His life.

Each day the guards would descend to the dark, underground dungeon, seize one or more of His companions for execution by the brutal inventions of mobs. In these circumstances, Bahá'u'lláh received the visions that awakened Him to His mission to the world. He writes, "One night, in a dream, these exalted words were heard on every side: 'Verily We shall render Thee victorious by Thyself and by Thy Pen. Grieve Thou not for that which hath befallen Thee, neither be Thou afraid, for Thou art in safety. Erelong will God raise up the treasures of the earth - men who will aid Thee through Thyself and through Thy name, wherewith God hath revived the hearts of such as have recognized Him.'"

Eventually, Bahá'u'lláh was released and immediately banished from His native land. His wealth and properties were confiscated, and His health impaired from the pestilential conditions of the

dungeon. He was exiled, with His wife and young children, and a small group of followers, to Baghdad, Iraq. The journey was in mid-winter, crossing a snow bound mountain range, and they arrived in Baghdad in January 1853. Bahá'u'lláh ministered to the needs of the Bábí community that had gathered in Baghdad, as the only effective leader that survived the massacres of the Bábís in Iran and the martyrdom of the Báb.

During the ten years in Baghdad, He wrote two books; the first a small book called *The Hidden Words*, verses both mystical and concise regarding God's relationship to man, the individual's response to God, and man's relationship to man. He described it as a distillation of the spiritual guidance of all the Revelations of the Past, the voice of God speaking directly to the human soul. The second work is *The Book of Certitude*, an exposition of the true, essential nature and purpose of religion, the station of the Messengers of God as agents of an ongoing process that is to awaken humanity to its spiritual and moral potentialities.

To the dismay of the Persian consular authorities who had believed the Bábí episode to have run its course, the community of exiles gradually became a respected and influential element in Baghdad and the nearby towns, and the renown of Bahá'u'lláh's wisdom and spiritual charisma caused the ire of the Islamic clerics who planned unsuccessful assassination attempts and holy war. Fearing that the acclaim that Bahá'u'lláh was having among influential Persian visitors to Iraq would reignite popular enthusiasm in Persia, the Shah's representatives pressed the Ottoman authorities to remove Him further from their borders. Eventually, in spring of 1863, the Turkish government acceded to the pressure and exiled Bahá'u'lláh and some followers to the capital, Constantinople.

The news of this further exile brought dismay to hundreds of people who had come to love Bahá'u'lláh, and who thronged His house as preparations for the journey were being made. Therefore He pitched His tent in a garden park across a river for twelve days to receive and console friends and followers. It was during this time that Bahá'u'lláh confided to His closest companions that the Báb's promises had been fulfilled and that He was "Him Whom God would make manifest." This announcement was received with great joy and happiness.

Bahá'u'lláh's time in Constantinople was shortened as the representatives of the Persian government feared that Bahá'u'lláh's following would again grow in numbers and influence in the capital city, arguing that His teachings would disturb the status quo. At first, the chief minister resisted the pressure to further banish Bahá'u'lláh, stating that His teachings were worthy of high esteem because they counteracted the religious animosities dividing the Jewish, Christian and Muslim subjects of the empire. The agitation persisted so the authorities conceded to move the exiles to the most remote end of the Turkish Empire, the provincial city of Adrianople, on the European continent.

*(TO BE CONTINUED NEXT MONTH)*